Reopening Unmanned Fitness Facilities

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Fitness centers have become a standard amenity in many office and multifamily buildings. In a pandemic environment, the value of this amenity may depend less on the kinds of workout equipment it has and classes it offers and more about how well it is cleaned and disinfected and how safe people will feel using it.

There is no evidence that COVID-19 is spread through perspiration and sweat. Nonetheless, by their very nature, fitness facilities are filled with high-touch surfaces and encourage physical contact among patrons. Add to this the fact that fitness centers provided as in-house amenities often are not staffed. They rely on an honor system among patrons to practice and enforce hygiene measures and distancing standards. This can make the process of reopening these centers even more challenging.

The following pages contain:

* Guidance for reopening unmanned fitness centers provided as amenities in office and multifamily buildings.
* Suggested communication for tenants and residents who have access to these centers that can be customized for your building.

**Suggestions for Reopening Unmanned Fitness Facilities**

* Follow local and state guidelines for reopening gyms and fitness centers.
* Establish occupancy thresholds to limit the number of persons in the facility at one time in accordance with social distancing guidelines.
* Set up an online reservation or sign-up system with a set duration for workout periods (e.g., 60 minutes).
* Establish a no-guest policy; restrict use of the facility to tenants and residents of the building.
* Consider specific hours for older or other high-risk patrons. This can be especially beneficial in multifamily properties that have a multigenerational resident mix.
* Reconfigure the placement of fitness equipment at least six feet apart. Mark distances around equipment using tape.
* Remove hard-to-clean fitness items, such as hand weights, mats, and exercise balls.
* Post reminders of social distancing guidelines and handwashing hygiene throughout the facility.
* Require patrons to wipe down equipment after every use, and provide disinfectants and paper towels or wipes for this purpose. Post reminders to do this near all equipment.
* Set up hand sanitizer stations throughout the facility.
* Enhance cleaning protocols. Establish a disinfection routine at regular intervals throughout the day using appropriate disinfectants that meet CDC criteria.
* Offer group classes only if social distancing requirements can be met and there is no person-to-person contact. Consider offering classes outdoors where possible. Urge patrons to continue taking advantage of online workout sessions, yoga classes, and other virtual activities.
* Encourage patrons to pay attention to their personal health and stay home if they have a fever, are coughing or sneezing, display other symptoms, or if they have been knowingly been exposed to someone with COVID-19.
* Consider whether masks will be required of patrons, and communicate accordingly.
* Do not provide towels. Ask everyone to bring their own towel.
* Close locker rooms if physical distancing cannot be accommodated. Ask patrons to bring as few items as necessary and keep them in a gym bag.
* Close saunas and steam baths or limit them to one guest or family unit at a time.
* Close water fountains. Encourage patrons to bring their own water.
* Get fresh air into the facility by opening doors and windows and maximizing fresh air through the ventilation system.
* Place signs about hand washing hygiene in restrooms.
* Communicate to tenants and residents what is being done to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in the fitness center, the policies adopted for its operation, and their own responsibilities to follow and enforce those policies for the health and wellbeing of everyone.

**Suggested Communication to Tenants or Residents**

* If you are sick or have been around someone who is sick–stay home. Do not use the fitness facility.
* Wash your hands before entering the facility and when you leave, and use hand sanitizer throughout your visit.
* Keep your hands off your face–avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth when working out.
* Wear a face covering as you enter and leave the facility. Consider wearing a face covering during your workout
* Adhere to established occupancy restrictions and scheduling protocols.
* Attend virtual exercise classes and workout sessions where you can.
* Minimize touching of surfaces. Limit the items you touch to the items you use.
* Disinfect each piece of equipment when you are finished using it with the wipe provided, and dispose of the wipe appropriately.
* Honor six-foot social distancing guidelines at all times–when using equipment and walking throughout the facility. Avoid gathering with other patrons.
* Bring your own towel and water and keep them with you.
* Remember that we all bear responsibility for the health and wellbeing of each other and everyone who uses this facility and is part of this community. Respect the honor system.