

Stay Safe!

Covid is the new normal: looking forward on how to navigate health facilities in the new normal. How to continue making health clubs as risk-free as possible in 2022.

By **Healthcare Business Today Team** - December 2, 2021

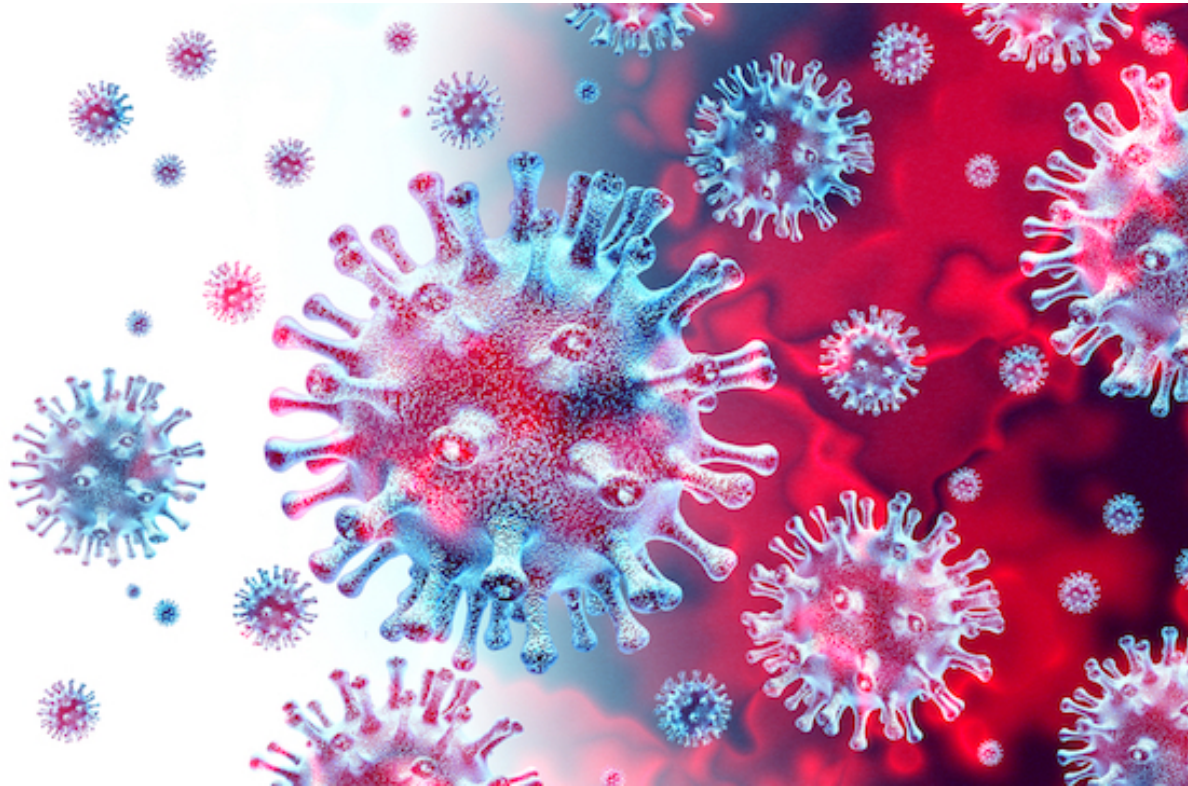


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By Marshal Sterio, CEO, [Surgically Clean Air](#)

COVID was a stress test on our society like nothing in recent memory. It made us reconsider virtually every aspect of our lives; the way we work, the way we shop, the way we interact with one another. And it made us pay particular attention to the quality of the air we breathe, especially when we're indoors with other people. The importance of quality HVAC filtration suddenly occurred to a large portion of the population, and it will continue to be front of mind even as vaccine rollouts show us a way past the pandemic.

Gyms and health clubs were some of the first businesses forced to close their doors in March of 2020, and many of them were unable to open – or were only able to open at limited capacity – through the lockdowns that have defined our lives since the virus first emerged. As a result, it's been the most challenging year on record for the fitness industry. But now it's time to make a comeback. And that starts with trust, which these days goes hand in hand with demonstrable sanitation and high-quality air filtration.

As vaccines allow local governments to roll back COVID safety restrictions, there are many areas in North America that are back to "business as usual," with no more mask mandates or social distancing restrictions of any kind. This presents unique challenges for the health club industry, because people aren't just sharing space, they are sharing equipment and they are touching common surfaces. There's simply no way to avoid this in a gym setting. So what can forward-thinking health club owners do to not only prevent the spread of disease, but also create an environment where patrons feel that their well-being is valued?

For starters, they can enforce social distancing, even if local and state regulations don't require it. Even before the pandemic, no one liked bumping up against another sweaty club member while working out, and right now it's even more of a problem because all of us are conditioned to protect our personal space. Clubs should consider implementing policies that allow people to sign up for specific workout times as opposed to just showing up. It's a little bit less convenient, but it also conveys a message to members that the club has their best interests in mind.

Another important step is to make sure that all equipment is properly disinfected between uses. Hopefully, everyone already wipes down their workout benches with a towel, but in the post-pandemic era, health club employees need to be fanatical about using disinfectants to thoroughly clean services that will be touched by multiple people during the course of a day. This may seem like overkill, but with the growing threat of the COVID-19 delta variant, we can't afford to let our guard down. Nobody wants to see health clubs close again because of the threat of the virus.

Ventilation is also absolutely essential. A number of health clubs kept their windows open and moved equipment around to get as much fresh air in as possible. Unfortunately, that's not always possible because of local weather and other factors. No one wants to work out next to an open window in Minneapolis in the middle of January! The next best thing is making sure that ventilation systems are keeping as much clean air circulating as possible, and that includes supplementing existing HVAC systems with powerful standalone filtration units. These can have the added benefit of being a noticeable change – upgrading your HVAC filters behind the scenes is great, but when a gym member sees a dedicated air filter, they'll know you're looking out for their health and well being.

There is no single recipe for bouncing back from the pandemic. Every health club is different, and what works for a gym in an apartment complex may not be the right approach for a standalone club in a suburban shopping mall. But by focusing on basic approaches to safety, health club operators can let their members know that their top priority is safety and wellness.

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