



Position Statement – Panamerican Confederation of Sports Medicine (COPAMEDE)

Sao Paulo, March 23th, 2020.

Regular physical activity/exercise is known to be associated to an improvement in the immune function, optimizing the body's defense mechanisms against infections.

Taking into account World Health Organization (WHO)'s recommendations, we make the following considerations:

- While athletes hope to maintain training levels, taking into account the specific aspects of each sport, it is necessary to prioritize their health and social responsibilities to contain the spread of the COVID-19 (Corona virus)
- The preparation of a specific program to maintain the athlete's fitness is considered necessary, to have optimal physical condition upon reintegrating into the training environment, once competitive activities can be restarted. This training program should be prepared by the athlete's physical trainer, under medical supervision.
- Athletes, medical and personal staff should avoid exercise in the presence of fever, cough, shortness of breath or any other symptoms suggestive of an infectious process.
- Athletes in a sports rehabilitation program should continue to follow the recommendations provided by his/her rehabilitation team (treatment plan, attendance to rehabilitation sessions, individualized home program).

Regarding the use of physical exercise for health promotion:

- Physically active individuals have a lower probability of developing clinical conditions, as hypertension, diabetes, and other cardiovascular diseases, which

are associated with higher risk of a complicated course in the case of Corona virus infection.

- In addition to its preventive role, physical exercise is also an important tool in the treatment and control of the mentioned chronic diseases. We must remember that decompensated patients become more susceptible to complications, in case of COVID-19.
- This is particularly important in subjects over 60 years of age, who are more vulnerable to this pandemic, as well as being a population with a greater probability of having the aforementioned chronic diseases.
- Therefore, physically active people, especially those over the age of 60, should be encouraged to maintain regular physical exercise, with the necessary adaptations to keep their usual routine at home.
- The elderly should avoid remaining at rest for long periods. Get up at least every ninety minutes to stimulate the cardiovascular, nervous, and musculoskeletal systems. Short walking periods at home are a good alternative.
- The elderly can do housework when possible standing up, avoiding fatigue, and sensation of instability.
- For the general population, we also recommend doing housework standing up, whenever possible. Practice strengthening exercises with your own body weight and stretching exercises. For every 30 minutes of rest or sitting, take a short exercise break.
- No one should exercise with an active infectious disease.
- The World Health Organization recommends avoiding indoor facilities and crowds. Therefore, practicing exercise in gyms and sports clubs should be avoided.
- In those places where there is some kind of restriction to walk on the streets, we recommend exercising at home. In those places where there is no such restriction, you must maintain the respiratory etiquette measures, such as keeping at least a one to two meter distance between people and in case of sneezing use a disposable tissue or your elbow to cover your face.

- It is important to remember that these considerations can change rapidly as the pandemic evolves. It is important to follow the recommendations of the local authorities (country, province or city), regarding the containment strategy, social isolation and eventually quarantine, to plan the practice of physical exercises.

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Panamerican Confederation of Sports Medicine

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