

Coaches Guide to Developing Training Plans

In addition to the new safety protocols and activity restrictions that will require coaches to adapt their training plans and environment, consideration must be given to the potential risk implications of reduced training during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many athletes will have diminished capacity in many areas. To reduce the risk of injury, coaches are advised to begin with a gradual resumption of training. Canada's top sport medicine experts have reported that National teams around the world are experiencing three times the normal injury rate among athletes returning to sport after an extended leave from training due to the pandemic. A gradual return to sport training plan will mitigate the risk of injury that results in keeping athletes out of our sport even longer.

PHYSICAL DISTANCING & THE TRAINING ENVIRONMENT

Physical distancing is proven to be one of the most effective ways to reduce the spread of illness during an outbreak. In Canada, as physical distancing measures remain in force, individuals **MUST** always maintain a minimal physical distance of 2 m (6 feet) between others.

The recommended distances when training and exercising are larger. For example, it is recommended that when considering a group moving in the same direction in one line, the physical distance be increased to 4-5 metres, 10 metres for slow walking and running, and 20 metres for hard biking.¹ Coaches projecting their voice in a training environment constitutes exertion. It is recommended that coaches wear face masks at all time during training activities. These considerations and facility needs should be implemented when developing training plans.

As of June 18, 2020, BCRPA recommends calculating space capacity in recreation facilities by allowing a 2-5 metres radius for each participant depending on the activity and expected exertion. If an activity required a 2-metre radius pre-pandemic, that same activity would now require a 3-metre radius¹. Meanwhile, the LifeSaving Society recommends 7m² of water space per person¹. The number of participants allowed in a facility, or section of the facility, at any given time must follow the venue, municipal, provincial, and public health restrictions for a maximum number of persons allowed to gather. The facility and its users must develop a plan for movement of participants in the facility that respects these gathering restrictions.

Developing Your Training Plan

Coach should consider the following measures related to **PHYSICAL DISTANCING** when developing their training plans:

- Physical distancing of a 2-5 metre radius** must always be maintained in all facility locations, including in the pool. The physical distancing is dependent on the level of exertion of the activity.
- Limit the number of people in the training group in accordance with the BCAS or facility capacity restrictions (whichever is more stringent).
- Athletes and coaches are to be separated into self-contained training groups or cohorts. To limit transmission, keep the same group of athletes for each training session.
- The size of training groups will be determined by BCAS or facility limitations, the available pool space, and the ability to maintain the physical distancing that is appropriate for the degree of exertion associated with training.
- An arrival schedule should be developed to coordinate the timing for coach and athlete arrivals. Individuals are to arrive on time at their prescribed arrival time.
- Athletes must arrive at the pool ready to train (swimsuit under their clothes) and must depart immediately after training: "Get in-Train-Get out".
- Respect and follow all facility rules and regulations.

Coaches should consider the following measures related to **EQUIPMENT** when developing their training plans:

- Athletes are not permitted to share any training equipment.
- Ensure athletes use a large enough yoga mat to eliminate contact between them and the pool deck when stretching or warming up.
- Develop a plan for the use of music system during training when it is appropriate to do so. Only one individual using their personal iPod can work the music at a time. All music equipment must be disinfected between users.
- Limit personal items and clothing (backpacks, jackets, shoes, etc.) brought in by athletes, coaches, and staff. Where bags must be brought in, they should be stored separately, with 2m between each member's items or in accordance with facility protocols. Personal items cannot be stored in club lockers.
- All personal items or equipment that arrive with an athlete must leave with the athlete. Personal items or equipment left behind will be discarded immediately.
- Coaches should not use whiteboards or on-site technology that requires swimmers to congregate around them unless physical distancing measures can be applied. Coaches are encouraged to continue to host team meetings in a virtual setting for such activities.

Coach should consider the following measures related to **HYGIENE** when developing their training plans:

- Upon arrival in the training environment, athletes, coaches, and staff must wash their hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer (>60% alcohol) for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Cover mouth and nose with a disposable tissue or the crease of elbow when sneezing or coughing. Wash or sanitize hands after using a tissue or the area of the skin if the elbow area is not covered with clothing.
- Do not share food and drinks. Do not share water bottles. All water bottles must be easily identifiable. Athletes, coaches, and staff are required to fill their personal water bottles at home.
- Physical therapy treatments, which includes hands-on services provided by massage therapists physiotherapists, chiropractors, athletic therapists, and strength and conditioning practitioners are to take place in accordance with the practitioner's guidelines.
- Ensure participants wear appropriate deck footwear, except when in the water, to limit contact between feet and the deck.
- Upon arriving at home athletes and coaches should remove their clothing, place it in the washing machine, along with their swimsuit and towel, and wash everything using regular laundry soap and hot water (60-90°C).

Coaches should consider the following measures related to **TRAINING IN THE COVID-19 ERA** when developing their training plans:

- In preparation for a return to training in water, a **gradual return to the water plan** is essential to mitigate the risk of injury. The focus of training is individual athlete skills training. See [Appendix 16](#) for a sample Return to the Water Training Framework developed by Canada Artistic Swimming and [Appendix 14](#) for return to train in-water strategies developed by the BCAS Technical Leaders Working Group.
- Incorporate the "return to the water plan" into a periodized, annual training plan. Factor in how many hours of pool time are accessible and how that will impact training volume and intensity over periods of time, as seasonal plans are developed.
- Determine the "minimum" coaching plan required to support the training plan, ensuring adherence to the Rule of Two.

- ❑ Create a plan for appropriate warm up/activation and post training cool down/recovery.
 - All warm-ups and cool down protocols must adhere to the physical distancing rules.
 - Athletes must use their own equipment (no sharing of equipment).
- ❑ There is to be NO athlete-athlete physical contact during training, either on deck or in the pool.
- ❑ There is to be NO coach-athlete physical contact during training. Coaches should use verbal cues when instructing students in place of physical contact. Alternatively, coaches can use video support in a virtual setting to demonstrate the skill or correction.
- ❑ There is to be NO coach-coach physical contact during training. Coaches are not permitted to share hand-held equipment such as stopwatches, tablets, clipboards, or pens, with colleagues or others.
- ❑ Use cones on deck to visually divide the pool training space into appropriately sized areas for athletes that respect the required physical distance for each activity, while respecting the facility's requirements.
- ❑ Entry and exit into and out of the pool must be staggered or spread out in a manner that respects the physical distancing requirements.

Additional Information:

[Appendix 14](#) provides Training Tips, Strategies, & Recommendations compiled by the BCAS Technical Leaders Working Group for each phase of the Return to Artistic Swimming Plan.

[Appendix 15](#) provides a Training Environment Check List for Coaches.

[Appendix 16](#): CAS Gradual Return to Water Training Framework