

Government announces gyms and pools to reopen safely

The Government has outlined the measures that will allow outdoor pools to reopen from 11 July and indoor gyms, swimming pools and sports facilities to reopen from 25 July, ensuring millions of people can get back into more sport and fitness activities.

The [guidance](#), published by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, has been compiled with input from the trade body ukactive, the Sport and Recreation Alliance, Sport England and other sports bodies, and in consultation with Public Health England and the Health and Safety Executive.

It includes advice for providers of pool, gym and leisure facilities on cleaning, social distancing, and protection for staff to help venues get back up and running safely.

It also supports the re-opening of sports halls which are vital to the return of play for many sports, including badminton and volleyball. Guidance produced by National Governing Bodies will complement the government guidance and help ensure indoor sports can be played safely from July 25.

Venues must ensure they can enable customers, staff and volunteers to maintain social distancing before, during and after participation.

Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden said:

The reopening of gyms is the news millions across the country have been waiting for with many people desperate to jump on a spinning bike or dive into a pool.

Our comprehensive guidance will ensure gyms, pools and leisure centres have the support they need to reopen safely for their customers and staff.

Helping people return to gyms safely will also help the nation get match-fit to defeat this virus.

Measures set out in the guidance include:

- Limiting the number of people using the facility at any one time, for example by using a timed booking system;
- Reducing class sizes and allowing sufficient time between each class to avoid groups waiting outside during changeover;
- Ensuring an appropriate number of people are in a swimming pool at any one time;
- Spacing out equipment or taking some out of service to maintain social distancing;

- Enhanced cleaning and providing hand sanitizer throughout venues;
- Considering how the way people walk through their venue could be adjusted to reduce contact, with queue management or one-way systems;
- Ensuring adequate ventilation;
- Encouraging the use of outdoor spaces for individual, team or group activities, making sure to comply with the latest restrictions on public gatherings;
- Exercise or dance studios should have temporary floor markings where possible to help people stay distanced during classes;
- Customers and staff should be encouraged to shower and change at home wherever possible, although changing rooms will be available.

Today's announcement follows a recent visit by government, Sport England and public health officials, led by Deputy Chief Medical Officer Professor Jonathan Van-Tam, to a series of ukactive member sites. This allowed officials to see first-hand how the sector is preparing to reopen safely.

Leisure centres and indoor gyms, along with swimming pools and other indoor sports facilities, have been closed since Saturday 21 March as part of measures to prevent the spread of coronavirus.

Rules on exercise were initially relaxed from 14 May, to allow people greater access to local, outdoor physical activity. This allowed the public to go outside for unlimited exercise, alone or with their household, or one other person while adhering to social distancing rules. It also permitted outdoor sports facilities such as golf courses and tennis courts to reopen, with strict safety measures in place.

On 1 June the Government published guidance which allowed people to exercise outside with up to five others from different households, provided that strict social distancing guidelines were followed. This meant that people who play team sports could meet to train together and take part in conditioning or fitness sessions, although anything involving physical contact was not allowed. It allowed parents to accompany their children to coaching sessions carried out on a one to one basis or in small groups.

Outdoor gyms were permitted to reopen from 4 July while ensuring social distancing.

This latest guidance is part of the Government's carefully-designed package to ease the burdens of lockdown in a way that is expected to keep the R rate, the average number of secondary infections produced by 1 infected person, down. The phased approach is outlined in the Prime Minister's roadmap for easing lockdown. As the Prime Minister has always said, the Government keeps these measures under review, and will not hesitate to apply the handbrakes if required.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

- This guidance is for gyms, swimming pools and indoor sports facilities

in England. Those in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland should refer to guidance from the devolved administrations.

- Please also see the latest Government guidance for the public on the [phased return of sport and recreation](#), and guidance for [elite sport](#).
- In May, [Sport England's weekly survey](#) of 2,000 people found that going to the gym was the leisure activity most people were keen to return to post-lockdown.