

Exercising...Masked

Getting back to the gym safely and effectively

As we continue to follow CDC guidelines and slow the spread of COVID-19, we must learn to adapt to our old (or new) fitness regimens using face masks. It may be a temporary - but necessary inconvenience, there are always ways to make it a little bit closer to 'normal'. Consider the following tips to get the most out of your masked workout.



CHOOSING YOUR EXERCISE FACE MASK

Wearing a mask to workout will take some adjusting, being prepared with a breathable and comfortable mask can make it easier. Consider these tips to pick out your perfect mask:

- Avoid paper or surgical masks as they rapidly become wet when breathing vigorously into them. They can quickly lose their ability to block outgoing particles and become a breeding ground for bacteria on the skin.
- Cotton may feel more breathable but can also dampen easily. Instead, choose a mask made from breathable, synthetic materials to lessen moisture buildup.
- Breathable masks with two or less layers of fabric that will not bunch up or chafe during your workout are best to avoid constricted breathing and skin discomfort.

ADJUSTING YOUR WORKOUT/BREATHING

Modifying your workouts to require less O₂ uptake and CO₂ output can relieve breathing stress when exercising with a mask. Instead of performing vigorous cardio, HIIT routines or circuit-style workouts, use this time to perfect your technique. Perform the basics to build a solid foundation for a seamless return to sports or extreme workouts. Practice squatting, deadlifting, pushing and pulling movements with perfect form and lighter weights. Laying down the groundwork for safe technique will give a competitive edge as intensity and weights increase.

Exercising in a mask presents an increased amount of breathing resistance and can get you out of breath much quicker. Practicing an efficient breathing pattern is critical to exercise and becomes even more of a priority when exercising with a mask to avoid feeling dizzy or fainting.

Because of the increased airflow resistance, short shallow breaths won't cut it. No matter the activity, be sure you are taking full breaths through the nose, expanding the belly as you inhale and exhale fully.

