



MFA Statement on Coronavirus Pandemic

As the new coronavirus spreads throughout the US, it is disrupting many medical association meetings and conferences. After much thought and discussion, we have made the difficult decision to **cancel the MFA Regional Conferences in Elkhart, IN (April 15-17) and Jackson, TN (May 20-22)** and **we will not be planning a Northeast Regional Conference** for June. With many of our MFA member facilities facing travel bans and increased pressure on their time as this health crisis is changing so rapidly, we felt it would be irresponsible to hold an event at this time for our members and sponsors. If you had registered for either Conference, we are currently processing full refunds this week. If you paid via credit card, we will refund the card. If you paid via check, we will issue you a refund check.

We will hold our **online Regional Conference on Thursday, March 26**, with **four webinars** that day. Everyone is welcome! We are also reaching out to our Regional Conference speakers to see if they would be interested in sharing their knowledge in a future MFA webinar. We currently have two more **webinars scheduled for March 18 and 25. Stay tuned to our website and email for a webinar update.** As your Medical Fitness Association, we are doing everything we can to offer you multiple opportunities for your continuing education!

At this time, our **Annual Conference**, to be held in Baltimore, MD on Nov 3-5, **is still on.** We will continue to diligently monitor this situation through the CDC. If anything changes, we will let you know immediately. In light of this unknown, we are pleased to offer a **100% risk-free cancellation policy** for our 2020 Annual Conference. If the Annual Conference needs to be cancelled, you will receive a 100% refund of your registration fee. We will endeavor to make that decision by October 2nd. At this point, we have a robust agenda and look forward to some great networking!

While member facilities have increased their outreach to their own members, we encourage you to work with your facility's or hospital's marketing/public relations department. This is an opportunity to support your local community by reassuring them on how you are handling the coronavirus and to support your members who are putting their memberships on hold by providing them with ideas for exercising at home. It's also an opportunity to raise awareness in your community as a medical fitness thought leader. Here are a couple examples:

Article on a fitness facility in CT: <https://www.wtnh.com/news/health/coronavirus/local-gyms-take-steps-to-keep-members-safe-amid-coronavirus-outbreak/>

ACE's article on "Top 25 At-Home Exercises": <https://www.acefitness.org/education-and-resources/lifestyle/blog/6593/top-25-at-home-exercises/>

We'd like to thank everyone who participated in our **COVID-19 Response Survey**. There is still time to participate in the survey. We will be sending out the preliminary results today. The full report will be sent out by this Friday, 3/20. One of the many benefits of being a Medical Fitness Association member is that you have the opportunity to learn what other medical fitness facilities are doing without handling the legwork yourself!



The following tips have been collected from the CDC and the Surgeon General. Please feel free to share this list with other fitness facilities in your area.

1. COVID 19 is, or soon will be, prevalent in our communities.
2. Some facilities are considering closing for a day or two to completely sanitize their facilities, or closing in response to a local outbreak of COVID-19. Use your judgement and advice from your own healthcare system partners as to your individual facility response. If you do remain open, strongly encourage your members to leave an empty piece of equipment between them and the next person as a practical way to practice social distancing.
3. While increased vigilance is strongly encouraged, we should encourage a calm, fact-driven response. Avoid panic and help calm down your member's fears by getting ahead of messaging. Be a source of information and demonstrating best practices for sanitizing, hand washing/sanitizing and modeling the behavior we want our members to emulate.
4. Employees should be strongly encouraged to wash hands at least hourly, or after touching machines, or potentially infected surfaces.
5. Everyone should be cognizant of not touching their faces, or at least to sanitize hands before touching the face.
6. Masks (unless they are N-95 masks, properly fitted and personnel trained in their use) are not effective for this virus.
7. Facilities should put in place increased sanitation and wiping down of machines, free weights, counters, locker room facilities etc. using disinfectants proven to eliminate the virus. Machines should be wiped down at least 3 times per day.
8. Anti-viral wipes should be available for members to wipe down equipment before and after use and they should be actively encouraged to do so.
9. Social separation should be practiced – keep 6 feet distance from other people when in public.
10. Post signage about hand washing/disinfecting for the public, encourage coughing into elbow, or better, if ill, stay home until fever free for at least 24 hours.
11. Seniors, or people with chronic conditions, should take extra precautions.
12. If members want to stay home, we should be offering guidance for at home exercises – something as simple as chair sits, band stretching, walking the length of one's home, wall sits, etc.
13. Consider working with your marketing departments to get ahead of this with messaging approved by your hospital (if hospital affiliated).
14. Use CDC resources for posters, information on COVID-19 while working closely with your Infection Prevention division if you are a part of a healthcare system.
15. Ensure that hand sanitizer and sanitizing wipes are readily available throughout the facility.
16. Consider developing a policy that allows you, as a facility operator, to send members home if they are actively coughing to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
17. Encourage members and staff to take personal responsibility to monitor their own health and stay away from crowds if they develop a cough, cold, or flu.