



ABC Guidelines - Covid-19

Guidelines for reopening of Climbing Gym Industry during social distancing

Written in partnership with UK Active and their reopening framework of the Gym and Fitness Industry.

1. OVERVIEW

This document is a framework setting out the operational requirements for opening climbing gyms and is based on a joint framework developed with UK Active for gyms and leisure centres during an anticipated period of “social distancing”, following the full closure of the sector due to Covid-19.

The document has been developed in full partnership with the major fitness and leisure operators in the UK and has been reviewed by a leading virologist. It has also been informed by best practice from international markets where governments are at different stages of managing the Covid-19 crisis, and working with their own fitness sectors.

The guidelines have been written following research through working groups from the Association of British Climbing Walls. The ABC have also been in weekly contact with a number of other European and North American indoor climbing organisations. The ABC guidelines are comparable or stricter than those from other countries we have been working with.

The guidelines have been approved by The British Mountaineering Council, the sport’s National Governing Body for England and Wales.

Our guidelines are compliant with those produced by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport which have been written in consultation with UKActive, Sport England, Sport and Recreation Alliance, National Governing Bodies, Public Health England and the HSE.

We believe climbing will play a vital role in ensuring the return of physical activity and the ongoing health and well-being of the nation following the raising of Covid-19 restrictions. We all understand how important any physical activity is, and as the Chief Medical Officer stated ‘There is no situation, no age, no condition, where exercise is not a good thing’.

This document sets out the framework for opening climbing gyms and provides a basis for individual operators to add their own operating guidance for customers, staff and supply chains in their own venues as necessary.

It is not intended to be exhaustive in covering every possible scenario but aims to provide a

clear direction for the entire leisure sector, ensuring climbing gyms will fall within the best practice of the leading recognised leisure facilities.

Individual climbing gyms may make their own decisions to enhance or adapt this to their own venues, and even go above the standards within this document, but not lower, if they wish to be recognised as meeting the standards.

The strategy is based around 3 principles

- Hygiene
- Capacity Management
- Social Distancing

2. REOPENING GUIDELINES

General

PHE (or equivalent) posters will be on display informing customers and staff of social distances and cleanliness/hygiene protocols throughout the facility.

Operators will commit to the wellbeing of their staff and customers, and if they show/have any signs of Covid-19 (temp, cough, difficulty breathing), they will be sent home to follow Government regulations.

Operators will comply with any health designation documentation that the relevant national government implements.

Hand sanitizer and/or soap will be available for both staff and customers to use on entrances and around the gym.

Encourage customers to adhere to social distances with point of sale, information and Staff 'floor walking'. Further criteria is below for certain areas.

Face masks will not be mandatory, unless government requires this.

It is down to the individual customer to take reasonable personal responsibility for social distancing when taking part in climbing and belaying.

Queue management. Gyms will ensure two metre spacing markers on the floor and if necessary, outside the entrance.

Capacity Management

Climbing walls will reduce their capacities to 1 person per 9 sq metres of space. This includes circulation, toilets and changing areas.

If time slots are used, customers will be managed in and out the centre to ensure social distancing measures are adhered to.

Any taught courses that are run will be undertaken with full adherence to social distancing guidelines and after a specific risk assessment has been completed.

Cleaning

Continue rigorous cleaning procedures.

If Covid-19 case in facility, operator will follow the PHE Guidance – ‘COVID-19 – Cleaning in non-healthcare settings’ while cleaning all areas of the facility.

Staff will carry out regular cleaning throughout the premises, particularly of points of frequent contact.

Hand wipes/sanitizers will be on offer (or people will be directed to where they can clean hands).

Gloves are not mandatory: WHO advice is that it is preferable not to wear gloves but to regularly wash your hands.

Processes will be put in place to make sure social distancing remains in place for reception staff e.g. protective screens.

Changing Rooms/Showers/Toilets

All gyms will be encouraged to keep changing rooms and showers closed.

Extra care will be taken and signposting deployed to maintain social distancing when in these areas.

Lockers will remain in use, as long as social distancing can be maintained.

Spray and cloths will be available for customer use at common touch points.

Climbing Gym and Warm-up Areas

Wherever reasonably possible **ground level** equipment will be cleaned regularly by the venue, customers will be asked to clean equipment immediately after use - e.g. exercise bikes, weights in warm up areas, pull up bars etc. Sanitising cloths and sprays will be provided.

In the case of climbing holds, which are part of the infrastructure of the centre, these cannot be cleaned between uses. They will be cleaned only when removed from the wall before being replaced. Customers should be encouraged to use good hand hygiene with sanitiser available around the centre. This is in common with other facilities such as schools, public transport, trampoline parks and playgrounds etc.

At all times we will ask customers to use their own best endeavours to keep the centre clean. This will be on top of the regular cleaning schedule.

Extra signage regarding social distancing will be in place around warm up, stretching, free-weights or training area.

Ventilation

As per the government guidelines, in Section 5 it states that restricting capacity to 1 person per 9 square meters of usable space will allow for ventilation of 20 L/p/m in venues with no mechanical ventilation system. Climbing walls will ensure appropriate ventilation

through either natural or mechanical means. They will be use CO2 monitors where necessary to ensure adequate air flow for both customers and staff.

Café/Restaurant

Cafes, restaurants and bars will re-open when Government restrictions allow and will operate under any guidelines issued by PHE or other national health authorities.

Additional signs will be put up communicating appropriate cleanliness and social distancing measures.

Vending machines will remain in place but will be cleaned regularly.

Government guidance on Coronavirus protocols for food businesses will be followed.

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First Aid/Rescue at height

Although there may be heightened concerns around first aid, this will continue as normal. The below adaptations will be used when needed:

- Staff undertaking rescue at height will use suitable PPE
- Gloves and resuscitation face masks will be provided to all first aiders for emergency first aid
- Face masks for general first aid
- [Government Guidance](#) here will be followed.

Miscellaneous

Operators to follow Government guidance for office staff.

Card/contactless payment will be promoted.

Operators may want to consider additional steps for any clientele over 70/with underlying health conditions.

All external contractors are to follow Social Distancing and cleanliness Guidelines.

