



**KEY FACTS ABOUT THE IMPACT OF FITNESS ON
HEALTH OF AMERICANS AND THE STATE OF
FITNESS IN THE UNITED STATES**

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While much remains unknown about COVID-19, the assumption that health and fitness clubs are either a source of new infections or a high-risk environment for new infections does not stand-up to the data.

- Colorado has released [contact tracing data linking outbreaks to settings](#). Of 62,144 total cases linked to outbreaks traced, they have found 1,743 cases linked to bars and restaurants, 1,579 cases linked to offices, but *only 32 cases resulting from outbreaks linked to health clubs or fitness centers* in Colorado. Colorado opened health clubs and fitness centers in June.
- These findings were affirmed by [an analysis conducted by the University of Oregon's Oregon Consulting Group \(OCG\)](#). OCG researchers looked for relationships between check in data based on 8.5 million health club visits in Colorado and publicly available contact tracing information. The analysis found no statistically significant relationship between gym attendance and COVID-19 cases.
- Training facilities operating under appropriate guidelines, with good hygiene and social distancing measures (1 meter for floor exercise, 2 meters for high intensity), saw no increase in COVID-19 transmission. (Source: [University of Oslo Independent Study](#))
- An industry survey conducted by MXM, consisting of 2,877 health and fitness clubs, reports a mere 1,155 COVID-19 cases out of 49.4 million check-ins as of August 7.
 - These findings break down to an occurrence rate of 0.002%.
- Louisiana tracks data on [COVID-19 cases by setting](#). Of nineteen reported settings—ranging from automotive to religious gatherings—gym/fitness centers rank 15th in COVID-19 cases.
 - This is well behind settings such as bars (#2), restaurants (#5), and casinos (#4) and even behind office settings and religious gatherings.
- Illinois tracks data on [COVID-19 outbreaks by location](#). Since July 1, 2020, only 1.25% of outbreaks in the state of Illinois have been linked to gyms/fitness/dance facilities. This is behind restaurants (4.18%), bars (2.71%) and office spaces (2.40%).
- New York's contact tracing data on [the source of new COVID-19 cases](#) shows gyms only responsible for 0.06% of cases. Gyms ranked 26th out of the 31 categories listed by the state.

- In other states including [Massachusetts](#) and [Washington](#), where fitness centers are combined with other sectors like casinos, pools, beaches and hospitality, outbreaks attributed to those locations appear to make up a small proportion of total outbreaks.
- San Diego County, California reported [county-wide contact tracing data](#) over a period of two weeks, from October 25 to November 7. Gym and fitness centers were responsible for only 0.5% of cases during this window.
 - This is well behind settings such as offices/work at 34.3%, bars and restaurants at 10.1% and retail stores at 8.0%.
- Gyms and leisure facilities in England have seen more than eight million visits in the first three weeks since reopening, and just 17 positive COVID-19 cases, [according to data from ukactive](#) (8/25).
- A study in Australia which included 6.26 million check-ins across 423 gyms over a period of two months (June 13 - August 11) found zero cases of community transmission associated with gyms.
- A case control study published in the CDC's [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#) found that people who tested positive for COVID-19 were more likely to have dined in a restaurant or have had close contact with COVID-19. There was no statistically significant association between COVID-19 test results and any other activity, including visiting a gym.
- Preliminary [data collected](#) as part of an ongoing study at the University of Florida found no detectable SARS-CoV-2 (the virus causing COVID-19) in the air at Gainesville Health & Fitness.
- Research conducted at Stanford and Northwestern University, published in the journal [Nature](#), found that capacity limits are an effective method for controlling COVID-19 transmission while blunting economic damage.
 - For example, in Chicago the study predicted limiting capacity at 20% of maximum occupancy cut infections—compared to a full reopening—by 80%, while only costing businesses 42% of their daily visits.
- According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), physical activity and other lifestyle changes can prevent five of the top ten causes of death in the U.S. (before COVID-19).
- In a newly released [pre-print](#), researchers used genetic markers to assess obesity, alcohol use, lifetime smoking, and physical activity. They found a two-fold increase in risk of respiratory COVID-19 and COVID-19 hospitalization for people with obesity and

lifetime smoking, and a five-fold decrease in risk of respiratory COVID-19 for people who were physically active.

- Evidence shows that physically active lifestyles can improve immune system health and [diminish the risk of contracting some communicable diseases](#), including upper respiratory tract infections.
- Health and fitness clubs are uniquely positioned to help the state, by conducting accurate and efficient contact tracing. Clubs use a check-in system, which allows them to identify who is in the club, as well as the date and time they visited.

Additionally, let us help clarify why some sources, which are often a reference as reasons for keeping health clubs closed, are deeply flawed studies, rather than showing that gyms are problematic.

The South Korea Study: Only Proves the Importance of Clubs' Social Distancing Guidelines and Increased Cleaning Protocols

There are three big red flags when it comes to this study:

1. The workshop in question took place a full two weeks before the Korean Centers for Disease Control (KCDC) recommended social distancing measures, and more than a month before officials closed South Korea gyms. Therefore, the cases identified in this study **predate** the extensive social distancing and other safety protocols subsequently adopted.
2. The study points to several key factors contributing to COVID-19 transmission: dense population, confined space, and workout intensity. Fitness facilities worldwide, including those in North Carolina, have already modified their safety protocols to address these key factors.
3. The study itself indicates that safety protocols and lower intensity activities may largely mitigate the risk of COVID-19 transmission. The study showed secondary transmission of COVID-19 in classes with 5 to 22 participants, in a 60 square meter room, during 50 minutes of intense exercise, but reported no cases in classes with fewer than five participants in the same space.

Cases Linked to Two Fitness Centers in Hawaii: There Was No Implementation of Key Safety Protocols

These examples don't prove gyms are high-risk. They only show that **any business** that doesn't have guidelines and safety protocols is problematic. All this example proves is that if people are in an enclosed indoor space without following any safety precautions, they run an increased risk for contracting COVID-19. This has nothing to do with gyms having an increased risk of transmission. For the record, the vast majority of fitness centers across the country have successfully implemented social distancing guidelines and increased cleaning measures.