

## Dance Guidelines during COVID-19

September 2020

Compiled by Melody Hrubes, Jason Hu, Julie Kirchen; edited by Ralph Manchester, Deanna McBroom

- These guidelines for the mitigation of the risk for dance during COVID-19 are supplementary to any federal, state, local or institutional regulations.
- These guidelines apply to any situation in which two or more dancers are in close proximity.
- These guidelines will be updated as new information becomes available.

### General recommendations

- Outdoor lessons/rehearsals/performances may pose a lower risk of disease transmission than indoor.
- Maintaining ventilation that brings in outdoor air in class, rehearsal, and performance spaces at or above 3 air exchanges per hour may reduce the risk of contagion. Consult with HVAC technicians for assistance.
- The use of UV light and HEPA (MERV 13 or higher) filters in indoor spaces may reduce the risk of contagion.
- Dance studios should undergo appropriate cleaning; SARS-CoV-2 can survive on some metal surfaces for 3 days or more, so simply letting metallic surfaces sit untouched overnight does not eliminate the virus.
- Consider dividing large groups into smaller ensembles to better allow for social distancing.
- Wearing of surgical-type masks is required initially; this requirement may relax as disease restrictions lessen in a locality.
- No unnecessary talking among participants. No loud talking; leaders consider using a microphone.
- No sharing of paper choreography instructions or other physical items.
- Plan for safe social distancing as participants enter/leave the space.
- Communicate expectations of compliance with safety protocols to participants and parents.
- Conduct a Covid-19 risk assessment at each lesson/rehearsal/performance. All should complete a symptom checklist prior to each session.

### Risk levels:

- **Blue:** no known increased risk over normal daily activities
- **Yellow:** probable increase in risk over normal daily activities
- **Red:** real world evidence of spread of disease associated with this activity

### Levels of evidence:

- Level 1: strong real-world research showing benefit of the recommendation for dancers
- Level 2: laboratory research showing benefit of the recommendation for dancers
- Level 3: expert opinion based on current public health advice and medical expertise

In general, the **risk level for most dance activities** when two or more dancers are in a room together is **yellow**. This mildly elevated risk of transmitting infection is due to (a) the increased breathing (ventilatory volume) that dancing requires, which creates more respiratory droplets and aerosol

particles, (b) the close proximity that dancing often requires and (c) the inability to wear a mask continuously while performing more demanding choreography.

Initially, **when small groups of dancers are first allowed to gather again**, the following guidelines are recommended (Level of evidence 3):

- Small groups (< 10) may be allowed in the studio with social distancing measures in place (consider alternating schedule); dancers continue training at home as well.
- Criteria for participation in group training sessions: see Appendix A.2
- Arrival and social distancing: see Appendix A.3
- Dancers should maintain a distance of at least 10 feet apart during activity
- No activities that require direct or indirect contact including: partnering, tactile cueing, direct floor work or touching of the same equipment
- Masks are required at all times inside the studio – this may preclude more vigorous choreography
- Frequent cleaning of studios and common spaces: Appendix A.4

**As larger groups (10 to 50?) are allowed to gather**, some restrictions can be relaxed (Level of evidence 3):

- Criteria for participation in group training sessions: Appendix A.2
- Precautions listed above should continue, but now allowing movement across the room. Dancers should maintain 6 feet distance apart standing side by side in one line and allow each group to complete the combination to the end of the room prior to the next group starting.
- Masks should be worn at all times.
- Frequent cleaning of studios and common spaces: Appendix A.3

**Once gyms and larger facilities are allowed to open with no limitations on group size** (ideally, because a vaccine is available), a return to near-normal dancing will be possible (Level of evidence 3):

- Activities with direct and indirect contact are permitted including partnering.
- Masks might not be necessary.
- Continue to educate staff and dancers regarding COVID-19 symptoms.
- Continue to monitor the health of staff and dancers.
- Continue standard infection control and vaccination (if available).

#### **Appendix A: Return to Studio Recommendations**

1. Caution when leaving home (follow CDC/WHO recommendations for appropriate reasons to leave home and proper personal protection) – wear masks.
2. Criteria for entering the studio:
  - No signs or symptoms of COVID-19 (Appendix B) in the past 14 days.
  - If a dancer or staff member has had COVID-19, then s/he needs a clearance note from his/her doctor prior to return to the studios.
  - Dancers who have traveled back to their company city should quarantine for 14 days before coming to the studios and continue with training in their home.
  - No close or sustained contact with anyone who is sick within 14 days of starting group training.
  - Temperature and/or symptom check prior to entering the studio, both recorded for each dancer and staff member in a log.
  - Use no-touch thermometer. If temperature is > than 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit, the individual must go home, monitor symptoms and contact a physician.

- Ask about symptoms from Appendix B and record in log (or use an electronic symptom review). If any symptoms are present, the individual must return home and contact a physician
3. Where possible, have one designated doorway for entrance, one designated doorway for exit.
    - Dancers should be scheduled in staggered arrival at studio to minimize congregating at the entrance. While waiting to be cleared, they should maintain a minimum of 6 feet apart, or wait outside.
    - Once cleared to enter, go directly to the designated area, removing outside clothing and placing it in an individual bag.
    - Showers on site should be discouraged. If that is not an option, they should maintain social distancing.
    - Dancers should try to enter and leave the studios with dance clothes under street clothes. The number of people in restrooms and dressing rooms needs to be limited to allow for social distancing and frequent cleaning.
  4. Cleaning
    - Barres should be cleaned immediately after use.
    - Floors and any other areas touched by anyone should be cleaned before the next class at a minimum. *Please see TFODH informational paper on COVID-19 FAQ for dancers and dance companies returning to the studios for suggestions on cleaning vinyl dance floors. Bleach should not be used on marley floors.*
    - Refer to the CDC cleaning recommendations for further details and other cleaning and disinfecting guidelines: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>

#### **Appendix B: COVID-19 signs and symptoms**

1. Fever > 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or 38 degrees Celsius
2. Cough, usually dry
3. Shortness of Breath
4. Sore Throat
5. Headache
6. Chills
7. Congestion
8. Muscle and joint pain that are unexplained
9. Nausea or vomiting
10. Loss of sense of smell
11. Diarrhea
12. Oxygen saturation of < 93% with a reliable pulse oximeter taken by a health care provider

#### **Appendix C: Recommended practice**

- **Barre** Dancers need to stand at least 6 feet (2 meters) apart, roughly 43 square feet (4 square meters) per dancer; consider marking this with tape
  - o Wipe down the barre before and after each use Dynamic exercises with larger movement should be avoided to minimize air turbulence in the room
- **Center Work**
  - o For stationary center work, dancers should be able to maintain 8-10 feet distance.
  - o Normal breathing should be encouraged over forced breath cues, as forced exhalation spreads larger droplets farther distances
- **Across the Floor**

- Dancers should avoid following right behind each other; it is safer to work next to each other. If dancers travel directly behind each other, they are in the slipstream where droplets remain suspended. To avoid contact, dancers need to allow even further distance.
- Dancers should maintain 6 feet distance apart standing side by side in one line and allow each group to complete the combination to the end of the room before the next group starts.
- Dancers should be reminded to maintain a distance of at least 6 feet when waiting to go across the floor and after completing the combination.
- **Air exchange & quality**
  - Open windows and doors to try to maximize improved air circulation.
  - Consider a delay of at least 10 minutes between classes to allow for cleaning.
  - As the virus is thought to be less virulent in humid conditions, monitor air conditioning and encourage a more humid environment.
  - Avoid dancers exiting and entering the studios at the same time.
- **Music**
  - Live musicians should be assigned to a consistent studio since disinfecting instruments may be difficult. Stationary instruments should be cleaned appropriately between musicians.
  - Touch points on sound equipment should be cleaned before and after use.
  - Consider the volume of music. The louder the music, the louder the instructor will have to project, potentially causing droplets to travel further.
- **General recommendations**
  - Frequent hand washing and use of disinfectant is essential both upon arrival/departure .
  - Face masks should be worn when social distancing is difficult for logistical reasons. (onsite medical/physical therapy care, live musician in a studio, staff cleaning surfaces)
  - Only individual and personal training equipment should be used. (mats, stretch bands, etc.)
  - All physical therapy or training roomequipment must be disinfected between uses. Dancers should not congregate in the company physical therapy spaces and gyms. The number of dancers permitted in these spaces may need to be limited depending on the phase of reintegration. Further precautions need to be in place to allow for clinicians to use PPE. Additional time should be allotted for full cleaning of the clinic between patients for stages 3 and 4 as it is difficult to promote social distancing precautions with physical therapy. On-site physical therapy treatment should be conducted via telehealth prior to stage 3.
  - Cleaning should follow up to dateCDC recommendations at all times. Any areas that are frequently touched such as barres, door handles, light switches, elevator buttons, stair railings, floors, music controls or instruments should be cleaned multiple times daily.
- **Companies need to consider the timing of their end goal.** Does it make sense to bring dancers back into the studios to help condition them if it is not possible and safe to perform for audiences for months? There will need to be a period of time to help dancers fully recondition after such an extended and unusual layoff. Since dancers have had to condition in smaller spaces, on different floor surfaces, and with varied instruction, there will need to be an appropriate and graded progression back to full dancing that will require a minimum of 4-6 weeks depending on the company and the ability of the dancers to work on jumps, pointe and the upper body strength necessary for partnering.
  - Highly encourage dancers to disinfect their personal cell phones frequently.

- Bring multiple masks. While it may be uncomfortable at first, you should wear a mask the entire time you're in the studio. Dial down the intensity of your dancing if you're feeling short of breath, lightheaded or dizzy, but know that your body will adjust to exercising with a mask over time. If your mask becomes wet from sweat or heavy breathing, change it out for a clean, dry mask.

(Source: <https://www.dancemagazine.com/coronavirus-studio-safety-2646053114.html?rebellitem=9#rebellitem9>)

### Other Resources

- Ensure adequate trash cans for tissues.
- Dancers must be encouraged to shower and wash their rehearsal clothing immediately upon returning to home. (Source: <https://www.nfhs.org/media/3812337/2020-nfhs-guidance-for-returning-to-high-school-marching-band-activities.pdf>)
- Individuals should wash their hands for a minimum of 20 seconds with warm water and soap before touching any surfaces or participating in class/rehearsals. (Source: <https://www.nfhs.org/media/3812337/2020-nfhs-guidance-for-returning-to-high-school-marching-band-activities.pdf>)
- If doors are used to access the training facility, plan to prop them open during usage hours. (Source: <https://www.ussoccer.com/playon/guides/phase-1-grassroots>)

**If doors cannot be propped open**, use a sleeve/covered hand or elbow to open.

- Sanitize hands following contact with door handles.

**Participants should wait in their cars** until their specific time to enter the facility. It is recommended that only the participant departs the vehicle. It is recommended that the driver either leaves the training facility or stays in the parking lot, remaining in the vehicle and observing all social distancing guidelines.

(Source: <https://www.ussoccer.com/playon/guides/phase-1-grassroots>)

### After Class

- Establish the amount of time (“15 minutes”) that dancers have to pack up and exit the facility.
- Communicate verbally and with signage.
- Consistently enforce time limit.
- Groups of dancers or family members should not linger in lobbies/entryways. (Source: <https://www.usfigureskating.org/news/article/returning-rinks>)

### Physical Considerations

- Due to stay-at-home guidelines throughout the country, many dancers have been unable to train and have been less active while at home. Players may not be physically prepared to return to full intensity training and as a result, are at greater risk for injury or illness should they be placed in a full-intensity training environment.
- Trainings are recommended to be no longer than 60 minutes during Phase I.
- Dance teachers should carefully assess their dancers’ fitness levels to best plan for and manage the volume, intensity and frequency of early return-to-play trainings.
- Do not do “too much, too soon.” Avoid greater risk of injury and illness by gradually reintroducing players to play in a safe and progressive manner.
- Dance teachers should plan to progress to full intensity training over 2-4 weeks. (Source: <https://www.ussoccer.com/playon/guides/phase-1-grassroots>)

### **Articles on Acclimatization**

<https://www.dancemagazine.com/dance-studios-after-covid-2646006493.html?rebellitem=1#rebellitem1>

### **Return to on-ice training checklist for figure skaters – Summary below:**

- Go slow. Plan 6-8 weeks to return to a normal training load.
- Athlete should devote first 4-6 weeks to build/maintain:
  - o Mobility, stability, flexibility
  - o Agility, balance, coordination
  - o Strength, power, endurance
- Create a plan for a dynamic warm-up and post training recovery.
- Plan a weekly skating workload
  - o Focus first on skating skills.
  - o Allow the mind-body to “re-connect” first 1-2 weeks.
  - o Monitor introduction of jumps/lifts. (Remember on-ice landing impact forces are far greater than jumps off-ice.)
  - o Progressively increase workload
- Increase either jump-load or training intensity by 10% each week until safe training volume is met

(Source: <https://www.usfigureskating.org/news/article/returning-skating-programs-and-disciplines>)

*Please also continue to refer to the CDC, OSHA, WHO and your local public health authorities to make the safest and most prudent decisions for your company. These recommendations are not meant to take the place of the advice of a medical professional.*