

Framework for exercise facilities in New Zealand operating within a **COVID-19 ENVIRONMENT**



Updated 2 November 2021. Version 5.42

Includes changes to check for applicability for Delta variant, updated on new QR code rules, distancing and masks. Updated adding information on transitional move through Level 3 for Auckland and Waikato (page 23).

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

This document is designed to provide a framework for managing risks associated with Covid-19 within exercise facilities and exercise providers in New Zealand. It provides recommendations to exercise providers that are evidence based, and follows a risk-minimisation model. Finally, it also provides a series of protocols should community transmission risk rise and additional controls needed to be considered to keep exercise facilities open.



Produced by ExerciseNZ/REPs/YogaNZ

Kris Vette (Clinical Protocol Designer) has assisted in researching scientific literature, and establishing appropriate evidence based interventions.

© Exercise Association of New Zealand, 2021



Contents

1. Executive Summary
2. Background on Covid-19
3. Objectives
4. Model
5. Assumptions
6. Modified Hierarchy of Controls
7. Risk Mitigation for level 2
8. Additional Protocols for consideration
9. Level Guidance
10. References
11. Framework Updates

This is a working document, and will continue to evolve to ensure the recommendations meet the latest research related to Covid-19 protocols and safe interventions. We are presently compiling the list of academic reports, research findings and other evidence that was used to support this document, and it will be added as an appendix, which will continue to be updated.



I EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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.**

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 evidence based solutions and recommendations to the unique environments of an exercise setting, operating within a Covid-19 environment. The recommendations are evidence based. Protocols are underpinned by the latest scientific and academic literature. Our primary recommendations were designed by Kris Vette, Clinical Programme Designer. Kris has substantial experience in this field having been involved in managing H1N1 in New Zealand, and Swine Flu for the NHS in the UK.

This document was first produced in April 2020, 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

This document identifies the unique and/or increased risks related to Covid-19 within an exercise setting, and provides stringent and specific protocols to manage these. Our recommended protocols and practices meet all Government general principles and guidelines to operate at level 2, while also considering the unique environment and challenges of an exercise setting. Specifically, this framework contains recommendations that exceed many government level 2 guidelines, as those guidelines are designed for the general case, and this framework is specifically for use within exercise settings.

We recommend that masks are worn by Personal Trainers, Gym Floor staff and Admin staff in all circumstances when serving customers and must maintain at least 2 metre from customers and other staff. Staff who are physically exercising (eg Group Exercise) are not required to wear a mask but must maintain 2 metres physical distancing.

We are recommending that all exercise providers in New Zealand follow these protocols.

2

BACKGROUND ON COVID-19

This introduction page was written in April 2020.

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. It is nearly 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.

Note: This document more generally, incorporates many of the design elements and concepts included in the Document ***Public Health Principles for a Phased Reopening During Covid-19: Guidance for Governors*** developed by the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

3 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 standards, 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 for this.
4. To provide protocols for exercise providers to use at Level 2 and Level 1, as well as a reminder of the very limited permitted activities at Level 3.



4

MODEL

This framework underpinning the approach outlined in this document uses a quantifiable methodology, underpinned by the following metrics:

Exposure Risk = contact intensity X #contacts

Risk → intervention/control → minimise residual risk

The model is designed to firstly identify the potential Covid-19 risks and then establish appropriate controls to minimise the residual risk by either reducing the contact intensity, or the number of contacts with others, or both. All of the interventions outlined in this document are measured against this risk model.

Notes:

- the risk profile above is the **exposure risk**, not the **individual risk**. Some individuals, such as older persons or those with existing health risks (heart disease, diabetes, asthma), have more adverse outcomes should they contract SARS CoV-2, and hence a greater **individual risk**. This is best managed by the individual, with information and guidance provided by the exercise facility to ensure they are informed prior to making any decisions.
- at an individual level, regular exercise and sufficient sleep are two of the most accessible tools to reducing an **individual's risk**.



5 ASSUMPTIONS

When developing the procedure/practices, the following assumptions are made:

- this document follows the assumptions outlined by the New Zealand Government at each level, e.g. at Level 2 the assumption is: “The disease is contained, but the risk of community transmission remains”.
- the mandatory rules and other recommendations outlined in this document are based on best information as of the date of this document. It will change over time, potentially rapidly.

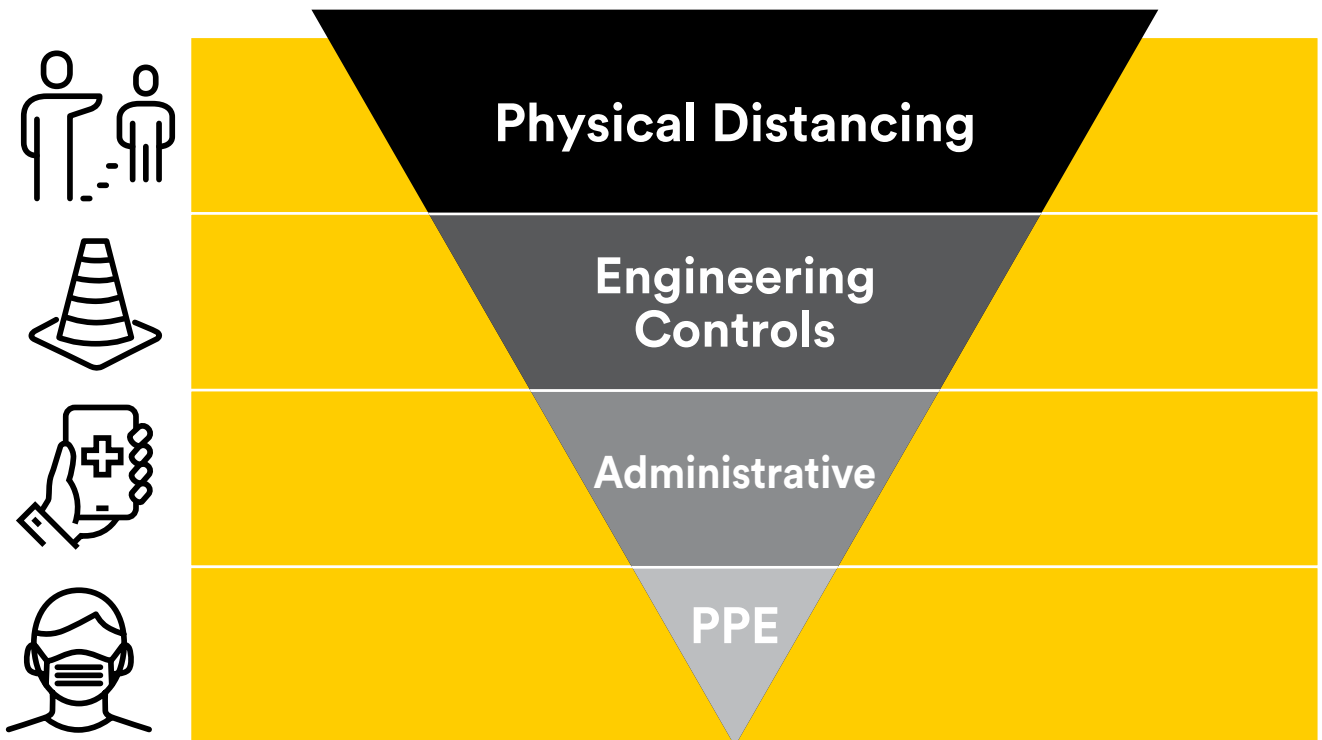


6

MODIFIED HIERARCHY OF CONTROLS

Using the modified hierarchy of controls, Covid-19 mitigation measures can include:

- Physical Distancing — wherever possible reducing physical contact between persons.
- Engineering controls — creating physical barriers between people.
- Administrative controls — redistributing responsibilities to reduce contact between individuals, using technology to facilitate communication.
- PPE & Cleaning — providing PPE, and having robust cleaning protocols that are well communicated.



7 RISK MITIGATION FOR LEVEL 2

All businesses operating at Level 2 need to follow all New Zealand government guidelines, while also considering the unique risks associated with their business activities. Specifically in an exercise environment consideration needs to be given to the following:

- many activities involve individuals exercising together from across multiple bubbles.
- increased respiration rates during many activities, with potential increased risk of spreading virus particles.
- proximity to others (both staff and other customers) for prolonged duration – in some cases up to an hour for class based activities and/or personal training sessions.
- shared equipment is common.
- outdoor spaces.

The mitigation strategies outlined in this framework take into account these additional risks.

Every exercise business operating at Level 2 requires a written Covid-19 site plan that specifically identifies the various Covid-19 risks, and how each will be managed.

While the recommendations in this document are not mandatory, any business that does not follow any of them should have additional documentation to outline why a recommendation was not followed, and how the additional risks created are controlled. The Covid-19 plan, together with any additional documentation showing variances from recommendations in this document, should be able to be provided to WorkSafe New Zealand on demand.

In addition to reviewing this framework and establishing appropriate controls, staff must be engaged as a part of any development. Additionally, they must be advised on what is required from them, and trained in this as needed. Full details of this can be found on the WorkSafe New Zealand web site.

Important: This framework specifies controls for Covid-19 related risks within the exercise environment. Where this framework goes above/beyond the general guidelines from the New Zealand government, this is due to the unique and/or additional risks from an exercise setting, some of which have been outlined at the top of this page. All recommendations are evidence based.

The following risk mitigation strategies are recommended (see pages 11-16):

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/membership

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

a) Physical distancing

The correct way to work out capacity within an exercise facility/space is based on safe physical distancing (i.e. how many can be within the space while maintaining the appropriate physical distance). The rules limiting numbers to social gatherings does not apply to gym/yoga/dance settings except for outdoor activities, where a limit does apply. In some smaller studios/spaces the resultant capacity could be less than 10, but in other larger spaces, the capacity could be much more than 100.

We have confirmed this with both WorkSafe and SportNZ, and they both agree that our interpretation is correct.

When calculating capacity for a space, regard should be taken to how much actual space is available for the activity being considered (not the total floor area) as well as how individuals interact (i.e. do they move around the space) and/or if any transit areas are needed. In some cases the limits to a space will need to be managed directly by staff (e.g. small changing areas), a booking system (e.g. studios or classes with small limits) or other tools to manage capacity.

Where a space is shared by others (e.g. a school or community hall) gaps between activities will be very important to ensure no mixing between participants of different activity providers. Each activity will need to calculate its own safe capacity number based on the above principles, and have a documented site plan included in their Covid-19 safety plan. As long as the activities are exercise based, and provided by a business (i.e. not a social gathering) then limits such as 10 for gatherings and 50 for venues do not apply.

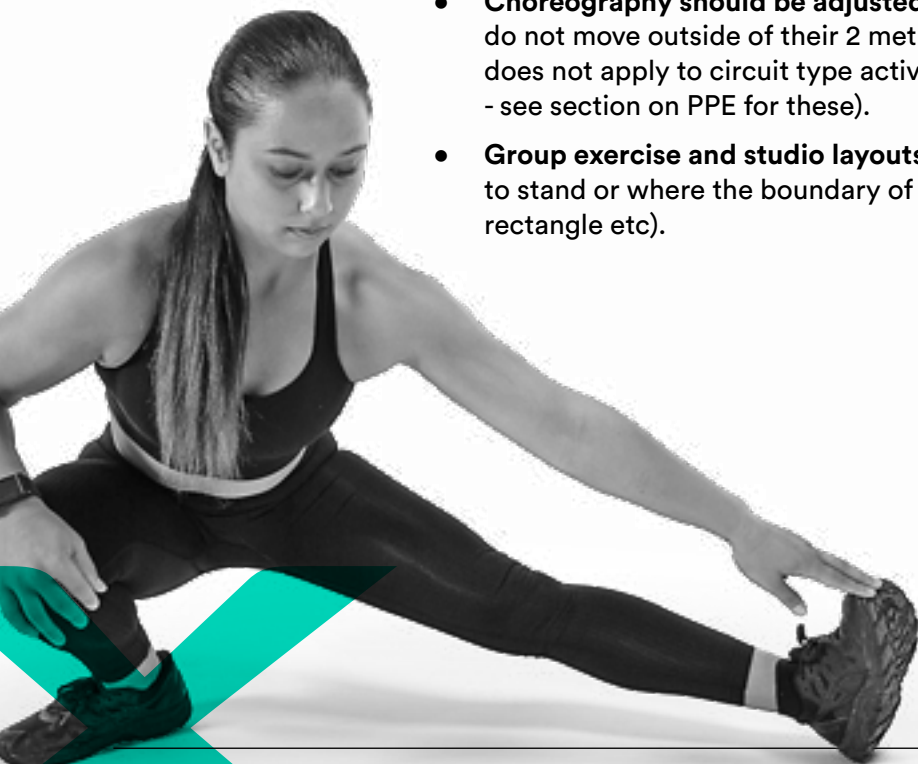
The government guidelines require a 2 metre distance in exercise facilities in the vast majority of cases. Customers must maintain 2 metres from each other at all times, with commonsense being applied to momentary movement past others. Staff must maintain 1 metre from each other at all times.

- **Group activities including Group Exercise, Yoga, equipment based exercise classes**

- For group based activities the required distancing is 2 metres. This is due to the prolonged contact time as well as increased respiration rates of many activities. When queuing inside before classes, 2 metre distancing is still required.

In addition consider:

- **Choreography should be adjusted** in group activities to ensure individuals do not move outside of their 2 metre radius from their starting location (note: does not apply to circuit type activities with shared equipment based activities - see section on PPE for these).
- **Group exercise and studio layouts:** Mark space on the floor for either where to stand or where the boundary of movement should be (e.g. a square/rectangle etc).



Childcare

Where childcare being offered is part of a licensed Creche/early childhood centre, then follow Ministry of Education Guidelines.

Basic info on childcare can be found here:

<https://covid19.govt.nz/activities/education/#education-at-alert-level-2>

Children should never be allowed to roam freely in gym exercise spaces at any Covid-19 level (basic health & safety issue), so a dedicated space is the likely model most facilities will be using for any children in their gym. In many cases it may be easier to keep childcare closed during level 2, as keeping children distanced, especially in small spaces is very challenging. If open, any childcare should still follow all other rules of distancing and masks (except those under 12) when not exercising.

Mums and bubs classes

Where parents and their children can be kept together (e.g. babies in prams) then they can stay inside a bubble together, with 2 metre distancing from other participants and staff then this type of activity/classes could be indoor or outdoors as long as the 2 metre distancing between bubbles was maintained. Mask can be off for anyone while exercising (including staff), and children under the age of 12 are not legally required to wear a mask anytime (but still encouraged to do so if possible).

- **Gym floor layout** ↓ intensity ↓ #contacts
 - **The default required physical distancing of equipment is 2m, with the following notes:** ↓ intensity ↓ #contacts
 - Breathing direction should be considered. Consider individuals on different equipment to be facing away from each other (i.e. backs to each other) for the entire duration of the activity.
 - **Consider transition areas** that individuals either congregate at, and/or walk through.
 - **Relocate or re-position** equipment so that physical distancing is maintained.

- **Managing Bottlenecks** ↓↓ # contacts
 - **Have appropriate gaps** (minimum 15 minutes) of time between group activities in the same space to avoid queuing in common areas (avoid any people in the room when people arrive / avoid waiting outside when people leave).
 - **Entrance spaces** – consider guiding direction of traffic flow through barriers and/or mark on floor.
 - **Any doors that require regular entry/exit** that do not allow for correct physical distancing have clear rules to reduce interaction. ↓ #contacts
 - When customers are queuing outside ensure 2 metre physical distancing. ↓ #contacts

- Consider auto **opening doors** or **installing kick plates** on doors to enable for hand-free egress where possible. ↓ intensity

- **Consider separate entrance and exits** if possible (to the facility and/or exercise spaces).

Other Physical Distancing scenarios

- Personal training sessions: Physical distancing of 2 metres should be maintained and masks are recommended for the personal trainer. Where trainers/clients are in close proximity (e.g. to help a client with technique) time should be kept to a minimum and trainers should consider standing so that their breathing direction is not towards the client.
- All outdoor exercise activities require minimum 2 metre distancing, regardless of activity type.
- General interactions with a customer should be at 2 metres.
- Any non-controlled interactions (i.e. no contact tracing) have a 2 metre required physical distancing.
- There should be no activities that include touching between individuals outside of their bubble (even with masks on). This includes spotting, pad work, assisted stretching etc.

b) Engineering

The following items are to be removed or disabled so they cannot be used/accessed

- Water coolers ↓ intensity
- Steam rooms and saunas ↓ intensity
- **Contactless payment systems** are used wherever possible ↓ intensity
- **Outdoor spaces** such as parks often provide additional space for physical distancing as well as excellent airflow, but also have potential new risks such as non sanitised items in public spaces, as well as being regarded as a uncontrolled environment (i.e. strangers could walk past the exercising group). Consider additional safety practices when outdoors. ↓ intensity ↓ #contacts.
- Consider the use of **Physical barriers** in areas where spacing less than mandatory physical distancing is difficult (e.g. indoor cycling, reception). ↓ intensity
- **Air conditioning, fans and airflow** ↓ intensity
 - Maintaining good and healthy airflow within exercise settings is important, specifically consider:
 - Encourage fresh airflow, either via open windows/doors and/or air-conditioning units that bring in fresh air from outside and/or appropriately filters for viruses.
 - Avoid the use of fans that blow across individuals and on to others. This increases the risk of virus spread. Fresh air is encouraged as is any recirculated air that is directed away from people.
 - Avoid using devices that recirculate air, and do not filter for viruses and then blow this directly at individuals (fresh air is encouraged) and/or any recirculated airflow that's directed away from people.
 - **Fresh airflow** is encouraged through use of open doors and windows where possible.
- **Changing rooms:**
 - Consider marking which lockers to use to spread out users. ↓ #contacts.
 - In smaller facilities, numbers may have to be limited to ensure physical distancing can be maintained (i.e. max # of people at a time, either policed or via signage). ↓ #contacts.
 - Saunas and steam rooms closed. ↓ #contacts.
 - 24/7 facilities will require any additional cleaning rules to be clearly communicated during unmanned times (i.e. what is expected of members). ↓ intensity

c) Administrative

• Entry Criteria (Facilities and Activities)

○ No entry to persons with any of the following:

- currently exhibiting a fever, or any other common symptoms of Covid-19.
- currently in quarantine or isolation by the NZ government.
- knowingly been recently (in the last 14 days) exposed to a person with Covid-19.

The above policy must be confirmed electronically to all existing customers.

○ Managed entry for all persons with any of the following: ↓ individual risk

- Underlying health conditions (e.g. asthma, heart disease, diabetes or obesity)
- Over the age of 70 (or whatever age the NZ government sets)

Any person meeting any of the above criteria should only be permitted into the facilities/activity after being notified of their greater individual risk. Such notification can be done electronically as part of a group message to all clients/members and/or via signage.

• Contact tracing protocols must be used for all individuals entering the facility/ taking part in the activity.

- must include all exercisers, staff, and any visitors (exercising or not).
- in August 2021 the Government announced that use of the Covid-19 QR codes and/or manual sign in was compulsory for all businesses to enforce. However this did not apply to businesses that had existing processes that recorded visits (such as many gyms with card/fob access systems). It is still a requirement for all businesses, at all Covid-19 levels, to display the Government QR code, and all those that do not have a tracking system must also ensure the QR code and/or manual sign in system is used (i.e. only those that have alternative systems to record visits are exempt from enforcing use).
- casual visitors should either not be permitted into the facility or a protocol established for their data to be entered into the contact tracking system. Additionally any casual visitors will require greater training as to their expected behaviours. Any paper based data must be entered into a digitised form within 24 hours (so it can be quickly shared with government agencies if required).
- data collected specifically for contact tracing will not be used for any other purposes, and will be automatically destroyed after 28 days (guidance from the Privacy Commissioner). Data collated as a part of normal membership visit recording may be kept for whatever time it is normally stored for.
- in addition to any contact tracing, the Government's barcode/app must be used and displayed (Note: Members of ExerciseNZ had signage sent to them in May with their unique barcode). You can get a barcode here - www.exercisenz.org.nz/barcode.
- for Personal Trainer/Instructors, generate a unique barcode for each location (unless the venue already has one - in which case use that).
- Mobile services, such as Personal Trainers, visiting people's homes do not need a barcode/poster for that activity (this advice is direct from the Ministry of Health).

- **Special contact tracing considerations for group activities in separate spaces**

Where there are dedicated spaces for groups of individuals to exercise/gather together (e.g. group exercise, staff training rooms etc) for 10 minutes or longer, and the facility has a total capacity of 50 or more individuals, then the following extra steps are recommended:

- Keep a separate record of attendees for each space/time/activity.
- Be able to provide the above records on demand (within 2 hours) or use the Government Covid-19 app for all recording keeping for this purpose.

Note: The above record keeping is not required where the users of the space come and go on their own timing (e.g. gym floor, changing rooms, pools etc) – in which case only recording that they are in the facility is needed. The most common example of when it is required is for group exercise type activities and/or small group training sessions (with or without a trainer/instructor) as well as child-care where the child is around other children for an extended period.

In cases of large recreation facilities where there are multiple spaces that may have groups interacting (e.g. courts, gyms space, pool etc), even when all the users come and go at their own timing, as much data as possible as to the room/spaces each visitor is using is recommended. The Governments Covid-19 barcode for each space could be a useful tool here.

How this data is collected is up to the exercise business, with options including:

- Manual lists/sign in sheets
- Roll calls
- Digital apps from the facility
- Using the Covid-19 barcode system from the NZ Government, and having a separate barcode for each room
- Booking systems

In all cases, where individuals are self-recording their visits, a check/audit system should be in place to ensure only those that have recorded their attendance are in the room/space – this could be by way of physically viewing the persons sign in/ scanning, tags to cross check valid attendees, and/or headcount systems that only start the class/activity when the numbers match. Where using the Government barcode system, as the data from this can not be accessed by the business to check, multiple opportunities to scan should be provided, along with multiple reminders - eg physical (signage), verbal (instructors) and system driven (during bookings).

The intent of the above protocols is to ensure that should a person visit the facility, who later tests positive for Covid-19, can quickly (within hours) have the spaces that the person used identified, their close contacts informed, isolated and tested without delay.

- **Consider booking systems** for any activities likely to be over capacity (e.g. group exercise spaces, but may include gym spaces in some facilities). ↓ #contacts
- **Consider offering more classes** (prerecorded or live) to lower the number of individuals in classes. ↓ intensity ↓ #contacts.
- **Consider extending hours to spread load** ↓ #contacts
- **Communication to staff and members** ↓ intensity ↓ #contacts.

- **Signage should make expectations of members clear** upon entry, as well as in specific areas as to their expected behaviour, including:
 - Staying away if symptomatic or have been around persons known to have Covid-19.
 - Social distancing.
 - Hand washing/hand sanitizer use.
 - Cleaning of any shared equipment.
 - Hand hygiene (sneezing into elbows), washing hands on arrival/leaving.
- **Staff should all be trained** in the following:
 - Basic SARS CoV-2/Covid-19 understanding.
 - How the disease is spread and how that relates to the facility.
 - Key mitigations the facility is undertaking.
 - How to manage their own safety.
- **Entry process** - Hand wash on entry for all staff and members with (soap and water or hand sanitizer) is highly recommended. This should ideally take place before the member enters the facility, or as early as possible on their transit through the building (e.g. reception). ↓ intensity
- Personal Trainers operating from more than one facility should considering limiting the number of facilities they operate from during Level 2. Consider one indoor and one outdoor location.
- Avoid the use of shared stationery items such as pens/paper with clients unless absolutely necessary (this includes data collection for the purposes of contact tracing). Where any such shared items are used, cleaning protocols need to be established, communicated and followed.
- Consider extra protocols for activities involving children, especially where both adults and children may interact.
- Staff rooms/areas:
 - Ensure all staff areas have clear protocols for common touch points (shared items) and signage communicates this.
 - Where possible, minimise contact to some areas/items to a limited number of staff.
 - In staff rooms ensure high touch items (e.g. jugs, dishwasher handles) have cleaning materials nearby and instructions clearly outlined.
 - Mandatory hand washing protocols established and communicated.
 - Masks are not required while not facing customers.

d) PPE & Cleaning

• PPE

- **Masks** are recommended to be worn by all staff when engaging with customers¹. The only exceptions being staff taking part in exercise (e.g. Group Exercise) and those in a pool,

Notes:

↓↓ intensity

1. **Masks are recommended** for staff engaging with customers and customers when they are not exercising.
 2. Face masks may be any type: Fabric, N95 or surgical. We do not regard a t-shirt/scarf as adequate.
 3. Masks should be made available for all staff to use.
 4. While masks are not mandated for those exercising (e.g. Group Exercise), they remain optional if clients/members wish to use their own. We do not recommend masks for clients that are sweating moderately or more (causing a damp mask). This is based on advice from the WHO.
 5. Customers are also recommended to wear a mask at all time except when exercising, so when entering the facility, changing and walking between rooms¹.
- **Gloves.** It is not generally recommended to wear gloves as it is easier to wash hands/use hand gel without gloves. Specifically:
 - Fingerless gloves impedes hand washing and the use of hand gel, but also allow virus spread via fingers (i.e. the 'worst of both worlds') so are not recommended.
 - Full hand gloves fabric are permitted, and in some cases may be better than no glove, however they have the disadvantage of less cleaning of hands.
 - Light weight latex type gloves are not recommended as they can easily be damaged on equipment common in exercise facilities.
 - **Full Sanitise (formerly deep clean)** should be undertaken at least daily and include sanitizing:
 - Surfaces of any and all exercise equipment that is shared between users. This includes items that are cleaned by the member before/after each use.
 - Changing rooms, showers, benches, basins, toilets and taps (including doors & any hard floor surfaces) and surfaces likely to be touched by members or staff.
 - Stairs (including handrails, and any hard floor surfaces).
 - Fabric flooring (e.g. carpet) must be vacuumed regularly.
 - Entrance ways that have all hard floors, reception counters, access turnstiles and wall areas that are likely to be touched by members or staff.
 - Staff undertaking deep cleans should be provided with adequate PPE (gloves and masks).
- All full sanitisation should:**
- Use chemicals or other approved methods on all hard surfaces that are effective against viruses. Contact time should be known for each chemical/method, so it stays on long enough to be effective.
 - Be only chemicals/methods that are anti-viral, however considerations should be given to chemicals/methods that are also environmentally friendly.

¹ The Governments official position is that while not legally required, they are recommended. This framework uses the same language as the government's rules. We do, however, strongly suggest that these recommendations are followed.

- **Spot clean:** All common touch points are to be cleaned as outlined below: ↓ intensity
 - When staffed, cleaning should be undertaken regularly, with frequency, depending on traffic and usage – the higher uses = greater frequency.
 - Common touch points include all door handles, basins & taps, any shared equipment not cleaned by the member on each use (e.g. plate weights).
 - All common touch points on cardio equipment (e.g. screens/hand touch points), handles on weight machines.
 - As with deep clean, chemicals must be those that kill SARS CoV-2, however must also be safe for direct skin contact by members/clients within 15 seconds after use.
 - When a facility is unmanned (e.g. 24/7 gyms) then these touch points should be highlighted by way of signage as a potential hot-spot.
- **Protocol for members cleaning of shared equipment.** ↓ intensity
 - Any common shared items such as dumbbells, machine weights, cardio equipment and any equipment shared in group exercise classes should be cleaned by the member before use, using an appropriate method (spray or wipes etc).
 - Expectations of members must be made clear on entrance, and in any dedicated exercise rooms (such as group exercise studios).
 - Where it is impractical to wipe the entire surface of an item before and after each handling by a different person (e.g. plate weights) then hand washing (soap and water or hand gel) should be undertaken before and after handling such equipment. This protocol should be made clear to members.
- **Record of cleaning** - All deep cleans and spot cleans should be recorded (time & date and by whom).
- **Small shared items.** All shared equipment should be managed to minimise any potential for being a risk for contamination, including: ↓ intensity
 - Removing it completely (e.g. boxing gloves, mats, foam rollers.)
 - Item directly sanitised between each use (e.g. pump bar/treadmill/machine weights) by member (see above).
 - Pre & post hand clean (soap and water or hand gel) for user PLUS items regularly sanitised by staff (e.g. plate weights).
- **Facilities should also be aware of the MOH specific protocols** for cleaning should an identified case of Covid-19 have been associated with the facility. These are available on the MOH web site.

General note on cleaning - The goal is not an aseptic environment, it is to minimise any risk vector. Deep cleans are designed to eliminate any residual virus.

e) Other Considerations

- **CPR**

When delivering CPR, our recommendations are:

- PPE: Mask (N95), gloves and goggles for the person administering CPR.
- Place a light cloth over the mouth and nose of the person being resuscitated.
- No direct ventilation (mouth to mouth/nose) - chest compressions only.
(This is the advice from the New Zealand Resuscitation Council.)

Full advice from the New Zealand Resuscitation Council can be found at www.nzrc.org.nz/covid-19/

- **Blood Pressure**

Taking blood pressure of members/clients is regarded as optional in Level 2.

When blood pressure is not taken we recommend:

- Asking the person if they know their normal blood pressure and recording that if known.
- Advising them to update you of any change in this (if they visit a GP and it is taken).

When blood pressure is taken:

- Blood pressure cuff should be thoroughly sanitised (e.g. alcohol).
- PPE offered to staff (i.e. optional) and also to any person with a compromised immune system or co-morbidity relevant to Covid-19 (e.g. heart disease, diabetes, asthma).



8

TABLES FOR COMMON SCENARIOS FOR LEVEL 2

Below is a summary of common roles and activities, along with recommended distancing, PPE and cleaning protocols.

ROLE / ACTIVITY	DISTANCING RECOMMENDATION	MASKS	CLEANING CONSIDERATIONS
Group activities	2 metres for both attendees and staff during activities.	Not required by either staff or customers when exercising. Recommended for staff when demonstrating but not taking part.*	Sanitize all shared items before each use by a different person.
Personal Training (including circuit type activities and small group training)	2 metres physical distancing advised, 1 metre with mask for short periods.	Recommended for trainer not customer.	No shared touching of items (including spotting). No boxing pad work where PT hold pads.
Reception	2 metres with staff & customers when both masked, and 2 metres between customers. 1 metre between staff at all times.	Masks recommended for staff and customer.	Watch for shared items with customers (pens, paper etc). Contactless payment recommended.
Gym floor	2 metres spacing for equipment	Masks recommended while not exercising for customer. Masks recommended for staff.	Communicate cleaning protocols for shared items. Regular spot cleaning and policing of member cleaning.
Outdoor	2 metres including when queuing outdoors. Limit 100 including instructor and spectators.	Masks not required outdoors.	Watch for interaction with non-clients and touching non sanitised items.
All other locations (eg. changing rooms, walking between exercise spaces, waiting areas).	2 metres.	Masks recommended for customer and staff interacting with customers.	

* Activities that are 'Do as I do' (eg most group exercise), staff do not have to wear a mask. Activities that are 'Do as I say' (eg some yoga classes, reformer pilates, some small group training) masks are recommended. When in doubt for staff - wear a mask.

9 OTHER LEVEL GUIDANCE

Level 1

At level one the Government's key assumption is that ***the disease is contained in New Zealand*** and have signaled that the key tools are border control and contact tracing of any virus transmission.

For exercise facilities and businesses, this means that:

- All activities can start back up, including those restricted during level 2 (e.g. pad work, spotting, hands on work such as massage).
- Any services stopped during level 2 reinstated (saunas, foam rollers etc).
- Shared equipment may be used.
- There are no specific capacity restrictions.
- There are no mandated physical distancing rules (including group activities).

We recommend you check any updates from the Government on its Covid-19 page as this is still changing, found here: www.exercisenz.org.nz/level1

For the exercise industry, the key things to consider and continue to practice are:

- Encouraging sick staff/members to stay away.
- Continuing with sanitisation of common hot spots, and providing cleaning materials to members for their own use.
- Encourage good hygiene (sneezing into elbows, regular washing of hand, avoid face touching).
- In August 2021 the Government announced that use of the Covid-19 QR codes and/or manual sign in was compulsory for all businesses to enforce. However this did not apply to businesses that had existing processes that recorded visits (such as many gyms with card/fob access systems). It is still a requirement for all businesses, at all Covid-19 levels, to display the Government QR code, and all those that do not have a tracking system must also ensure the QR code and/or manual sign in system is used (ie only those that have alternative systems to record visits are exempt from enforcing use).

The Government Covid-19 site states for level 1 that ***Physical distancing encouraged as a measure that can be applied***. In the context of exercise facilities this means continue to think about layout, especially in group activities, but there are no mandated limits or minimum distances at level 1.

A reminder that the Government could change New Zealand's Covid-19 level at any time, so remember the protocols for level 2, and be ready to instigate if needed. ExerciseNZ will continue to engage with the Government, and government departments (Ministry of Health and WorkSafe NZ) to ensure this document remains evidence based, and is consistent with the latest information and guidance relevant to the New Zealand exercise industry.

Level 3

At Level 3, all gyms, studios and exercise facilities must remain closed. Travel to an exercise facility by staff is only permissible for essential activities (i.e. safety reasons) and filming (see below). It does not allow for staff to have their own workout unless filming within the facility, even if alone.

Exercise professionals, including personal trainers, group exercise instructor and yoga teachers may also train others via virtual platforms.

Exercise professionals may not undertake any activities in person regardless of physical distancing in any setting (i.e. in facilities, in homes, in home studios, or outside).

Only people from within family/house bubble may exercise together, and the only interaction with a trainer should be via virtual means.

Exercise equipment may be bought and sold at Level 3, as long as a contactless sales process is maintained.

Staff may also visit facilities to prepare for Level 2, and undertake cleaning and maintenance work, but must physical distance from other staff, and wear a mask at all times.

Change made to filming policy under Level 3 (made 21 September 2021)

We have now had it confirmed that the new Level 3 rules do allow for filming/classes at Level 3 as long as no customers are on site, and standard distancing and masks rules are followed. Only staff essential for this and other permitted activities as outlined above should go into the facility.

From their website “Exercise facilities and classes can offer lessons remotely (eg by video), but cannot open their premises.”

For more information visit - www.business.govt.nz/covid-19/operating-at-alert-levels/



Staged Level 3 re-opening rules (from Oct 2021)

For regions in Step 1:

Outdoor exercise activities may take place (and people may travel across Auckland to attend them) as long as:

- There is no more than 10 individuals from up to 10 different bubbles (including any instructors) at any time, with no restriction on the number of bubbles.
- You must physically distance by 2 metres and sanitize equipment between clients.
- There are some restrictions - outdoor activities with other people including outdoor exercise classes and a maximum of 10 people (quoted from the Governments Covid-19 web site).
- Contact tracing rules apply (so encourage QR scanning, with a manual sign in option available).

We note there is currently inconsistencies with the Governments message. While no contact sports are allowed and you must socially distance, their website currently allows for boxing (see <https://covid19.govt.nz/activities/sports-and-recreation/>).

Normal precautions should be taken, asking/checking for cold/flu like symptoms, staying away if unwell etc.

No training indoors is currently permitted.

Note: Those with insurance with REPs are covered for outdoor exercise classes, as long as it is within your normal scope of activities.

For regions in Step 2:

- Outdoor gathering limit increased to 25 (24 participants + 1 Instructor)
- Outdoor exercise sessions are permitted with 2 metre physical distancing.
- Any equipment used must be sanitised after each persons use.
- Limit also includes any children present with parents, children must also be 2 metre physical distancing.
- No indoor training is currently permitted.

Step 3

The current stepped approach does not include gyms and exercise facilities at any of the Level 3 steps (ie we need to wait till Level 2). We have also received confirmation from multiple sources stating that this is being reconsidered by the Government, and gyms/indoor exercise may be able to reopen at step 3. If/when this changes we will update this Framework.

This page was last updated at 10am on Tuesday, 2nd November 2021.

10. References for Recommendations and Statements

1. Musher.D, How Contagious are Common Respiratory Tract Infections?, New England Journal of Medicine, Mar 2003. *Page 3 - Medical Rule*
2. Lake, M, What we know so far: COVID-19 current clinical knowledge and research; (Clin Med) Royal College of Physicians Mar, 2020. *Page 3 - Background, Routes of Transmission*
3. van Doremalen et al; Aerosol and Surface Stability of SARS-CoV-2 as Compared with SARS-CoV-1; New England Journal of Medicine, 2020. *Page 3 - Surface survival of virus*
4. Leung. N et al.; Respiratory virus shedding in exhaled breath and efficacy of face masks; Nature Medicine April 2020. *Page 9 - Masks*
5. Harvard Med School; Respiratory tract infection - Is it contagious?; Harvard Publishing, Updated Jan 2017. *Page 3 - Background, Medical Rule*
6. Desai, A et al, Masks and Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19); JAMA. Published online April 17, 2020. doi:10.1001/jama.2020.6437. *Page 9 - Masks*
7. Arons M. et al; Presymptomatic SARS-CoV-2 Infections and Transmission in a Skilled Nursing Facility; NEJM, April 2020. *Page 9 - Masks, Asymptomatic Spread*
8. Prem, K.; The Effect of Control Strategies to Reduce Social Mixing on Outcomes of the COVID Epidemic in Wuhan; Lancet, March 2020. *Page 4 - Objectives*

11. Framework Updates

- 12 May 2020 - Level 2 restrictions and common scenarios table added.
- 19 May 2020 - Added CPR section.
- 22 May 2020 - Updated CPR, added Blood Pressure, update to cleaning protocols.
- 25 May 2020 - Modified guidance on masks for PTs, update outdoor limits to reflect government guidelines (as of 12pm, 29th May 2020).
- 5 June 2020 - Update to include Level 1 guidance.
- 11 August 2020 - Updates latest face mask protocols and Government guidance.
- 13 August 2020 - Updated dates, touching protocols.
- 14 August 2020 - Updated contact tracing rules.
- 17 August 2020 - Updated contract tracing rules for mobile PTs and mask recommendation for clients/members.
- 24 August 2020 - Updated for Auckland Level 2 extra restrictions
- 2 October 2020 - Updated contact tracing for larger facilities.
- 21 October 2020 - Updated contact tracing for larger facilities.
- 1 February 2021 - Various minor changes including date changes and rewording of October references for the 2.5 Level.
- 19 August 2021 - Recently checked for applicability for Delta variant.
- 23 August 2021 - Updated with Governments tracing requirements.
- 6 September 2021 - Changes made to reflect the new Delta-Level 2 rules
- 7 September 2021 - Updated to reflect change in distancing.
- 10 September 2021 - Changed to reflect changes to Government policy on masks and recommendations for childcare.
- 21 September 2021 - Changes made to filming rules under Level 3.
- 5 October 2021 - Information on Auckland's transitional moves added.
- 2 November 2021 - Information on Wakato transitional moves added.