

Wellness Wednesday



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Experts Predict How Coronavirus Will Change Gyms And Workout Classes

Be prepared for a new normal with exercise as fitness centers reopen during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

As states across the country begin to reopen amid the coronavirus pandemic, there's a lot of questions surrounding what daily life will look like, and how it could be different from anything we've experienced before. With an emphasis placed on health precautions, all types of businesses have been tasked with implementing new guidelines in order to prioritize the safety of their customers — and that includes gyms and fitness studios.

Some states like Texas and Florida have already begun opening their exercise facilities, while others, like Massachusetts, are waiting until a later "phase" of the reopening process. But even when your local gym opens its doors, safety still remains a priority.

COVID-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus, is mainly spread through person-to-person contact, and gyms can be highly populated areas. Dr. Kelly Cawcutt, the associate director of infection control and assistant professor of infectious diseases and critical care medicine at University of Nebraska Medical Center, tells HuffPost that she has concerns about crowded classes or gyms where airflow might be less than ideal.

"Exercise increases the frequency and depth of breathing, so there is potential impact of increased aerosol at this time," she said. Aerosols are small particles people expel that could contain the virus.

"Masks would be ideal, but we also know those can be difficult to wear during exercise and may not be mandated," she added.

While it is not the primary means of transmission, COVID-19 can be spread via surfaces as well. Mark S. Dworkin, a professor and associate director for epidemiology at UIC School of Public Health, pointed out that clients might come in contact with equipment and machines that others have touched.

"This virus can likely survive longer on a moist surface, so sweat on equipment is problematic," said Dworkin, who has authored two books on infectious diseases. "Gym reopening should be decided based on how severe the outbreak is in the area. Where there is an abundance of testing and relatively low transmission according to local health jurisdiction, the safety of reopening is higher."

So what exactly will gyms look like in a post-lockdown world? HuffPost asked experts to break down what the "new normal" will look like while working out.

Cleanliness will be key.

Vigorous and frequent cleaning will undoubtedly be necessary to create a safe and healthy environment in gyms. Dworkin said “providing sanitizing wipes for clients to apply to the surfaces they touch” will be key and Cawcutt advised facilities should offer “easy access throughout the gym to hand sanitizer and wipes.” She added that gyms should make their policies clear to let clients know how frequently the studios are cleaned.

Many fitness companies, both large and independently owned, are already publicizing such plans. SoulCycle, a spinning studio with locations across the country, announced a series of modifications like disinfecting equipment between classes even when not in use. Planet Fitness, a gym with locations in all 50 states, will encourage its members to thoroughly clean their machines after working out.



Emily Bench-Lahrssen, founder of Miami-based pilates studio Pilathon, tells HuffPost that when her business eventually reopens, they will be cleaning equipment with “top grade disinfectant” before and after every class. Floors and common spaces will be cleaned in the morning, at midday and before night classes.

Hands-free check-in systems will become the norm.

To limit the amount of person-to-person contact, gyms will likely implement digital check-in systems, along with changes to front desk interactions.

“For the time being, mats, water and towels won’t be provided, so we are asking our clients to bring their own,” Bench-Lahrssen said, noting that Pilathon will utilize contactless check-in. “High-touch amenities such as lockers, showers, sauna, and the front desk sitting area won’t be in use for the time being.”

Social distancing will be enforced while working out.

Experts recommend that people remain 6 feet apart from one another to minimize the possibility of infection through respiratory droplets.

“During exercise, there should be the capacity to have social distancing in place, or some kind of barrier between equipment to help decrease the risk for spread from someone who is asymptomatic,” Cawcutt said.

SoulCycle’s safety plan includes the placement of floor markers throughout the studio, as well as in locker rooms and restrooms. Equinox, a gym with locations throughout the U.S. and internationally, plans to implement “physical distancing cues” in its clubs as well.

Bench-Lahrssen said that Pilathon will separate equipment by the necessary 6 feet, and add signage to the floors to encourage students to maintain distance while in class. “We are also separating the benches where clients sit to remove their shoes,” she said. “Only one person per bench will be allowed.”

Some form of screening may happen at various locations.

As temperature checks become more common throughout businesses, gyms will likely implement medical screenings of staff members upon entry. In Dworkin's opinion, gyms should be "asking screening questions to identify anyone who may be ill — and exclude them if they may be ill."

SoulCycle has said it will check temperatures of all staff members — and clients as well, in states where checks are mandated. They will also ask clients to sign health declarations before each class, "stating that you agree to the health and safety parameters put in place by our governments."

Gym clients should also keep in mind the things they can do on their own to stay safe.

In addition to following the guidelines of your gym or fitness studio, there are some extra measures that clients can take to protect their health and the health of others. Cawcutt emphasized that anyone who feels ill, or who has had known exposure to COVID-19, should absolutely stay home.

Dworkin also noted that some folks with compromised immune systems might want to continue avoiding gyms for the time being — even if their local studio reopens.



"If someone has ... high-risk conditions, social distancing is especially important and they should consider exercising at home or outdoors instead of risking contact with people in a gym," he said.

Cawcutt added that carrying your own hand sanitizer, wearing a mask, implementing frequent hand-washing, and avoiding touching your face are all helpful strategies, along with visiting the gym during less popular hours.

"Help others by continuing to be an example of safe exercise habits," Cawcutt said. "Advocate for detailed, well-thought-out safety and cleaning plans for the gym, and have patience with everyone as we continue to advance through this trying time."



BANANA PANCAKE CEREAL



272 Calories | *PREP TIME: 10 mins* | *COOK TIME: 20 mins* | *TOTAL TIME: 30 mins*
YIELD: 4 Servings | *COURSE: Breakfast / Brunch* | *CUISINE: American*

INGREDIENTS

1 cup 1% milk, buttermilk or almond milk
1 cup all purpose or whole wheat flour
1 ripe banana
2 large eggs
1 teaspoon oil
1 teaspoon vanilla
2 teaspoons baking powder
1/4 teaspoon salt
cooking spray
1 cup fresh mixed berries, for topping
1 large banana, sliced
Optional whipped cream and colored sprinkles,
for toppings

Mini Pancake Cereal is the latest Tiktok trend, so versatile you can serve them with anything you want! I made them healthier with my banana pancake recipe and topped them with tons of fresh fruit.

TIP:

Pancake cereal is very versatile. Pretty much however you like your regular-sized pancakes will work with these bite-sized pancakes. You could make tiny whole wheat pancakes or pancakes with mini chocolate chips or sprinkles.

Nutrition Information

Serving: 2/3 cup pancakes 1/3 cup fruit, Calories: 272 kcal, Carbohydrates: 50 g, Protein: 9.5 g, Fat: 4.5 g, Saturated Fat: 1.5 g, Sodium: 378.5 mg, Fiber: 5 g, Sugar: 16.5 g

Source: [Skinnytaste.com](https://www.skinnytaste.com)



INSTRUCTIONS

How to make them:

Making pancake cereal starts like any other pancake recipe – the first step is to make the batter. I put all the ingredients in a blender and pulse until the batter is smooth and thoroughly combined.

Then, you need to put the batter into an empty condiment bottle so you can squeeze out the little pancakes. If you don't have a bottle, you can just use a zip-locked bag – pour the batter in and then snip the corner of the bag. It will work perfectly for squeezing out the mini pancakes.

Once little bubbles form on the tops of the pancakes, flip them over with a spatula. Flip a couple times until they are a nice light brown color.

When the pancakes are done, put them in a bowl and top with banana and berries and any of your other favorite toppings.

FEATURED EXERCISE

Grab your dumbbells – let's go to work!

ISOMETRIC GLUTE BRIDGE + CHEST FLIES

Start by lying on the ground with your feet 1 foot apart and your knees bent at 45-degree angles. Press your heels into the ground, and lift your hips toward the sky until you feel your glutes engage.

Hold a weight in each hand with the shafts parallel to each other. Extend your arms toward the sky, directly above your chest.



While holding bridge, move both arms away from each other until they are just 1 inch off the ground. Keep arms fully extended, but don't lock your elbows.

Engage the pectoral (chest) muscles to bring the weights back together above you.

Complete 15–18 reps.

Source: <https://simpleasthatblog.com/beginners-guide-strength-training-home/>

Regular exercise can help you control your weight, reduce your risk of heart disease, and strengthen your bones and muscles. But if it's been awhile since you've exercised and you have health issues or concerns, it's a good idea to talk to your doctor before starting a new exercise routine.



Strength

It does not come from
doing what you can do.

It comes from overcoming
the things you once thought
you could not do.

- unknown



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