

Re-opening key considerations for exercise facilities in New Zealand

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Key items to consider when planning physical re-opening

This document is designed to be an initial guide for exercise facilities in New Zealand as they plan for physical reopening at LEVEL 2. A more comprehensive framework, which will be mapped against both the government's requirements, best practice internationally, as well as guidance from the World Health Organisation (WHO), will be released shortly.

While the exact length of level 2 restrictions is unknown, it is our recommendation to plan for longer term restrictions/changes to your operation and consider how the points below may best be addressed and implemented both when you re-open, but also for the longer term (6-18 months).



Part 1: Social Distancing



1. How will your facility limit the number of people in the facility at one time to comply with social distancing requirements, and how will this be monitored and enforced?
 - a. Things to consider: Each space/room may require a different approach. Some may require bookings and/or additional rules.
 - b. Will any rooms/services or items be off limits (anything from water fountains to certain exercise rooms or equipment).
 - c. You may need to consider multiple check in points, for access to the main facility, and then individual areas.
2. Virtual offerings
 - a. Will you continue to offer this?
 - b. Will you offer a virtual offering from within the facility also (i.e. pre-recorded session)?
3. How will you enforce social distancing in various spaces?
 - a. Group exercise (marking floors)
 - b. Cardio areas (consider breathing direction)
 - c. Gym space, both machines areas and more open spaces
4. Bottlenecks/grouping - How will areas that may create unintentional congregation be managed?
 - a. Entrance areas
 - b. Changing rooms
 - c. Waiting areas for classes (consider larger gaps between classes and/or staggered entry/exits for large groups)
 - d. Staff rooms/offices





Part 2: Cleaning & Sanitation

5. What are the new cleaning protocols?
 - a. 'Deep clean' – what, how often and by whom?
 - b. Hot spot cleans – door handles, locker doors, taps, etc.
How often, who and how?
 - c. Expectations of members?
 - d. Transparent recording of cleaning
6. Do any items need to be removed or placed out of order?
 - a. Examples to consider removing include shared items such as bands, hand weights, yoga blocks, mats, and foam rollers.
 - b. Consider turning off water fountains, saunas and steam rooms
7. How will you communicate and enforce new cleaning practices with members?
 - a. Communications - Emails, texts, letters?
 - b. New signage - where and what key messages?
 - c. Any new check-in process to ensure they are safe (i.e. they don't have symptoms or are supposed to be in quarantine) and understand the new facility rules?



Part 3: Staff

8. Staff safety
 - a. Will staff be required to wear, or just offered PPE such as face masks and/or gloves?
 - b. How will you manage staff that feel unsafe in a CV-19 world?
 - c. What are your (new) opening staffing requirements? How will this be communicated with staff. What if this changes (less or more staff needed)?
 - d. What checks will be done on staff to ensure their safety and the safety of members? (e.g. temp checks?)
 - e. What new training is needed for staff?



Part 4: Operations

9. Any new systems needed?
 - a. Any new check in processes (either on 1st visit, or each time)? How will any queues be managed for this?
 - b. Any bookings systems needed either for classes, or the entire facility? Any limits on bookings?
 - c. Any time limits for using the facility – how is this managed? (one in out /set shifts etc)
10. Are there any services you have implemented during closure that you will continue after you reopen?
 - a. Will any virtual services be offered for people choosing to stay away?
 - b. Will there be new 'virtual inside the club' offerings (i.e. classes with pre-recorded instruction). This may help with managing # in classes by offering more classes.
 - c. For all areas: Will the service be an extra cost, included with membership, or some partial cost instead of membership fee?



What else are we doing?

Exercise New Zealand, together with the New Zealand Register of Exercise Professionals and Yoga New Zealand continue to work on a number of areas to support the exercise community though COVID-19 and beyond. A summary of these are listed below.

1. Government Engagement & Policy Support

Working with government to get clear expectations for our industry, and then work with these to develop industry best practices and a framework to ensure those exercising in New Zealand can do so safely. We see this as a two way street – us communicating government messages to our industry (supporting the government rules) as well as providing relevant input on the key considerations for our sector/industry and how certain practices can lead to a safer outcome for New Zealanders exercising.

We will also lobby Government where needed. At this stage the focus is around financial support for exercise providers (focusing on our role in mental health and long term health benefits more generally), but will consider any lobbying needed where our industry is being adversely impacted or treated unfairly. To be clear, we do not expect this to involve lobbying for 'exceptions to the rules' for facilities, except where we believe that there is a clear solution to the problem that is safe for New Zealanders and that is likely to be accepted by the Government.

2. Messaging to the Public

One of the key items moving forward when New Zealand moves to Level 2 is trust and confidence in gyms and exercise providers. In addition to sharing information such as this document, we will provide tools and promotional material to use with the public to help you clearly communicate that your offering is safe and following all New Zealand best practice.

3. Research

We have already conducted research on a number of areas including the likelihood of gym members to returning to exercise post Level 3, as well as landlord's responses to rent reduction requests. We have also shared global research on exercise trends through COVID-19 from multiple sources.

We are currently conducting consumer research on consumers likely spending habits at Level 2 and beyond as compared to normal, and how much of that may be online. This will help facilities plan for the likely re-opening behaviour of their members/clients, as well as future financial and capacity projections.

4. Support for the industry

We continue to be here for the industry – whether this is providing tools, resources and information to help navigate the every changing COVID-19 challenges, all the way through to sourcing hand-sanitiser, or perhaps just offering a person to chat to and get some support on a current challenge – we are here.



Help Us to Help You

A reminder ExerciseNZ (including REPs and Yoga New Zealand) is a non-profit membership-based organisation. We do not receive any regular government income, and rely on income from our members to exist and operate. If you find our activities useful, we encourage you to join so we can continue to help you, your business, and the collective exercise industry.

We understand that now, more than any other time, any new investment needs to provide excellent value, so we have a number of ways we are supporting new members:

- we are waiving all joining fees to ExerciseNZ (usually \$100) and the first-time registration/membership fee to REPs and YogaNZ (usually \$57.50).
- we offer monthly payment options for all three organisations, and from as little as \$20/mth (depending on size of organisation and what org you are joining).

We encourage exercise facilities (gyms, studios etc) to join ExerciseNZ – www.exercisenz.org.nz/join

We encourage exercise professionals (PTs, gym & group exercise instructors) to register with REPs – www.reps.org.nz

We encourage yoga teachers to join YogaNZ – www.yoganewzealand.org.nz

Remember – we are in this together, help us to help you by joining your association.