

Importance of Wearing Face Masks While Exercising & Tips for Working Out with a Face Mask

Based on and best practices and customer feedback since our reopening, the Recreation Center is requiring that face masks be **worn at all times, even when exercising**. The CDC recommends wearing a mask to prevent the spread of Coronavirus is essential to stop respiratory droplets traveling through the air from one person to another. Respiratory droplets are considered the primary source of transmission for the virus. Face masks, combined with frequent hand washing and vigorous cleaning and disinfecting surfaces by everyone, are the critical elements to eliminating the spread of respiratory droplets.

In an indoor fitness environment like the Recreation Center, where people may be breathing heavily and working hard, wearing a mask at all times will be instrumental in helping to keep you and everyone around you safer. During more intense activities like aerobics and weightlifting, people produce more respiratory droplets than regular daily activity, which means the face coverings have more to catch for everyone's benefit. When it comes to wearing masks, however, it requires participation from everyone to be truly effective.

How Can I Wear A Face Mask While I Exercise?

The main concern surrounding wearing a face mask while working out revolves around how the covering affects your ability to breathe. Yes, everyone needs more oxygen while working out, and even a simple cloth covering can make it difficult to breathe. But this does not mean you should opt for no exercise instead of exercise with a face mask? Most people can perform aerobic and weight training exercises while wearing a face mask. Of course, not all exercises may be advisable, and each person's body will respond differently. You may need to adjust your workout intensity level as your body adapts to the physical experience of exercise with a face mask, especially if you have underlying health concerns. Just like with any activity, be smart and listen to your body. If your heart rate feels too high, if you get lightheaded, dizzy, or nauseous, stop your workout immediately and take a break.

Wearing a face mask while working out will protect you and those around you, and if used properly, a face mask can help you get exercise back in your life safely and healthily. Here are five tips that can get you started working out with a face mask.

Five Tips for Working Out With a Mask

- 1. Pick the right mask for your workout** - Make sure it fits securely around your face, so it won't slip off during activity and is made of a breathable moisture-wicking material to allow for maximum airflow.
- 2. Use it properly** - The mask should fully cover your nose and mouth. Only use the ear loops when putting on or taking off the mask, never touching the front by your mouth.
- 3. Take it slow to start** - Begin slowly and increase the intensity only as your body adjusts. If you have underlying conditions or respiratory concerns, consult your physician first. If you begin to feel lightheaded, take a break. Stay hydrated.
- 4. Bring a backup** - Wet face masks are less effective, and heavy breathing and sweating can cause your face mask to damp quickly. Have a new clean, dry face mask available if needed during your workout. Place your used mask immediately in your gym bag or dispose of it hygienically.
- 5. Wash it after every workout** - Remember to launder your face mask after every use.