

National Study Reveals the Current Fitness Habits of the American Gymgoer

BOSTON, MA—October 20, 2020—The International Health, Racquet & Sportsclub Association (IHRSA) released first-of-its kind data from a new national survey* of Americans with gym memberships that addresses their physical and mental state throughout COVID-19 pandemic. The full results from the study, which was conducted in collaboration with leading international insights company Kelton Global, a Material Company, are published in “[The COVID Era Fitness Consumer](#)” IHRSA report and delve into how Americans feel about the pandemic overall, what effects it has had on their overall health and fitness, how the virus has shaped their personal wellness outlooks, their overall comfort levels returning to the gym and more. As gyms closed due to COVID-19 in March, members were forced to change up their routines. While some got creative with at-home workouts, others struggled to find a comparable fitness solution. The study overwhelmingly found that gymgoers look forward to returning to their gym — and at least one aspect of physically being in their gym (95 percent), plus the routines and sense of community they associate with it — as they push to reach their personal fitness goals. In fact, when asked what they missed most, the only thing Americans miss more than going to the gym (59 percent) is visiting their loved ones (65 percent) – more so than going to concerts or games (55 percent), bars or restaurants (51 percent) or even seeing movies in theaters (46 percent).

Not only do gym members feel positively about returning to the gym — many feel ready and motivated to do so – they look forward to enjoying the physical

and mental benefits of working out at their gym again, from building strength and their immune system to releasing mood-boosting endorphins. Notably, exactly half (50 percent) of gym members express dissatisfaction with at-home fitness efforts and changes to their routine, primarily because those new routines are less challenging (54 percent), less consistent (53 percent) or just simply worse (51 percent) than their gym-going routines.

The study reveals a number of additional insights regarding how people feel about going to the gym amidst the pandemic, including:

- **Seeing is Believing.** 88 percent of members who have returned to the gym since it reopened express complete confidence in safety precautions and cleanliness procedures.
- **Wellness Remains Top-of-Mind.** Three in four (76 percent) gymgoers admit they are feeling anxious about their health, with nearly equal halves are worried about their physical fitness (50 percent) as they are about their immunity (49 percent). Respondents were more likely to say they are worried about these factors than they are about connecting with family and friends (38 percent), stay-at-home orders (34 percent) and returning to malls, restaurants, and gyms (33 percent).
- **At-Risk Individuals Commit to Exercise.** Those at elevated risk of COVID-19 due to preexisting conditions are doubling down on health commitments. Compared to those with fewer comorbidities, those at increased risk are more likely to say they're committed to being more physically active (60 percent versus 56 percent). And 58 percent of all gymgoers, regardless of current health, say that they are now more committed to being physically active, eating healthier (57 percent) and taking better care of their mental health (42 percent) than ever before.
- **Boost in Stress Relief.** Gymgoers say exercise (65 percent) has been a successful way they've managed or coped with stress over the last few

months, more so than other activities like reading (50 percent), cooking or baking (47 percent), and even connecting virtually with friends and family (45 percent).

- **Gym Habits Remain Strong.** Prior to the pandemic, 42 percent of gymgoers went three to four days a week. As gyms reopen, almost as many (35 percent) have anticipated they'd be going just as often — and nearly all (94 percent) say they'll return in some capacity. Even those who haven't visited their gym since it reopened, nearly half feel going back will improve their energy levels (47 percent), help them feel stronger (47 percent) and help build their immune system (30 percent).
- **What They Miss Most.** Nearly all (95 percent) gymgoers miss at least one aspect of physically being in their gym. Among them, they most miss the routine of going to their gym (54 percent). Having limited equipment at home (54 percent) means they're unable to get the same variety of workouts (51 percent). Two in five (42 percent) miss working out with other people, while a similar number (36 percent) miss the sense of community that comes with belonging to a gym.

“The data confirms the essential role health clubs play in promoting and maintaining the wellbeing of consumers,” said Jay Ablondi, executive vice president for global products for IHRSA. “With 70 percent of members relying on their gyms to maintain their overall health, Americans are looking at getting back to, maintaining and even improving their exercise habits - and nothing but confidence in their gyms to be safe, comfortable, and clean. Clearly, there's no replacement.”

The full results from “The COVID Era Fitness Consumer” IHRSA report study and report are available at [IHRSA.org/publications](https://www.ihrsa.org/publications). For additional details on the study and how the fitness industry is committed to keeping its members safe, healthy and moving, visit [IHRSA.org](https://www.ihrsa.org).

**Online survey conducted by Kelton Global, a Material Company, to 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 percent.*

About IHRSA

IHRSA, the International Health, Racquet & Sportsclub Association, is a not-for-profit trade association representing the global fitness industry of over 200,000 health and fitness facilities and their suppliers.

IHRSA maintains a leadership role in advancing physical activity, which is critical to peak health and the battle against obesity and chronic lifestyle disease. As one of the world's leading authorities on the commercial health club industry, IHRSA's mission is to grow, promote, and protect the health and fitness industry, while providing its members with benefits and resources. IHRSA and its members are devoted to making the world happier, healthier, and more prosperous through regular exercise and activity promotion.

About Kelton Global

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