



**NEW JERSEY**  
**GUIDANCE FOR HEALTH CLUBS/GYMS/FITNESS CENTERS**  
**May 7, 2021**

Per Executive Orders No. 181, 192, and 230, 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 indoor premises of health clubs/gyms and other fitness centers is currently limited to 50% capacity, excluding staff.

Additional changes to capacity are expected to take effect on May 19. Revised guidance will be issued at that time.

**Entrance requirements for facilities:**

- Monitor patrons and staff to ensure masking and adequate 6 feet physical distancing when indoors, regardless of vaccination status.
- 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 have been told to quarantine by public health officials or currently have symptoms of COVID-19 as defined at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>
- Provide safety reminders at the beginning of each authorized activity or session to reemphasize the protective measures in place, including maintaining physical distancing and cleaning protocols.
- Consider closing or limiting waiting areas and, for class-based indoor activities with distinct session times, encourage patrons to wait outside or in their cars until 10 minutes prior to class. Schedule 30-minute windows between classes to allow for appropriate ventilation and cleaning of the fitness room/equipment, and to discourage congestion.
- A facility shall conduct temperature and symptom screening of staff and patrons 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?
- Contactless payment and sign-in methods are encouraged.

### **Physical Distancing and Face Coverings:**

- Masks/Face coverings are required to be worn by all patrons 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. Masking is required, regardless of a person's vaccination status.
- Physical distancing of at least six feet of separation must be maintained by every person in the facility at all times to the greatest extent possible.
- Attendance for indoor group activities (e.g., classes) must be limited to a number that permits all participating individuals to remain 6 feet apart in the designated space. Classes are also subject to the indoor gathering limit, as established by Executive Order.
- Place signage at entrances, on floors, and throughout the facility to instruct patrons of the enhanced physical distancing requirements.
- 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. Install cleanable transparent shields or other barriers to physically separate staff 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.
- Ensure physical distancing in common spaces where patrons are likely to congregate, such as lobbies and waiting areas.

### **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. Encourage proper handwashing of all staff and patrons.
- Distribute hand sanitizer and disposable wipes abundantly throughout the facility for staff and patrons to disinfect their hands and equipment before and after use, including 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 about proper procedures for sanitizing equipment.
- Ensure daily cleaning of high-touch surfaces, such as handrails, doorknobs, and restrooms.
- All equipment must be cleaned between use. Facilities must provide sanitization supplies at each piece of equipment for patrons to clean in between each use. Only equipment that can be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected after use by patrons should be allowed.
- Clearly designate staff responsible for cleaning. Staff should maintain a cleaning log that includes date, time, and scope of cleaning.
- Perform enhanced [cleaning and disinfection](#) after anyone suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 has been in the workplace.
  - a. Cleaning: Soaps/Detergents that reduce germs on surfaces
  - b. Disinfection: EPA approved products that kill germs on surfaces
- 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 staff do not have access to these areas or items, wait 24 hours (or as long as possible) before cleaning and disinfecting.

### **Staff Wellness and Safety:**

- Require staff to wear masks/face coverings at all times, regardless of vaccination status, 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 staff to wash hands frequently; alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol may be used as an alternative.
- Staff responsible for towel service must wear gloves while collecting/handling used towels.
- Adjust workplace hours and shifts (working teams with different schedules or staggered arrival / departure) to minimize contact across staff and reduce congestion. Stagger lunch and break times for staff to accommodate at least 6 feet of physical distancing between staff.
- Close or reconfigure common spaces and high-density areas of facilities where staff are likely to congregate (e.g., break rooms and eating areas) to allow 6 feet of physical distancing.
- Provide training to staff on up-to-date safety information and precautions including hygiene and other measures aimed at reducing disease transmission, including:
  - Physical 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. Employers should have flexible sick leave policies to encourage staff to stay home if sick.
- When to seek medical attention if symptoms become severe
- Which underlying health conditions may make individuals at greater risk of severe COVID-19 disease
- Limit staff to discrete work zones where possible to minimize overlap.
- Facilities must screen staff at each shift as required above for patrons.
- Maintain a log of staff and patrons to support potential contact tracing (name, date, time in and out, contact information).
- If the employer is notified of a positive case of a staff or patron 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. Staff who test positive for COVID-19 should immediately notify their employer; these staff should not return to work until they meet the criteria to [discontinue home isolation](#).
- Operators/owners, staff and patrons should cooperate with the public health investigation of a suspected or confirmed case.

#### **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. Additional considerations for improving the building ventilation system can be found in the [CDC Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers](#).



### **Locker rooms and amenities:**

- Facility-provided towel service may resume. Staff responsible for towel service must wear a mask and gloves while collecting/handling used towels.
- Individually partitioned showers or communal showers with installed barriers/partitions (at least 6 feet apart) are permitted.
- Close or mark lockers to enforce 6 feet social distancing, especially in locker rooms. Gyms should provide sanitizing wipes near the lockers or in the locker room.
- Shared saunas and steam rooms are not permitted.
- 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/most current Executive Orders, Executive Directives and guidance.