

Resumption of leisure sports after release from containment
Press release of the French National Academy of Medicine
May 1, 2020

The containment implemented over the last 8 weeks to reduce contacts between people and avoid transmission of Covid-19 has imposed a limitation on outings in public space and a reduction in physical activity, despite the authorization of one hour of exercise per day. There is concern that this may result in a marked decline in individual physical conditions and the onset of a state of de-conditioning, particularly in subjects with cardio-metabolic risk factors and in the elderly.

The National Academy of Medicine recalled that regular physical activity, with a reduction in the time spent sitting, is beneficial to health ^[1]. It lowers the risk of most chronic diseases and improves the health status of patients affected by these diseases.

With the upcoming release from containment, it is necessary to consider resuming leisure physical and sports activities, in order to improve physical and mental health, while correcting the deleterious effects of social isolation. This resumption must be very gradual, accompanied, and comply with measures aimed at preventing human-to-human transmission of SARS-CoV-2.

In order to promote the resumption of leisure sports in optimal safety conditions, the National Academy of Medicine recommends:

1. for persons who have contracted Covid-19, who have been placed in isolation, or who have been in contact with confirmed patients, to ensure that there are no contraindications to resume the practice of sport during a medical consultation, so as to check the integrity of the cardiovascular system and respiratory function;
2. a progressive resumption of sports activity in order to limit the risk of accidents, particularly of muscles or joints, since a long period of inactivity is associated with muscle loss and alteration of deep sensitivity, which increases the risk of fall during fast movements or on uneven ground;
3. compliance with distancing measures, since physical exercise increases the ventilatory flow, and thus the risk of transmission through the respiratory tract. For this reason:
 - only individual sports activities practised outdoors can be authorised in the current state of the epidemic;
 - the safety distances between people must be adapted according to the sport activity practised (at least 5 to 7 metres in the wake of a runner or cyclist and 1.5 metres laterally);
 - " Wearing a "general public" mask is recommended during low- to moderate-intensity exercises; incompatible with intense exercises, it must be worn before and just after stopping their practice;
4. preferential use of personal equipment for sports practice or, failing that, common equipment cleaned and disinfected before and after use;
5. maintaining the closure of collective facilities (changing rooms, meeting places, etc.);
6. limiting the progressive deconfinement to leisure and training sports activities, excluding competitions (even of amateurs) and high-level or professional sports activities;
7. the implementation of prevention measures specific to the discipline and the information of members by each sports federation.

The National Academy of Medicine recalls that any physical or sports activity becomes strictly contraindicated in the event of the appearance of fever or respiratory signs.

¹ Communiqué of the French National Academy of Medicine « Confinement is not sedentary » of March 31, 2020