

Hit the
GYM



Pandemic Precautions in the Gym

The coronavirus pandemic is still raging across the U.S and while getting fit may help you weather the virus better if you were to contract it, there are special precautions to be taken in gyms and fitness centers.

HOW DOES COVID-19 SPREAD?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says that COVID-19 spreads mainly through person-to-person contact between people who are closer than six feet to one another. It can also be spread through respiratory droplets when someone who is infected coughs, sneezes or talks. You may also be able to get the virus by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it — such as gym equipment — and then touching your mouth, nose or eyes.

GET FIT, STAY SAFE

While in the gym, maintain your social distance of at least six feet. Your gym may have spaced out equipment or use special floor markings to help you out. You should also wear a cloth face covering in public, including at the gym. Be extra careful when putting it on and taking it off. Don't touch the mask while you are wearing it



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and don't touch your face while taking it off. Wash your hands before putting it on and after taking it off, and wash the mask after each use.

When it comes to equipment, make sure you wash all

gym equipment before and after you use it. Avoid touching your mouth, nose or eyes, especially after handling frequently touched items, such as free weights. Wash your hands frequently or use an alco-

hol-based hand sanitizer. And while it's important to keep hydrated, don't use the gym's water fountains. Instead, bring your own water bottle from home and keep it with you.

Some people cough or

sneeze when they start exerting themselves and that's OK. Just make sure you sneeze or cough into a tissue and throw the tissue away. Then wash your hands for 20 seconds with warm water and soap.

Get Started with Pilates

Pilates is a set of low-impact controlled movements that can improve flexibility, builds strength and develops body control and endurance.

If this sounds like a workout you might be interested in, keep reading for more tips on getting started with Pilates.

A HISTORY

Joseph Pilates developed a fitness system he called Contrology in the early 20th century. His method puts an emphasis on body alignment, breathing, developing a strong core and improving balance. The exercises are no longer called Contrology, of course, and instead bear Pilates' name. Most Pilates practices are governed by six principles — breathing, concentration, control, center, flow and precision.

BREATHING

Pilates saw full inhalation and exhalation as cleansing and invigorating. Pilates breathing means that the practitioner breathes deeply and fully into the back and sides of their rib cage. During an exhale, practitioners engage the deep abdominal and pelvic floor muscles and hold onto the engagement as they inhale again. Pilates attempts to coordinate this breathing with movement, much as in yoga.

CONCENTRATION

There's no wandering mind during Pilates practice, because the practice is heavy on form. The way each exercise is done is more important than the exercises themselves.

CONTROL

All Pilates exercises are done with careful control so that the muscles work to lift against

gravity and the resistance of any apparatus.

CENTERING

For practitioners to properly control their bodies, they need to find their center. The center usually refers to the group of muscles in the center of the body; those in the abdomen, back, hips, butt and thighs. Pilates movements begin from the center and move outward

toward the arms and legs.

FLOW

Pilates practitioners look for an economy of movement through the use of transitions. Exercises flow into each other to build strength and stamina.

PRECISION

The focus in Pilates is in doing one precise and perfect movement. The end goal is for

the precision to eventually become second nature and carry over into everyday life as a kind of grace.

What to Wear for Pilates
You'll need form-fitting clothing so that your instructor can see your movements better and your clothes don't get caught in any equipment. Try leggings or capris instead of shorts, which may ride up, and a fitted top or shirt.



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Proper Gym Etiquette

It can be intimidating walking into a gym the first time. The music, the machines and a lot of fitness-oriented strangers. Here are some rules of thumb to help you navigate a new gym or if you're visiting one for the first time.

PLAN YOUR WORKOUTS BEFOREHAND

Know what you want to do before you walk in the door. Bookmark any videos you want to watch and know what order you want to go in. You'll save yourself time, as well as others. Which brings us to ...

DON'T BE AN EQUIPMENT HOG

If there's any kind of crowd at all, don't dawdle at gym equipment. Get in, get set up and do your exercise. No staring at a nearby TV or posing for selfies. And if you're stretching or using free weights, make sure you're not setting up camp in a walkway.

WIPE IT DOWN

When you're done with that precious gym equipment, wipe it down. Especially during pandemics and cold and flu season.

PUT IT BACK

Once it's clean, put every-



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thing back where it belongs. If you're using free weights, put them back in the correct spot on the racks. If you're using mats, roll or fold them properly and put them back where they go.

BE FLEXIBLE ABOUT YOUR ROUTINE

Be ready to modify your routine if your equipment isn't

immediately available. Don't hover.

RESPECT PERSONAL SPACE

In fact, don't hover, ever. During the pandemic, we're supposed to be keeping at least six feet between each other. Also watch for others using equipment or you could end up with a broken toe

from a dropped weight.

OBEY THE HOUSE RULES

Read and follow the gym's own set of rules. This may include things like time limits on certain equipment or not dropping weights.

BRING A TOWEL

Towels are great tools in the gym, not only for wiping down

your own sweaty self, but also for claiming equipment. Nothing says still in use like a draped towel on the arm of the treadmill.

BE WELCOMING

Once you're used to coming to your gym, be welcoming of newcomers. Remember how nervous you were the first day and be willing to help others.

Get Started with Yoga

Yoga is a group of physical, mental and spiritual practices. It originated possibly as long as 3000 BC, but only came to the West in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In the U.S., yoga usually refers to the hatha yoga method of exercise.

ASANAS AND VINYASAS

As an exercise, yoga is practiced as a series of asanas connected by flowing sequences called vinyasas. An asana is a body posture that can be held comfortably with the practitioner experiencing no discomfort. A vinyasa is a smooth transition between asanas. Asanas and vinyasas often flow into one another, accompanied by breathing exercises.

TYPES OF YOGA

There are a huge variety of yoga practices you can choose from. Bikram yoga is an aerobic-style practice that takes place in heated rooms. Iyengar yoga emphasizes correct body alignment and working slowly. Sivananda is a more spiritual practice that includes chanting in Sanskrit and a vegetarian diet. Jivamukti yoga uses flowing exercises accompanied by music, chanting and the read-



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ing of scriptures. Kundalini yoga includes meditation, breathing exercises and chanting.

No matter the type of yoga, most classes often begin with a slower warm-up period, a series of more vigorous exercises and end with another slow-down, often into relax-

ation or meditation. A typical session lasts around an hour.

YOGA CLASS CHECKLIST

Most yoga practices take place in the form of a class at a local gym or fitness center. You can find a class by asking friends and family or looking around online. You can also

find practices you can do at home on apps or online videos.

Yoga doesn't usually require much special equipment, but you will need a few things.

- A comfortable set of workout clothing.
- A yoga mat.
- Straps and blocks for

some practices. If you go to a class, they may have some you can use for the duration.

- A yoga towel, especially if you want to try one of the styles done in a warm room.
- A good water bottle.
- A pair of socks or a hoodie if you get cold during the final relaxation poses.

Buying a Fitness Tracker

There's almost no end to the wearable technology out there that will track your movements and even your sleep. It can be overwhelming even to start looking, so we're making it easy for you by highlighting a few models for you to consider.

APPLE WATCH

If you want more than just a step counter and you have an iPhone, this may be where you want to go. They're pricey, but functional. The latest model even boasts a built in EKG to keep an eye on your heart.

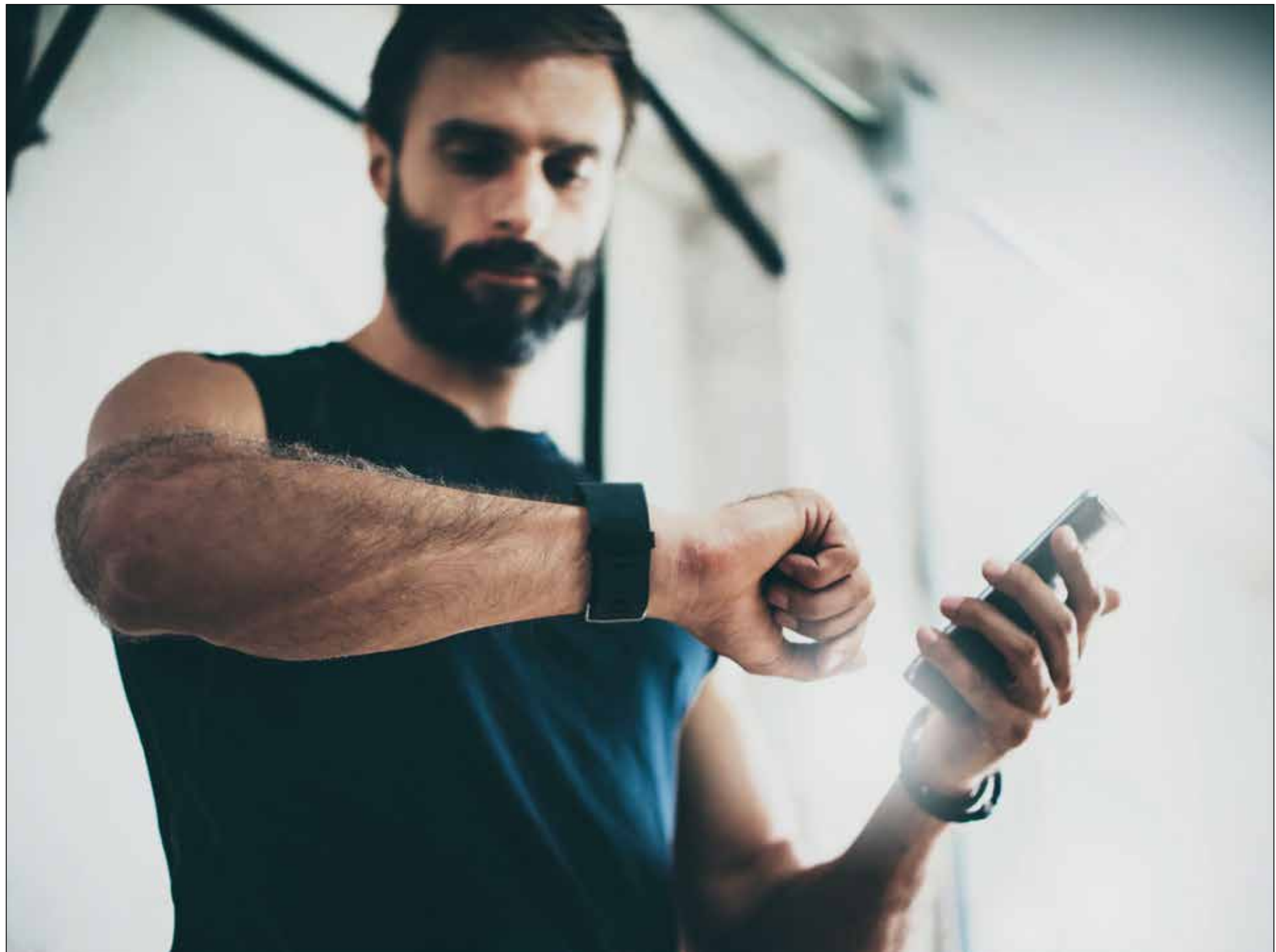
Apple Watch is available with cell data plans and without. Remember that without a cell plan, the watch relies on your phone for connectivity.

FITBIT CHARGE 4

With a seven-day battery life, the Fitbit Charge is a true powerhouse of a fitness tracker. It also tracks steps, heart rate, breathing, blood oxygen levels and has GPS built in. It's also swim proof.

GARMIN VIVOSMART 4

This sleek fitness band features a heart-rate monitor, step tracking, automatic exercise detection and counts reps



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for gym exercises.

SAMSUNG GALAXY FIT

If you're hitting the pool, this fitness tracker might be the one for you. It's waterproof up to 50 meters and also tracks steps and sleep, workouts, heart rate and displays notifications from your phone.

SAMSUNG GALAXY FIT E

The big factor here is the price — the Fit e comes in at less than \$40. It's a basic tracker that focuses on steps and sleep, with automatic workout tracking and a heart rate monitor.

Like the more fancy Galaxy Fit, it's also waterproof up to 50 meters.

OURA

New to the marketplace is Oura, a ring that focuses less on activity and more on your sleep. It tracks your resting heart rate while you sleep and rest during the day. The manufacturers don't suggest wearing it to the gym (it can scratch), but it does track body temperature, unlike

these other devices.

MOTIV

This is another smart ring that also monitors your heart rate for fitness. It's a titanium band that's waterproof up to 165 feet and designed to be worn all the time. Like the Oura, it tracks sleep, but it also tracks your fitness, too.

Get Started with Spin Class

Spin classes are indoor cycling classes that focus on endurance, strength, intervals, high intensity workouts and recovery. The classes use specialized indoor bikes with a weighted flywheel and can burn between 300-500 calories in an hour.

WHAT IS A CLASS LIKE?

Usually, the class consists of several participants led by an instructor. The instructor will lead the class through movements and positions designed to simulate terrain and situations that would occur if you were riding a bike outdoors. The instructor may use music, motivation and visualization, along with enthusiastic coaching, to get students through a ride to suit their goals and fitness level. The instructor will also provide technical advice designed to prevent injury.

Students can adjust the difficulty of the workout by varying the resistance on the flywheel or by changing their cadence (the speed at which they turn the pedals). The class usually consists of five core movements: the seated flat, the standing flat or running, jumps or lifts, a seated climb, and a standing climb.



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In all these movements, the cadence should remain below 110 revolutions per minute.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

Spin classes focus on the lower body, toning the legs, back and hips. But be careful and listen to the instructor. Improperly done exercises can

result in lower back or knee injuries can occur. Fortunately, spin class bikes have a lot of adjustment to help the rider keep a good form.

When standing next to the bike, the seat should come to the rider's hip and be set so that the knee and the ball of the foot are in line when the pedal is pointing forward. Less

experienced riders may want to set their handlebars higher to reduce back pain.

WHERE CAN I FIND A SPIN CLASS?

Look to your local gym and fitness centers. Try to pick one close to either home or work to give you less of an excuse to beg off. If you're still wary of

the coronavirus or public spaces in general, many fitness apps now offer virtual indoor cycling classes that you can take with your own indoor bike. Indoor bikes can range from a simple setup of your regular bicycle on an indoor frame to an expensive bike that comes with a virtual studio class.

Workout Recovery the Right Way

Now that you've hit the gym, asana'd your way to inner peace and spun the classes, it's time to let your tired muscles rest and recover. The ways to do that are almost as myriad as there are ways to work out. Here are a few tips for recovering from a workout the right way.

HYDRATE, HYDRATE, HYDRATE

You need lots of water before, during and especially after exercise. If water isn't your thing, you can try a sports drink or even a chocolate milk. Any kind of liquid will help your muscles repair themselves and build strength for your next workout.

GET PLENTY OF REST

Sleep is when your body repairs itself, including those muscles you just worked hard during Pilates. While you're working out, make sure to get between seven and eight hours of sleep a night and, if your schedule allows, the occasional afternoon power nap. Studies show that a quick 20-minute nap two hours after working out is enough to recharge your muscles without interrupting your rest at night.

EAT WELL

And that includes plenty of protein, a nutrient essential for muscle repair. Protein can be found in lean meats, eggs, Greek yogurt, cottage cheese and even some vegetables. Focus on snacking on high protein foods right after your workout and right before bed (remember, sleep is prime muscle repair time) to help

your muscles recover and alleviate soreness.

STRETCH

You should be stretching before and after each workout to prevent injury and help your muscles recover. Put 48 hours between workouts of each muscle group, and, during that time, focus on lower-impact workouts,

such as yoga.

MIND YOUR INJURIES

Remember to tend to injuries promptly and don't let your workout hurt in a bad way. Observe proper form when working out to prevent injuries; go for quality and not quantity in your workouts.

For minor injuries, remember the RICE method: rest, ice the injury to prevent swelling, apply a compression bandage and elevate the injury as much as possible.

Most workout injuries should heal in four weeks or less. If you're in pain for longer than that, or in severe pain at any point, seek medical attention promptly.

