



**NEW JERSEY**  
**GUIDANCE FOR HEALTH CLUBS/GYMS/FITNESS CENTERS**

**August 28, 2020**

**Updated items highlighted**

Per Executive Order 181, health clubs/gyms or other fitness centers, as well as recreational businesses that offer fitness classes and activities, must follow the criteria listed below.

- The workforce and customer presence must be limited to no more than 25% of the maximum occupancy for a particular area set by the certificate of occupancy, exclusive of staff, who must maintain 6 ft. of space from others.
- In addition to capacity restrictions, indoor group activities (e.g., classes) can occur but must limit to no more 1 individual per 200 square feet of accessible space or less, AND all individuals must be able to maintain a minimum of 6 feet of distance from other individual during the entire class.
- Outdoor group activities can occur but all individuals must be able to maintain a minimum of 6 feet of distance from other individual during the entire class. If individuals attending outdoor classes enter the center premises, whether to use a restroom or otherwise, they must be included in the capacity limit indicated above.
- One-on-one personal training can occur assuming 6 feet of distance can be maintained for the majority of the training session.
- Individual or pair activities which do not involve contact (e.g., racket ball, handball) can also occur.
- Only equipment that can be thoroughly sanitized before and after use by clients should be allowed.
- Activities such as swimming in an indoor pool, tanning, outdoor dining, pick-up of food or beverage, and retail sales, which may be otherwise permitted but which are not governed by this document, remain subject to standards outlined in applicable Executive Orders, Executive Directives and guidance.

Health clubs/gyms and other fitness centers are to adhere to the protocols listed below.

Capacity and entrance requirements:

- Each facility must monitor visitor entries and exits, ensure social distancing, and limit occupancy at all times to:
  - 25% of the facility's maximum permitted occupancy as documented in its occupancy permit on record with the municipal building department or other municipal record holder.
  - Facilities for which no permitted occupancy limitation is on record may allow 125 square feet per person of accessible indoor or outdoor space.



- Place signage at facility entrances to instruct patrons that they cannot enter if they have been diagnosed with or suspected to have had COVID-19 and are still within the required isolation period as defined by CDC at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/duration-isolation.html>, if they currently have symptoms of COVID-19 as defined at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>, or if they have been in close contact with an individual diagnosed with COVID-19. Close contact is defined at [https://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/documents/topics/NCOV/NCOV\\_chapter.pdf](https://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/documents/topics/NCOV/NCOV_chapter.pdf).
- Safety reminder should be provided at the beginning of each authorized activity or session to reemphasize the protective measures for everyone to include maintaining social distancing, sanitation protocols, and pre-session screening.
- Close or limit waiting areas and, for class-based activities with distinct session times, ask customers to wait outside or in cars until 10 minutes prior to their class.
- To limit the use of shared locker room facilities, clients should be informed to arrive dressed to workout/train and bring their own hand towel, water, yoga mat, boxing gloves, and any other equipment.
- A facility shall conduct a temperature screening and questionnaire of staff and clients upon entrance to the facility. Any individual who is found to have a temperature of 100.4 or above, or who answers yes to any of the following or similar questions, shall be denied entrance to the facility:
  - Within the last 10 days have you been diagnosed with COVID-19, had a test confirming you have the virus, or been advised to self-isolate or quarantine by your doctor or a public health official?
  - Have you had any one or more of the following symptoms today or within the past 24 hours, which is not new or not explained by another reason?
    - Fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, fatigue, headache, muscle/body aches, runny nose/congestion, new loss of taste or smell, or nausea, vomiting or diarrhea?
  - In the past 14 days, have you had close contact as defined at [https://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/documents/topics/NCOV/NCOV\\_chapter.pdf](https://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/documents/topics/NCOV/NCOV_chapter.pdf) with an individual diagnosed with COVID-19?
- Limit access to the facility through the front door. Other access points should be kept closed, except where required to remain open by law or where it is otherwise necessary that another access point remain open for safety reasons.
- Install physical partitions in areas where physical distancing is not possible, such as service counters. Contactless payment and sign-in methods are encouraged.



### Social Distancing and Face Coverings:

- Masks/Face coverings are required to be worn by all clients while in the facility at all times except when doing so would inhibit the individual's health, such as when in the water and in other situations where the presence of a mask would pose a risk to the individual's health, or where the individual is under two years of age.
- Social distancing guidelines of at least six feet of separation must be maintained by every person in the facility at all times to the greatest extent possible.
- Each facility will have a social distancing plan that explains where clients can be at a given time in lobby or waiting areas, private offices, and the training area.
- Place signage at entrances, on floors, and throughout the facility to instruct clients of the enhanced social distancing requirements.
- Training equipment will be adjusted or access restricted in order to maintain proper social distancing standards.
- Arrange all equipment (weights, machines, treadmills, bikes, etc.) so exercise areas are spaced out at least 6 feet apart. Installation of barriers between machines should be considered where practicable.
- If spacing of equipment is not possible, equipment should be blocked off (e.g., every other machine) to maintain 6 feet distancing.
- Close or reconfigure other common spaces where customers are likely to congregate or where social distancing is not possible, such as lobbies and waiting areas.
- Training sessions must be staggered to maintain social distancing and limited capacity in a facility.
- Except where permitted to be used (see General Operations below), lockers should remain closed. When permitted to be used, close or mark lockers to enforce 6 feet social distancing, especially in locker rooms. Lockers should be sanitized after each use. Gyms should provide sanitizing wipes near the lockers or in the locker room.

### Cleaning:

- Ensure access to handwashing facilities on site, including soap and running water; alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol may be used as an alternative.
- Distribute hand sanitizer and disposable wipes abundantly throughout the space for workers and customers to disinfect their hands and equipment before and after use.
- Disposable wipes should be placed next to each piece of large equipment (such as treadmills, bikes, rowing machines) and next to each area containing smaller equipment (such as free weights).
- Facility must post signage and review with clients proper procedures for sanitizing equipment.
- Frequently (a minimum of three times daily) clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces, such as handrails, doorknobs, and restrooms. If these areas cannot be cleaned and



disinfected frequently, these locations shall be shut down until such measures can be achieved and maintained.

- Require trainers to wash hands before and after each training session and sanitize frequently during each session.
- All equipment must be sanitized between uses. No equipment should be used by another customer or returned to the storage rack / container without being sanitized.
- Encourage customers to use one piece of equipment at a time (e.g., limit circuit training or “super sets” with multiple pieces of equipment) in order to facilitate required sanitizing.
- Facilities must provide sanitization supplies at each piece of equipment in order for customers to clean in between each use.
- If sanitation (or the monitoring thereof by employees) of any piece of equipment is not possible or practical, this equipment should be closed off.
- Schedule 30-minute windows between classes to allow for thorough cleaning and appropriate ventilation of the fitness room, and to discourage congestion.
- Clearly designate staff responsible for sanitizing, cleaning, and supervision during each shift.
- Ensure restrooms are frequently cleaned during each shift and appropriately disinfected throughout the day.
- In the event of a positive case of a worker, customer or vendor shut down site and wait 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting of the workplace in accordance with current CDC guidance.
- Keep cleaning logs that include date, time, and scope of cleaning.

#### Staff Wellness and Safety:

- Require staff to wear masks/face coverings at all times, except when doing so would inhibit the individual’s health, such as when in the water and in other situations where the presence of a mask would pose a risk to the individual’s health. Operators/owners will provide staff face coverings to wear while in the facility, at no cost to the staff.
- Ensure access to handwashing facilities on site, including soap and running water, and allow enough break time for workers to wash hands frequently; alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol may be used as an alternative
- Stagger lunch and break times for workers, regulate the maximum number of people in one place and ensure at least 6 feet of physical distancing between workers.
- Close or reconfigure common spaces and high-density areas of facilities where workers are likely to congregate (e.g., break rooms and eating areas) to allow 6 feet of physical distancing.
- Personal trainers should maintain six feet of distance from clients to the extent possible and should minimize any prolonged close contact. Personal trainers must wear face coverings. Any equipment used during the personal training session must be sanitized



after each use, or at the end of the session if the client was the only person who used the equipment during the session.

- Provide training to workers on up-to-date safety information and precautions including hygiene and other measures aimed at reducing disease transmission, including:
  - Social distancing, handwashing, proper use of face coverings
  - Self-screening at home, including temperature and symptom checks
  - Reinforcing that staff should not come to work if sick
  - When to seek medical attention if symptoms become severe
  - Which underlying health conditions may make individuals more susceptible to contracting and suffering from a severe case of the virus
- Adjust workplace hours and shifts (working teams with different schedules or staggered arrival / departure) to minimize contact across workers and reduce congestion.
- Limit employees to discrete work zones where possible to minimize overlap.
- Facilities must screen workers at each shift as required above for customers (see Capacity and entrance requirements).
- Maintain a log of workers and customers to support potential contact tracing (name, date, time in and out, contact information).
- If the employer is notified of a positive case of a worker or client at the workplace, the employer shall notify the local health department (LHD) in the city or town where the workplace is located and assist the LHD as reasonably requested to advise likely contacts to self-quarantine. Testing of other workers may be recommended consistent with CDC or NJDOH guidance and/ or at the request of the LHD.
- Operators/owners should cooperate with the investigation of a suspected or confirmed case.
- Staff and clients should be advised to cooperate with the LHD investigation and/or recommendation for testing.

#### Indoor Air/Ventilation:

- Keep doors and windows open where possible and utilize fans to improve ventilation.
- Inspect and evaluate the heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) unit to ensure that the system is operating within its design specifications.
- Conduct routine maintenance as recommended by the manufacturer or HVAC professional.
- Within the design specification of the HVAC unit:
  - Increase the volume of outdoor air to the maximum capacity while the gym is occupied.
  - Reduce the volume of recirculated air being returned to the indoor spaces
  - Increase the volume of air being delivered to the indoor spaces to the maximum capacity
  - Select maximum filtration levels for the HVAC unit.
  - Ensure that the HVAC unit runs continuously while the gym is occupied.



- Ensure that the HVAC unit runs for at least two hours before and two hours after the gym is occupied.
- Consider installing portable air cleaners equipped with a high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter to increase the amount of clean air within the gym.
- Review and follow the latest CDC guidance for ventilation requirements.

#### General Operations:

- Consider setting aside specific hours of operation exclusively for high-risk clients, which may include, for example, individuals with serious underlying medical conditions like chronic lung disease, moderate to severe asthma and people who are severely immunocompromised.
- Facility provided towel service should be discontinued.
- Individually partitioned showers or communal showers with installed barriers/partitions (at least 6 feet apart) are permitted in gyms with pools (in accordance with the NJAC 8:26, Public Recreational Bathing). Showers are not otherwise permitted.
- Locker room use will be limited to hand washing and restroom use. Shower use is limited to circumstances listed above. Lockers will be closed except where showers are permitted.
- Shared saunas and steam rooms are not permitted.