
Outcomes of REPs Consultation

REPs COVID-19 Health and Safety Protocols - May 2020

We have just completed an industry consultation where we proposed new industry specific COVID-19 mandated health and safety protocols to provide protection to the exercising public. Thank you to the 500 exercise professionals and facilities who provided feedback.

The change proposed was that registered exercise professionals would be required to wear a face mask when interacting within 4 metres of clients/participants, with some exceptions allowed.

Overview of the Industry Consultation

The consultation provided an opportunity for registered exercise professionals and facilities to give their feedback. We have given careful consideration to all of the responses received. Overall there was industry support for the proposed safe distancing standard. Feedback was received from some survey participants that 2 metres provided a safe level of distancing without the need to wear a face mask.

REPs and the Exercise Association of New Zealand have been in discussion with Sport New Zealand who are the government agency overseeing sport, recreation and physical activity, and WorkSafe New Zealand who are the government authority responsible for ensuring the health and safety of all New Zealand workplaces. We have taken into consideration their advice. We have also taken into consideration the safe physical distancing practices of New Zealand high performance sports coaches when engaging with their participants.

The REPs COVID-19 Health and Safety Protocols for registered exercise professionals have been amended based on the feedback received, and in conjunction with the expert advice we have received.

Outcomes of the Industry Consultation

Summary: Based on our industry consultation, discussions with Sport New Zealand and WorkSafe New Zealand, and the expert advice we have received, the REPs minimum physical distancing requirements without the use of face masks when interacting with clients/participants is now 2 metres.

The following new mandatory requirements will be in place for all REPs registered exercise professionals from May 2020. This will form part of the health and safety requirements of the REPs Code of Ethical Practice.

- Interactions with clients/participants for a period of 4 minutes or longer (e.g. personal training, group exercise, yoga and other group classes/activities) then the recommended physical distancing is 2 metres. At 2 metres or greater distancing, face masks are not required. Where a face mask is used, physical distancing can be reduced to 1m between client and exercise professional.
- Where an interaction with clients/participants is of short duration of 1- 2 minutes (e.g. gym instructor), the minimum recommended distance for this interaction is 1 metre and a face mask is not required.

Notes:

- All recommendations are based on interactions in an indoor controlled environment. Specifically, that contact tracking protocols are in place for individuals present.
- Individuals should not touch each other. This includes client/trainer and client/client.
- Staff should avoid touching any member/client used items used during the exercise session.

These REPs requirements for personal training, gym instruction, and group activities/exercise (including yoga) should be read in conjunction with the ExerciseNZ framework document for full details.

Face mask types - The face masks can be any type; fabric, N95 (respirator), surgeons face masks or visor type (the visor type being potentially more suitable for group exercise where barriers aren't possible, and the 2 metre distance is unable to be maintained).