



# FITNESS STUDIOS AND GYMS CHECKLIST

## SAFE RETURN TO BUSINESS



WINDSOR-ESSEX REGIONAL  
Chamber of Commerce

For more detailed recommendations and links to additional helpful resources, please review the **“Safe Return to Business: A Public Health Toolkit for the Windsor-Essex Business Community”** document from the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit. *This checklist is meant to be a guide for businesses and should not take place of any legal advice or rules put in place by any governing body or legislation.*

*\*\*This document is subject to change and is current as of August 12, 2020 (Stage 3)*

### COMMUNICATION TO STAFF AND CUSTOMERS

- Inform customers about your re-opening timeline and changes to how your business will operate. Use as many methods of communication as possible, such as subscribed email lists, direct customer phone calls for urgent matters, social media, and your website.
- Post signage at entrances and throughout the building that clearly communicate procedures for physical distancing between staff and customers. This includes posters and floor markings such as instructional tape/stickers that direct the flow of people or customers waiting for services, including any outdoor waiting areas. Examples of signage can be found in Appendix B in the [Toolkit](#) or at [wechu.org/cv/resources-downloadable-signs](http://wechu.org/cv/resources-downloadable-signs).
- Post signage to communicate entry procedures such as [hand sanitizing, sneeze and cough etiquette](#), wearing of cloth masks, and/or screening for symptoms.
- Ensure employees are aware of common [COVID-19 symptoms](#) and instruct them to complete a daily [COVID-19 self-assessment](#) before reporting to work.
- Ensure customers and staff know to stay home if they are sick.
- Provide training to employees on effective [hand hygiene practices](#) and if required, the [proper way to put on and remove PPE](#) such as masks, face shields, gowns, and gloves.

### POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- Create policies and procedures that outline roles and responsibilities of the employer and the employee, including [cleaning and disinfection of the workplace](#), how workers can report signs of illnesses, how to handle potentially high levels of employee absenteeism, staff return to work after COVID-19 illness, and how work will be scheduled.

- Create a response plan to handle an employee or client who becomes ill while at work or in your business.
- Decide which staff will be returning to work and what job function they will be assigned to. Consider staggered staff return dates and times to minimize large groups arriving at once.

### HEALTH AND SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

- Order an adequate supply of approved disinfecting solution or wipes, and an alcohol-based hand rub (hand sanitizer) with a minimum of 60% alcohol content, liquid hand soap, and paper towels. These should be easily accessible to employees and clients.
- Print and display posters describing proper methods of hand washing and hand sanitizing.
- If a building has been shut down for an extended period of time, it is important to perform a general building inspection that includes:
  - Security system checks.
  - First aid supply checks.
  - Ensuring all tools and equipment are in good working order.
  - Discarding any expired or spoiled inventory.
  - Checking for evidence of pest/rodent infestation such as droppings.
  - Checking the HVAC system to ensure it is in good working order and replace filters if necessary.
  - Flushing all drinking water taps for at least 5 minutes.
  - Performing a deep cleaning and disinfection throughout the business.
- Complete any needed modifications in areas where there will be staff and/or clients, to assist with physical distancing and proper cleaning and disinfection. For example:
  - Install Plexiglas barriers at check-outs and/or between workers who must work in close proximity to each other.
  - Replacing fabric/plush furniture with hard surfaces that can be easily cleaned and disinfected.
  - Providing additional garbage bins for safe disposal of used PPE, tissues, and paper towels.
- Choose your information sources wisely. Check the [WECHU website](#) regularly for updates and helpful resources and bookmark official municipal, provincial and federal government websites.
- If required, order [supplies](#) including disposable masks for clients and disposable or reusable masks for staff. Medical masks should not be used as these are being conserved for health care workers. Print and display posters describing [proper usage](#).

## OTHER REQUIREMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Notify the health unit for a [pre-opening inspection of any pools, spas or whirlpools](#) that you have on site as per Ontario Reg. 565: Public Pools.
- Limit the number of people in the facility at one time to comply with physical distancing requirements. The total number of people permitted in areas containing weights or exercise machines must not exceed the maximum indoor gathering limit of 50 people.
- Up to 50 additional people may attend an indoor fitness class if it takes place in a separate room/area and physical distancing can be maintained between all patrons. It is strongly recommended that there be assigned spaces for organized fitness classes and floor markings to indicate where each person should exercise. Consider greater distance requirements for high-intensity classes which may result in greater dispersion of respiratory droplets. Develop a procedure for how will this be monitored, enforced, and communicated.
- Consider using a booking system for classes and booking workout sessions. Request that clients arrive no earlier than five minutes before their scheduled class or session to avoid crowding. Consider keeping a record of their contact information, as well as their check-in and checkout time to facilitate contact tracing in the event of an outbreak.
- Employees and staff do not count towards the gathering limits.
- Avoid the use of high-powered fans that may result in a greater dispersion of droplets.
- Discourage activities that require close contact between people (e.g., needing “spotters” or activities that require a partner). If partners are required, ensure that they are from the same household or social circle. Coaching/instructional sessions should be conducted in a manner that minimizes close contact.
  - Wrestling or martial arts activities that require close contact (i.e. grappling, sparring) are permitted only between members from the same household or social circle. General classes may resume with physical distancing maintained between all others.
- Establish policies and procedure on how physical distancing will be ensured in all fitness areas (e.g., cardio machines, free weight area, locker rooms, or pool and spa areas). Consider turning off or moving some machines to support physical distancing.
- Post signs to inform customers of the maximum occupancy for areas or rooms (e.g., locker rooms, showers, washrooms) in your facility. When determining occupancy levels, the number of people permitted in a space at any one time should be limited to the number of people that can safely maintain physical distancing of at least two metres. This maximum occupancy for indoor gatherings must be limited to 50 people or 100 people for outdoor gatherings.
- Saunas and steam rooms must continue to remain closed until further notice.
- Limit drinking directly from the water fountain and instead encourage the filling of water bottles only. Ensure that the water fountain is cleaned after each use.
- Provide hand sanitizer and low-level disinfectant sprays or wipes for guests throughout the facility.

- [Clean and disinfect](#) common use areas such as restrooms and showers, group exercise studios, and high touch surfaces more frequently. Equipment must also be cleaned and disinfected between user sets.
- Identify hard-to-clean items (e.g., stretch bands, yoga blocks, foam rollers, foam mats) and decide if access to them should be restricted. If possible, ask people to bring their own.
- Post signage directing members to clean their equipment and space before and after use and [sanitize hands often](#) during their workout. Be sure to provide plenty of cleaner, disinfectant, and paper towel near work out equipment.
- Gyms and fitness studios are exempt from the mandatory face covering [class order](#) issued by the Medical Officer of Health, however, employees and fitness members are encouraged to use face coverings when not engaging in exercise or other physical activity that would otherwise make wearing a mask difficult.

## RESOURCES

**Government of Ontario**

**[Ontario Regulation 364/20 made under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act: Rules For Areas in Stage 3](#)**