



# Best Practices to Prevent COVID-19 Guidance for Exercising Indoors

For the latest version of this guidance, please check

<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/ncorona2019/BestPractices/exercisingindoors/>.

## Updates

8-19-21:

- Minor edits made to update language to reflect current state of COVID-19 transmission and to reflect the requirement that masks be worn at outdoor Mega Events.

Given the ongoing community transmission of COVID-19 and the presence of the Delta variant, masking indoors, regardless of vaccination status, is essential to slowing the spread of COVID-19 in the community. The Delta variant spreads much more easily than strains of the virus that circulated in LA in the past.

Per published reports, factors that increase the risk of infection, including transmission to people more than 6 feet away, include:

- **Enclosed spaces with inadequate ventilation or air handling** that allow for build-up of exhaled respiratory fluids, especially very fine droplets and aerosol particles, in the air space.
- **Increased exhalation of respiratory fluids** that can occur when an infectious person is engaged in physical exertion or raises their voice (e.g., exercising, shouting, singing).
- **Prolonged exposure** to these conditions.

Below is a summary of best practices for gyms, fitness centers and other businesses that offer indoor space for exercise to enhance safety for their workers, customers, and communities, and lower the risk of COVID-19 transmission within their establishments. In addition to this information, please remember:

- Employers must follow the Cal/OSHA [COVID-19 Prevention Emergency Temporary Standards](#) (ETS). Please note that the directives in the LA County Health Officer Order must be followed when they are more stringent than the Cal/OSHA temporary standards.

**Please be sure to read and follow the [general guidance for businesses and employers](#).**

The specific best practices below are intended to supplement the general guidance.

## Follow mask rules for employees and customers

- ✓ **Customers:** Require all customers, regardless of vaccination status, to bring and wear masks when they are indoors. Customers may temporarily remove their masks while swimming or showering. Make masks available for customers who arrive without them.
  - ✓ Ensure that customers wear their masks indoors, even while exercising.
  - ✓ If the gym or fitness center has food or beverage service, follow [Food and Beverage Services Best Practices](#) Guidance.
  - ✓ If guests or customers cannot tolerate the wearing of a mask while inside a sauna or steam room, it is recommended that the facility allow only single use of those facilities.



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- ✓ **Employees\*:** Require all employees, regardless of vaccination status, to wear masks when working indoors and in shared vehicles. Masks need not be worn indoors if the employee is alone in a room or actively eating or drinking at a seated or stationary location. If employees must eat indoors, they should be distanced at least 6 feet from other persons.
  - ✓ Upon request, employers are required to provide unvaccinated employees with the correct-size respirator along with basic instructions on how to use the respirator. Respirators must be replaced if they get damaged, deformed, dirty, or difficult to breathe through. For more information about free and low-cost PPE for businesses and organizations see: <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/docs/FreeAndLowCostPPE.pdf>.
  - ✓ Employees who work in a setting where they are in close contact with other people who may not be fully vaccinated should be encouraged to wear a higher level of protection, such as “double-masking” (wearing a cloth mask OVER a surgical mask), or a respirator. This is particularly important if the employee is not fully vaccinated and is working in an indoor setting, a crowded outdoor setting, or in a shared vehicle.
  - ✓ Consider requiring staff to also wear eye protection in addition to a respirator if they are not fully vaccinated<sup>1</sup> and are in close contact with customers.
  - ✓ See the [Los Angeles County Health Officer Order](#) page and the [Cal/OSHA Emergency Temporary Standards](#) page for more information about mask requirements. Please note that the directives in the LA County Health Officer Order must be followed when they are more stringent than the Cal/OSHA temporary standards.

\* Some independent contractors are considered as employees under the State Labor Code. For more details, check the California Department of Industrial Relations’ [Independent contractor versus employee](#) webpage.

### Screen customers

- ✓ Post [signage](#) to remind customers that they should NOT enter if they have symptoms of COVID-19 or if they are under isolation or quarantine orders.

### Reduce crowding, especially indoors

- ✓ Maintain your outdoor service area to enable greater occupancy outdoors where ventilation is better.

### Ventilate

- ✓ Make sure your building’s HVAC system is in good, working order.
- ✓ Consider installing portable high-efficiency air cleaners, upgrading the building’s air filters to the highest efficiency possible, and making other modifications to increase the quantity of outside air and ventilation in all working areas.

<sup>1</sup> You are considered fully vaccinated against COVID-19 two (2) weeks after: the second dose of a Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine series, a single dose of Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine or you finished the series of a COVID-19 vaccine that has been listed for emergency use by the World Health Organization. See [fully vaccinated](#) web page for more information. If it is less than 2 weeks after your second or only dose, you do not have enough protection from the COVID-19 virus. It takes time for your body to build immunity. Continue to take prevention steps until 2 weeks have passed.



## Best Practices: Guidance for Exercising Indoors

- ✓ When weather and working conditions allow, increase fresh outdoor air by opening windows and doors. Consider using fans to increase the effectiveness of open windows - position window fans to blow air outward, not inward.
- ✓ Decrease occupancy in areas where outdoor ventilation cannot be increased.
- ✓ Keep your background music volume low so that customers and employees do not have to talk loudly to be heard.
- ✓ See State [Interim guidance for Ventilation, Filtration, and Air Quality in Indoor Environments](#).

## Support handwashing

- ✓ Place handwashing stations or hand sanitizer at entry and outside communal bathrooms with signage promoting use.
- ✓ Encourage frequent handwashing.
- ✓ Posters in multiple languages that [remind people to wash or sanitize their hands](#) and show [how to wash their hands](#) are available in the [signage section](#) of the [Best Practices for Businesses and Employers](#) webpage.

## Communicate

- ✓ Post [signage](#) so that visitors who are entering your establishment are aware of your policies, including the requirement that all customers wear a face mask while indoors.
- ✓ Use your online platforms to communicate your COVID-19 safety policies to the public.