



Return to Sports and Exercise during the COVID-19 Pandemic: An Overview of the Consensus Statement



COVID-19 has presented us with unprecedented challenges that may continue until better treatments or a vaccine are developed. Returning to sport and exercise following a period of prolonged physical distancing (*which can lead to a decrease in conditioning*) will present coaches and athletes with challenges as they resume training and practices. These recommendations are to describe best practice procedures based on a detailed consensus statement that addresses return to activity considerations. It is recommended that schools and coaches review these recommendations and refer to other documents for more detailed information.

1. **Follow Policies and Guidelines** as put forth by:
 - a. Federal, State, and Local Authorities (to include public health departments)
 - b. Your School District
 - c. Sport Governing Agencies (NFHS, IHSA, etc)
2. While most young individuals experience no or only mild symptoms related to COVID-19, due to the potential impact of the novel coronavirus on the lungs, heart, and kidneys, **athletes with a history of COVID-19 (or who currently have symptoms suggestive of COVID-19) must be CLEARED by their health care provider before resuming training.**
 - a. Documentation **MUST** be provided prior to continuing participation.
3. Timed fitness tests and maximal lifts **SHOULD NOT** be conducted during the first 2 weeks of return to activity.
4. **Develop training protocols that take into consideration any loss of conditioning that has occurred.** All workouts/practice plans should be written and provided to administrators in advance.
 - a. It is recommended to use the **50/30/20/10 rule for conditioning activities as guidelines**

Week	Reduction in Volume/Workout	Work to Rest Ratio
1	50%	1 : 4
2	30%	1 : 3
3	20%	Normal
4	10%	Normal
5	None – Normal with no restrictions	Normal

- a. It is recommended to use the **FIT rule for resistance training as guidelines.**

Element	Definition	Example	Recommendation
Frequency	# of sessions/week for a specific muscle group or movement type	5 training sessions, but only 3 lower body sessions	Week 1: ≤ 3 Sessions Week 2: ≤ 4 Sessions
Intensity Relative Volume (IRV)	IRV = Sets x Reps x % 1RM (% of 1 Rep Max)	3 sets x 10 reps x 0.50 1RM = 15 IRV	Week 1: IRV = 11-30 Week 2: IRV = 11-30
Time of Rest Interval	Work to Rest Ratio (W:R) between sets	30 secs to complete set & 90 secs of rest = 1:3 W:R	Week 1: W:R = 1:4 Week 2: W:R = 1:3

5. **Multi-sport athletes SHOULD NOT participate in multiple training sessions in one day** for the first 2 weeks.
6. **Heat Acclimatization** – Exercising in the heat presents additional challenges for the body (especially when athletes have undergone a loss of conditioning). **Coaches MUST following the [IHSA Fall sports practice model.](#)**
7. If training is paused for more than 5-7 days due to reinstatement of “stay at home orders” or an individual or team must quarantine, consideration should be given to:
 - a. Athletes restarting or extending the heat acclimatization process prior to the resumption of activity.
 - b. Athletes restarting or extending timelines for resuming training activities (ie. 50/30/20/10 & FIT guidelines).
8. **Hydration** – Access to fluids should be no different than pre-COVID-19 training (free access to fluids at all times), with the exception that individuals should not share water bottles.
 - a. Hydration stations (water cows, water trough, water fountains, etc.) may be utilized but must be cleaned appropriately before and after every practice/contest.

Documents of Reference:

- [Return to Sports and Exercise during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
- [GUIDANCE FOR OPENING UP HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETICS AND ACTIVITIES](#)
- [Korey Stringer Institute – COVID-19 Return to Activity](#)