



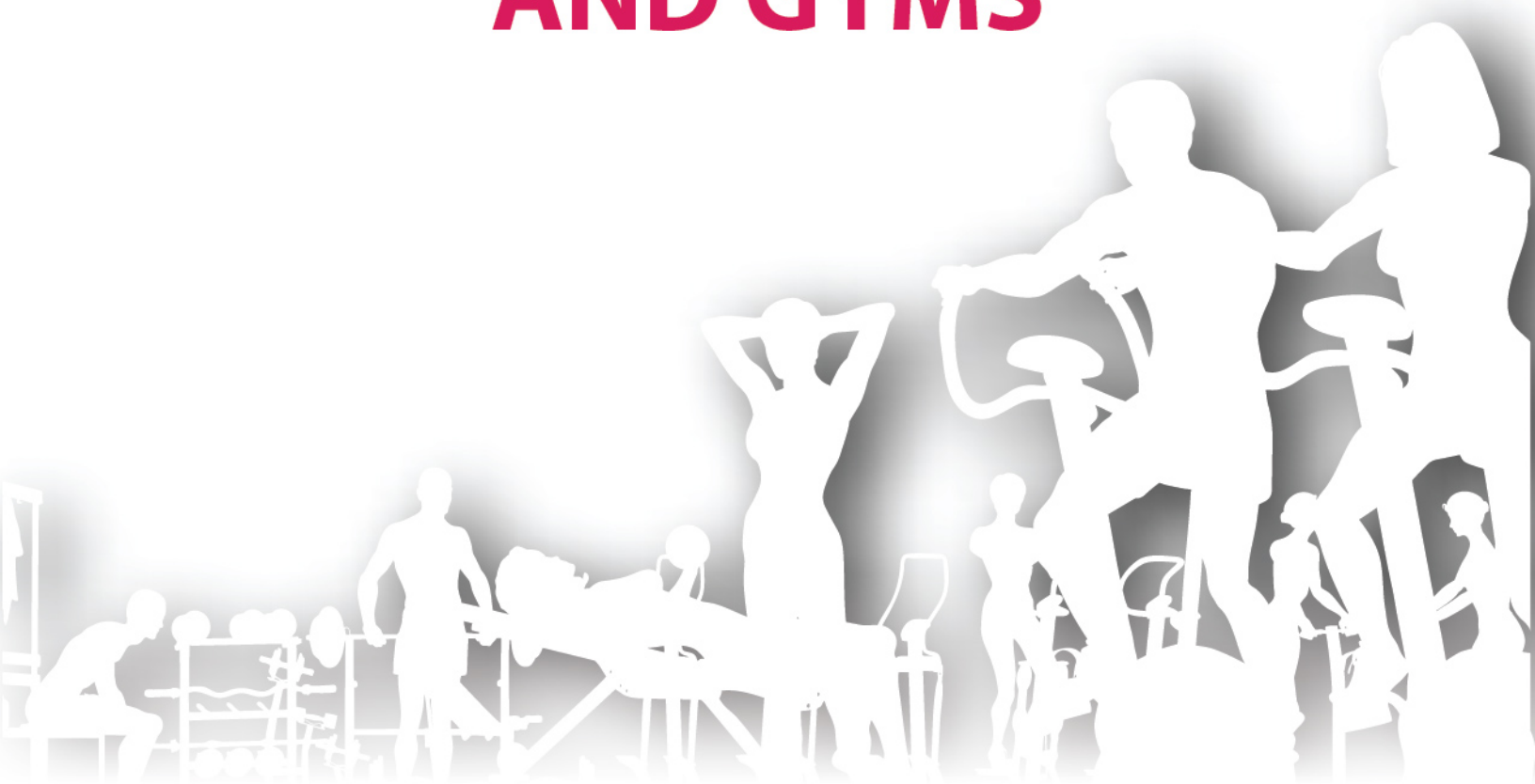
GOVERNMENT OF THE  
VIRGIN ISLANDS

COVID-19

Joint Information Cell • Health Emergency Operations Centre



# GUIDANCE FOR FITNESS FACILITIES AND GYMS



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Medical Hotline: 852-7650 (8:30a.m. - 4:30p.m.) | COVID-19 Information Call: 468-2274

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## GUIDANCE FOR FITNESS FACILITIES AND GYMS

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## I. Check-Ins

Gyms with touch-pads for self check-in should start to transition to touch-less technology and card swipes.

In the interim, customers should not be allowed to touch the key-pad while checking in. Front desk staff should check in and out all clients. The less hands that touch the device the better!

## II. Client Capacity

### *Weight Room*

- The **maximum** allotted number is **15 persons** at a time.

### *Aerobics & Yoga Rooms*

- Rooms utilised for aerobic classes (e.g. body pump, spin, dance-ercise, zumba) and yoga must have markings to enable social distancing (6 feet in circumference (all directions))
- Rooms must have adequate ventilation.

## III. Managing Capacity

### *Client Management*

All gyms should consider upgrading their system to allow the option of booking clients by slots. This allows you to stagger clientele and enable cleaning between time slots.

In the interim, a numbering system (1-15) must be used.

- Clients should be given a number made of plastic or any easily cleaned or disinfected material.
- During peak hours the owner must monitor client time to allow for rotation of clients. This may be done utilising a vibrating pager system or a multiple timer app.

### *Peak hours*

The following maximum time limit should be implemented by all gym owners for the cardio machines and weight room during peak hours.

- Cardio: 30 minutes
- Weight room: 1 hour

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#### Non-peak hours

Time-limits can be relaxed during non-peak hours, but **only** if the capacity has not been reached or the gym is relatively empty.

#### IV. Spatial Arrangements

Only 15 persons should be allowed in the gym at a time. Clients must wait outside the gym **in their vehicle** until persons have left and a space has opened. They must **not** gather or loiter outside the facility.

Every other machine in the cardio room must be spaced to create distancing.

Remove some benches and equipment from inside the weight room to create more space.

#### V. Ventilation

Ensure the facility has good air flow throughout - this could include ventilation systems and passive ventilation like adjustable windows, roller doors and fans.

#### VI. Customer responsibility

All customers must bring their own:

- Towel (No towel, no service). Towels should not be reused!
- Bottle of water (if the premises does not sell)
- Disinfectant wipes (*Please refer to the Environmental Health Department's list of approved disinfectants. Some examples include: Clorox, Lysol*).
- Face shield or cloth mask. *Persons who have a cardiovascular or respiratory disease such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder (COPD), bronchitis, cystic fibrosis, pulmonary fibrosis and any other conditions that affect the heart or lungs, please use the face shield instead.*
- Equipment: gloves, wrist straps, balls, weight belts, yoga mat.

No customer should be allowed entry to the premises without the first 4 things.

Also, no customer should be allowed further into the premises if they are showing or have reported having any signs or symptoms of illness.

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## VII. Administrative Controls

### *Employee Protection*

- Allow employees to work remotely (i.e. from home) as much as possible.
- Install plexi-glass at **all** service areas (e.g. reception area, shake bar) where client-employee interactions are most likely to occur.
  - Installation of the plexi-glass is to reduce contact (direct or indirect) with customers and prevent contracting the virus.
- All employees reporting to work **must be screened** for COVID-19 symptoms with the following questions:
  - Have you been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19?
  - Are you experiencing a cough, shortness of breath or sore throat?
  - Have you had a fever in the last 48 hours?
  - Have you had new loss of taste or smell?
  - Have you had vomiting or diarrhea in the last 24 hours?
- **Temperature screening employees:**
  - Employees should take and log temperature before shifts.
  - Best practice: employers to take temperatures onsite with a no-touch thermometer each day upon arrival at work.
  - Minimum: temperatures can be taken before arriving. Normal temperature should not exceed 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Staff should **wear face shields** or **face coverings** (preferably **cloth**, not N-95 or medical masks, which should be reserved for healthcare workers) and other personal protection items as recommended by the CDC and World Health Organization (WHO).
- **Provide training** on social distancing and proper use of personal protective equipment.
  - All employees should in essence be trained by compliance officers and enforce all social distancing and hygiene measures in the facility.
  - This training can be administered by the Ministry of Health; Public Health Division.
- **Provide a sanitising station** such as a wash basin with soap and/or bottle of hand sanitiser at key entry points of the facility. e.g. The entry & exit points.
- **Practice recommended social distancing** to the greatest extent possible.
- **Stagger shifts, breaks and meals** to maintain social distancing. Consider reduced staffing requirements where possible.

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- **Prohibit congregating in break rooms or common areas** and limit capacity of such areas to allow for safe social distancing minimum of 6 feet whenever possible.
  - Employees should **increase hygiene practices**—wash hands more frequently, avoid touching face, practice good respiratory etiquette when coughing or sneezing.
- All employees must stay home if feeling ill and report any symptoms of illness to supervisor.
  - All employees must not report to work if they reside in a household that has been quarantined or isolated.
  - Employees who are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 according to the CDC (e.g., due to age or pre-existing conditions) are encouraged to stay home.
- **Direct any employee who exhibits COVID-19 symptoms** (i.e., answers yes to any of the screening questions or who is running a fever) to leave the premises and immediately refer them to the Public Health Unit (468-2274) or the medical hotline (852-7650). Employers should maintain the confidentiality of employee health information.
- **Plan for potential COVID-19 cases**, and work with local health department officials when needed (e.g. monitor and trace COVID-19 cases, deep clean facilities).
- **Update the Employee Illness Policy** to include the symptoms of “COVID-19” or create a COVID-19 specific policy. All staff should sign the policy, and the policy should be posted for confirmation.
- **Post extensive signage on health policies**, including the following documents, in the workplace to help educate building occupants on COVID-19 best practices:

#### *Customer Protection*

- **Screen customers for illness** upon entry to the gym:
  - Best practice: Temperature checks for every customer. Persons with temperatures above 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit should not be permitted on premises.
  - Minimum: Question customers regarding COVID-19 symptoms.
    - ✓ Have you been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19?
    - ✓ Are you experiencing a cough, shortness of breath, or sore throat?
    - ✓ Have you had a fever in the last 48 hours?
- **Keep doors and windows open** where possible to improve ventilation.
- **Post signs encouraging social distancing.**
  - All signs must be visible to customers from a distance of 6 feet!
- **Require that customers wash or sanitise their hands** upon entering and leaving the facility.
  - Alcohol/Hand sanitiser and tissues should be provided for by the facility.

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- **Require customers to clean equipment** they come in contact with using disinfecting wipes before and after each use.
  - Disinfectant sprays and towels must be available throughout the gym and changed frequently throughout the day.
- Encourage customers to **use only one piece of equipment at a time** (i.e. no circuits or “super setting”) so that machines are cleaned after use and **it allows for appropriate contact time for the disinfectant to work.**
- **Consider limiting workout length** to avoid unnecessary exposure, decrease congestion, and allow for additional sanitisation.
- **Recommend that persons more vulnerable or at-risk** for COVID-19 (e.g those who are over the age of 65 or those who have chronic medical conditions)—take extra precaution or refrain from use of the facility during the first week of opening.
- **Discourage gathering and working out in groups (no partnered PT sessions allowed).**
  - Ask any groups inside of the fitness facility to separate.
- **Keep social distancing in mind:**
  - Every other machine in the cardio room must be spaced to create distancing.
  - Remove some benches and equipment from inside the weight room to create more space.
- **Do not issue gear or towels.**
  - No balls, weight belts, bands, should be issued. Everyone should walk with their own equipment.
  - Each person must come to the gym with their own towel. No towel no service!
- **Temporarily close all water fountains, common areas, break rooms, check-in counters, where customers or employees may congregate.**
  - Encourage users to provide their own water.
- **No self-service options** (coffee bars, smoothie stations and other forms of communal food in facilities).
  - Food retail should follow the established restaurant guidelines.

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## VIII. Cleaning and Disinfection of the Environment

### Overview

- Gyms must be thoroughly cleaned twice daily.
  - In the morning before the first crowd (regardless of whether you cleaned the night before) and after the last person has left the facility.

### Summary

- Disinfect using products that are registered and labeled as bactericidal, virucidal and fungicidal.
- Prior to opening each day, gyms must be thoroughly cleaned and sanitised to national mandates.
- Disinfect all surfaces, tools, and equipment, even if they were cleaned before the salon/shop was closed.
- Door pushes, knobs and windows must be wiped down frequently.
- Shared space chairs and surfaces must be wiped down frequently.
- The reception area must be free of magazines, toys, coffee machines and any other frequently-handled items.
- **Client responsibility**
  - All customers must thoroughly clean the surfaces of all equipment after use with an approved disinfectant wipe or cleaning materials provided by the facility.
  - Special focus should be on the handles of all equipment used.
- **Administrative/Staff responsibility**

### Reception area

- Remove all unnecessary items such as magazines, newspapers, service menus, any other unnecessary paper products and decor.
- Wipe reception desk with disinfectant.
- Employees should frequently wash their hands after the using the phones, computer, cash register and/or credit card machine. Wipe these surfaces between each use.
- Avoiding the exchange of cash can help greatly in preventing spread of virus, but if this is unavoidable, be sure to wash and sanitise hands well after each transaction.
- The use of credit/debit transactions is preferred, using touch/swipe/no signature technology.

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- Clean and disinfect all retail areas, daily, including products. Try to avoid client touching products that they don't plan to purchase.
- Clean and wipe all door handles and other surfaces that are regularly touched by clients and staff with disinfectant wipes.
- Provide hand sanitiser and tissues for employees and clients.
- Consider floor stickers and signage that provide guidance for social distance.
- Placement of visible and appropriate signage to communicate to the customer that thorough sanitisation procedures are in place.

#### *Restrooms*

- Clean and disinfect ALL restroom surfaces including floors, sinks, faucets and toilet bowls. Store paper products in a closed cabinet and provide liquid soap.
- Mount toilet paper and paper towel. Place lined trash can by the door. Remove anything that does not have to be in the restrooms.

#### *Training Rooms*

#### **Aerobic, Yoga and Weight Rooms**

All rooms should be swept and mopped twice daily. Mopping must be performed with the recommended concentration of disinfectant. Do **not** use more than the recommended.

Clean and wipe all door handles and other surfaces that are regularly touched by clients and staff with disinfectant wipes.

#### **Equipment**

Spray and wipe **all** gym equipment, like treadmills, seats, balls, yoga mats, belts, kettle-bells, bars, free weights.

There should be a special emphasis on cleaning all high touch surfaces, e.g. handles of free weights, cardio machines, hammers, kettle-bells and bars.

Equipment made of soft, absorbent/spongy material should be sprayed, wiped and placed in a well-ventilated area to dry.

Clean and wipe all door handles and other surfaces that are regularly touched by clients and staff with disinfectant wipes.

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