

Confined or not, physical and sport activity remains a necessity.

Press release from the French National Academy of Medicine

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The second wave of Covid-19 has led the health authorities to re-establish containment measures throughout the country since October 29. Once again, the conditions of isolation and inactivity imposed on a large part of the population have deleterious consequences for both physical and mental health, as was observed during the lockdown implemented from March 17 to May 11 [1,2].

Containment constraints reducing physical activity and increasing sedentary life style, i.e. the daily time spent in a sitting position, which is a corollary of inactivity, have major effects on health. During the first lockdown, it was measured that physical activity was reduced by a third and that the daily time spent in a sitting position increased by almost 50%, leading to a state of muscular "de-conditioning" from the very first days. Containment also affects food intake, sleep, vitamin D biosynthesis, stress and anxiety. Physical and mental health are affected, especially in the elderly, accelerating loss of autonomy and the risk of falls.

During the containment, the reduction of sedentary lifestyles associated with the regular practice of physical activity, even reduced, and the earliest possible resumption of sport activity condition the restoration of muscle mass and functions.

Is wearing a mask compatible with the practice of sport? While the sports activities authorized without a mask during the containment period do not seem to expose to the risk of viral transmission, high intensity exercises with a mask are accompanied by a feeling of discomfort and breathing difficulties, which may lead to the possible onset of hypoxia and hypercapnia. For this reason, the wearing of a mask is not required when practicing individual outdoor sports, as long as a physical distance of 2 to 3 meters can be maintained throughout the session. The same applies to brisk walking practice as a physical activity for health.

While the improvement of the epidemiological indicators suggests that containment measures would be lightened, **the National Academy of Medicine recommends that:**

1. As long as the containment lasts,

- to reduce the daily time spent in a sitting position, each period of 30 to 40 minutes in a seated position being followed by a 5-minute walk around the home, alternating gentle stretching and lifting on the tiptoes;
- to practice muscle strengthening exercises 15 to 20 minutes a day, 3 times a week, particularly for the elderly, using the furniture and utensils available at home (chairs or furniture as a support, bottles of water as makeshift dumbbells, etc.) ;

- to devote 30 to 45 minutes a day to dynamic physical activity, whether it be sports or brisk walking.

2. as soon as the containment measures have been eased,

- to maintain the recommendations for reducing the time spent in a sitting position and for muscle strengthening exercises at home;

- to practice a sports activity with a low risk of viral contamination, individual, exclusively outdoors and allowing the maintenance of a physical distance throughout the session (running, athletic walking, golf, tennis, cycling, surfing, solo sailing, etc.) ;

- for sports clubs and federations, to provide clear and up-to-date information to their members and to implement prevention measures specific to each discipline.

In addition, the National Academy of Medicine recalls:

- that optimal safety conditions must be met, including the closure of changing rooms, showers and toilets;

- that people who have contracted Covid-19 must check with their doctor to ensure that there are no contraindications to resuming sports practice out of competition [2];

- that the onset of fever or respiratory signs contraindicate any physical or sports activity;

- that, after an interruption, the resumption of any sporting activity must be gradual;

- that the use of personal equipment should be favored;

- that such sports activities must be designed for the purpose of maintaining fitness and not for competitive purposes.

[1] Press release of the National Academy of Medicine "Confinement is not sedentary" of March 30, 2020.

[2] Press release from the Academy "Resumption of leisure sports after release for containment" of May 1, 2020