

A group of runners is captured from behind, running along a paved path in a park. The scene is dimly lit, suggesting dusk or dawn. The runners are wearing athletic gear, including tank tops and shorts. Some of the runners' bib numbers are visible: 25, 32, 39, 31, and 39. The path is scattered with fallen leaves, and the background is filled with trees.

BMF - 20 :  
SOCIAL DISTANCING PROTOCOLS  
FOR OUTDOOR FITNESS IN PUBLIC  
SPACES AND URBAN PARKS

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## 1. Background and Context

### 1. Sector Close Down

All indoor fitness clubs in the UK were temporarily closed for an indefinite period on 20<sup>th</sup> March.

As the weekend of 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> March was very warm a significant proportion of the UK population headed to public spaces and urban parks for exercise.

When the fitness clubs closed, they furloughed many full time staff, though a large number of Casual or Self-employed Personal Trainers were laid off with no clarity over their future. In a natural reaction, many of these headed to the parks to keep their clients active.

To compound matters, the warm weather attracted a lot of families to parks for picnics and general recreation.

### 2. Re-opening Outlook and Plan

When indoor fitness clubs are allowed to reopen they will do so under strict restrictions on services, facilities, hygiene and social distancing. As a result of this, the service members are going to receive is likely to be sub-standard especially in the area of group exercise.

It is anticipated that outdoor spaces and urban parks will be allowed to open for group exercise under strict rules before the indoor clubs are allowed to open.

BMF has developed a social distancing safe workout methodology for group exercise and personal training and provided this to UK Active.

### 3. These Protocols

When lockdown is eased, we anticipate a proliferation of both group exercise classes and personal training sessions being conducted within public spaces and most notably parks. It is our hope that these protocols complement arrangements for urban parks and managed rural areas, whereby local authorities adopt the protocols as a pre-requisite for any group exercise or personal training within their open spaces.

Instructors (franchisees, park managers, instructors) can make their own decisions and can go above the standards in this document, **but not lower**.

BMF is approaching re-opening in parks as a two-stage process, this document looks at the initial opening period and anticipated Social Distancing regulations set by Government.

Once Social Distancing is relaxed by Government, these protocols will equally be relaxed until normal operations can resume.

## **2. BMF-20 Protocols**

### **1. Risk Assessment and Site Survey**

- a. Site specific risk assessments must be conducted (or updated) taking into account the risk associated with exercising in a particular location, e.g. a busy London park versus a sparsely populated common area.

### **2. Communication with Members and the Public**

- b. Communications must be issued to members explaining the protocols, requesting compliance, providing Q&A and ultimately reassuring members.
- c. Communications will reiterate that ultimately the member must take all reasonable personal responsibility when taking part in physical activity, including the responsibility not to congregate pre or post class.
- d. Member Terms and Conditions will be updated giving BMF the automatic right to suspend membership for any member in persistent breach of social distancing guidelines.
- e. Instructors should take every opportunity to communicate these safe workout protocols through local press (newspapers), park social media pages, local businesses etc.
- f. A summary of the Safe Workout Protocols for Members is provided at Annex A. See also 'Promoting the Safe Workout' section in this document.

### **2. Mandatory Booking-in**

- a. Communications to members should reiterate that the protocols are for member and public safety and that booking into classes in advance is mandatory to avoid overcrowding.
- b. Members who have not booked in will be asked to leave the class for the safety of all other members.
- c. Social distancing and cleanliness will be promoted when booking on-line

### **3. Meeting Points**

- a. Members should arrive individually and at pre-defined points and after registration with the Instructor, should be instructed to move off quickly into the park to their allocated workout 'station'.
- b. Where possible, workouts should take place away from car parks or other busy areas of the park. Entry and exit points for members to join the workout formation should be clearly marked.

#### **4. Member Possessions and Clothing**

- a. Members must keep possessions with them at all times, at no point should any member possession be passed between a member and an instructor including clothing, water bottles, car keys, inhalers, phones, training vests etc.
- b. Members will be advised to wash hands before attending classes.
- c. Members will be advised to wear their BMF Training Vest to help identify them as distinct from other park fitness operators (Bootcamps, PTs etc.) and emphasise that they are participating in a safe social distancing workout.

#### **5. Pre-class Briefings**

- a. Social Distancing and cleanliness will be promoted by the instructor at the start of the class and throughout the class.
- b. Anyone showing symptoms of COVID-19 will be asked to leave the class.

#### **6. Post-class Briefings**

- a. Members will be instructed not to congregate post-class but asked to leave quickly and individually.
- b. Instructors should take care to release members from the workout formation individually or in small groups to minimise the chance that they will breach social distancing rules post-class (e.g. by bunching up at park gates).

#### **7. Class Formations**

- a. Instructors must adhere to the BMF-20 workout protocols at all times.
- b. Classes will be organised in a series of formations in such a way as to comply with social distancing, with appropriate spacing between participants monitored by the instructor throughout the class.
- c. Members must only train at their allocated 'station' which shall be indicated by a cone or series of cones creating a clear 3m<sup>2</sup> space around each member.
- d. Therefore, only the static formations at Annex B are permitted as part of the BMF-20 workout. BMF will add additional formations when they have been tested as safe and compliant with social distancing.
- e. Members must not be instructed to conduct shuttle runs between two points, or run or jog around fixed locations in the park (e.g. a lake or a tree) as this may cause them to bunch up or get out of sync and break social distancing rules.
- f. Where possible, the areas of a park used for training should be relocated / re-sited in between classes to avoid the risk of members training on the same area of ground as another member<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> This represents best practice, as there is currently no scientific evidence that COVID-19 is transmitted via sweat particles.

## 8. Class Sizes

- a. Maximum class sizes will be set by BMF Central in accordance with Government, Park Authority and UK Active mandate.
- b. Initially class sizes will be capped at 15 members<sup>2</sup> plus the instructor(s); therefore instructors should be mindful of this and organise their weekly schedules and BMF at Home offer accordingly.
- c. Maximum Class sizes will be reviewed by BMF Central on a weekly basis and will be revised upwards when it is safe and compliant to do so.
- d. In order to ensure there is adequate supply of classes for all members, limits should be put on how early members can book into a class, and how many classes members can book into in advance. Members will be asked to adhere to respectful booking etiquette to give other members the opportunity to book onto outdoor classes.

## 9. Class Timings

- a. Back-to-back classes should be scheduled so as to allow for time for one group of members to leave entirely before another group arrives (at least 10 minutes between classes).
- b. Instructors must schedule classes at times when parks are less populated, such as early morning and late evening, to reduce the risk of coming into contact with other park users / bystanders.
- c. Instructors should schedule their online (BMF at Home) classes when parks are more heavily populated, such as over lunchtime on a weekday, or after 0730 on the weekend, to avoid drawing unnecessary public attention to their outdoor classes and also reduce risk of coming into contact with other park users.

## 10. Class Types

- a. Personal Training and Small Group Training can continue providing social distancing measures are in place.
- b. Specific times of the day should be made available for Active classes for the over 70's or those deemed most 'at-risk'. Alternatively, instructors should schedule online classes for the over 70's or those deemed most 'at risk'.
- c. Crossrun, Military Fit Ops, or other workout programmes are not permitted during social distancing, other than when delivered online as part of a BMF at Home programme.

## 11. Equipment and Equipment Cleaning

- a. Members are permitted to bring a weighted rucksack with them, but this must always remain with the member.
- b. Equipment must be cleaned in line with Public Health England guidelines.
- c. Equipment must be cleaned in between classes and at the start of every day.

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<sup>2</sup> Unless a smaller number is required by Government.

- d. Anti-viral spray must be used and is available for purchase through the Purchase IT portal.
- e. Cones or other markers used should be cleaned in between classes.

## **12. Vehicles**

- a. Vehicles should not be used to store member possessions
- b. Vehicles should be kept clean and tidy and subject to a full weekly cleaning regime

## **13. Promoting the Safe Workout**

- a. Flags and pop-up banners should be used to indicate meeting points and safe workout guidelines.
- b. A-boards should be purchased which can be placed near the meeting point to display safe workout guidelines.

## **14. Responding to Positive Cases**

- a. A process flow diagram for responding to positive cases of COVID-19 infection is provided in a separate procedure.

## **Annex A – Summary of Safe Workout Protocols for Members**

*To visibly display on A-Boards / Pop-up Banners and for use in collateral.*

The BMF-20 workout has been specifically designed to meet all Government, Park Authority and Trade Body social distancing requirements. Participants must adhere to the following six rules in order to take part in the BMF-20 workout.

1. To avoid overcrowding, booking into classes is now mandatory.
2. Class sizes are set in advance.
3. Congregating in groups before or after a class is not permitted.
4. BMF will allow 3m<sup>2</sup> of training space per person.
5. Workouts will be adjusted to adhere to social distancing.
6. Participants must keep belongings with them at all times.

Full details of the BMF-20 safe workout protocols are available on the BMF website.

## Annex B – BMF-20 Workout Formations

### BMF 20 WORKOUT HOLLOW SQUARE FORMATION

