

# Every Californian deserves access to safe exercise.

Fitness center closures have started a health equity crisis in California communities. Many communities lack alternatives to exercise because:

- Many families are unable to afford a home gym.
- Outdoor activity is not safe in areas with poor air quality, which disproportionately impacts lower income neighborhoods and communities of color in California.
- Wildfire season and high heat have made outside exercise unfeasible in many areas.
- Californians with disabilities rely on their gyms for specific ADA equipment.

**Unfortunately, many communities where home gyms and outdoor exercise is not feasible are the same communities that are already disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.** Exercise is an essential part of health and wellness and must be recognized by the State as such. It is critical that fitness centers that meet space and safety requirements be allowed to open and provide Californians with vital access for safe exercise.



## EXERCISE IS ESSENTIAL FOR:

### PHYSICAL HEALTH

Lockdowns have led to 32% reduction in physical activity among individuals who were physically active.<sup>1</sup>

In California, physical inactivity is the highest among Black and Latino residents, at 23% and 27%, respectively.<sup>2</sup>

The obesity rate in California is 25.8%, but that number jumps to 33% for Latinos, 40% for Blacks.<sup>3</sup>

Physical activity is vital to brain health, weight management, reducing disease, strengthening your bones and muscles.

Regular physical activity is beneficial for cardiovascular health and frequent exercise is associated with a decrease in cardiovascular mortality as well as the risk of cardiovascular disease.

### MENTAL HEALTH

53% of US adults reported that their mental health has been negatively impacted due to the coronavirus.<sup>4</sup>

Research shows that exercise reduces anxiety and appears as effective as psychotherapy for treating mild to moderate depression.

A new CDC survey found the coronavirus pandemic has increased levels of anxiety and depressive disorders, substance use and suicidal ideation among high-risk populations, including young people, racial and ethnic minorities, essential workers and caregivers.<sup>5</sup>

1 in 4 young adults have also contemplated suicide during the pandemic.<sup>5</sup>

## COVID-19 PROTECTION

- Exercise may prevent patients from developing acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS), which is one of the deadliest COVID complications. 45 percent of patients who develop COVID-related ARDS will die.<sup>6</sup>
- People with obesity are more likely than normal-weight people to have other diseases that are independent risk factors for severe COVID-19, including heart disease, lung disease, and diabetes.<sup>7</sup>
- People with obesity who contracted SARS-CoV-2 were 113% more likely to land in the hospital, 74% more likely to be admitted to an ICU, and 48% more likely to die.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cambridge.org/engage/coe/article-details/5eb2056d7a31fc00183d05db>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/annual/measure/Sedentary/state/CA>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/annual/measure/Obesity/state/CA>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.kff.org/report-section/the-implications-of-covid-19-for-mental-health-and-substance-use-issue-brief/>

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6952a1.htm?s\\_cid=mm6952a1\\_w](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6952a1.htm?s_cid=mm6952a1_w)

<sup>6</sup> <https://news.virginia.edu/content/exercise-may-protect-against-deadly-covid-19-complication-research-suggests>

<sup>7</sup> <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/obr.13128>