



# Coronavirus COVID-19

BC Centre for Disease Control | BC Ministry of Health



## Indoor Exercise Requirements May 27, 2021

**Note: This updates the May 7 version of these requirements. Changes are highlighted in yellow.**

All facilities or individuals providing exercise indoors (i.e. individual or **low intensity group exercise**), or one-on-one personal training indoors, must implement and comply with all requirements in this document - as indicated in the BC Provincial Health Officer's [Order on Gathering and Events](#). **High intensity group exercise is prohibited at this time.**

### Scope of Guidelines

**Martial Arts, Cheerleading, & Gymnastics** studios are not covered by these requirements as these activities are governed under provincial and local sport organizations and must follow current Provincial Health Officer orders and Public Health guidance related to sport as well as [viaSport's Return to Sport Guidelines](#). Public **Skating Rinks** and **Swimming Pools** are also not governed by these requirements.

### High vs. Low Intensity Exercise

There is no evidence-based consensus on what differentiates high intensity vs. low intensity group exercise, especially as it relates to the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Separating out activities into specific categories of risk is also challenging because an activity that may be "high intensity" for one individual may be considered "low intensity" for another, depending on their physical fitness.

For the purposes of these requirements, **exercise that generally results in significantly increased respiration rates is considered high intensity, while exercise that does not result in significantly increased respiration rates is considered low intensity.** While it is recognized this is a broad definition, the overarching intent is to support people to participate in important health-promoting activities while reducing COVID-19 transmission risk. In general, high intensity exercise (especially in groups or communal spaces) leads to greater risk of COVID-19 transmission than low intensity exercise.

Examples\*:

| Low Intensity  | High Intensity  |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barre (lower intensity classes)</li> <li>• Exercise machines/cardio equipment (low intensity)</li> <li>• Light weightlifting</li> <li>• Pilates (lower intensity classes)</li> <li>• Stretching</li> <li>• Tai-Chi</li> <li>• Yoga (hatha)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aerobics</li> <li>• Barre (high intensity/cardio classes)</li> <li>• Bootcamp</li> <li>• Bodybuilding / Heavy Weightlifting</li> <li>• Circuit training</li> <li>• CrossFit (high intensity activities/classes)</li> <li>• Dance classes</li> <li>• Dance fitness (Zumba and similar)</li> <li>• Exercise machines/cardio equipment (high intensity)</li> <li>• High-intensity interval training (HIIT)</li> <li>• Kickboxing (Tai Bo and similar)</li> <li>• Spin</li> <li>• Yoga (hot, power)</li> </ul> |



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If you have fever, a new cough, or are having difficulty breathing, call 8-1-1.



**\*This is not an exhaustive list. Gym, studio, and fitness centre operators should use best judgement in identifying what category their activities/classes/facilities fall into based on these examples**

### Case Finding and Contact Tracing

- Contact information (name and phone number or e-mail) of staff and participant attendance must be collected and kept in a format that can be made readily available if needed by Public Health for contact tracing purposes.
  - Operators should keep contact information available for up to 30 days.

### Staffing

- Facilities must have staff on site while patrons are exercising unless all requirements can be met without a staff person on site.
  - For example, occupancy requirements must be maintained through electronic entry/exit systems; electronic/video monitoring and communication to members must be in place to support enforcement of mask use and physical distancing; cleaning and disinfecting requirements must still occur.

### Environmental Measures

Environmental measures are changes to the physical environment that reduce the risk of exposure, such as increasing ventilation, and frequent cleaning and disinfection.

### Ventilation

- Creation of intentionally overheated exercise environments is prohibited
- Outer doors and windows must be left open or partially open at all times (if possible)
- All mechanical heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems must be working properly
- Fresh air intake on ventilation systems must be increased as much as possible
- Use of floor and wall fans is not allowed

### Floor Markings and Reducing Group Congregating

- Any group classes or bookings where a cohort of patrons are arriving at the same time must include at least 5 minutes before and 5 minutes after the class/booking time to reduce bottlenecking
  - For example, a 45-minute group class would be 35 minutes of exercise, with 5 minutes for staggered arrival and 5 minutes for staggered exit (additional time between classes is also required, see Booking and Registration section, below)
  - Additional time may be required for larger classes or to reduce the potential of gathering in common spaces
- Designate different doorways for entrance and exit if possible, or create a different process so patrons are not entering and exiting simultaneously at the same time
- Changerooms and showers must allow for 2m distancing between patrons at all times
  - Lockers / showers should be blocked off and floor markers used to ensure physical distance is maintained
- Use floor markings and/or physical barriers to direct flow through the space and ensure 2 metres physical distancing can be maintained at all times
- Post signage to indicate how these rules should be followed

### Cleaning and Disinfection

- All shared equipment (e.g. exercise machines, floor mats, weights, etc.) must be cleaned and disinfected between each use either by staff or patrons; supplies and signage should be provided throughout facility.
- Other high touch surfaces (e.g. door handles, sink faucets, etc.) must be cleaned and disinfected twice per day



- Where exercise activities involve participants prone or seated on the floor (i.e. floor mats not used), the floor must be cleaned and disinfected twice per day

### Physical Barriers

- Physical barriers between exercise equipment or stations may be used as an additional safety measure, although use of physical barriers does not alter the physical distancing or occupancy requirements.

### Administrative Measures

Administrative measures include the implementation of policies, procedures, training and education that reduce the risk of exposure.

### Occupancy

- To determine overall occupancy: for individual indoor exercise facilities (e.g. big box gyms), each workout room/space must have at least **10 square metres** of unencumbered useable floor space per patron/staff who will be in the space exercising (since there is no instructor present and there may be individual high intensity exercise taking place).
- **Group low intensity exercise** must have at least **7 square metres** of unencumbered floor space per person up to a **maximum of 25 people per workout room/space.**
- Post signage with occupancy limits for each room so staff and patrons are aware and ensure that capacity is not exceeded

### Physical Distancing and Minimizing Physical Contact

- Physical distance of **2.5 metres** between each patron in all directions must be maintained **while exercising**:
  - If possible, exercise machines/equipment should be spaced or blocked off to accommodate
  - Floor markings/signage should be used to identify exercise space
  - If there is movement occurring, each patron should have enough space to ensure they are never within 2.5 metres of each other
- Personal trainers must maintain 2m from client (and other patrons)
- Instructors should remain in a designated “instructor area” throughout the class where they can maintain 2m physical distance from all patrons
  - Instructors must give verbal rather than hands-on corrections for yoga/barre/Pilates, etc.
- No spotting allowed for weightlifting (except patrons who reside in the same household), use other safety measures
- Physical distancing of **2 metres** must be maintained **when not exercising** and at all other times in facility

### Booking and Registration

- Pre-scheduled workouts are mandatory. All member and non-member workouts must be booked prior to arriving at the facility.
  - Inform clients when they book that they must not come if they are feeling sick, and must cancel if they are feeling unwell
- For group low intensity exercise classes, there must be at least 5 minutes between classes where no patrons are in the space:
  - *Example Schedule:* 9:00-9:05– staggered entrance for Class 1; 9:05-9:50 – low intensity exercise Class 1; 9:50-9:55 – staggered exit for Class 1; 9:55-10:00 – cleaning and no patrons in space; 10:00-10:05– staggered entrance for Class 2.
  - Smaller studio spaces or those with lower ceilings or fewer windows/natural air intake are encouraged to allow even greater time between classes
- Ask that patrons do not arrive earlier than their scheduled arrival time



- All patrons must have read and agree to follow safety protocols
- If possible, stagger bookings to ensure not all patrons are not arriving or departing at same time

#### Audio

- Music in all exercise spaces must be kept below speaking volume in order to reduce singing or shouting; individuals may listen to music with headphones but are required to take headphones off when communicating with another patron/staff/instructor/trainer

#### Food and Beverages

- Patrons must bring or use a personal water bottle; water filling stations can be provided, but water fountains for drinking should be shut off

#### Staying Home When Sick and When New Symptoms Develop

- Policies must be established to
  - ensure employees complete daily entry requirements
  - ensure employees can and must stay home when they have symptoms of COVID-19
  - for employees or patrons showing symptoms of COVID-19 when inside the facility

#### Personal Measures

Personal measures are actions individuals can take to protect themselves and others. Examples include physical distancing, minimizing physical contact, frequent hand washing, practicing respiratory etiquette and staying home if sick.

#### COVID-19 Health Check

- Employees must complete daily entry requirements before entering the facility as per the [WorkSafeBC employer requirement](#)
- Patrons must complete daily entry requirements before entering the facility (e.g. [Entry Check for Visitors](#))

#### Exercise Attire / Personal Equipment

- Patrons should arrive in exercise attire to minimize use of change rooms
- Where practical, patrons should bring as much of their own equipment as possible

#### Hand Hygiene

- Direction must be given to patrons to practice hand hygiene before and after a workout; supplies should be provided throughout the facility

#### Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

##### Masks

- **As per [Ministerial Order M012](#)**, masks must be worn at all times in exercise facilities including while exercising.
- People who are unable to wear a mask due to a health condition or a physical, cognitive or mental impairment, and people who are unable to put on or remove a mask without the assistance of another person are exempt from mask requirements.
  - People who are unable to wear a mask must maintain at least 3m distance at all times when in the facility

