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Guidance

Guidance for the public on the phased return of outdoor sport and recreation in England

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What we're doing

We are increasing people's access to outdoor physical activity for the purpose of health and wellbeing. This includes use of outdoors sports courts and facilities.

You can only exercise alone, with members of your household, or with 1 other person from outside your household while keeping 2 metres apart at all times.

For example, this means that you cannot have 5 people from 1 household plus 1 person from outside the household playing sport together. But you can have 2 people, from 2 different households, as long as they are staying a minimum of 2 metres apart.

Check in advance if the facilities you want to use have reopened.

If exercising in the countryside remember to follow the countryside code and act responsibly.

Once you are home remember to wash your hands.

If you are symptomatic, living in a household with a possible COVID-19 infection or if you are classified as extremely vulnerable on health grounds, the guidance is that you should remain at home.

What has changed

The government has announced that people can go outside more than once a day for exercise, alone, with members of their household, or with 1 person from outside of their household as long as they are following social distancing guidelines. You must still only exercise in groups of no more than 2 people, unless you are exercising exclusively with members of your household.

Outdoor sports courts and other outdoor sporting activities are permitted to reopen if those responsible for them are ready to do so and they can do so safely, following public health guidance. Indoor facilities such as clubhouses should be kept closed, apart from toilets and throughways. Clubhouse bars and restaurants can also offer take-away services (see below for more detail).

Outdoor gyms, playgrounds and outdoor swimming pools will remain closed.

Travelling for physical activity

You can now travel for physical activity. Ideally use your nearest, local appropriate venue to reduce pressure on transport infrastructure. But you can travel to outdoor open space irrespective of distance. You shouldn't travel with someone from outside your household unless you can practise social distancing - for example by cycling. You should consider all other forms of transport before using public transport.

Leaving your home - the place you live - to stay at another home is not allowed.

To help keep yourself and your fellow passengers safe, you should not travel if you: are experiencing any coronavirus symptoms are self-isolating as a result of coronavirus symptoms or sharing a household with somebody with symptoms are clinically extremely vulnerable

See the government's safer travel guidance for passengers (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers>) for further information.

Clinically vulnerable people (such as people aged 70 and over)

The advice for clinically vulnerable groups (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing>) remains the same. If you are in this group you are advised to stay at home as much as possible and, if you do go out, take particular care to minimise contact with others outside your household.

If you are living in a household with a possible COVID-19 infection or if you are classified as extremely vulnerable on health grounds, the guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>) is that you should remain at and exercise at home

If you have children with you

You can bring your children with you to exercise. You can exercise with members of your household, and it's important that children have as many chances to be as active as possible.

If you are going out as a household group, you cannot gather with other individuals from outside your household.

But please remember that if you have children with you, you are responsible for supervising them at all times and in line with social distancing guidelines.

Using sport facilities

Sports Courts including basketball and tennis courts, bowling greens and playing spaces like golf courses (public and private) can re-open. Other outdoor sports facilities such as angling can also resume.

All forms of water sports practised on open waterways, including sailing, windsurfing, canoeing, rowing, kayaking, surfing, paddle-boarding and the use of privately owned motorised craft (in line with the guidance issued by the relevant navigation authority) are allowed.

All of these activities must only be undertaken alone, with members of your household or, providing you are following social distancing guidelines, with just 1 other person from outside your household. For example it would not be possible to form a double or Canadienne canoe, kayak or rowing boat with someone outside your household as it would not be possible to abide by the social distancing guidelines.

Outdoor gyms, playgrounds and outdoor swimming pools will remain closed due to the higher risk of close contact and touching surfaces.

Timetable for reopening

Sport facilities are now allowed to open.

Each venue, including council-owned sports facilities, will make their own decisions about when their facilities are ready to open and can be operated safely. Please check ahead on websites and social media to make sure before you arrive at a facility that it has reopened and what advice they are offering users, for example if there is a booking system.

The government has also published high level guidance for elite athletes and professional sportsmen and women (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-phased-return-of-sport-and-recreation/elite-sport-return-to-training-guidance-step-one>), in order to allow them resume performance training under new guidance at official training venues.

Government is working with National Governing Bodies of sport to determine what additional and specific guidance may be needed in future

Sharing equipment

It is a decision for facility managers whether or not they hire out equipment.

We would expect them to follow sensible precautions and clean in between users, as well as the safely working guidance.

Where possible we recommend that you limit sharing of equipment, for example you should use your own tennis racquet, golf club or basketball, but if you do, practice strict hand hygiene.

If you are sharing equipment, including balls, you should wash your hands thoroughly before and after use.

Changing rooms

Indoor facilities, apart from toilets and through-ways should be kept closed.

Personal trainers and coaching

One on one personal training or coaching is permitted if outside and remaining a minimum of 2 metres apart.

Bars and restaurants

Bars and restaurants, including any food or drink facilities inside a clubhouse must remain closed until further notice. Take-away services can be offered, but any hot or cold food must be consumed off the premises, outside of the building.

Toilets and through-ways may be kept open, but guidance on hygiene (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-guidance>) should be followed.

Individual sports

Athletics

Athletics tracks can re-open, but this is at the discretion of the facility and must be done in a way that adheres to guidance on social distancing.

Fishing

You can now go fishing but only alone, with members of your household, or with 1 other person a minimum of 2 metres apart. You should always follow social distancing guidelines when encountering others.

Tackle shops must remain closed (as most other sports shops) but can operate remotely via deliveries or 'click and collect' services.

Golf

You can play golf providing you only meet up with 1 other person from a different household and observe social distancing guidelines, remaining a minimum of 2 metres apart.

Horse riding

You can ride a horse, providing that you are alone, with members of your own household or alone with 1 other person from a different household. You should observe social distancing where possible when encountering other riders or the public.

You are allowed to visit venues like a riding club to exercise. You should only do so alone, with members of your household or with 1 person from another household as long as you can remain 2 metres away from them. You should check ahead to ensure that these facilities are open and prepared to receive visitors.

Lawn bowls and croquet

You can play lawn bowls and croquet where facilities have reopened, but you can only take part in these activities by yourself, or with members of your household or with 1 person outside of your household, as long as you are able to maintain social distancing.

Swimming

Outdoor swimming pools cannot open at this time.

Tennis

You can play tennis providing you only meet up with 1 other person from a different household and observe social distancing guidelines, remaining a minimum of 2 metres apart.

Water sports

You can go to the beach as long as you are alone, with your household, or with 1 other person from outside your household and staying 2 metres apart at all times. You should not share a private vehicle with anyone outside your own household and you should follow social distancing guidelines when encountering others.

All forms of water sports practised on open waterways, including sailing, windsurfing, canoeing, rowing, kayaking, surfing, paddle-boarding and the use of privately owned motorised craft (in line with the guidance issued by the relevant navigation authority) are allowed.

You are allowed to visit venues like a sailing club to exercise. You should only do so alone, with members of your household or with 1 person from another household as long as you can remain 2 metres away from them. You should check ahead to ensure that these facilities are open and prepared to receive visitors.