



## NEW YORK STATE SETS REOPENING DATE FOR GYMS

DON POLLARD / OFFICE OF GOV. ANDREW CUOMO

August 17, 2020 - New York's reopening process originally included gyms in its fourth phase, but the Cuomo administration set them aside — along with other venues such as movies theaters — when regions around the state started reaching that stage.

Gyms and fitness studios in New York state will be allowed to open as early as Aug. 24, Gov. Andrew Cuomo announced Monday.

The new guidelines for gyms include a handful of initial requirements:

- Gyms will be allowed to open at 33% capacity.
- Masks must be worn at all times.
- The state is issuing standards for ventilation and air filtration. There will also be guidelines that require practices such as sign-in forms and recommendations for symptom screening at the door.
- Local municipalities will have the responsibility to conduct inspections before gyms open, or within two weeks of opening. The state is setting a September 2 deadline for municipalities to do these inspections.
- Indoor classes will be allowed at the discretion of local municipalities.

"Gyms are one of the areas where you have to be very careful," Cuomo said Monday during a press briefing. "Health officials and space officials, physical plant officials, have helped us develop these guidelines."

Gyms have been closed in New York since March as part of the state's efforts to fight the Covid-19 pandemic. New York's reopening process originally included gyms in its fourth phase, but the Cuomo administration set them aside — along with other venues such as movies theaters — when regions around the state started reaching that stage.

The delay has frustrated the operators of gyms and fitness studios, prompting them to band together to lobby the state. Some operators have questioned whether they'd be able to make it through the disruption.

After suffering one of the nation's worst peaks early in the pandemic, New York has significantly controlled the spread of the virus in recent months.

Cuomo said Monday that New York's test positivity rate was .71% on Sunday, the lowest daily percentage since the start of the pandemic. The rate has been on average 1% or lower since June.

"That is exactly where we want to be," the governor said.

He credited the state's phased reopening process for keeping spread of the virus suppressed.

In addition to gyms, the state has been easing restrictions on other venues that have set aside so far in the reopening process. Bowling alleys were allowed to reopen at 50% capacity on Monday.

Still not allowed to reopen: movie theaters.

Cuomo said Monday theaters pose a relatively high level of risk — even at reduced capacity — because they involve groups of people seated for long periods of time.

"This is a risky situation," the governor said. "And on the index of how essential, movie theaters are not high on the list."