



More people
More active
More often

COVID-19 – Re-Opening Q+A for the Gym and Fitness Industry



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According to current evidence, the COVID-19 virus is primarily transmitted between people through respiratory droplets and contact routes. – **UK Government**

Respiratory Droplet – The usual medical rule for transfer is that individuals must be in close range for more than 10 minutes to pick up virus through inhaled air (unless someone is spraying saliva as they talk, are sneezing, or coughing).

Contact – Contact an infected surface with your hand and then touch your mouth, nose or eyes.

1. Can you pass Covid-19 from Sweat?

- No, there is no current evidence that the virus can be spread by perspiration (sweat).
- This is supported for non-respiratory fluids by the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/faq.html> however, limited data is available on sweat/perspiration.

2. Is a gym 'dirtier' than a shop?

- Gyms have very high standards when it comes to cleanliness/hygiene and, as they did prior to closing, they will be putting extra measures in place to make sure that both the staff and customers are safe.

3. How long will COVID-19 stay on equipment for?

- While the COVID-19 virus can stay on certain surfaces for two or three days, the most important thing to know about coronavirus on surfaces is that they can easily be cleaned with common household disinfectants that will kill the virus, which is already common practice in facilities but will be increased post-opening.
- Furthermore, any virus picked up by the hands must be transferred to the mouth/eyes/nose for possible infection to occur. Signage and information to customers to avoid hand-to-face contact, frequent hand washing, and the use of anti-viral/bacterial hand gels will further reduce the infection risk.

4. Can COVID-19 be transmitted in areas with hot and humid climates?

- There is no evidence that COVID-19 is any more transmittable in a hot, humid climate than any other climate. The best way to protect yourself against COVID-19 is by maintaining social distancing and frequent hand washing, and the use of anti-viral/bacterial hand gels. By doing this you eliminate viruses that may be on your hands and avoid infection that could occur by then touching your eyes, mouth, and nose.

5. Do the enclosed environments of gyms and leisure facilities create higher risk of COVID-19 transmission than other indoor places, such as clothes shops, bars or cinemas, and why?

- No, there is the same chance of getting COVID-19 in all areas indoors, the key is keeping social distancing in place, follow cleanliness guidelines and [aerosolisation guidelines](#).

6. Is there a higher risk of aerosol transmission in gyms and leisure facilities than in other indoor environments, and why?

- As long as you follow the aerosolisation guidance there is no evidence to suggest that gyms and leisure facilities are a higher risk than any other setting.
- Operators will also take extra consideration in certain areas of the facility, where high-intensity aerobic activity takes part in a confined space with no windows.

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7. How is COVID-19 transmitted?

- General – The World Health Organisation (WHO) states that the disease spreads primarily from person to person through small droplets from the nose or mouth, which are expelled when a person with COVID-19 coughs, sneezes, or speaks.
- Faeces – The WHO states that while initial investigations suggest the virus may be present in faeces in some cases, to date, there have not been reports of faecal-oral transmission of COVID-19.
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/faq.html>

8. Can COVID-19 be transmitted in the water of a swimming pool and does this increase the risk of transmission? What is the risk in swimming pools?

- There is no evidence that COVID-19 can be spread to humans through the water of pools, hot tubs or spas.
- The risk of transmitting person-to-person remains and all standard guidelines should be adhered to i.e. social distancing while in the pool and surrounding areas.

9. Is there an increased risk of COVID-19 transmission in a studio compared to the gym floor?

- As long as social distancing, cleanliness and the aerosolisation guidelines are followed then there is no increased risk.

10. Do shared water fountains pose an increased risk of COVID-19 transmission?

- As long as all touch points are cleaned pre and post use, water fountains are safe.

11. Do changing rooms/toilets pose an increased risk of COVID-19 transmission?

- As long as you follow social distancing and cleanliness guidelines, there is no increased risk.

12. If a person wears a masks or gloves in a gym or leisure facility will it protect them from COVID-19?

- Non-PPE certified masks are not certified to prevent the wearer from contracting COVID-19. They may, however, have some value in preventing the wearer from spreading COVID-19.
- Exercising indoors with a face mask may not be appropriate in all cases – a face mask increases the work of breathing which leads to greater 'respiratory steal' (oxygen consumption by the respiratory muscles in breathing), and increase the perception of effort (breathing and exercise).
- While gloves are useful in some circumstances, in a gym using hand sanitiser and wiping down equipment before and after use is more appropriate.

13. Does physical activity (exercise) increase resilience to COVID-19, and how?

- WHO recommend regular physical activity benefits both the body and mind. It can reduce high blood pressure, help manage weight and reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, and various cancers – all conditions that can increase susceptibility to COVID-19.
- Physical activity leads to improvements in immune health and metabolic health, both of which are linked to COVID risk. Furthermore, physical activity is central in weight management and positive changes in body composition, both of which are linked to COVID-19 risk.

14. Does Air conditioning raise the risk of transmitting COVID-19?

- The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) have advised that the risk of air conditioning spreading coronavirus is extremely low.

Acknowledgments

ukactive would like to thank Professor Greg Whyte OBE PhD DSc FBASES FACSM and Kris Vette M.Phil, B.Sc, PG Dip BusAdmin, for reviewing the answers to these questions.

Kris Vette – M.Phil, BSc, PGDip BusAdmin.

Kris Vette is a specialist in Evidence Based Practice design. He also has extensive pandemic preparedness and response experience having led the border control for New Zealand during the 2009 H1N1 pandemic. While managing Infectious Diseases at St Georges Hospital, London, during 2002/3, he was on the SARS1 planning and response team. With a background in healthcare management and human factors he has conducted external reviews of serious incidents across both the healthcare sector and NGO's. In New Zealand, in 2011/12, he led the project to design and standardise clinical pathways and protocols across the Auckland hospitals and Primary Care. His BSc is in Physiology and he holds an M.Phil in military strategy that he applies to enable organisations to develop resilient responses in pandemics and other dynamic events.

Professor Greg Whyte OBE PhD DSc FBASES FACSM

In 2014 Greg was awarded an OBE for his services to Sport, Sport Science & Charity, and was voted as one of the Top 10 Science Communicators in the UK by the British Science Council. Greg is an Olympian in modern pentathlon, and is a European and World medalist. He is a specialist in the field of sports and exercise science. Graduating from Brunel University, he furthered his studies with an MSc in human performance in the USA and completed his PhD at St. Georges Hospital Medical School, London. Greg is currently a Professor of Applied Sport and Exercise Science at Liverpool John Moore's University and Director of Performance at the Centre for Health and Human Performance at 76 Harley Street, London. Greg's former roles include Director of Research for the British Olympic Association and Director of Science & Research for the English Institute of Sport.

Greg is the preeminent authority on Exercise Physiology and Sports and Exercise Performance in the UK. An internationally recognised expert in the field having published over 350 peer reviewed papers, 8 books and a leading media commentator. Greg has extensive professional experience assessing, treating and improving the performance of patients, sporting enthusiasts and athletes ranging from cancer sufferers to celebrities attempting their first mountain summit to Gold medal seeking Olympians.

Greg is well-known for his involvement in Comic Relief, since 2006 Greg has applied his sports science work to assist various celebrities in completing some of the toughest challenges. Greg has trained, motivated and successfully coached 32 Sport & Comic Relief Challenges and has helped raise over £45million for charity.