



# IAFF WELLNESS FITNESS AND PERFORMANCE FAQs



## **Should I continue to exercise during the pandemic?**

Absolutely. If you are already physically active, you should feel comfortable maintaining a moderate-intensity exercise routine that you are accustomed to — the benefits will extend to both your physical and mental health. However, this is not necessarily the time to push your physical limits and stress your immune system with longer duration, high-intensity activities.

## **Is it safe to run or bike outside?**

In general, yes — as long as you are maintaining an appropriate physical distance from others, including a partner who may be participating with you. Every attempt should be made to avoid crowded areas where it would not be possible to stay at least 6 feet from other people. If someone sneezes, coughs or breathes in your direction (or you in theirs), you (or they) can breathe in droplets with virus particles and you can be infected. It is also theoretically possible for these droplets to land on your hands and make their way into your body via touching your face. It may also be best practice to wear a mask to protect others from you should it not be possible to maintain physical distancing in all instances. In some areas, it may be mandatory to wear a mask out in public and you should make efforts to be familiar with state and local government orders. Finally, be aware of differing types of facemasks/coverings and restricted airflow or contained carbon dioxide that may create a physiological response.

## **Can exercise boost my immune system?**

Broadly speaking, yes. If you exercise regularly, you are likely experiencing the benefits of having a stronger and more effective immune system to combat several inflammatory stimuli. However, while it is increasingly clear that regular exercise can boost the immune system, it must also be noted that high-intensity, longer duration activities can depress our immune response acutely. In other words, it may be prudent to avoid high-intensity, long duration activities during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly if you are not accustomed to this type of exercise.

## **Could I use this time to start being more physically active?**

Yes, you can certainly start integrating lower-intensity, shorter duration activities into your daily routine, but now would not necessarily be the time to try higher intensity or long duration workouts that you are not accustomed to.

## **I love exercising in group environments, what should I do?**

You are not alone. Group exercise has helped millions of people become and stay active. It can be motivating to see others have fun and challenge themselves and energizing to know that you are not alone. Making a commitment to someone else can also keep you accountable, improve adherence and change your mindset. While we are all doing our part to slow the spread of COVID-19 by staying at home, it is important to distinguish between physical distancing and

social distancing. We can keep our distance AND stay connected. We can still support, motivate and challenge each other, be accountable and laugh with friends by sharing our at-home workouts. Several at-home exercise options can also be found at [Exercise At Home](#).

## What types of things could I do to exercise at home?

There really are countless options to maintain your exercise routine at home. In addition to an infinite number of bodyweight options (e.g., squat, lunge, good morning, push-up, inverted row), any piece of furniture, appliance, etc., can be used as exercise equipment. Tips to stay active while at home include:

- Create an at-home exercise routine. Create a dedicated exercise space (kitchen, office, backyard, garage, etc.) and schedule time during the day for you to be active (consider using the same time every day).
- Challenge your family and friends. Friendly competition or collaborative pursuits can help with motivation, adherence and mental health. We are better versions of ourselves when we stay connected.
- Commit to 5-10 minutes a day. During times of uncertainty and changing priorities, less could be more. Committing to something every day will help to maintain our physical and mental health in both the short and long term.

## What types of physical activities can I do with my kids?

Kids will see benefit from activities that involve challenges and creativity, and those that afford an opportunity to build physical literacy — the confidence and competence to perform fundamental patterns as skills such as running, jumping and throwing. However, the most important will be that they are fun. A few sample activities can be found [here](#).

## What can I do to keep my aging parents active while staying at home?

One of the most effective things for older adults is to maintain a similar routine — be active at the same times and be social at the same times, even if it does not involve the same activities. The key is to ensure that they are not more sedentary than usual. For example, if they are typically active for an hour in the morning, encourage them to get up and walk around their home (inside or outside while maintaining appropriate physical distancing) at the same time. If they are part of a social club and play cards, dance, sing, etc., multiple times a week — these same social connections should be encouraged.