



Back to Lifting: A Practical Guide to Returning to the Platform Safely

Returning to Training

Updated May 27, 2020

Acknowledgements

The following guide was created to assist USA Weightlifting members, club owners and event organizers to supply general guidelines and best practices when it comes to returning to sport. It is up to date as of May 27, 2020.

The recommendations contained herein are not intended or implied to be mandates or industry standards. Many of these recommendations are based upon current guidelines set forth by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other Federal government agencies. The USA Weightlifting Sports Medicine Society also supplied its expertise for this guide.

The knowledge surrounding COVID-19 is constantly changing and circumstances are different based on geographic region. USA Weightlifting strongly encourages all USA Weightlifting members, club owners and event organizers to adhere to their state and local guidelines when determining their own re-opening policies and procedures.

The following considerations are provided for general informational purposes only and are not intended as, and should not be relied upon as, specific medical or legal advice. You are strongly encouraged to consult with qualified medical personnel/public health officials for medical considerations and to local, state and federal orders and/or laws for legal considerations. If you use any considerations provided for herein, *you do so at your own risk and you specifically release from any and all liability* USA Weightlifting, and their directors, officers, employees, volunteers, and agents in connection with your use of the enclosed considerations.

Please contact USA Weightlifting at (719) 866-4508 or usaw@usaweightlifting.org with any questions or concerns.



USA WEIGHTLIFTING

Sports Medicine Society

SAFE RETURN TO TRAINING

INTRODUCTION: Since March 2020, the novel Coronavirus pandemic has stopped mass gatherings, including sporting events, closed local gyms, and altered air travel. As many areas in the United States start to re-open and the “shelter in place” mandate is lifted, many of our athletes and coaches are asking about guidelines to safe return to weightlifting training. Using the following institutions (NCAA, NSCA, WHO, CDC, PAWF and IWF) we have compiled the following document as a way to help guide athletes and coaches. Please realize that this document is by no means conclusive and maybe subject to change as medical knowledge of the epidemiology of COVID-19 pandemic evolves.

TRANSITION PERIODS: Especially for those athletes who have ben sedentary or not involved specifically in the sport of weightlifting, it is during then a period of “inactivity” that athletes are at greater risk of injury, exertional heat illness, exertional rhabdomyolysis and cardiorespiratory failure. This has been noted by the NCAA and the NSCA in collegiate athletes after not exercising over the summer and then going through maximum exertional efforts upon their return to sport. The collaborative paper between the NSCA and the NCAA Competitive Safeguard Committee (Strength Cond Journal, June 2019) is available in the link below. Their 18 page consensus statement nicely outlines and makes recommendations on safely return to training https://journals.lww.com/nsca-scj/Fulltext/2019/06000.CSCCa_and_NSCA_Joint_Consensus_Guidelines_for.1.aspx

- A. Recommendations for the prevention of most common exertional injuries
- B. Development and application of the following for each gym:
 - a. Emergency action plans (EAP) for each training venue/gym
 - b. Pre-participation medical exam or at least questionnaire in relation to COVID-19
 - c. Results of at-risk athletes (those who may have had COVID-19 and subsequent sequelae) made available to coaching, training staff and medical personnel.
- C. Adjustments of workouts to match environmental conditions especially with extreme heat, cold or humidity
- D. Recommendations that coaching and training staff be properly certified. We recognize the importance of the USAW coaching certification program in helping to improve the sport and decrease injury related to lifting.
- E. Limits to training volumes, training intensity and work-to-rest ratios that will allow coaches to design program for their athletes that are personalized and safe.
 - a. When designing the training programs keep in mind that some athletes might have had an inactive period over the last weeks. Returning immediately to a full blown program might result in injuries and affect lifters.
- F. Adjust hydration status, as some gyms may lift outdoors in heat. Athletes who have been lifting in cooler settings may need to increase their usual hydration status.



VENUE/GYM:

Recommendations that should be strongly considered in relation to venue.

- 1) Follow the local, regional, or state government and public health policies in your region.
- 2) Limit number of athletes to no more than 10 persons (spectators, staff or athletes) per 500 sq. ft. of open gym floor space, where each athlete can exercise with at least 6 feet or 2 meters between them. If no masks are being used, suggest 10-12 feet between platforms/workstations.
- 3) The bathrooms should have soap and running water. ALL athletes, staff should wash their hands after using the bathroom.
- 4) Encourage athletes to arrive to the gym on their sports clothes, so changing rooms can remain closed.
- 5) Open air, good ventilation, and larger areas decrease risk of infection.
- 6) Suggest everyone entering the gym (athletes, coaches, staff, and visitors) have their temperature taken via a non-contact Infrared thermometer.

ATHLETES:

- 7) Persons should wear masks when NOT exercising or cooling down. If an athletes' needs "spotting," the spotter should wear their own PPE.
- 8) Masks should be worn over nose/mouth, can be medical grade surgical disposable, N95, or some double-sided thick, tightly cloth woven material. Handkerchiefs, neoprene face shields (with unfiltered mouth/nose wholes), and elastic neck wrap or Face/neck gaiter tube bandana extended over the face may not be as effective. The Mask is generally thought to protect others from the wearer, NOT the wearer from other people.
- 9) An athlete should not "share" their bar and should disinfect after use. If an athlete shares a platform, they must each use a separate bar or disinfect between each use or may use disposable surgical gloves.
- 10) Athletes should use their own personal equipment (shoes, belts, wraps, chalk, muscle rub, etc.) and refrain from sharing or community use (unless properly sanitized)
- 11) Encourage the use of taped off "social distancing" training areas to designate a visual separation
- 12) Encourage individual chalk stations within separate training areas. This can be accomplished with zip lock bags with athlete names or plastic storage containers both are cheap and an easy way to limit contact in a shared space.

SANITATION:

- 13) Disinfection of bar may be used with disinfecting wipes, 60%-70% isopropyl alcohol spray, 1/3 cup bleach per gallon of water, or other disinfectant solutions approved by CDC. Bar needs to be dry before next person uses that bar to ensure proper disinfection.
- 14) Disinfection of gym and platforms should occur many times a day depending on volume of use.
- 15) The venue/gym should supply sanitation stations so athletes and coaches may easily clean equipment between use. The gym should perform their own sanitation of venue/equipment daily, if not more often.

