

## Phase II guidelines for Gyms & Fitness Centers

### About this guidance

These guidelines summarize steps all gyms and fitness centers must take. In addition to the sector-specific guidance outlined here, all businesses are required to comply with the general guidance document available at: [www.reopeningri.com](http://www.reopeningri.com).

This guidance document is intended to address frequent issues that arise when complying with general requirements for all establishments regarding social distancing, sanitization, and other standards. The general requirements include those in the RI Department of Health (RIDOH) regulations “Safe Activities By Covered Entities During the COVID-19 Emergency” and are available on the Secretary of State’s website at <https://rules.sos.ri.gov/organizations>. In addition to complying with these guidelines, businesses and organizations must also comply with the general workplace guidelines in order to resume activity in Phase II.

These guidelines are designed to reduce the risk of clients, employees, and all Rhode Islanders developing COVID-19. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, these guidelines must be followed closely. Upon inspection, if any business owner or professional is found in violation of these guidelines or the regulations, they may be closed immediately by RIDOH officials. Keep in mind that these guidelines will be in effect during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic, may be updated as necessary, and will be relaxed when safe to do so.

If you have any questions about this guidance, please contact the Department of Business Regulation via the online form at <https://dbr.ri.gov/questioncomplaints/> or at 401.889.5550.

### Phase II operations

Under Phase II of Rhode Island’s reopening plan, gyms and fitness centers will be able to resume in-person activity on a limited basis with significant restrictions in place to protect public health and safety.

#### All Gyms and Fitness Centers:

- Activities where social distancing cannot be easily, continuously, or measurably maintained are not permitted in Phase II. Activity involving physical contact between individuals is not permitted (e.g. boxing, wrestling, contact martial arts).
- Reservations for member and attendees to sign up for classes or workout sessions in advance are strongly recommended (i.e. discourage “walk-ins”). It is suggested that businesses develop a digital or telephonic system that enables customers to schedule appointments in advance.
  - Gyms may also consider implementing an outdoor reservation station for taking walk-in customers. The outdoor reservation station may consist of the following elements: a plexiglass barrier (or similar material that separates staff from walk-in customers); demarcated 6 foot spacing for walk-in customers in line; limiting lines to 10 individuals at a time; and staffing lines to ensure that walk-in customers comply with social distancing requirements.

- The collection of contact tracing information for employees and gym attendees either before or upon entry to the gym or fitness center is required.
- Businesses must screen all entrants, including employees, visitors, and customers upon arrival to the gym or fitness center. It is recommended that businesses conduct such screenings verbally. Businesses may also consider using a client intake form or software such as a smartphone app to conduct such screenings. Screening is permitted to take place electronically or telephonically at the time of class reservation and must be reconfirmed at the point of entry into the gym.
- All communal areas, such as waiting areas, lobbies, and locker rooms are recommended to be closed. The use of communal showers is not permitted. The gym or fitness center should clearly post that such communal facilities remain closed until further notice. Single-occupancy showers are permitted only where showers are sanitized between uses.
- Whirlpools, saunas, and steam rooms must remain closed. Pools must be operated and used in accordance with regulations issued by the Rhode Island Department of Health.
- Outdoor activities are preferred. Open windows or doors when possible to improve ventilation in indoor spaces. Increased use of HVAC is not recommended if outdoor airflow cannot be introduced.
- Gyms and Fitness centers should consider implementing work-out “shifts” in which individuals sign up for designated times to exercise. It is encouraged to build cohorts that remain consistent (i.e. the same set of people work out together each time).
- There must be adequate time between classes or sessions (e.g. 30 minutes) to thoroughly clean the equipment and exercise space. Cleaning should be conducted in accordance with CDC guidance.
- No mutual contact on equipment is permitted without thorough sanitation in-between uses. Shared equipment (including machines, free weights, and other equipment) must be cleaned between individual clients’ uses. If such frequent and careful cleaning practices are not practical (that is, if sanitization between users cannot be ensured and monitored by staff), the gym or fitness center may need to close off weight training areas or otherwise prevent such equipment from use. Alternatively, individuals may provide and use their own personal equipment (e.g. dumbbells, yoga mat, jump rope etc.).
- It is required to provide hand-sanitizer and disposable wipes for individuals to clean their hands and to clean equipment before and after usage.
- High-touch surfaces & shared objects must be cleaned in accordance with the general business and organization guidance document available at: [www.reopeningri.com](http://www.reopeningri.com).
- It is encouraged for gyms and fitness centers to hold hours exclusively for vulnerable populations (or otherwise provide accommodations for these populations).
- Use of water-fountains and filling stations is not permitted.
- Individuals must keep 6’ social distance from others at all times. Exercise equipment including cardio equipment must be at least 6’ apart. Greater distance (e.g. 14’) is preferred. If exercise machines cannot be moved to space them at least 6 feet apart, they should be blocked off (e.g., with every other piece of equipment blocked off and prevented from use with tape or another method) to ensure customers can maintain social distancing of 6 feet or more.
- It is required to have demarcations demonstrating 6’ social distancing between equipment and walkable pathways (preferably one-way paths) in workout areas.
- Any bar with a food service area must comply with the setting specific guidance issued for restaurants.

- Patrons are encouraged to bring their own equipment when possible (e.g. dumbbells, yoga mats, jump rope).

### Small-Group Fitness Classes (e.g. Yoga, Cross-Fit, & Spin Classes):

- It is encouraged to build cohorts that remain consistent (i.e. the same individuals attend the same class, so that attendees are not with different individuals each class).
- In a class setting, capacity is limited to 15 individuals (not including fitness staff) so long as social distancing requirements can be enforced.
- Instructors must adhere to social distancing guidelines through the duration of the class.

### For Unstructured, Open Gym Settings:

- Capacity is limited to 1 person per every 150 square foot.
- It is recommended that businesses designate staff members to provide sanitizing, cleaning, and supervision with a focus on high-touch objects during each shift.

### Outdoor Fitness:

- Outdoor fitness that can guarantee social distancing throughout is permitted.
- For outdoor group fitness, capacity is limited to 1 person per every 150 square feet. All social distancing guidelines must be followed. Guidance on outdoor and organized sports is forthcoming and will be made available on [www.reopeningRI.com](http://www.reopeningRI.com).

### Masks or Face Coverings During Fitness Activity:

- The use of masks is required in these settings (indoors and outdoors) in alignment with RIDOH Regulations which indicate that masks must be worn unless 6' social distancing can be maintained easily and continuously. However, if patrons are engaged in vigorous fitness activities without masks, the physical distance between patrons must be increased to 14' as respiratory droplets can spread further during strenuous exercise.
  - If a gym or fitness center installs a solid, impermeable plexiglass barrier (or similar material that separates patrons) between individuals exercising that exceeds the individuals' height, the distance between individuals engaging in vigorous activity without a mask may be reduced.
- When exercising with a mask or face covering, please consider that masks that are made of moisture wicking, breathable materials (e.g. polypropylene, polyester) are available on the market. A buff – a type of tubular facial covering – built of thin, synthetic fabrics designed to reduce heat buildup is one common example. The fitness industry has provided guidance on the subject of materials for masks for use when exercising:
  - American Trail Runners Association: <https://trailrunner.com/trail-news/atra-member-leslie-jordan-inc-unveils-face-masks-and-race-wraps/>
  - Consumer Reports: <https://www.consumerreports.org/coronavirus/how-to-choose-and-wear-a-mask-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic/>
  - Chemical and Engineering News: <https://cen.acs.org/biological-chemistry/infectious-disease/best-material-homemade-coronavirus-face/98/web/2020/04>

**Miscellaneous Services:** Additional, miscellaneous services that some gym and fitness centers may offer (e.g. massage) must comply with the appropriate setting specific guidance available at: [www.reopeningri.com](http://www.reopeningri.com).