



SUGGESTED GUIDANCE FOR GYM AND TRAINING

Prepared by Environmental Health & Engineering

Last Updated: 01/09/2022

GENERAL GUIDELINES

The following provides suggested general guidance and procedures to reduce exposure risk to coronavirus in gym and training areas at competition venues during the Athletes Unlimited (AU) season. In addition, this guidance is applicable to the gym and fitness center selected for use by AU for the athletes and staff. This guidance has been prepared for AU to ensure facilities used by athletes and staff have in place appropriate controls.

Note: All decisions about implementing these considerations should be made according to state and local guidelines as they are updated and issued. AU officials can determine, in collaboration with state and local health officials if and how to implement these considerations while adjusting them to meet the unique needs and circumstances of AU and the local jurisdiction. Their implementation should also be informed by what is feasible, practical, and acceptable.

- ❑ Any activities that can be conducted outdoors are strongly encouraged.
- ❑ Avoid use of indoor running track, especially if any gym users except teammates are present, since physical distancing may not be able to be maintained and heavy breathing could increase the likelihood of transmission occurring. Running outdoors is encouraged.
- ❑ Athletes should avoid group exercise classes taking place indoors with the exception of team-organized training with only health-screened athletes and staff present. Even in team settings, group exercise outdoors is preferred. If exercise must occur indoors, open windows and doors to allow for increased outside air circulation wherever possible. Whenever possible, athletes should wear high quality masks.
- ❑ Do not enter a fitness facility if experiencing any [COVID-19 symptoms](#) or if there is a known exposure to someone else with COVID-19. Notify team healthcare staff as soon as symptoms develop or an exposure has been recognized. Stay in your living space and await further guidance.

- ❑ Use contact-free check-in methods whenever possible. If contact is required clean hands immediately with hand sanitizer.
- ❑ *Best practice:* Reserve gym times for team use only. Ensure no users are in the space for at least 15 minutes before use by athletes to allow for air turnover in the space. Also ensure all equipment and machines have been wiped down before team use.
- ❑ Athletes should limit personal items brought to the facility. Do not share towels or other personal items with others.
- ❑ Make sure to use proper hand hygiene whenever using bathrooms or locker rooms.
- ❑ Limit the time spent in the fitness facility by reviewing facility information and planning workouts ahead of time.
- ❑ Wear face covering whenever not actively exercising, and whenever entering, exiting, or moving around the fitness center.
- ❑ Facilitators and staff should wear a mask at all times.
- ❑ Follow markings or tape denoting physical distancing guides for gym attendees.
- ❑ Avoid use of areas where other gym users are in close contact.
- ❑ Avoid use of saunas and steam baths at fitness centers.
- ❑ Athletes should bring their own drinking water in bottles or purchase water bottles onsite. Do not use drinking water fountains.
- ❑ Minimize use of vending machines and food concessions. Athletes should clean their hands after use of vending machines or when in contact with high-touch surfaces at concessions.
- ❑ Athletes and staff must wear a mask if using the fitness center at the hotel.
- ❑ Practice proper hand hygiene:
 - ❑ Wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds before and after activities,
 - or
 - ❑ Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol before and after activities.
- ❑ If cleaning supplies or hand sanitizer supplies are not sufficiently stocked, notify gym personnel as soon as possible.
- ❑ Keep a face covering and personal bottle of hand sanitizer in your gym bag to ensure ready supply is available at all times.

WEIGHTLIFTING AND OTHER FITNESS



- ❑ Clean hands with sanitizer upon entry to the facility and to the weight room/gym areas. Make sure to clean hands immediately after leaving each workout area. Avoid touching your face while working out.
- ❑ *Good practice:* Wipe down/sanitize equipment before and after use.
- ❑ *Good practice:* Do not share equipment with anyone outside of the team.
- ❑ *Better practice:* Athletes should try to share equipment only with roommates or your current teammates. Wipe down/sanitize equipment before and after use and particularly between users.
- ❑ Pull-up bars, rings, or rigs must be wiped down between users.
- ❑ Spotting during weightlifting must be done only by a health-screened teammate or staff member. The spotter must wear a high quality face mask while in close contact with an athlete or staff member.
- ❑ *Good practice:* Athletes should wear high quality face masks while weightlifting, if possible, especially when in close contact with others.

CARDIO EQUIPMENT

- ❑ Avoid using cardio equipment indoors if possible. Even with 6 feet of spacing, high exertion exercise can make it more likely that transmission will occur. If possible, use equipment outdoors or conduct cardio exercises outdoors without equipment. Ensure physical distancing is maintained while conducting cardio exercise outside.
- ❑ Ensure that any cardio equipment, such as treadmills, are spaced more than 6 feet apart, particularly if equipment use is not limited to AU team members.¹
- ❑ Avoid using cardio or other gym equipment where athletes are exercising face-to-face with teammates. Especially avoid using cardio equipment facing non-teammate gym users. Side-by-side or back-to-back orientations may lower potential virus transmission but would still be considered higher risk.
- ❑ Wipe down cardio equipment before using, then clean hands with sanitizer.
- ❑ After using cardio equipment, wipe down the equipment then clean hands with sanitizer.

SWIMMING

¹ American Industrial Hygiene Association. *Reopening: Guidance for Gyms and Workout Facilities*. https://aiha-assets.sfo2.digitaloceanspaces.com/AIHA/resources/Guidance-Documents/Reopening-Guidance-for-Gyms-and-Workout-Facilities_GuidanceDocument.pdf



- ❑ Athletes should follow physical distancing.
- ❑ Avoid the locker room by going dressed for swimming and then leave the facility to shower and change at your room.
- ❑ Athletes should bring and use their own towel.
- ❑ *Best practice:* For lap swimming, maintain spacing between individuals swimming by allowing one swimmer to occupy a lane at a time.
- ❑ *Best practice:* Ensure swimmers have their own equipment and do not share with others. Do not use facility-provided equipment, such as extra goggles, flotation devices.
- ❑ *Best practice:* Select an aquatics center that allows dedicated pool time that is exclusive to only AU athletes and staff.

FITNESS CENTER OPERATIONS

AU should ensure that fitness centers selected for use by athletes or staff have a COVID-19 management plan for their facility. The sections below include recommendations for fitness center operations to control potential risk to COVID-19. AU should review the plan of the selected facility to ensure that their plan includes the following suggested practices:

- ❑ Symptom check conducted at the entry. This may include temperature screening.
- ❑ Gym capacity should be limited based on available space in the facility to allow for at least 6 feet of separation between athletes and gym members or staff. Greater distancing is recommended for high exertion exercise.
- ❑ Gyms must mandate use of masks for everyone when in the lobby, changing rooms, and restrooms. Facility staff and trainers must wear masks at all times.
- ❑ Apply markings to the floor to denote physical distancing guides for gym attendees.
- ❑ Set up signage to remind gym users of physical distancing, hygiene, and face covering guidelines.
- ❑ Clear protocols and practices for frequent cleaning of equipment and facilities by fitness center staff.
- ❑ Provide ample supplies and opportunities for hand washing or sanitizing, and cleaning supplies for use on gym equipment.



- ❑ *Best practice:* Select a fitness center that allows dedicated gym time that is exclusive to only AU athletes and staff.
- ❑ *Best practice:* Select a fitness center that keeps windows and doors open to allow for regular outside air exchange.
- ❑ *Best practice:* Select a fitness center that does not allow group classes indoors, requires face coverings when not actively exercising, and encourages face coverings during weightlifting and other non-cardio exercises.

COMMUNICATION

- ❑ Fitness centers must post signage at the entrance reminding visitors of face covering, physical distancing, and any capacity limitations. Post [print material from the CDC](#) in critical areas where physical distancing should be mandatory: group exercise rooms, common exercise areas, locker rooms, etc.
- ❑ Prepare and place relevant posters and signage incorporating guidance from the CDC, World Health Organization (WHO), and/or other health-based organizations in appropriate places where intended audiences can be reached. Examples include:
 - ❑ [COVID-19 information](#)
 - ❑ [Handwashing](#)
 - ❑ [Cough etiquette](#)
 - ❑ [Symptoms associated with COVID-19](#)
 - ❑ [Practices to stop the spread of the virus](#)
 - ❑ [Physical distancing](#)
- ❑ Post [print material from the CDC](#) in or near locker rooms/bathrooms to remind individuals when and how to wash hands. Use electronic resources to provide regularly updated information and reminders for good safety and hygiene practices, whenever possible.
- ❑ Screen, distribute, and incorporate [this CDC video resource](#) on proper handwashing into training programs for staff.
- ❑ Provide information regarding activities that are being undertaken to create a healthy workout experience and to prevent transmission of disease. This should include education on good hand washing hygiene, physical distancing measures, mask use, and cleaning practices, at a minimum.
- ❑ Educate staff and gym members on infection prevention practices.



- ❑ Staff and members must not visit the gym if exhibiting any symptoms, including cough, fever, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, and new loss of taste or smell.
- ❑ Staff and members also should not attend the gym if they have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 within the previous 14 days.
- ❑ Physical distancing requires members and staff to remain more than 6 feet apart as much as possible and wearing a high quality face mask.
- ❑ Staff and members should wash or use sanitizer on hands often, including upon entering the facility; upon entering and leaving locker rooms; after using restrooms; after using gym equipment or contact with high-touch surfaces; and after coughing, sneezing, or blowing their nose.
- ❑ Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or by coughing into your elbow.
- ❑ Policies should be put in place to allow gym staff to refuse access to anyone appearing to show symptoms or anyone not following gym hygiene and physical distancing guidelines.
- ❑ Develop a plan for how to address a case of COVID-19 among staff and/or members, including how to communicate with staff and members if a case has been identified having visited the facility and what follow up actions are expected of potential AU members that have been exposed (i.e. quarantine).

COVID-19 SUSPECTED OR PROBABLE CASE

- ❑ If a member or employee does not show [COVID-19 symptoms](#) but notifies the facility that they have been in close contact with a person who has a confirmed case of COVID-19, direct the individual to monitor for COVID-19 symptoms. Inform the individual that they should follow [CDC guidance](#) if symptoms appear.
- ❑ If a member or employee shows [COVID-19 symptoms](#) or is confirmed as having COVID-19, follow the procedures below:
 - ❑ Immediately separate staff and patrons with COVID-19 symptoms (for example, fever, cough, or shortness of breath).
 - ❑ Establish procedures for safely transporting anyone who is sick to their home or to a healthcare provider.
 - ❑ Close off areas used by a sick person and do not use areas until after cleaning and disinfection.



- ❑ Ensure safe and correct use and storage of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency ([EPA\)-approved List N disinfectants](#), including storing products securely away from children; follow manufacturer's instructions.

FACILITIES AND OPERATIONS

VENTILATION

- ❑ Open windows and/or doors as much as possible to increase outdoor air supply.
- ❑ Increase supply air flows to the gym and group exercise rooms, if possible.
- ❑ Ensure restrooms and locker rooms have fans venting outdoors and operating to create negative pressure.
- ❑ For group exercise rooms consider use of a portable high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filtration unit sized appropriately to the space.
- ❑ Use of fans that focus airflow directly onto gym occupants are not recommended as they can direct airflow from one person to another and re-suspend particles from the flow.

RESTROOMS / SHOWERS / LOCKER ROOMS

- ❑ Locker rooms and showers should have dividers between users or markings to note appropriate distancing. If not possible to properly distance users, locker rooms and/or showers should be closed.
- ❑ High quality masks must be worn in locker rooms and restrooms at all times
- ❑ Encourage good hand hygiene for all staff and members.
- ❑ Post signage and inform members that hand washing or sanitizing is required for all individuals before and after workouts, before and after using a new piece of equipment, as well as before and after the use of restrooms and/or locker rooms.
- ❑ Sufficient supplies must be provided and replaced regularly throughout the day. These include soap, hand sanitizer, paper towels, and tissues. Hand sanitizing stations should be readily available in multiple places, particularly at entryways/exits.
- ❑ Make trash cans readily available. Trash cans should be a type that does not require touching by the user. A no-touch trash can should be placed by all doors with pull handles, to ensure clean paper towels used to open the door can be disposed of properly.



- ❑ Toilet lids, if available, should be closed when flushed. Notices educating users should be placed in stalls.
- ❑ Restrooms and locker rooms should be cleaned and disinfected multiple times per day.

COMMON AREAS

- ❑ Consider eliminating reception seating areas to remove the temptation for individuals to gather for prolonged periods of time.
- ❑ Remove or reconfigure seats, furniture and customer service stations as needed to preserve physical distancing.
- ❑ If vending machines are used, provide cleaning supplies and disinfectants, and require users to wipe down touch points after each use.
- ❑ High quality masks must be worn in all common areas.

STAFF

- ❑ Ensure that there are sick leave policies in place that encourage staff to stay home when sick and get tested if they have been exposed to someone with COVID-19.
- ❑ Determine how and when staff can return to work after being diagnosed with COVID-19. Follow CDC's [criteria to discontinue home isolation](#).
- ❑ Assign a staff member to address COVID-19 concerns from staff or members. Instruct staff to refer all concerns to the identified COVID-19 staff person.
- ❑ If possible, adapt duties to allow for protection of high-risk staff. This could include telework, changes in schedules, or adjusting job tasks to reduce potential exposures.
- ❑ Monitor absenteeism of staff and create a roster of trained back-up staff.
- ❑ Limit the number of staff present during the same time by staggering or rotating shifts. Monitor staff schedules and ensure there is a list of available trained staff.
- ❑ Train gym personnel on physical distancing guidelines and proper mask use, and ways to communicate them to members.
- ❑ Train staff on all safety protocols and COVID-19 guidelines. Consider training virtually or ensuring that physical distancing is maintained during in-person training.



- ❑ If an employee is sick or undergoes testing, results should be reported to the employer so that a plan for returning to work can be established according to a doctor's approval and current CDC recommendations.
- ❑ Train all staff about the sources of exposure to the virus and routes of transmission, the health risk associated with that exposure, and appropriate workplace protocols in place to prevent or reduce the likelihood of exposure or transmission. Training should include (but not be limited to) information about what individuals should do to isolate if they have suspected or confirmed COVID-19, how to cooperate with public health officials to enable contact tracing, and how to quarantine safely, if there is a significant exposure.

CLEANING AND DISINFECTION

Note: COVID-19 is not spread through sweat; however, items touched by many people in a gym (e.g., barbells, weight machines, aerobic fitness equipment, etc.) could pose a risk for transmission because respiratory droplets may settle on equipment, or individuals could transfer virus from their hands to equipment.

- ❑ Provide hand washing stations at the entrance of the facility or alternatively, hand sanitizer (60% alcohol), if not feasible.
- ❑ Provide wipe stations for members to wipe/disinfect equipment before and after exercise at each location/station/piece of equipment.
- ❑ Examples of equipment surfaces in direct contact with the skin that should be cleaned and disinfected include but are not limited to:
 - ❑ Hand grips on cardio equipment such as treadmills, bicycles, ellipticals.
 - ❑ Hand grips on dumbbells, weight bars, and other strength-training systems.
 - ❑ Pads/cushioned components such as fitness mats, bike seats, lifting benches, and other cushioned components of strength training machines.
 - ❑ Fitness balls, rope handles, and other fitness accessories.
- ❑ Add hand sanitizer stations next to wipe stations to allow staff and members to clean their hands after wiping down equipment.
- ❑ Clean and disinfect common areas (e.g., lobby, check-in), restrooms, and locker rooms at least one time per day. Disinfect shared items between users to the extent possible. Instruct gym users and include visible signage about disinfecting equipment between uses.



- ❑ Establish a disinfection routine with staff at regular intervals. Follow manufacturer's guidelines for cleaning products, including application methods and contact time required for disinfection.
- ❑ High contact areas such as door handles, hand railings, toilets, faucets, and sinks should be disinfected multiple times per day if possible.
- ❑ Any shared use items should be disinfected after each use.
- ❑ Any equipment or supplies that have been used and require cleaning should be kept in a labeled container noting it requires disinfection.
- ❑ As with other cleaning activities (e.g., cleaning bathrooms or doing laundry), high quality face masks should be worn.
- ❑ Use of a disinfectant appropriate for porous material is recommended. Follow manufacturer's instructions. Example: Lysol Laundry Sanitizer (see manufacturer's instructions for inactivating viruses, including a 15-minute presoak).
- ❑ Cloth face coverings used by staff should be laundered regularly.
- ❑ If vending machines are used, provide cleaning supplies and disinfectants and require users to wipe down touchpoints after each use.



REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Athletic Facilities*.

<https://www.cdc.gov/mrsa/community/environment/athletic-facilities.html>

USA Gymnastics. *Member Club Considerations for a Safe Re-opening*.

<https://usagym.org/PDFs/About%20USA%20Gymnastics/covid/safereopening.pdf>

American Industrial Hygiene Association. *Back to Work Safely*.

<https://www.backtoworksafely.org/>

U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration. *COVID-19 Control and Prevention*.

<https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/controlprevention.html#health>

Limitations: EH&E's advice, recommendations, guidance, and work product is intended to augment and supplement all existing local, state and federal, laws, by-laws, regulations, and ordinances that may apply to AU's work, workforce, and places of work, such as, without limitation, all employment laws, and all U.S. Occupational Safety Health Administration (OSHA), EPA and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) laws and regulations; therefore where EH&E's advice, recommendations, guidance, and work product may overlap or touch upon existing laws and regulations, such advice and recommendations should be construed and interpreted in a manner which further defines existing duties and obligations, and assists in the implementation of policies and procedures to discharge those duties and obligations, and should not be construed or interpreted in a manner that lessens or diminishes existing duties and obligations.

