



# Re-Opening and Recovering: Best Practice Recommendations for Yoga Schools, Businesses, and Professionals Around the World

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## Contents

<b>Understanding Government Orders and Restrictions on Business Operations and Social Gatherings .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Making a Plan to Operate and Practice Safely .....</b>	<b>3</b>
Consider How COVID-19 Will Affect Your School, Business, or Practice .....	4
Components of an Operations Plan .....	4
Implementing Your Plan Consistently and Effectively .....	5
Review and Evaluate .....	6
<b>Recommended Health and Protective Measures .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Governmental and Health Authority Resources .....</b>	<b>10</b>

# Re-Opening and Recovering: Best Practice Recommendations for Yoga Schools, Businesses, and Professionals Around the World

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The global COVID-19 pandemic has created health and safety challenges for communities around the world. According to the World Health Organization, most countries have seen cases of COVID-19 with many experiencing outbreaks. In response, many countries, provinces, and municipalities have adopted physical distancing policies (also known as social distancing) to slow the spread of the virus. There is evidence that these efforts helped to reduce transmissions and save lives.

On March 15, Yoga Alliance recommended that in-person yoga instruction cease in locations where social distancing had become the requirement or the norm. In issuing this recommendation, we called upon yoga professionals to consider the roles that they play in their communities as civic leaders, trusted advisors, and holders of wisdom and to prioritize the well-being of their communities. We understood that this was not the easiest course of action, but the right and responsible one.

Now, as regions globally begin to lift social distancing requirements in preparation to re-open public spaces, we remain committed to supporting yoga schools, businesses, professionals, and practitioners in prioritizing and protecting the health and safety of our communities. In harmony with our values, we are issuing best practice recommendations to guide our community's recovery and re-opening.

These recommendations are based on guidance from leading public health organizations and experts, government and international agencies, legal advisers, and Yoga Alliance's collective expertise on yoga practice and yoga business operations and may be updated or revised to reflect new information. This document is intended for use by yoga schools, businesses, and professionals and is designed to serve as a reference guide to support individual planning and decision-making. Please note that these best practices do not take the place of government orders or regulatory requirements applicable to you, which may prescribe specific operating standards during the COVID-19 crisis. The information contained in this document does not constitute legal advice.

Yoga Alliance recognizes that schools, businesses, and professionals have their own operating practices, space limitations, varying resources and capabilities, and differing legal and regulatory obligations. We strongly recommend that you consult with legal counsel and your insurance provider as you consider business operations.

*These best practices do not take the place of government orders or regulatory requirements, which may prescribe specific operating standards during the COVID-19 crisis. The information contained in this document also does not constitute legal advice. It is important that you weigh all of the advice and counsel provided to you as you plan for the coming weeks and months.*

## I. Understanding Government Orders and Restrictions on Business Operations and Social Gatherings

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, countries, provinces, and municipalities across the world issued various orders and restrictions on business operations and social gatherings. Some jurisdictions have operated under government orders which direct residents to stay in their homes and reduce social interactions except for limited reasons, such as obtaining necessary supplies. These restrictions may be known as stay-at-home orders, quarantines, curfews, shelter-in-place orders, shutdowns, and lockdowns, amongst other terms. Some areas have issued orders directing most businesses to close to the public, sometimes in conjunction with orders directing people to stay home. Still other areas have not adopted any direct orders, but rather urged residents and businesses to voluntarily adhere to social distancing guidelines. The orders and guidelines in each country, province, or municipality can vary in scope, stringency, and duration.

Now, many countries and regions are preparing to allow certain businesses to re-open and for public life to resume at different intervals over the coming weeks. In the course of doing so, some jurisdictions are tasking businesses and service providers with health and safety obligations as a condition for resuming operations.

Because the rules governing business operations and social gatherings vary from country-to-country and even, sometimes, from city-to-city, it is important for you to understand the laws and rules where you live and work. To find out about the rules that may affect you, refer to publications and announcements from your national and local governments, health ministries, and other trusted sources of public health information.

Be sure to identify the following critical information:

- Is your country, province, city, or town subject to an order that restricts business operations or social gatherings?
- To whom does the order apply?
- When does your order expire? When will the restrictions be lifted?
- Has your country, province, city, or town issued a separate order that sets health and safety requirements for businesses and professionals or members of the public?
- Has your country, province, city, or town issued guidance to help the public understand relevant orders and restrictions?

## II. Making a Plan to Operate and Practice Safely

Just because you can open your doors does not mean it is safe or prudent to resume business as usual, right away. To protect yourself and the well-being of others, you must first consider whether you have the space, resources, and capacity to operate and practice in a manner that prioritizes health and safety.

## Consider How COVID-19 Will Affect Your School, Business, or Practice

Consider how the COVID-19 outbreak may affect your school, business, and practice, including:

- Virus transmissions through in-person contact or use of shared space;
- Employee illness or inability to come work due to other responsibilities (for example, childcare);
- Concerns and fears of the yoga public, which may reduce demand for in-person practice;
- Difficulty obtaining supplies, protective equipment, or cleaning products; and
- Difficulty enforcing health and safety measures at all, especially if individuals are non-compliant.

As you consider re-opening or restarting in-person group practice or private instruction, decide how you will address the COVID-19-related risks that you identified. You may need to modify how you did things before the pandemic, either by relying more heavily on virtual classes or by altering the configurations of your space or the size of your trainings or classes. You might need to obtain new or different equipment or implement a new disinfection and cleaning regimen. You'll certainly need to communicate with your staff, teachers, volunteers, students, and other patrons. For many yoga professionals and businesses, we imagine that this may mean that you consider a phased approach to re-opening your business that allows you to grow into your old practices and some new ones, over time.

While we understand the serious economic and social toll of the COVID-19 pandemic, we urge yoga businesses and professionals to be realistic about their capacity and capability to re-open and quickly resume operations safely. It is likely that many yoga businesses will not be able to readily implement the health and protective measures that will be critical to protecting each other and our country. Please visit Yoga Alliance's [COVID-19 Resources Website](#) for information on business and financial support, including guidance for transitioning your school, business, and/or teaching online.

## Components of an Operations Plan

When you decide to re-open, we recommend that you develop a comprehensive operations plan. Your operations plan should account for all aspects of your school, business, or practice, including those related to:

- Studio, worksite, or practice space cleaning and sanitation protocols;
- Implementation of protective measures to promote employee and public safety, including physical distancing protocols;
- Structure of inperson classes or practices;
- Management of reception, boutique, and bathroom spaces to limit surface contact;

- Staff leave policies and arrangements;
- Continuity of operations if teachers or staff cannot come to work;
- Provision of protective equipment and the availability of handwashing and sanitation stations;
- Training for staff and teachers and communication with students and the public;
- Incident response protocols in the event of a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case; and
- Incident response protocols in the event of non-compliant students or practitioners.

Your operations plan should also account for laws and regulations governing your school, business, or practice, including, for example:

- Government orders setting health and safety requirements for businesses conducting in-person operations;
- Applicable employment laws; and
- Applicable workplace safety regulations.

In developing your plan, you should also consult guidance issued by leading international health and safety authorities and the health and safety authorities in your country. The World Health Organization has issued [guidance for workplaces](#). A non-comprehensive list of health and safety authorities is included in Section IV of this document.

## Implementing Your Plan Consistently and Effectively

Once you set a plan, it is important to make sure that you implement it consistently and effectively. Failure to do so could lead to injuries, illness, or even legal consequences.

Consider how you will implement your operations plan. It may be helpful to develop written policies and procedures that govern how you will handle certain situations or accomplish specific tasks. It will also be helpful to post signage, both on site and online, to instruct and set expectations for staff, teachers, students, and other patrons in your school, studio, and/or other physical location.

For example, if you plan to resume some in-person classes, develop a policy that sets your standards for:

- Maximum class size;
- Maximum class duration;
- Space configuration to maintain physical distancing;
- Rules preventing or regarding hands-on adjustments or other touching;
- Pre-class health screening of employees and students (e.g., taking one's temperature);

- Pre-and-post class cleaning regimens;
- Face-covering rules;
- Rules on the use of mats brought from home and on the sharing of mats;
- Rules restricting or limiting the use of blocks, blankets, straps, and any other communal equipment;
- Personal protective equipment requirements for teachers and students; and
- Rules on use of facilities including lockers, changing rooms, bathrooms, and showers as well as the storage of personal belongs during class(es).

Having a written policy will make it easier to stay consistent and to engage your staff and community in making sure your standards are met (even if you are not providing direct oversight).

Moreover, consider developing procedures, signage, checklists, or other documentation to guide and routinize tasks and encourage consistent practices. For example, consider creating a procedure that governs studio cleaning and accounts for:

- All spaces, furniture, equipment, and surfaces that must be cleaned;
- Cleaning schedule with increased cleaning frequency to areas touched more often (e.g., doorknobs);
- Cleaning products to be used;
- Process to document that cleaning has taken place (e.g., a checklist or log); and
- Process to document and/or escalate any identified unsafe conditions.

If you work with others, consider how to communicate your policies and processes. You may need to: walk employees, teachers, and volunteers through your new policies; provide handouts and conduct trainings; and practice protocols. It may be helpful to conduct scenario drills, exercises, or workshops to make sure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in the event of an incident or emergency.

## Review and Evaluate

As you build experience with your new protocols and learn more about operating during a public health emergency, and especially as new guidance becomes available, set time aside to review and evaluate your plans, policies, and procedures on a regular basis. Ask yourself:

- Are your written documents up to date?
- Do you need to update or modify your plan, policies, or procedures?
- Do you need more procedures to help guide tasks?
- Are there new rules or guidance that you need to address?

### III. Recommended Health and Protective Measures

As discussed in Section II, Yoga Alliance recommends that yoga schools, businesses, and professionals develop plans to protect the health and well-being of teachers, students and practitioners, and the broader community. To support this objective, we are providing the following health and safety measures for review and consideration. All of the recommendations that follow are based on guidance from leading public health organizations and experts, government and international agencies, legal advisers, and Yoga Alliance's collective expertise on yoga business operations and yoga practice. These will help to create layers of protection against virus transmission.

According to the World Health Organization, the primary method of [coronavirus transmission](#) is thought to be through close contact from person to person. The virus can spread through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks, and these droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs. COVID-19 also may be transmissible while not actively displaying symptoms.

For this reason, maintaining good physical or social distance is very important in preventing the spread of COVID-19, although there is not consensus on the recommended length of distance from person-to-person. The World Health Organization (WHO) [recommends](#) maintaining physical distance of 1 metre (approximately 3 feet) from others, while the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [recommends](#) maintaining 6 feet (approximately 1.8 metres) from others. Other countries have issued their own advice on the recommended distance between people.

Yoga Alliance recognizes that schools, studios, and other classes and programs that take place in locations of all kinds operate differently and are subject to varying regulatory requirements; therefore, they may develop their own protocols to promote health and safety. For this reason, the following measures are not provided with the expectation that they will be adopted in totality. Rather, Yoga Alliance encourages all yoga schools, businesses, and professionals to assess their legal obligations, to explore guidance from health and safety authorities, and to use their overall best judgment in adopting and implementing protective measures. In fact, some of the following recommendations may necessitate that businesses and professionals weigh competing priorities and make the best decisions for themselves and their communities.

- **Consider Conducting Temperature Checks:** Consider conducting temperature checks via a touchless infrared thermometer of every individual, including staff, teachers, volunteers, students, and practitioners. The CDC has recommended regular health checks, including temperature checks to identify individuals with a fever, as a community mitigation strategy to slow virus transmission. It defines a fever as a measured temperature of 100.4 degrees F / 38 degrees C or higher. Follow public health guidance indicating when it is safe for symptomatic individuals to return to public spaces.

- **Limit People in Studio:** Assess the maximum number of people who can be physically present in your space without coming into close contact with each other. Your assessment should include class space as well as bathrooms, hallways, and other common areas. To limit the number of people coming to your studio/class at a given time, consider requiring advance sign-up for any students or practitioners using online or telephonic scheduling.
- **Ask Screening Questions:** When individuals—staff, teachers, volunteers, students, or practitioners—arrive, ask questions of each person: have you had a cough? Have you had a fever? Do you live with anyone who is sick or quarantined? If anyone answers affirmatively, send them home.
- **Provide Advance Notifications:** Inform people that they should not sign-up or come to the studio/class if they have a cough, are running a fever, or have been exposed to someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or is experiencing [COVID-19 symptoms](#). Notify individuals of the health and safety policies that they will be expected to follow if they come to your studio/class.
- **Maintain Physical Distancing:** Configure your space to maintain physical distancing. Measure and mark distances from outside your school's or studio's perimeter to within the inside of the registration area, boutique, bathrooms, locker rooms, and/or class space. Consider additional space as needed to accomplish social distancing. Maintain distance between all yoga mats. Do not offer hands-on assists.
- **Require Face Coverings:** Many countries are recommending the use of face masks to prevent transmission of COVID-19, so be sure to understand the guidance in your region.

The WHO has [indicated](#) that wearing a medical mask can limit the spread of certain respiratory viral diseases, including COVID-19, and recommends that masks be used by healthcare workers, people who are sick and exhibiting symptoms, and anyone taking care of someone who is sick with COVID-19. The WHO has further indicated, however, that the evidence on the benefits of non-medical masks (i.e. homemade masks made of breathable fabrics) is limited.

- **Promote (and Require) Hand Washing and Good Hygiene:** Require staff and volunteers to hand wash with soap and water before and after every registration period. Require teachers to hand wash with soap and water before and after every class. Hang signs and encourage all students and practitioners to practice [hand washing best practices](#).

Post signs in each bathroom and around the studio with respect to [cough-and-sneeze etiquette](#) (cover your mouth and nose with a tissue and then throwing it away, using upper sleeve if a tissue is not available, refraining from touching your mouth, nose, and eyes, etc.). Make tissues available to the extent possible.

- **Limit Contact Surfaces:** The WHO has advised that contamination on surfaces is one of the ways that COVID-19 spreads. To be cautious, work to minimize the surfaces that are touched by multiple people. For example, offer no-touch trash cans where possible and place them by the door(s). Remove all unnecessary items, like décor, from common spaces. In retail areas, encourage students and practitioners to only touch what they plan to purchase.
- **Invest in Up-Leveled Cleaning Protocol:** Cleaning and disinfection decreases how much of the virus is on surfaces and objects, which reduces the risk of exposure. Create a cleaning and disinfection plan for school, studio, class space, and other common areas. Cleaning should take place regularly.  

Clean the bathroom(s) before and after each class, including floors, sinks, and toilet bowls. Clean the studio floors before and after each class. Wipe telephones, keyboards, door handles, bathroom faucets, front desk surfaces, and anything that staff, teachers, or students commonly touch.
- **Stock Supplies:** Stock and maintain products to clean and disinfect, including handwashing soap, paper towels, and alcohol-based hand sanitizers. If you are unable to stock necessary supplies, suggest that people bring their own or consider a temporary closure until you are able to restock.
- **Restrict Use of Communal Mats and Props:** Require students to bring their own yoga mats. Provide sanitizing wipes or sprays to disinfect mats before and after use. Do not offer props or allow students to bring their own props.
- **Restrict Payment Options to Avoid Person-to-Person Contact:** Consider accepting only electronic (e.g. credit/debit card or mobile) payments, if possible, ideally using touch/swipe/no signature technology. Do not accept cash if you can avoid it. Clean pens for signature before and after each use.
- **Provide Policies for Sick Staff and Teachers:** To reduce transmission, it is important for sick workers to stay home. Develop policies to ensure that sick staff and teachers stay home. Consider your leave and time off policies and be flexible with work schedules. Be sure to adhere to all applicable employment laws and regulations regarding employee leave and accommodations.
- **Maintain Records for Contact Tracing:** Maintain clear records of who is present in the school or studio at any given time. In the event of notice of an infected visitor, records of others present at that time will be important to help identify who may have come in contact with the infected visitor.
- **Create Notice Mechanisms:** Establish notice mechanisms to notify staff, teachers, volunteers, and students in the event you become aware that an infected, or potentially infected, person was at the school or studio. It is important to make sure that you have contact information for employees and students if contact is required. Be mindful of privacy. If you provide notice, omit identifying details about the person infected or suspected to be infected.

## IV. Governmental and Health Authority Resources

Many governments and other health authorities have published rules, guidance, and other helpful information regarding COVID-19. The following tables provide links to resources from the most populous countries and regions where our members live and work. These lists are not exhaustive and may be updated or revised to reflect new information. Yoga Alliance provides these links for informational purposes only and cannot verify the accuracy, detail, or currency of the information contained on the linked pages.

### INTERNATIONAL

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- World Health Organization**
- > [Advice for the Public](#)
  - > [Getting Your Workplace Ready for COVID-19 Guide](#)
  - > [Considerations for Public Health and Social Measures in the Workplace in the Context of COVID-19](#)

### AFRICA

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- South Africa** > [Department of Health | Online Resource and News Portal](#)

### ASIA

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- China** > [Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention | COVID-19](#)
- Hong Kong** > [Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region | COVID-19 Resource Centre](#)
- India** > [COVID-19 Updates and Resources](#)
- Indonesia** > [Ministry of Health | Novel Coronavirus](#)
- Japan** > [Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare | About Coronavirus Disease 2019](#)
- Malaysia** > [Prime Minister's Office of Malaysia | Coronavirus Disease 2019](#)
- Philippines** > [Republic of the Philippines, Department of Health | Updates on Novel Coronavirus Disease](#)
- South Korea** > [Ministry of Health and Welfare | Coronavirus Disease-19](#)
- Thailand** > [Ministry of Public Health, Department of Disease Control | Corona Virus Disease](#)

## AMERICAS

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- Brazil** > [Ministério da Saúde | COVID-19 \(Portuguese\)](#)
- Canada** > [COVID-19: For Businesses and Employees](#)  
> [Risk-informed decision-making guidelines for workplaces and businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- Mexico** > [Gobierno de Mexico | COVID-19 Resources \(Spanish\)](#)

## EUROPE

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- Belgium** > [Government of Belgium | COVID-19 Resources](#)
- Denmark** > [Danish Health Authority | Coronavirus](#)  
> [Danish Health Authority | Questions and Answers on Novel Coronavirus](#)
- European Commission** > [Coronavirus Response](#)
- Finland** > [Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare | COVID-19 Latest Updates](#)  
> [Finnish Government | Restrictions during the Coronavirus Epidemic](#)
- France** > [Informations Coronavirus \(French\)](#)
- Germany** > [Federal Government | COVID-19](#)  
> [Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs | SARS-COV-2 Occupational Safety Standard \(German\)](#)  
> [Coronavirus: Questions relating to Labour Law](#)
- Greece** > [National Public Health Organization | Coronavirus Disease](#)
- Italy** > [Governo Italiano | Coronavirus COVID-19 \(Italian\)](#)
- Netherlands** > [Government of the Netherlands | Coronavirus](#)  
> [Government of the Netherlands | The Coronavirus—FAQ for Entrepreneurs](#)
- Norway** > [Norwegian Government | The Coronavirus Situation](#)
- Spain** > [Ministerio de Sanidad | Enfermedad por nuevo coronavirus, COVID-19 \(Spanish\)](#)
- Sweden** > [Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency | Official Information on the Novel Coronavirus](#)
- Switzerland** > [Federal Office of Public Health | New Coronavirus](#)  
> [Federal Office of Public Health | Recommendations for the Workplace and Schools](#)

- United Kingdom** > [COVID-19: What you Need to Do](#)  
> [COVID-19: Guidance for Employees, Employers and Businesses](#)

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## MIDDLE EAST

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- Turkey** > [Turkish Ministry of Health | COVID-19 Resource Page \(Turkish\)](#)  
> [Turkish Presidency's COVID-19 Web Page \(Turkish\)](#)
- United Arab Emirates** > [UAE, Handing the COVID-19 Outbreak](#)

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## OCEANIA

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- Australia** > [COVID-19 News, Updates, and Advice](#)  
> [COVID-19 Information for Workplaces](#)
- New Zealand** > [Ministry of Health, COVID-19](#)

We know that the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted you, your families, and our community significantly and immeasurably. As we navigate this period together, Yoga Alliance is continuing to monitor our community and develop guidance and resources for our members. Please be sure to visit us at our [COVID-19 resource site](#).

Reach out to us with feedback, questions, or concerns at **1-888-921-9642 (YOGA)** or at [info@yogaalliance.org](mailto:info@yogaalliance.org). Thank you for the work that you do for your communities—always, and especially now in these difficult times.