

A practical guide for athletes returning to athletics training following the COVID-19 restrictions during phase 3 of the route map for exiting lockdown

This practical **guide**, prepared by our team in consultation with **sportscotland** and in line with government guidelines, outlines the specific measures **scottishathletics** recommend athletes take to ensure a safe return to athletics training activity.



PHASE 3

Be aware guidance can change quickly and more restrictive rules may be applied in the future, so please refer to the [scottishathletics](https://www.scottishathletics.org.uk) website regularly.

The guidelines in this document relate to phase 3 of the Scottish Government's COVID-19 route map through and out of the crisis.

This phase:

1. Permits the resumption of sport in line with sports specific guidance and public health advice.
2. Organised outdoor sport specific activity can be undertaken by children and young people (u18) from 13th July with no physical distancing required on the field of play.
3. Enables groups of 15 from 5 households, including family and friends, to meet outside with physical distancing.
4. Gyms (including indoor sport spaces) will not open before 31st July.
5. These guidelines should be read in conjunction with any updated Scottish Government guidance. Information on the Scottish Government's approach to managing COVID-19 is available at www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/
6. Travel guidance outlined by the Scottish Government should always be adhered to. Guidance is available at [Staying Safe and Protecting Others: Travel](#)



1. Before you train

In this phase you must stay at home if you:

- Have been in contact with someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days.
- Have been overseas to a country on the quarantine list or exposed to someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days.
- Have COVID-19 symptoms (self-isolate for 7 days) or are feeling unwell.
- Have been told to self-isolate as part of the contact tracing measures in place.
- You may be subject to a symptom check by your facility operator or club prior to training.

2. Physical distancing & good hygiene behaviours

- Follow Scottish Government advice on physical distancing at all times.
- Do not share food, towels, and drinks.
- Clean your hands and equipment frequently.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes and dispose of any used tissue in your own bag and take it home with you. Wash your hands for 20 seconds or sanitise afterwards.
- Avoid spitting unless into a tissue which you should take home and dispose of.
- Avoid touching your face.
- Hand sanitiser should be at least 60% alcohol based and detergent wipes appropriate for the surface they are being used on.

Further health, safety & hygiene guidance:
[Health Protection Scotland: General guidance for non-healthcare settings](#)
[UK Government / HPE: Cleaning in a non-healthcare setting](#)
[Health Protection Scotland: Hand hygiene techniques](#)

3. Safeguarding

Children and young people:

As club activity resumes in stage 3: -

- Clubs should ensure their [Child Wellbeing and Protection Policy](#) and their Welfare Officer contact details are both up to date and easily accessible on the club website and social media pages.
- Clubs should circulate their [Codes of Conduct](#) for coaches, athletes, and parents/carers so that everyone is reminded about the expectations of them and their roles.
- Clubs should make the [Responding to Concerns Procedure](#) widely available so that everyone knows what to do and who to contact with any worries or concerns.
- Outwith normal club sessions, coaches must have the express permission of the parent/carer of an athlete who is under the age of 18 to coach that athlete. If the session is 1:1 the parent must be in attendance. Where a group of children are being coached outwith club sessions then at least one of the parents must be present.
- Parents/guardians who are supervising their children should abide by Scottish Government physical distancing guidance and stay at least 2m away from those out with their own household.
- Groups of parents from different households should not congregate before, during or after the activity.
- Further considerations on the safe return of children and young people to sport can be found [here](#).

Para-athletes:

- General Assistance: para-athletes requiring personal support should bring a carer with them to training to provide any direct support.

4. Training groups and sizes

The rules for training group sizes and physical distancing are as follows;

Age 11 and under

- Children aged 11 years and younger are not required to physically distance, as set out in Scottish Government guidance. This extends to organised sports activity and the field of play.
- Coaches and other adults must continue to physically distance as per Scottish Government guidance (2m for time being) at all times.
- **scottishathletics** recommend a maximum group of 8 athletes for this age group.

Age 12-17 years

- For older children aged 12-17 a 'field of play bubble' can be created during organised sports activity that allows contact whilst the activity is taking place, in effect suspending physical distancing guidelines for the duration of the activity.
- Normal physical distancing guidelines will however apply before and after the activity takes place (see [Scottish Government guidance](#)).
- Coaches and other adults must continue to physically distance as per Scottish Government guidance (2m for time being) at all times.
- **scottishathletics** recommend a maximum group of 10 athletes for this age group.

Age 18+

- As of the 10th July the household numbers that can mix outdoors is 5 households (with up to 15 people).
- These guidelines remain in place for adult (18+) training groups and physical distancing must be maintained at all times. Please note that this guidance may be relaxed over the weeks ahead so please continue to follow Scottish Government guidance.

For the purposes of track & field, the field of play is defined as the track and infield (including any external throws specific areas). For off track activity the field of play rules apply from the start of your warm-up to the end of your session.

Athletes should make sure that if they are coached by an independent coach that they are following the necessary rules put in place.

5. Attending training

Check directly with your athletics club and facility operator on their access arrangements in phase 3.

Recognised **scottishathletics** performance athletes should be aware of the guidance issued by the performance team and contact their respective performance manager.

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Where you do intend to train in phase 3 please follow the guidance outlined below:

- Athletes should be aware that the easing of restrictions does not mean that all facilities will open immediately. Owners and operators will require time to consider all the implications of opening facilities and put plans in place to re-engage staff and to set up operations that ensure the safety of participants, staff and volunteers. This is a difficult time for everyone so please be patient.
- Indoor areas may be open but not before the 31st July so check with your local facilities operator.
- Sports facility operators and clubs may open toilets for public use if they follow the guidelines outlined on the Scottish Government website [Opening Public Toilets Guidelines](#) .
- Read the separate guidance for clubs, coaches, facilities, and any relevant risk assessments.
- Athletes should plan and risk assess the session and training environment with their coach online or by phone prior to the session and confirm expectations and requirements.
- Athletes should follow the club and/or facilities booking protocols.
- Athletes should avoid travelling to and from training in the same vehicle as someone from a different household. Where possible public transport should be avoided.
- Athletes should arrive and leave the designated training facility as close as possible to when they are due to train.
- Athletes should take with them hand sanitiser and/or suitable antiviral wipes.
- Equipment should be cleaned prior to and following training with suitable antiviral wipes.
- Para athletes will be permitted to use their personal throwing frames and straps, RaceRunning Frames and Racing Wheelchairs. Hygiene guidance should always be followed.
- No spectating should take place other than where a parent is supervising a child or vulnerable adult. Physical distancing guidance should always be followed.

6. When training finishes

- Once training has finished leave promptly and maintain physical distancing.
- Hands should be washed and/or sanitised as soon as possible.
- Ensure personal kit and equipment is cleaned thoroughly after use.
- If you become unwell after training, you should first contact your GP/NHS 24 and then inform your club.

7. Event specific guidance

General safety & hygiene

Athletes must be aware of current club and facility first aid procedures. The club/facility will ensure the first aid equipment has been updated appropriately for the COVID-19 pandemic and that first aiders are aware of COVID-19 specific first aid advice <https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/first-aid-certificate-coronavirus.htm>.

- Athletes should not handle any shared coaching equipment (cones etc.). Only the coach should do this.
- Athletes are advised to use their personal equipment wherever possible and follow hygiene guidance.
- Personal equipment should not be shared, and measures must be put in place to reduce the risk of contamination.

- Where there is a requirement for athletes to share equipment, it should be thoroughly cleaned before and after use.
- Clean all equipment with suitable antiviral wipes/spray at the conclusion of your session.
- Be aware of what surfaces other athletes and coaches touch.
- Hand sanitiser should be at least 60% alcohol based and detergent wipes appropriate for the surface they are being used on.

Track

- Follow the current Scottish Government advice on physical distancing. When the guidance is 2m a **one lane gap** on the track is not sufficient to meet the physical distancing requirements. On the field of play athletes under 18 can participate without the need for physical distancing.
- Equipment such as hurdles and barriers may be used if the facility and the club have both assessed the risk and put in place measures to ensure it is safe to do so.
- The facility should have in place a protocol for the setup and clear-up of hurdles and/or barriers. Facility operators should make it clear to athletes and coaches whether cleaning of hurdles and barriers will be carried out by the facility staff or whether the coach or athlete will be expected to do it.
- Hurdles and barriers should be cleaned using antiviral wipes/spray before and after use.
- It is advised to use personal starting blocks but if you require to use shared blocks all surfaces should be cleaned using suitable antiviral wipes/spray.
- Ideally athletes should run side by side leaving 2m between them if over the age of 18. Athletes running in single file must maintain a 5m distance if over the age of 18.

Field Events

Opening jump areas is a decision for the facility operator based on their risk assessment of the activity. The following guidance will inform that assessment and applies where the operator allows vertical and horizontal jumps.

Vertical Jumps

- Follow the training group sizes as per section 4 for the number of athletes/households that can jump during a session. Athletes should be supervised by a coach and physical distancing must be maintained for individuals aged 18+.
- An adult, either the athlete, coach or facility operator should perform a wipe down of bars and uprights using suitable antiviral wipes/spray before and after the session. Facility operators should make it clear to athletes and coaches whether cleaning will be carried out by the facility staff or whether the coach or athlete will be expected to do it.
- Athletes should sanitise hands before and after each jump and maintain good hygiene practices.
- Signage must be prominently positioned at each jump area stating the rules/guidance for use. High mist spray of an antiviral disinfectant cleaner to be used on the bed between users. **Operators must contact the manufacturer of the jumps mats in use at their facility to confirm whether the proposed cleaning products can be used safely on their equipment.**
- Coaches should check with athletes if they have any skin conditions that may react to the cleaning product used on the mats.
- If an athlete coughs or sneezes on the bed it should be closed for cleaning.
- After each session cleaning of the bed must be completed, and a minimum of 15-minute drying time must be allowed, before the next session starts.

Horizontal Jumps

- Follow the training group sizes as per section 4 for the number of athletes/households that can jump during a session. Athletes should be supervised by a coach and physical distancing must be maintained for individuals aged 18+.
- Sandpits should be covered when not in use and signs positioned to ensure they are not used.
- Athletes should sanitise hands before and after each jump and maintain good hygiene practices.
- Athletes should use their own tape measure.
- Signage must be prominently positioned at each jump area stating the rules/guidance for use.
- During each session, one adult, either a coach or athlete, should be responsible for the raking of the pit. The rake should be cleaned using suitable antiviral wipes/spray before and after use.
- High mist spray or watering can of sterilising fluid should be sprayed over the sand after use, turned and raked. Facility operators should implement a process for this procedure ensuring correct PPE is used for spraying.
- An adult, either the athlete or coach, should clean any other equipment used.
- After each session cleaning of the pit must be completed, and minimum of 15-minute drying time must be allowed, before the next session starts.

Throws

- Follow the training group sizes as per section 4 for the number of athletes/households that can throw during a session. Athletes should be supervised by a coach and physical distancing must be maintained for individuals aged 18+.
- Athletes should be supervised by a coach and physical distancing must be maintained.
- Risk assessments must have been completed and shared with all coaches and athletes for both the throws facility and specific training session.
- Athletes are encouraged to use their own equipment which must be cleaned using suitable antiviral wipes/spray before and after use.
- Coaches and athletes should ensure that any shared equipment is used by only one athlete at a time and is thoroughly cleaned before and after each session.
- Athletes and coaches should avoid touching the shared cage/netting.
- Where a cage door requires to be moved, it should be moved by an adult, either athlete, coach or facility operator who is familiar with its operation. The facility operator should make clear to coaches and athletes who can move cage doors. Any surfaces touched in the process of moving the cage door should be cleaned with suitable antiviral wipes/spray before and after use.
- Facility operators should make it clear to athletes and coaches whether cleaning will be carried out by the facility staff or whether the coach or athlete will be expected to do it.

Para-athletes

- Where possible, para-athletes should use their own personal equipment. All equipment should be cleaned before and after a session following the hygiene guidance.
- Wheelchair, race running, and seated throws athletes should be helped and supported into any equipment by the guardian/carer only.
- Guide Runners: in phase 3, unless the guide is from the same household/extended

household then guide running should not be carried out.

Off track coaching and leading including road running

- Follow the training group sizes as per section 4 for the number of athletes/households that can run during a session. Athletes should be supervised by a coach and physical distancing must be maintained for individuals aged 18+.
- Coaches, athletes, and runners should adhere to all restrictions that may be placed on a public space by the owner of that space.
- Coaches should ensure they have carried out a standard risk assessment of any training space or route, as they would normally, prior to the session taking place.
- Coaches, athletes, and runners should ensure they carry out standard safety procedures (e.g. phones, route planning etc) when accessing 'wild' public spaces.
- Be aware of other members of the public using the same space you are training in. The group should be briefed on how they run together in a way that respects physical distancing, and which does not cause unnecessary risk or anxiety to members of the public.
- Ideally athletes should run side by side leaving 2m between them if over the age of 18. Athletes running in single file must maintain a 5m distance if over the age of 18.

Competition Specific Guidance

- Competition specific guidance for all events – track, jumps, throws etc is available to download from the **scottishathletics** fixture page.

8. Contacts

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