With news headlines stirring up constant concern in 2020, Americans are stressed—and many are having to get creative to relieve that given Coronavirus closures. Many are finding respite in fitness, whether at the health club or at home.

A new survey* by the International Health, Racquet & Sportsclub Association (IHRSA), conducted by Kelton, a Material Company, shows that American health club and gym users are awaiting the opportunity to resume their fitness routine with bated breath.

While at-home workouts satisfy some, many feel they're no match for the health club experience. They're taking note of and are satisfied with the safety precautions their club is taking, leaving many feeling ready to hit the gym again—if they haven't done so already.

*a survey to 1,171 Americans aged 18+ who have a gym membership or recently canceled one due to COVID-19

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FOR CONSUMERS, THERE’S NO PERFECT SUBSTITUTE FOR THEIR HEALTH CLUB

As gyms closed due to COVID-19, members were forced to change up their routines. While some have gotten creative with at-home workouts, others continue to struggle as nothing quite compares to being in the gym. Health club and gym users look forward to returning to their gym—and the routines and friendly faces they associate with it—as they push to reach their personal fitness goals.

FITNESS ROUTINES HAVE BEEN UPENDED SINCE COVID-19 BEGAN

more than 4/5 (85%) fitness club users admit their exercise regimen has changed over the past several months

53% are going for walks or runs more often
33% are streaming at-home fitness videos
30% are taking pets for more walks
29% have purchased fitness equipment

WHY ARE 50% OF GYM GOERS DISSATISFIED WITH THEIR NEW FITNESS ROUTINES?

54% said less challenging
53% said less consistent
51% said simply worse

48% of people admitted to having a harder time finding the motivation to exercise

54% dissatisfied with their new routine
44% those who have not returned

56% believes their new routine to be worse
45% those who have

10% or 1/10 of people who haven’t kept up their routine, admit they’ve stopped exercising altogether
52% those who have not returned to their gym since it reopened are having a harder time getting motivated to work out compared to 42% of those who have.

Admit they have a hard time finding the motivation to exercise

**IT’S ONLY TEMPORARY: SAYS 53% OF CONSUMERS WHO CHANGED THEIR FITNESS ROUTINE**

- 63% of Boomers+ say changes are temporary
- 51% of Gen X say changes are temporary
- 44% of Millennials say changes are temporary
- 47% of Gen Z say changes are temporary

**MANY LOOK FORWARD TO RESUMING THEIR NORMAL GYM ROUTINE AND THE RESOURCES THAT COME WITH IT**

95% nearly all club users miss at least one aspect of physically being at their gym

54% report having limited equipment at home

51% say they’re unable to get the same variety of workouts

Many acknowledge that they’re now more able to focus on physical fitness and health.

- 68% say they are prioritizing their health more
- 59% say they are eating healthier than they did previously
- 77% members say they have more time to exercise now
- 65% are spending more time focusing on their own health and fitness than before
MEMBERS MISS THE COMMUNITY FITNESS CLUBS PROVIDE

Here are three things consumers miss about their club ...

- **42%** working out with other people
- **36%** sense of community that comes with belonging to a gym
- **26%** having people at the gym cheer them on through a workout

Among those who miss being at the gym, more women than men say they miss working out with other people (**48% of women vs. 37% of men**) and the sense of community there (**40% of women vs. 33% of men**).

WHY CONSUMERS ARE RETURNING TO THEIR GYMS

- **70%** to maintain their overall health
- **55%** to get stronger
- **48%** to improve flexibility
- **48%** to build muscle
- **49%** to boost their mood

53% of those who have returned to their gym since it reopened say one of their goals in having a membership is to elevate their mood versus 44% of those who have not returned.
FOR 2020 STRESS, EXERCISE MAY BE THE ANTIDOTE

While it seems there are stressors everywhere in 2020, COVID-19 has been a dominant source of anxiety and worry for millions of Americans. As a result, many are feeling more stressed now than they did at the start of the year and they're agonizing over the state of the world, their communities, and themselves. Many have found that activities like reading, cooking, and, above all, exercising have offered them a way to cope with such a trying time in their lives.

STRESS HAS BEEN BUILDING FOR AMERICANS 2020
63% OF FITNESS CLUB USERS FEEL MORE STRESSED NOW THAN AT THE START OF THE YEAR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>women</th>
<th>men</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>more stressed</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>just as stressed</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>35%</td>
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68% of those who canceled their gym membership due to the pandemic report feeling more stressed now than they did at the start of the year versus 61% of current members.

EVERY GENERATION REPORTS INCREASE IN STRESS

- 55% of Boomers+ say they feel more stressed
- 68% of Gen X say they feel more stressed
- 66% of Millennials say they feel more stressed
- 73% of Gen Z say they feel more stressed

EXTERNAL FORCES WEIGH HEAVILY ON THEIR MINDS

91% club users are concerned about current events and issues

- 65% said the U.S. economy
- 58% said the presidential election
- 39% said racial inequality
In fact, gym users are more worried about these factors than they are about connecting with family and friends (38%), stay-at-home orders (34%), and returning to malls, restaurants, and gyms (33%).

Those who have not returned to their gym since it reopened are more concerned about their immunity and not getting sick (54% vs. 44%).

**PARENTS HAVE ADDED ANXIETY AROUND THEIR CHILDREN’S WELLBEING**

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<thead>
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<th>Man</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>46%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Health</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>42%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mental Health</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Life</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9/10 Americans say the COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted how they feel.

### 4 Things They Are Worried About

- **Friends and Family**: 54%
- **The Future**: 52%
- **Their Health**: 46%
- **Generally Feeling Anxious**: 46%

1/5 admit the situation is leading them to be argumentative with loved ones:

- **59% of Women**
- **50% of Men**

- **57% of Women**
- **46% of Men**

- **51% of Women**
- **41% of Men**

Of those feeling the negative impact, 50% of those who have not returned to their gym report being worried about their health, versus 41% of those who have returned to their gym.

### Not All Doom and Gloom, Some Find Silver Linings

3/5 see the positive side of things:

- **Happy to Spend More Time at Home**: 55%
- **Excited to Take on House Projects**: 49%
- **Excited for the Extra Downtime Stay-at-Home Orders Offer**: 30%

Men are more excited than women to take on house projects (52% vs. 45%).
HOW FITNESS CLUB USERS COPING FEELINGS OF STRESS IN 2020?

- **65%** exercise
  - **50%** reading
  - **47%** cooking/baking
  - **45%** connecting virtually with friends and family
  - **42%** organizing or decluttering their home
  - **35%** tackling home improvement projects
  - **34%** gardening

- **68%** of Boomers+ managed their stress through exercise this year
- **67%** of Gen X managed their stress through exercise this year
- **58%** of Millennials managed their stress through exercise this year
- **65%** of Gen Z managed their stress through exercise this year

- **FEWER MILLENNIALS** managed their stress through exercise this year than other generations.

- **Those at high risk of COVID-19** less likely to manage their stress with exercise.
  - **53%** those at high risk
  - **71%** those at moderate risk
  - **72%** those with no elevated risk

- **More women** managed their stress over the past few months by exercising than men (68% vs 63%)
- **More non-parents** report exercising to keep their stress levels in check than parents (69% vs 59%)
MEMBERS ARE MAKING MOVES TOWARD A HEALTHIER FUTURE

Americans are ready to return to their daily lives after months of stay-at-home orders and business closures. They’re optimistic that public spaces and venues will safely welcome them back upon reopening, but that’s not to say they aren’t taking their own precautions. Health club users are looking to make the most of their future, and many are committed to improving their health to ensure they’re able to do so.

GYM GOERS WANT TO GET BACK TO THEIR FAVORITE ACTIVITIES

- 65% miss visiting loved ones
- 59% miss the gym
- 55% miss going to concerts or games
- 51% miss bars and restaurants
- 46% miss seeing movies in theaters

MEMBERS FEEL CONFIDENT IN THE HEALTH AND SAFETY MEASURES OF THEIR GO-TO SPOTS

CONFIDENCE LEVEL BY LOCATION

- 83% confidence in supermarkets
- 80% confidence in outdoor dining at restaurants
- 69% confidence in the gym
- 69% confidence in hair salons or barbers

75% of men feel confident in their gym’s health and safety measures

64% of women feel confident in their gym’s health and safety measures

88% of those who have returned to their gym since it reopened are confident in the safety precautions their gym has taken versus 55% of those who have not
MANY LOOK TO MAKE THE MOST OF THE FUTURE

49% are making time to do the things that make them happy

44% are spending more time with their loved ones

42% are being kinder to others

38% are being kinder to themselves

GYM GOERS COMMITTED TO THEIR HEALTH AND WELLNESS

58% aim to be more physically active

57% want to eat healthier

43% plan to see a doctor if they’re feeling sick

42% aim to take better care of their mental health

65% aim to increase their physical activity

64% aim to eat healthier

51% aim to increase their physical activity

50% aim to eat healthier

being more physically active

Boomers+ 69%
Gen X 53%
Millennials 45%
Gen Z 55%

eating healthier

Boomers+ 67%
Gen X 56%
Millennials 47%
Gen Z 45%

MORE BOOMERS+ SAY THEY’RE COMMITTED TO BEING MORE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE AND EATING HEALTHIER THAN OTHER GENERATIONS

THOSE AT ELEVATED RISK OF COVID-19 DUE TO PREEXISTING CONDITIONS ARE DOUBLING DOWN ON HEALTH COMMITMENTS

being more physically active

60% Those at risk

56% Those least susceptible

seeing a doctor if they’re sick

46% 40%
A RETURN TO THE HEALTH CLUB GIVES MEMBERS AND CLUBS A BOOST

Not only do members feel positively about returning to the gym—many feel ready and motivated to do so. They look forward to the physical and mental benefits of working out at their gym again, from building strength and their immune system, to releasing mood-boosting endorphins. Gym goers trust their health clubs to create a clean and safe environment for members and are satisfied with the measures taken already, allowing many to return to their fitness regimen with confidence.

HEALTH CLUB MEMBERS ARE OVERALL OPTIMISTIC ABOUT RETURNING TO THEIR HEALTH CLUB

66% have positive feelings about going back to the gym

- ready: 36%
- motivated: 31%
- excited: 30%

56% admitted to negative feelings about going back to the gym

- worried: 27%
- nervous: 31%

73% of men feel positive about going back to the gym and 60% of women share these feelings

83% of people who have returned to the gym feel positive about returning again

versus 54% of people who have not returned to the gym yet

EVEN THOSE YET TO VISIT A GYM RECOGNIZE THE BENEFITS OF RETURNING

physical benefits

- improve energy levels: 47%
- help them feel stronger: 47%
- help build their immune system: 30%

mental benefits

- improve mental health: 42%
- boost their mood: 40%
- feel less stressed: 42%
BOTH PARENTS AND NON-PARENTS SAY STRESS RELIEF IS A KEY BENEFIT OF RETURNING TO THE GYM

THOSE WHO HAVE RETURNED TO THEIR GYM CONFIRM THE BENEFITS

- 55% increased strength
- 53% improved energy levels
- 49% improved mental health
- 48% decreased stress

57% the gym has improved mental health
54% the gym has helped them feel less stressed

CONSUMERS FEEL INFORMED AND CONFIDENT ABOUT THE SAFETY PRECAUTIONS THEIR CLUB IS TAKING TO WELCOME THEM BACK

7/10 gym members know the safety measures their gym is taking to re-open

More people are confident in their gym’s protocols than those who feel the same about other businesses:

- 67% confident in retailers’ protocols
- 67% confident in coffee shops’ protocols
- 62% confident in indoor dining protocols
- 59% confident in boutique exercise studios’ protocols
UPON RETURNING, MANY LOOK TO PICK UP WHERE THEY LEFT OFF WITH THEIR ROUTINE

Prior to the pandemic, most users went three to four days a week (42%). Once the gym reopens, almost as many (35%) anticipate they'll be going just as often.

WHAT GERM-BUSTING MEASURES THAT GYMS ALREADY TAKE BOOST CONSUMER CONFIDENCE THE MOST?

- 81% additional cleaning and hygiene
- 51% hand sanitizer stations throughout the gym
- 51% cleaning throughout the day
- 49% nightly deep cleaning
- 42% medical-grade disinfectants

CLUB STAFF AND MEMBERS MAKING A GROUP EFFORT ALSO INSTILLS TRUST FOR RETURNING MEMBERS

- 51% staff wearing face masks
- 43% members wearing face masks
- 45% members using hand sanitizer upon entering
- 39% disinfecting equipment before and after use
- 39% seeing staff undergo temperature checks
- 72% say measures taken by members boost confidence
- 66% say measures taken by members boost confidence
- 70% say measures taken by staff boost confidence
- 64% say measures taken by staff boost confidence

94% of people say they’ll return to the gym in some capacity
METHODOLOGY

SAMPLE

This survey was fielded among 1,171 people aged 18+ in the United States who currently have a gym membership, or recently canceled their gym membership due to COVID-19. The survey was conducted online during the period of August 24-28, 2020, and has a margin of error of +/- 2.9%.

METHODOLOGY

Results of any sample are subject to sampling variation. The magnitude of the variation is measurable and is affected by the number of interviews and the level of the percentages expressing the results.

In this particular study, the chances are 95 in 100 that a survey result does not vary, plus or minus, by more than 2.9 percent, from the result that would be obtained if interviews had been conducted with all personas in the universe represented by the sample. The margin of error for any subgroups will be slightly higher.

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ABOUT IHRSA

The International Health, Racquet & Sportsclub Association (IHRSA) is a nonprofit trade association founded in 1981. IHRSA represents a global community of health and fitness professionals committed to building their businesses and improving their communities’ health and well-being.

Health clubs, gyms, fitness facilities, and industry suppliers—millions of people—all working toward one goal: helping more people get active. To learn more, visit Ihrsa.org.
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IHRSA HELPS HEALTH CLUBS IMPROVE PROFITABILITY, GROW, AND STAY COMPETITIVE BY PROVIDING UNIQUE NETWORKING AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES, INDUSTRY BENCHMARKING, AND HEALTH PROMOTION TOOLS, SO IHRSA MEMBERS CAN HELP THEIR COMMUNITIES LEAD HEALTHIER LIFESTYLES.

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