

**Framework for exercise facilities in  
New Zealand operating within a  
COVID-19 ENVIRONMENT  
under the Traffic Light system. 2021-2022**



**Version 3.3  
Updated 23 June 2022**

**Includes updates on the  
requirement of masks.**

*“There is no situation, no age, no condition  
where exercise is not a good thing.”*  
- Chris Witty, England’s chief medical officer

## **1. Introduction**

**This framework is in response to the Governments COVID-19 Protection Framework, otherwise known as the Traffic Light System. The intent of this framework is to provide more detail to the Government’s guidance as well as covers common examples that are more relevant to our industry.**

**General advice on COVID-19 should still be followed which is available on the Government’s COVID-19 website. A reminder, as with all COVID-19 advice, it will change over time, and this framework will continue to be updated.**

**Please see the back page for a list of the latest updates.**

---

Produced by ExerciseNZ/REPs/YogaNZ

© Exercise Association of New Zealand, 2022



# Contents

1. Introduction
2. Background on ExerciseNZ, REPs and YogaNZ
3. Background on COVID-19
4. Objectives
5. General Guidance
6. Use of My Vaccine Passes (MVPs)
7. Guidance for Exercise Providers
8. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
9. Framework Updates

*This is a working document, and will continue to evolve as the government provides more guidance on how the system will work.*

## 2 BACKGROUND ON EXERCISENZ, REPS AND YOGANZ



**ExerciseNZ:** The Exercise Association of New Zealand Incorporated (ExerciseNZ) is a non-profit membership based body that represents some 550+ exercise facilities (gyms, recreation facilities, yoga studios, etc) as well as managing the registration of 3,500+ exercise professionals. **Our collective membership represents over 75% of both exercise providers and exercise professionals in New Zealand.**

**REPs:** The New Zealand Register of Exercise Professionals (REPs) is the quality mark for the exercise industry. It operates the registration body for exercise professionals and facilities in New Zealand.

**YogaNZ:** Yoga New Zealand supports the yoga community in New Zealand - teachers, yoga therapists, studios and those provider teaching training.

Collectively YogaNZ and REPs are part of the ExerciseNZ whanau, who provides the admin back office support to both YogaNZ and REPs.

**The sector: 790,000 [Horizon survey] kiwis are members of an exercise facility in New Zealand,** with a further casual use of as many as 360,000 [conservative based on Qualtrix]. Over 30% of all adults in New Zealand use our sectors services. While not a 'sport', if it was, in New Zealand 'Exercise' is bigger than Rugby, Cricket and Netball combined in terms of participation numbers.

**Benefits of exercise:** While not specifically outlined in this document, it should be noted here that regular exercise is one of the most beneficial activities an individual can undertake to improve their health. Normally the list of the benefits of exercise is wide and varied - everything from being protective against stroke, heart disease and many other chronic diseases and conditions, all the way through to its role in weight management and diabetes control. However, right now the focus is around mental health, and its proven benefits for 'mental robustness', which is protective against both depression and anxiety – two looming issues in a COVID-19 environment. It is so widely accepted as beneficial, that it was one of the few activities encouraged during level 4 lock-down.

**This framework:** This document provides solutions and recommendations for the unique environments of an exercise setting, operating within a COVID-19 environment.

This document was first produced in November 2021, and while the background and framework were developed then, the contents continues to be updated regularly to reflect the latest research advice and Government rules.

We are recommending that all exercise providers in New Zealand follow the recommendations in this document.

### 3

## BACKGROUND ON COVID-19

This introduction page was written in April 2020 and updated in January 2022.

The COVID-19 pandemic disease is caused by the SARS CoV-2 virus. It is a devastating virus because while in New Zealand it only kills about 1-2% of those it infects, it infects a lot of people. The original strain was three times as infectious as the seasonal flu.

The risk of serious disease or death increases significantly with age and other health conditions like respiratory, cardiac, diabetic disease or high BMI's. Mortality rates can approach 20% for these at risk groups. While rare, it can also severely affect even young, healthy people including children.

80% of people will have mild or no symptoms. 15% will be moderate and may need hospitalisation. 5-6% will have severe symptoms, with some needing to be on a mechanical ventilator.

The problem that the human immune system has defending it is that it is a novel virus. It is new to humans, so we have no immunity from prior infection to it. This is what makes it so unpredictable.

SARS-2 virus can last on surfaces like glass, plastic and cardboard for up to two or three days but it is unlikely that virus on those surfaces would be infectious after much more than 48 hours as viral numbers drop to low levels by then.

There are two main routes of infection:

1. Respiratory (inhaled virus through the air).
2. Contact an infected surface with your hand and then touch your mouth, nose or eyes.

It is possible from 'sneeze studies' that some virus could be exhaled in small, light 'aerosol' type particles and remain airborne beyond 2 meters.

The usual medical rule for transfer is that individuals need to have to be in close range for more than 10 minutes to pick up virus through inhaled air (unless someone is spraying saliva as they talk, or are sneezing).

Some of the best ways to keep your immune system working well are getting enough sleep, staying physically active, and maintaining a healthy diet.

### **The Delta and Omicron Variants:**

The emergence of the more contagious Delta variant in New Zealand in August 2021, and Omicron in 2022, together with vaccination being widely available has changed the way the government is dealing with COVID-19. The new traffic light system focuses on ensuring activities that have high degree of close contacts are encouraged to use compulsory vaccination certificates, as well as allowing for much more freedoms for those that use them. Over time the restrictions for those that test positive for COVID-19 may also change as it becomes more endemic in New Zealand.

## 4 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this framework are:

1. To develop a framework that provides a safe environment for New Zealanders to return to exercise facilities in New Zealand that meets both New Zealand Government's requirements, but also considers international best practice.
2. Provide guidance to those operating exercise facilities in New Zealand.
3. To provide 'Trust and Confidence' to both the Government, and the New Zealand public, that the exercise industry provides takes COVID-19 safety seriously, and is taking all practicable steps to ensure this.
4. To provide guidance for exercise providers to use at Green, Orange and Red.
5. To provide options and information for those using My Vaccine Passes (MVPs) as well as those that choose not to.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Note: No longer mandatory from 4 April 2022



## **5 GENERAL GUIDANCE**

Many of the key principles of COVID-19 remain the same under the new traffic light system, namely:

1. Anyone who is sick, stay home (staff/contractors as well as members).
2. Anyone with cold/flu like symptoms should get a COVID-19 test.
3. Isolate for 7 days if you are COVID-19 positive or a household contact.

### **Definition of a gym**

The current traffic light system uses the term 'gym' as a placeholder name for a whole range of exercise venues. We have been advised that this will cover the vast majority of indoor exercise providers including gyms, studios (PTs, Yoga, Dance) and most settings where the public enters and gathers together to exercise indoors. It includes studios even if very small and only offering 1:1 services.

Non exercise spaces such as school halls hired exclusively for the use of exercise are not regarded as a gym. For more details see page 9.

This document also outlines guidance for outdoor activities and private homes.

### **Definition of a worker**

From a COVID-19 traffic light perspective, 'worker' covers all staff & contractors regardless of how/who engages/pays them. This means in a gym/exercise setting, gym staff, PTs, group ex instructors, yoga teachers, cleaners, and any person who is working from/out of the facility is covered. When reading this document the terms 'staff', 'worker' and 'contractor' can be used interchangeably, as they are all covered by the same MVP rules.

### **COVID-19 rules continue to change**

This document has been developed at a time where there are still many changes ahead for the COVID-19 rules. We will continue to update the framework as the Government announces its new guidance/rules.

### **Protocol if workers or members test positive for COVID-19**

Any person testing positive for COVID-19 together with all of their household contacts are required to self-isolate for 7 days. Only household contacts and those with COVID-19 are required to self isolate.

The latest guidance from MOH on isolation periods and testing protocols can be found here at the link below:

For household contacts - [www.exercise.org.nz/householdcontact](http://www.exercise.org.nz/householdcontact)

### **Interpreting 1 metre & 200 capacity limit and a 'defined space'**

There are various times when the term 'defined space' is used in the context of capacity limits. Gyms and exercise venues can potentially have multiple 'defined spaces' subject to the rules below.

1. A defined space is an indoor area that has no direct airflow to another indoor area that is being used; or an outdoor area that is separated from other outdoor areas by 2 metres. Separate spaces must be managed so that, so far as is reasonably practicable, groups do not mix entering, leaving, or using the premises.
2. Whenever the 1 metre rule applies to indoor spaces, then the 1 metre should be used to work out capacity i.e. how many customers can fit into the space with 1 metre distancing. This creates a hard upper limit for the space, or 200, whichever is the lower number. This does not mean that customers must stay 1 metre at all times. This includes all attendees, and does not include workers.
3. For outdoor activities there are no capacity limits.

### **Fines**

Fines for breaches of rules related to COVID-19 have recently been increased. They are now up to \$15,000 for a business, and \$4,000 for an individual. Fines apply to a large range of activities, including as allowing non vaccinated individuals (staff/contractors or customers) into a space where MVPs are required/not sighting/verifying a persons COVID pass.

### **Signage**

Businesses must display posters advertising if they require people entering to have a My Vaccine Pass.



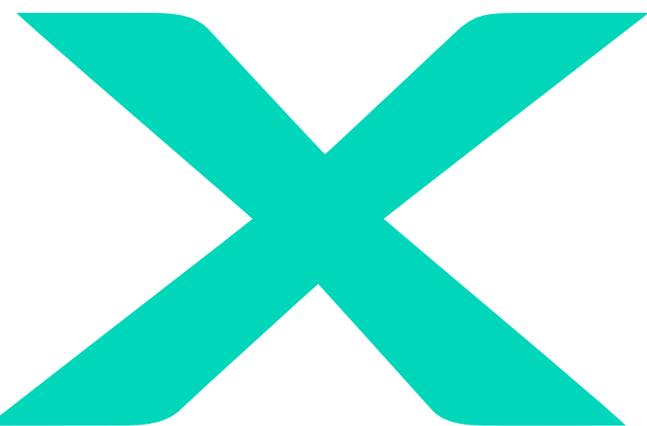
## Clarification of Mask Policy at Orange

Masks are not compulsory for workers or customers. Masks are not required at all while exercising.

**Important:** Workplaces you are able to implement their own Covid-19 policies, including masks, that are in addition to the government's rules, some exercise workplaces may still ask staff to wear masks in some cases.

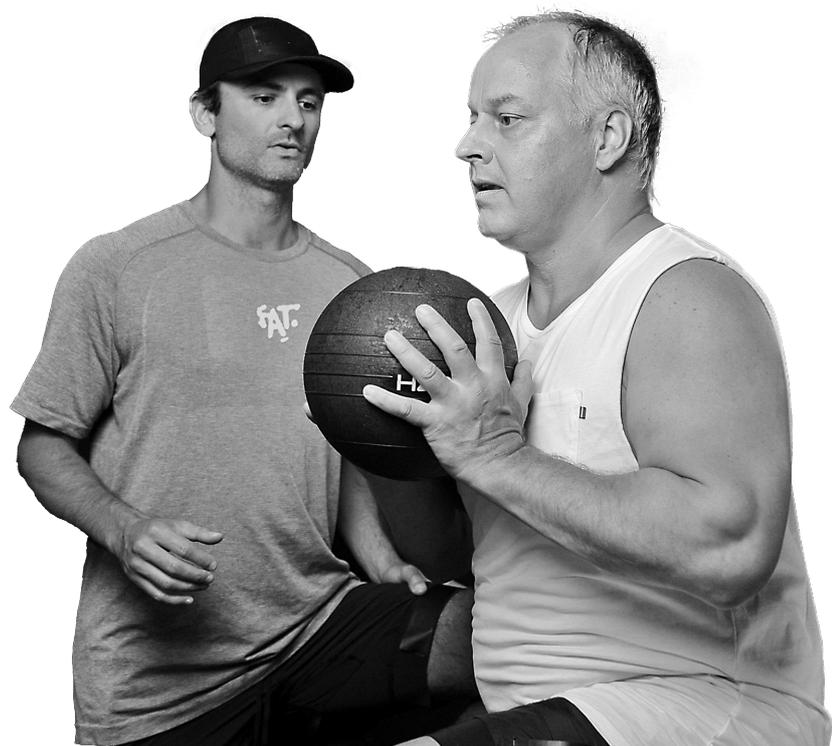
## Hiring Spaces from non exercise facilities

When exercise classes or activities take part in a space that is not an exercise venue, but hired for exclusive use for exercise (eg school hall) then the rules for 'Gatherings' apply.



## 6 USE OF MY VACCINE PASSES (MVPS)

From Monday 4 April 2022 (11:59pm) the government has said MVPS are no longer required for workers or customers of exercise businesses, however a business may continue to require them if they wish.



## 7 GUIDANCE FOR EXERCISE PROVIDERS

Below is a table that outlines the common scenarios for exercise venues

Item	Green	Orange	Red
Can the venue open?	Yes, no restrictions.	Yes, no restrictions.	Yes. Capacity 1 metre distancing/200 max. per defined space. <sup>1</sup>
Mask Requirements	Not Mandatory	Recommended for members and staff but not required by government.  Not required at all while exercising.  Gyms may set their own policies.	Recommended for members. Compulsory for staff unless exercising
Saunas	Can open	Can open	Can open
Training outdoors	No limits	No limits	No limits
Water Coolers	Can be used	Can be used	Can be used
Contact Activities (eg pad work/boxing, client/trainer contact)	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed
Non vaccinated staff	Permitted <sup>2</sup>	Permitted <sup>2</sup>	Permitted <sup>2</sup>
Can trainers train non vaccinated individuals in clients homes?	Yes <sup>2</sup>	Yes <sup>2</sup>	Yes <sup>2</sup>
Group Exercise in gym/exercise venues	No restrictions	No restrictions	Yes. Capacity 1 metre distancing/200 max. per defined space.*

<sup>1</sup> 200 limit applies from 11.59pm 25 March 2022 (limit is 100 until then).

<sup>2</sup> Applies from 11:59pm 4 April 2022 (until then these are not permitted)

## 8

## FAQS FOR ORANGE AND RED

The following is a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) we have received about the Orange and Red levels.

**Q: Can we do contact/pad work?**

A: Yes.

**Q: What about Tai Chi/Other Martial Arts, Yoga, Pilates & Dance Classes?**

A: All indoor exercise/dance/martial arts are covered by the rules outlined in this document.

**Q: I offer free sessions – do the rules still apply?**

A: Yes.

**Q: Do I have to keep 1 metre from my clients at red?**

A: No. Pad work and other contact activities are permitted . The 1m only applies to working out capacity.

**Q: Masks – can you explain the rules again?**

A: Masks are compulsory for workers engaging with customers, and recommended for the public/customers when they are not exercising. Workers are also not required to wear a mask when exercising.

**Q: My gym is saying I have to wear a mask (or some other rule), where this document says I don't – who is right?**

A: This document is the minimum based on the law. The gym (or place that rents you space) can set any additional rules on top of this that it sees necessary/beneficial – so if your gym says wear a mask, wear one.

**Q: Do capacity limits include workers?**

A: No, workers are excluded from any capacity calculations.

**Q: Do capacity limits include children?**

A: Yes, children count towards any capacity limits (regardless of age).

**Q: Do I still need to clean equipment?**

A: Yes, cleaning should still take place.



## Framework Updates

**October 2021** - Work on this framework started

**18.11.2021** - Draft release

**18.11.2021** - Updated with information on shared areas/sub-tenants

**19.11.2021** - Public version released

**19.11.2021** - Updated terminology, rules for outdoors, capacity limits and under 12s

**22.11.2021** - Clarification with the 100 person limit added

**23.11.2021** - Update guidelines of emailing vaccine passes and rules for 1:1 sessions in homes

**24.11.2021** - Fines section added and clarification around single shot vaccinations.

**25.11.2021** - Overseas Vaccination information added

**26.11.2021** - Added clarification on worker/staff/contractors

**26.11.2021** - **Major Update:** Added MVP Signage requirement, Defined 'defined space', Updated max numbers for training unvaccinated outdoors, MVP pass scanning - now 'strongly advised'.

**26.11.2021** - Clarified rules for Database integration

**26.11.2021** - Shared Space information updated

**29.11.2021** - Reformatted section on 'defined spaces' and number limits

**01.12.2021** - FAQ section added

**02.12.2021** - Extra FAQs added

**07.12.2021** - Extra FAQs added. Information about shared business space added.

**08.12.2021** - Unvaccinated staff update.

**13.12.2021** - Update on shared spaces.

**15.12.2021** - Additional MOH information added.

**26.01.2022** - PPE section added to reflect new government laws taking affect 03/02/2022.

**01.02.2022** - Updated language to align with SportNZ. Information on non exercise venues added.

**08.03.2022** - Update to mask rules for customers, rules around close contact change.

**23.03.2022** - **Major Update** - Isolation info, MVP rules, QR codes, increased capacity, Updated Q&A, two guidance tables merged to one.

**6.04.2022** - Information on MVPs Updated

**23.06.2022** - Update to mask policies

This framework document has been provided without charge to the exercise industry of New Zealand.

**Paid members of Exercise New Zealand can contact us for support regarding understanding this document and/or implementation questions.**

We also extend our support to individuals who are registered with REPs and/or members of Yoga New Zealand who have questions regarding their individual practice/business.

For Information on joining Exercise New Zealand, REPs and YogaNZ, please visit

[www.exercisenz.org.nz](http://www.exercisenz.org.nz)

[www.reps.org.nz](http://www.reps.org.nz)

[www.yoganewzealand.org.nz](http://www.yoganewzealand.org.nz)

NOTE: We are a non profit membership based organisation and do not receive any regular government funding therefore rely on membership support to exist.