

What is the risk of COVID transmission in gyms?

The risk of COVID transmission in gyms is higher than other sporting environments due to the large number of people who can be exercising vigorously at the same time in an area where there are many surfaces that are touched frequently by different people who don't normally mix together. The vigorous activity increases the likelihood of respiratory droplets spreading from person to person, as well as landing on surfaces that gym users move between and touch as part of their exercise regime.

Controls for the following aspects of a gym's COVID Safety Plan are particularly important:

- ▶ density, mixing and distancing
- ▶ hygiene and cleaning
- ▶ contact tracing.

Density, mixing and physical distancing requirements

The Public Health Directions state:

- ▶ there must only be 1 person per 2 square metres
- ▶ people must maintain 1.5 metres from others, where practicable.

Density

Density refers to the number of people allowed in your gym. This must comply with the Public Health Direction.

Why is this important?

Having lots of people in an enclosed space increases the risk of the COVID-19 virus spreading from one person to another.

Working out your allowed number

For guidance on working out the allowed number of people (including staff) in your gym, see also our [COVID Safe Information Sheet Managing density, distancing and mixing of people in your workplace](#).

How to manage the number of people in your gym

- ▶ restrict the number of members and other users allowed in specified areas
- ▶ require members and other users to register (ideally online) for specific sessions/timeslots
- ▶ restrict the number of people allowed in each class
- ▶ restrict the use of change rooms. Ask members and other users to arrive ready to train and leave the premises once their workout is complete.

Distancing

Distancing is about ensuring there is 1.5 metres between people where practicable, and working out options when this cannot be achieved.

'Where practicable' allows for options when there is no other way of performing an essential task. A good example of an essential task is correcting the posture of a person in a yoga pose.

Why is this important?

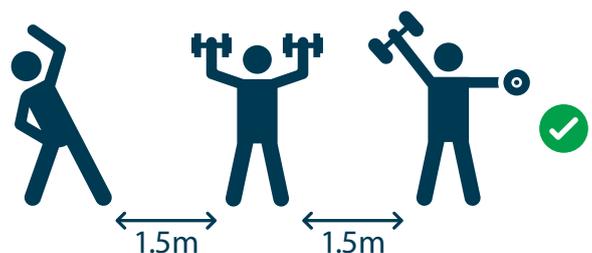
Ensuring people are separated by 1.5 metres reduces the risk of COVID-19 virus droplets being passed from one person to another.

How to follow the 1.5 metre rule

Review the layout of the gym floor and specific workout areas. Changes to maintain 1.5 metres between members include:

- ▶ increasing the spacing between equipment or disabling access to pieces of equipment
- ▶ where available, relocating easily moved equipment to an available outdoor space (where weather permits and it is safe to do so)
- ▶ putting signs and floor markings around the gym, in group exercise rooms and in change rooms to identify the required distancing
- ▶ remove or cordoning off common areas such as lounges or chairs where members and staff may otherwise congregate.

Where personal trainers provide one-on-one training with an individual, they must still follow the 1.5 metre rule for training sessions.



Mixing

Mixing is how you reduce the movement of people in your gym.

Why is this important?

People moving around increases the risk of the COVID-19 virus being passed from one person to another, particularly where those people don't normally mix with each other. The more people come into contact with others, or surfaces where others may have left respiratory droplets, the greater the risk of COVID-19 spreading.

COVID Safe Information Sheet:

CLEANING, HYGIENE AND MANAGING MIXING OF MEMBERS AT GYMS

How to manage the movement of people

Examples include:

- ▶ ensuring one-way flow of movement if possible
- ▶ staggering class session times so there is no overlap between members and entry/exit to the class is managed to keep groups separated
- ▶ offering online classes where possible
- ▶ limiting the time people spend together.

Cleaning and hygiene

Public Health Directions require you to clean and, if appropriate, disinfect your gym, including equipment, to the standard and frequency necessary to reduce the risk of COVID-19 being transmitted between people.



Cleaning and hygiene is a shared responsibility between you, your staff and your members. Having sound cleaning and hygiene procedures in place and supplies available is a critical factor in gyms being able to operate without supervision. However, you cannot rely on members cleaning equipment to an appropriate standard. Provide information and training to members to ensure they understand their responsibilities, including the need to clean equipment after use.

Put in place a cleaning schedule that ensures your gym, including the equipment, is thoroughly cleaned following each peak period. Your staff should be trained on how to undertake cleaning to the required standard. You should do a 'deep clean' each day, preferably by a professional cleaner, before the gym opens to members. In 24 hour gyms, a 'deep clean' should be conducted before the first peak period in the day.

For details on how to clean and disinfect your gym, see [Safe Work Australia guidance](#).

Managing your members and other users

It is up to you and your staff to actively enforce your COVID Safety Plan and control measures. This means providing appropriate cleaning supplies for members and other users to clean equipment after use, as well as supervising and managing your members and other users to make sure they are doing the right thing.

As well as supervising members and other users on the floor when the gym is staffed, you could also consider watching back video footage to ensure members and other users are cleaning all equipment used (including weight plates) and using towels on equipment.

Your gym may wish to introduce policies such as 'no towel, no train' or a 'non-compliance one strike' to further encourage members and other users to do the right thing.

Personal cleaning and hygiene

Encourage members and other users to:

- ▶ use contactless payment or sign-in
- ▶ bring a clean towel each time they attend the gym
- ▶ wash gym clothes and towels after each session.

Equipment cleaning and hygiene

To support appropriate equipment cleaning and hygiene:

- ▶ provide alcohol-based hand sanitiser in appropriate locations and disinfectant wipes for members and other users to wipe down where they have touched equipment before and after use
- ▶ provide sufficient supplies of cleaning products
- ▶ provide instruction and supervision so members and other users understand how to properly clean equipment
- ▶ remind members and other users to clean down their equipment with signs around the gym and by staff announcements before and after classes, and during peak periods in free exercise areas
- ▶ allow sufficient time between classes and personal training sessions so all equipment can be properly cleaned after use
- ▶ encourage members and other users to bring their own equipment where possible (eg yoga mats, boxing gloves)
- ▶ encourage members and other users not to touch or share others' personal items or equipment unless necessary
- ▶ encourage members and other users to bring their own filled water bottles; close/remove water dispensers/bubblers.

Contact tracing

Any records you keep on the flow of people into your gym will help Public Health if there is a positive case identified within your gym or in the community.

Collect contact details such as phone numbers when members and other users make bookings, upon entering the gym using their assigned key fob, or in membership details.

Keep a register of people entering the gym.

Watch video footage to ensure the member assigned to a fob is the member entering the gym.

You must keep these records for a minimum of 21 days.

Don't cheat the control measures

You can't avoid implementing a control measure because it is inconvenient or will cost or lose you money. For example, not moving equipment or removing equipment in the gym to create the required spacing because members will be dissatisfied with the amount of equipment available is **NOT** a reason for ignoring Public Health Directions.



Related guidance

See also:

- ▶ [COVID Safe Workplace Guidelines for Sport and Recreation](#)
- ▶ [Framework for operations for fitness facilities: Fitness Australia](#)