

COVID-19 RECOMMENDATIONS

INTERNATIONAL TABLE TENNIS FEDERATION

VERSION 1.0





I N T R O D U C T I O N

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed our lives and our sport drastically. Training and competition venues across the world have remained closed, and our sport's activities have been suspended. With a view to the future ITTF has developed a roadmap in form of these guidelines for returning to regular training and competition practices. These guidelines are intended as recommendations for all members of the table tennis community to continue to enjoy and participate in our sport during the current global health emergency, and to return to a shared enjoyment of it in the future.

The guidelines are not legally binding, but only serve as a complement to guidance and laws issued by local authorities across the globe in relation to the spread of COVID-19. National and local governments are continuously issuing and updating procedures regarding restrictions on and gradual openings of society, which need to be duly respected by all.

We are closely monitoring and continuously evaluating the situation in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic. Being aware of the current situation, following national guidelines and adjusting our habits accordingly will enable us to continue to practice our sport and gradually return to regular training and competition practices. In preparing these guidelines, we are closely following advice by the World Health Organization (WHO).



P U R P O S E

The ITTF is committed to updating the table tennis community on safety practices. This document is intended to guide and assist athletes, coaches, clubs and National Associations (NAs) in planning their return to regular training programs and developing their own detailed plans. The recommendations outlined in this document are by no means exhausting and may change as and when new information on the COVID-19 outbreak, its prevention and its treatment become available. ITTF takes no responsibility for any possible infection with the COVID-19 during table tennis activities.

S C O P E

These guidelines can be applied by any individual or organization involved in the sport of table tennis globally without limitation:

- Continental Federations;
- National Associations;
- Athletes;
- Athletes' entourage members;
- Coaches;
- Officials;
- Administrative staff;
- Medical staff;
- Volunteers;
- Any other person (whether human or an organization) involved in table tennis in any of the roles these guidelines address.

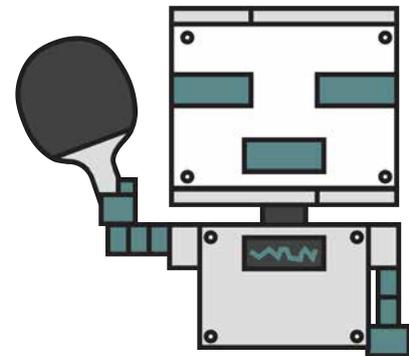
Phases of returning to training and competition

PHASE 1 - LOCKDOWN

Where public authorities have introduced lockdown measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19, training and competition facilities are closed due to the requirement by public authorities, and only essential work is permitted.

■ TRAINING

- i. Personal training at home - table tennis training for those with a table and TT robot at home, physical training and mental training;
- ii. Only online coaching available via online meeting platforms;
- iii. Common cleaning protocol of living space and athletic equipment – using disinfectants, wearing appropriate personal protective equipment (gloves, face mask, etc.) to prevent contact with contaminated surfaces;
- iv. Only leave your home for essential work or errands and follow infection prevention measures when in public



■ COMPETITIONS

None

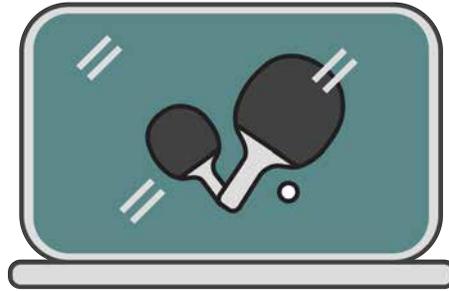
■ OFFICES

- i. Only leave your home for essential work and follow infection prevention measures when in public;
- ii. Common cleaning protocol of office space and work equipment – using disinfectants, wearing appropriate personal protective equipment (gloves, face mask, etc.) to prevent contact with contaminated surfaces;
- iii. Keeping physical distance from coworkers – around 2 meters apart (6 feet 5 inches)

■ MEETINGS

Online

■ SAFEGUARDING MEASURES FOR ONLINE SESSIONS INVOLVING VIDEO



With online coaching and meetings becoming a necessary element of working and training from home, safeguarding measures should be observed. These should be based on safeguarding policies already in place and should be adapted to an online environment where webcams are used. The following points are minimum elements that should be observed:

I. All sessions

- Suitable clothing should be worn throughout any session held via video, including any household members in the background;
- Language must be professional and appropriate, including any household members in the background;
- Any computers used should be in appropriate areas for the online session in question and where possible be against a neutral background;
- Where online coaching is involved, live sessions should be kept to a reasonable length of time, as they would be in a regular training environment;
- Participants should risk assess the use of a webcam in any particular situation;

II. Additional measure where children are involved

- Parents' consent should be sought prior to the event;
- One-on-one sessions should be avoided where possible;
- Sessions should be recorded and stored for record-keeping, subject to parents' consent;
- Coaches and youths must wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household.



P H A S E 2 PARTIAL RELAXATION OF LOCKDOWN

Where public authorities have introduced lockdown measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19, training and competition facilities remain closed. Workplaces begin to open and non-essential errands may be allowed.

■ TRAINING

Measures as per Phase 1.

■ COMPETITIONS

None

■ OFFICES

- i. Any staff working in an office shared with other people must have shown no signs or symptoms of COVID-19 as established by the WHO in the past 14 days, or per guidelines of local health authorities before returning to office work;
- ii. If showing symptoms of ill health, staff should refrain from working from a shared office space and instead remain at home;
- iii. Common cleaning protocol of office space and work equipment – using disinfectants, wearing appropriate personal protective equipment (gloves, face mask, etc.) to prevent contact with contaminated surfaces
- iv. Keeping physical distance from coworkers – around 2 meters apart (6 feet 5 inches)

■ MEETINGS

Online and in person - in person meetings to avoid smaller spaces and keep recommended physical distance of around 2 meters (6 feet 5 inches) from each other.

P H A S E 3 T R A I N I N G V E N U E S O P E N

Where lockdown measures have been partially lifted, training facilities may open for small group activities; competitions remain suspended and travel is limited. Training venues must keep a log of all attendees on site per day for case tracking in case of infection.

■ TRAINING

Recommendations for participation in group training for athletes, coaches and staff:

- i. Exact numbers of small groups allowed to be in sports and leisure facilities should be based on instructions by local authorities, but in any case, capped; there should be no open training sessions without a limit on time or participation numbers;
- ii. Where possible, separate training slots with enhanced protective measures should be offered to people who are more at risk of complications in case of infection;
- iii. Hand washing to be mandatory upon entering and before leaving the training venue and encouraged throughout. If possible, hand sanitizers should be made available throughout the training venue.
- iv. No touching or shaking of hands amongst participants. Social distancing rules must be observed;
- v. A wet disinfectant mat should be placed at the entrance of the venue to facilitate sanitizing of shoes;
- vi. Every 2 hours, all closed areas on the premises (such as offices, changing rooms, hallways, etc.) should be ventilated if at all possible. This should also be done before a changeover of attendees within the venue;
- vii. Any participants must have shown no signs or symptoms of COVID-19 as established by the WHO in the past 14 days, or per guidelines of local health authorities;
- viii. Individuals with a documented case of a COVID-19 infection need clearance from an approved health professional in order to participate in training;



- ix. Where possible, participants should aim to be present at the intended training location for 14 days prior to beginning group training and not travel extensively in this period, which significantly reduces the risk of introducing COVID-19 into the training group;
- x. Eliminate contact with compromised individuals. Signs and symptoms of COVID-19 may vary. Athletes, coaches and staff should not be in close contact with anyone who is sick for 14 days prior to beginning group training. This recommendation reduces the risk of introducing COVID-19 into the training group by someone who may have COVID-19 but is not experiencing any symptoms;
- xi. Follow proper respiratory hygiene. This means:
- Covering your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze;
 - Disposing of the used tissue immediately and wash your hands.
- xii. Social distancing measures should be upheld as far as possible:
- Distance between participants should be kept to an absolute minimum of 1m (3 feet) at all times as advised by WHO, but it is advised to keep a physical distance of 2m (6 feet 5 inches) where at all possible;
 - Participants should refrain from shaking hands, hugging and touching in greeting or celebration;
 - No Doubles training;
 - Adapted multi-ball training:
 - ensure only coach touches balls;
 - area secured so that balls cannot mix with other balls;
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- xiii. The playing court should have an area of at least 5mx12m (16 feet 5 inches x 39 feet 4 inches), surrounded by barriers. It is recommended to keep at least 2m (6 feet 5 inches) space between courts, and a maximum of two persons per one table tennis court. Coaches may be in the facility but should remain outside of the bordered court. For training facilities without barriers, managers may improvise division between tables.
- xiv. Coaches must maintain required physical distance from participants during practice and follow guidelines by local authorities on appropriate PPE (Personal Protective Equipment);

- xv. Continuous sanitizing and prevention practices should be applied (cleaning equipment, washing hands, wearing protection gear as directed by the local government)
- xvi. Eliminate non-playing time in facility including using public showers and changing rooms. Prevention practices required in bathroom areas;
- xvii. Eliminate sharing equipment and observe of the following steps:
- No sharing of rackets. The racket is part of the player's personal equipment;
 - Balls should only be touched by one person at the same table. For this reason, balls should be clearly marked, so that each player only serves with their ball; use of Table Tennis robots should be accompanied with dedicated balls, ideally with ball collection by net (not by hand), to prevent requiring multiple persons to handle the balls;
 - No breathing on the ball for tackiness; balls to be cleaned after practice;
 - No switching of table sides;
 - No touching or cleaning of table with the hands during practice;
 - When using a table tennis robot, each player should use their own set of clearly marked balls, and be responsible for collection of these balls, to avoid multiple people touching them;
 - Every person to use their own hygiene products;
 - Leave at least a ten-minute window for changeover between different training groups to ensure a contact-free switch;
 - If facility is not dedicated to table tennis only, and tables and barriers need to be moved each time, dedicated individuals should be appointed for setting up and breaking down movable equipment. These individuals should at the very least practice proper hand washing techniques before and after touching equipment, but preferably use face masks and gloves while carrying out this task.
- xviii. All participants to bring their own bottle and snacks. Physical distance to be maintained during short breaks;
- xix. Where possible, participants should avoid public transportation on the way to the training venue and back home.



Additional recommendations:

- Minimize risks among participants through continuous infection prevention measures (frequent handwashing, avoid touching your face, cover your mouth when coughing, etc.);
- All participants should self-monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 daily. Participant with symptoms should not attend practice and need to notify coaches, staff, and their healthcare provider. Daily recording of symptoms;
- Coaches or staff monitor athletes for symptoms and remove symptomatic athletes from training. PPE and prevention supplies should be made readily available (hand sanitizer, facial tissues, facial coverings, etc.);
- Small group training to be used outside or in bigger indoor spaces.

■ **COMPETITIONS**

None

■ **OFFICES**

Measures as per Phase 2.

■ **MEETINGS**

Measures as per Phase 2.

P H A S E 4 TRAINING & COMPETITION POSSIBLE

Where lockdown measures have been partially lifted, training facilities may open for small group activities; local competitions may go ahead, either behind closed doors or with limited spectator numbers. Training and competition venues must keep a log of all attendees on site per day for case tracking in case of infection.

■ TRAINING

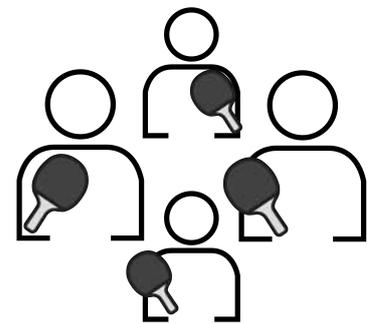
Measures as per Phase 3.

■ COMPETITIONS

Local competitions only; no international travel by participants.

I. Participants

- Any participants must have shown no signs or symptoms of COVID-19 as established by the WHO in the past 14 days, or per guidelines of local health authorities;
- Individuals with a documented case of a COVID-19 infection need clearance from an approved health professional in order to participate in competition;
- Apply proper hygiene practices, such as washing hands upon entering and before leaving the training facility, cleaning equipment and using sanitizing products extensively, and follow additional guidance by local health authorities;
- All participants to carry their own face masks and use them as advised by local authorities and the event organizer;
- No touching or shaking of hands amongst participants. Social distancing rules must be observed;
- Follow proper respiratory hygiene. This means:
 - Covering your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze;
 - Disposing of the used tissue immediately and wash your hands.





- Where possible, use individual transport rather than group travel;
- Changing rooms to remain closed; participants to arrive ready to play match and to depart immediately after if possible. Time in shared facilities of competition venue should be avoided or severely reduced;
- Warm up in separate hall according to schedule. Note that warm up time may be reduced to accommodate all players while upholding social distancing measures;
- Apply prevention practices in shared areas if they cannot be avoided (such as bathrooms), including avoiding physical contact and application of appropriate hygiene practices;
- No sharing of equipment;
- If advised by local health authorities, umpires to wear masks and gloves in the venue.

II. Organizers and staff

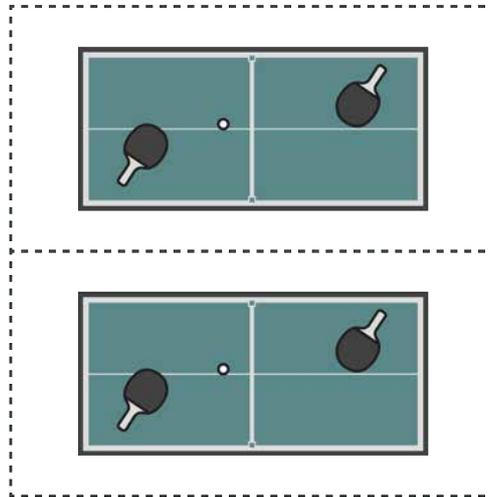
- Ensure compliance with all advice and guidance issued by local authorities;
- Ensure that no individual that has disclosed symptoms of COVID-19 in the past 14 days is allowed to participate or work at the competition in question, and that any prior infections with COVID-19 have been cleared by a health professional;
- Place wet disinfectant mats at each entrance of the venue to facilitate sanitizing of shoes;
- Every 2 hours, all closed areas on the premises (such as offices, changing rooms, hallways, etc.) should be ventilated if at all possible. This should also be done before a changeover of attendees within the venue;
- Based on guidance by local authorities, assess risk of having spectators attend the event and decide whether to play behind closed doors;
- If it is decided that spectators shall be allowed into the venue, ensure that social distancing measures can be upheld according to guidance issued by local authorities; this may mean reduced spectator numbers;
- No racket control to take place;
- Follow guidelines set out by WADA (World Anti-Doping Agency) regarding anti-doping procedures at the time of the event;
- All draws to be done online;
- Choice of shirt colour to be done prior to the match (online);



- Ensure that social distancing measures can be upheld in the call area. This includes:
 - Considering a layout to ensure a distance of 2m (6 feet 5 inches) can be upheld between individuals;
 - Ensuring that PPE in the form of face masks is worn by everyone. Where permissible, organizers must ensure sufficient supply of face masks for participants.

- Stripped down match protocol:
 - Walk in to ensure social distancing;
 - Presentations in box to follow distancing measures;
 - No handshakes;
 - Coin toss to be done by umpire in seat and with players remaining on their sides;
 - No timeout sign to be placed on playing table; only signaled by umpire and small sign placed on umpire's table instead;
 - Towel rule to be relaxed;
 - Towels not to be used for wiping any surfaces, but only own hands and face. Only one box per player, no swapping between games;

- Ensure that social distancing measures can be upheld on the field of play. This includes:
 - Considering a layout with fewer tables to ensure a distance of at least 2m (6 feet 5 inches) between playing courts;
 - Having a bigger box to ensure distance between umpires, players and volunteers remain more than 2m (6 feet 5 inches) at all times;
 - Ensuring that distance between coaches and their players on the field of play can always be at least 2m (6 feet 5 inches); this may mean placing the chairs farther behind the court surrounds;
 - No multi ball to be implemented;
 - Placing towel boxes at a distance from the umpire that ensures social distancing is maintained throughout;
 - Provide bottled sealed drinks, instead of public / shared water dispensers.



- Provide on-site doctor with sufficient PPE and ensure they are trained in response to COVID-19;
- Provide an isolation room for suspected cases of COVID-19 on site;
- Apply continuous sanitizing and prevention practices (cleaning equipment, washing hands, wearing protection gear as directed by the local government);
- Ensure all staff keep a distance of at least 2m (6 feet 5 inches) from other individuals;
- Ensure all staff are briefed on appropriate hygiene practices and are applying them consistently;
- Provide hand sanitizer throughout venue;
- Ensure that shared areas (bathrooms, racket control, food courts, etc) have demarcations to assist in keeping the appropriate distance from other individuals.

III. Spectators and Media

Follow all guidance by local authorities regarding COVID-19 prevention measures and adhere to all rules set in place by the organizers of the event in question.

■ OFFICES

Measures as per Phase 2.

■ MEETINGS

Measures as per Phase 2.

P H A S E 5 RETURN TO REGULAR TRAINING & C O M P E T I T I O N

Facilities are open and no limitations on group size. Workplaces open. Training and competition venues should continue to keep a log of all attendees on site per day for case tracking in case of infection.

■ TRAINING

- i. Any participants must have shown no signs or symptoms of COVID-19 as established by the WHO in the past 14 days, or per guidelines of local health authorities;
- ii. Individuals with a documented case of a COVID-19 infection need clearance from an approved health professional in order to participate in training;
- iii. Where possible, participants should continue to aim to be present at the intended training location for 14 days prior to beginning group training and avoid extensive travel for private purposes, which significantly reduces the risk of introducing COVID-19 into the training group;
- iv. Eliminate contact with compromised individuals. Signs and symptoms of COVID-19 may vary. Athletes, coaches and staff should not be in close contact with anyone who is sick for 14 days prior to beginning group training. This recommendation reduces the risk of introducing COVID-19 into the training group by someone who may have COVID-19 but is not experiencing any symptoms;
- v. Continue to apply proper hygiene practices, such as washing hands upon entering and before leaving the training facility, cleaning equipment and using sanitizing products extensively, and follow additional guidance by local health authorities. Hand sanitizers are to be provided in all venues.
- vi. Continue to follow proper respiratory hygiene. This means:
 - Covering your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze;
 - Disposing of the used tissue immediately and wash your hands.



- vii. Continue to apply prevention practices in shared areas (bathrooms, changing rooms, etc.), including avoiding unnecessary physical contact and application of proper hygiene practices;
- viii. Continue to disinfect equipment before and after use. Balls to continue to be cleaned after practice.
- ix. Every person to use their own hygiene products. All facility visitors to continuously wash hands.

Additional recommendations:

- Minimize risks among participants through continuous infection prevention measures (frequent handwashing, avoid touching your face, cover your mouth when coughing, etc.);
- All participants should self-monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 daily. Participant with symptoms should not attend practice and need to notify coaches, staff, and their healthcare provider. Daily recording of symptoms;
- Coaches or staff monitor athletes for symptoms and remove symptomatic athletes from training. PPE and prevention supplies should be made readily available (hand sanitizer, facial tissues, facial coverings, etc.);
- Regular group training in any types of spaces while observing good hygiene practices throughout;
- Equipment may be shared with frequent disinfection before another person uses it. Every person is encouraged to use their own hygiene products, but disinfective spray and hand sanitizers should be made available by the training provider/venue;
- Normal coaching practice may resume.

■ **COMPETITION**

New protocols for events will continue to be developed as additional facts about disease prevention and returning to larger groups become known. General guidelines will be implemented as needed, in addition to any local authorities' requirements. ITTF and other event authorities should work closely with the local organizing committees of events.



Increased hygiene practices and disease prevention measures should be identified and met at all future events and activities, including implementing and encouraging proper respiratory hygiene.

When returning to international events, all attendees may be required to be tested at 7 days prior to travelling and produce a medical certificate for clearance.

For a transitional period, social distancing measures set out in Phase 4 may need to be observed in the following areas, with additional measures taken:

- i. Travel:
 - Avoiding group travel wherever possible
 - For international events: If transportation services are provided by the LOC, all persons boarding the bus should always wear a mask. If needed distancing measures might apply, with space blocked between persons.
 - Buses should be disinfected twice a day.
- ii. Hotel, accommodation and competition venue:
 - For international events, official hospitality package provided by the LOC should only be limited to one (1) hotel. Official hospitality packages might be mandatory if deemed necessary or otherwise participants who do not choose the official package might be requested to register their locations and should always minimise socialising with the public.
 - Temperature taken upon entry into the venue.
 - Toilets in the venue should be cleaned with high frequency.
- iii. Competition system: during transitional period, events and playing systems might be adjusted as needed.
- iv. Protocol: match protocol may need to be limited; multi ball system might not be implemented.
- v. Food area;
 - Designated area or room for meals in the hotel or venue. If meals are being served in hotels, they should be separated from the public area.
 - Countries to be designated specific tables to ensure proper distancing.
- vi. Competition area:
 - Tables in call area to be separated at least with 2m (6 feet 5 inches) distance if possible;
 - For club/local events, selection of balls prior to match is not allowed.



- For international events, selection of balls prior to match is allowed in the condition that:
 - 1) hand sanitizer is provided at the call area with players sanitizing their hands prior to ball selection;
 - 2) players wear a mask during the ball selection.

- vii. Officials/Accredited area:
 - Three seats to be left empty between each individual, and seats of every second row should always be left empty.

- viii. Staff area:
 - Seats at the technical desk should always be kept to an absolute minimum of 1m (3 feet) at all times as advised by WHO, but it is advised to keep a physical distance of 2m (6 feet 5 inches) where at all possible.

- ix. Media area:
 - Seats at the media tribune and media centre should always be kept to an absolute minimum of 1m (3 feet) as advised by WHO, but it is advised to keep a physical distance of 2m (6 feet 5 inches) where at all possible.

- x. Anti-Doping area.

■ OFFICES

Measures as per Phase 2.

■ MEETINGS

Measures as per Phase 2.

P H A S E 6 P R E V E N T I O N

When COVID-19 cure or vaccine becomes available.

- i. COVID-19 vaccination for athletes, coaches and staff;
- ii. Ongoing education of members of the table tennis community on COVID-19, its prevention and proper respiratory hygiene;
- iii. Continue to promote and implement good hygiene practices: frequent handwashing, avoiding touching the face, covering the mouth when coughing, etc.;
- iv. Frequent disinfecting of equipment before, during, and after training.

