



# LIFTING ATHLETICS OUT OF LOCKDOWN

#StaySafe

## Return to Training

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## Guiding Principles

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The safety and wellbeing of all athletes, runners, coaches, officials, volunteers and the wider community is at the heart of any guidance that Welsh Athletics is distributing.

The guidance that follows provides sport specific advice. It is important to say that any return to activity must take account of local conditions and any risk assessment for normal activities should be undertaken as well as ensuring that all government guidance around Covid-19 is taken into account.

It is the responsibility of each athlete, coach and facility to make that assessment based on their local environment. Risk assessment must take into account mitigations and plans for when activities do not go as expected. Planning scenarios around, for example, an injury occurring to an athlete and the need to support that athlete while social distancing should be undertaken<sup>1</sup>.

<b>Health first</b>	<b>If you have any doubts or concerns about the risk to your health or that of others, stop and re-assess</b>
<b>Stay up to date</b>	How will you make sure you, and those you're with, are following the latest guidance? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Check the latest Welsh Government Guidance here.</a></li></ul>
<b>Think ahead: Before, during, &amp; after</b>	What do you need to do before taking part? Have you assessed the risks? How will you get to and from where you're going?

When lifting restrictions please consider the following at a local level<sup>2</sup>:

- Can the measures be implemented effectively in practice?
- How will you clearly communicate the changes to all without disadvantaging any parties?
- Will you need to provide extra encouragement or incentives to bring people back to the sport?
- Ensure you consider any consent issues – any decision to participate should be voluntary and informed.

## Return to Training activity phases

Element of the sport	Lockdown	Red Phase 1	Amber Phase 2	Green Phase 3
Athlete Training	Individual training allowed as per Welsh Government Legislation	Individual training allowed as per Welsh Government Legislation.  Potential for Coached Elite Athlete Training to take place	Potential return to activity on a one-to-one coached basis or in small groups whilst maintaining social distancing	Individual and group training resumes at all facilities with group size limits and social distancing

**COVID-19** Any athlete experiencing/displaying any COVID-19 symptoms, must not attend any training sites and self-isolate in line with Public Health guidelines for a minimum of 14 days and inform your nominated club COVID19 officer.

### Training

Currently any training undertaken by athletes is in strict accordance with Welsh Government / DCMS Guidelines.

It is anticipated that any training activity will take place on a one-to-one basis only (i.e. one coach and one athlete OR two athletes with no coach present – this is linked to guidance of facility owners and the coaching license requirements). These two individuals may not need to be from the same family household, but both will need to adhere to the latest social distancing guidance (Welsh Government Legislation).

- Training sessions will only be permitted under the strict guidelines approved by Welsh Government and the facility provider.

Once the Welsh Athletics restriction on Training / Coaching has been removed, careful consideration to Welsh Government guidelines and safety policy should be adhered to.

Group numbers should be strictly monitored as per Government guidelines – the ability to meet people from another household only - so if training with multiple athletes, consider breaking up into separate sessions, also consider travel guidelines and not traveling further than the guided distance to train.

It is reasonable to note that any guidance provided going forward will take account of local facilities / conditions and any risk assessment for normal activities should be undertaken as well as ensuring that all government guidance around Covid-19 is considered.

It will be the responsibility of each athlete, coach, and facility to make that assessment based on their local environment. Risk assessment must consider mitigations and plans for when activities do not go as expected. Planning scenarios around, for example, an injury occurring to an athlete and the need to support that athlete while social distancing should be undertaken.

## **General Guidance Notes for a return to Training**

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As the Welsh Government unlocks restrictions aligned to Athletics Training (Lockdown moves to Green) there are general guidelines that should be considered / adhered to:

These general guidelines outline the robust measures Welsh Athletics would like Athletes to take, in conjunction with other athletes, coaches and clubs, to maintain their own, and others safety, as we travel along the roadmap to unlock our sport.

The measures proposed cover each step of the journey from preparation at home to the outdoor area used for exercise and back home again and will be confirmed in line with guidance from Welsh Government.

- All guidance measures should always be followed when released during the appropriate phases of the unlocking journey.
- Further advice will be provided in due course in line with Welsh Government Guidelines.
- These guidelines apply to Wales only and are based on those detailing the use of public spaces, outdoor activity, and exercise.

The safety and wellbeing of all athletes, runners, coaches, and the wider community is at the heart of any guidance that Welsh Athletics is distributing. We know that athletes, runners, coaches, and athletics venues will be keen to resume athletics activity as soon as it is safe and appropriate for them to do so. Welsh Athletics recognises that wish BUT at the same time wants to ensure that the safety and wellbeing of everyone in the athletics community, facility providers and the wider community is considered as the priority.

The guidance that follows provides sport specific advice to help athletes. It is important to say that any return to activity must take account of local conditions and any risk assessment for normal activities should be undertaken as well as ensuring that all government guidance around Covid-19 is considered. It is the responsibility of each athlete, coach, and facility to make that assessment based on their local environment. Risk assessment must consider mitigations and plans for when activities do not go as expected. Planning scenarios around, for example, an injury occurring to an athlete and the need to support that athlete while social distancing should be undertaken.

Welsh Athletics is advising that group activity does not take place during this first step due to the requirements for social distancing. Your health: it is of paramount importance that athletes monitor themselves for any signs of the virus, as well as general health. All athletes should follow the advice of their GP or medical practitioner in all cases. This guidance has been published on the understanding that it is an interpretation of government guidance relevant to the sport of athletics and running. It is likely to change at short notice, in which case we will publish updates through the Welsh Athletics website and social media channels.

**All parties should note the disclaimer at the end of this piece.**

- Before and after sessions Stay up to date with current guidance / restrictions.
- Check all guidance that has been published, especially concerning social distancing and hygiene and any athletic specific guidance.
- Be aware guidance can change quickly and more restrictive rules may be applied in the future, so please refer to the Welsh Athletics website regularly.
- At this point in time athletics and coaching activity can take place on a one-to-one basis only (i.e. one coach and one athlete OR two athletes with no coach present). These two individuals do not need to be from the same family household, but both must adhere to the latest social distancing guidance.
- Check directly with your Athletics Club on their policy, outdoor track and field facilities should only open at the discretion and with the consent of the facility owner, provider or contractor.
- A coach can carry out a coaching session with one athlete and then coach a further athlete after the conclusion of the first session.
- It is recommended that a time buffer is built in between sessions to enable social distancing and adequate cleaning, according to guidelines, to take place.
- Coaches should not coach more than one athlete at any one time, even if one or more of those athletes is not present all the time. Before leaving home
- Follow all hygiene guidance including washing your hands.
- Ensure that all arrangements have been made prior to leaving home so that any government advice on social distancing, as an example, can be maintained at any facility. This may mean prior coordination of activities with the facility management or other coaches.
- At this point in time only outdoor facilities may be used.
- Athletes should ensure they are prepared and have planned for circumstances where injuries or other accidents occur, and they have mitigating procedures and plans in place to resolve the issue while maintaining all government guidance.
- Ensure you have enough food and hydration for the session.
- Be aware that changing facilities and toilets may not be open.
- Take hand sanitizer with you.
- Do not congregate before or after training, return home.
- Ensure all hygiene guidance on use of equipment or facilities is followed.

**Spread of Covid-19 Coronavirus** - Athletes are reminded on a regular basis to wash their hands for 20 seconds with water and soap and the importance of proper drying with disposable towels. Also catch coughs and sneezes in tissues – Follow 'Catch it, Bin it, Kill it' and to avoid touching face, eyes, nose or mouth with unclean hands.

### **Event guidance Younger athletes (under 18 years of age)**

- If undertaking a session with your Coach, ensure that they have the permission/agreement of your responsible parent or guardian.
- Coaching should only be undertaken in sight of your parent or guardian due to the one-to-one nature of coaching restrictions at the current time.
- Social distancing guidance must be maintained at all times.

### **Masters athletes**

- All guidance applicable to athletes in this document is relevant to Masters athletes.
- In addition, government guidance on vulnerable persons should be adhered to, if relevant, and taken into account by individual athletes.

### **Communication and facility liaison**

Athletes should ensure when they are planning to use a facility that they coordinate all activities prior to coaching to ensure social distancing, as well as health and safety and cleaning protocols, can be carried out.

Athletes can access and utilise outdoor athletics training facilities with the permission of the facility owner/management. They should not access any facilities if they do not have permission to use and should at all times adhere to any guidance put in place.

Athletes should be aware of any restrictions around toilets. In all cases they should ensure government guidance is followed and a risk assessment in place before any coaching takes place.

**Track and Field guidance – When Welsh Government Legislation Allows and facilities become available the following should be considered:**

In all cases normal coaching practice with risk assessment and high-quality practice should be adhered to as well as implementing any requirements around social distancing and hygiene.

All athletes should ensure they have followed government hygiene rules including washing hands and cleaning any permissible equipment prior to use.

All athletes must follow any hygiene guidance put in place by a facility.

### **Track**

Athletes should ensure they maintain social distancing appropriate for the activity.

- ONE lane gap is not socially distanced.

**Steeplechase barriers** and the water jump can be used by an athlete provided the equipment is thoroughly cleaned according to guidance before and after each session – Subject to facility owners risk assessment and permission.

**Hurdles** can be used by a coach and athlete provided the equipment is thoroughly cleaned according to guidance before and after each session – Subject to facility owners risk assessment and permission.

**Starting blocks** should be used just by one athlete and thoroughly cleaned according to guidance before and after each session – Subject to facility owners risk assessment and permission.

## **Jumps**

- If jumping areas are to be used athletes must follow hygiene guidelines for the cleaning of hands prior to commencing any training activity.
- Mats and landing areas should be thoroughly cleaned in line with government guidance, before and after each individual athlete/user.
- Disinfecting landing beds effectively against Coronavirus is the responsibility of the facility operator. The disinfectant used for this purpose must not damage or compromise the safety properties of the landing bed, or cause harm to staff, volunteers or athletes.
- Athletes should be encouraged to use their own / personal equipment where possible (i.e. pole vault poles). When this is not possible, any equipment used should be used by just one athlete and thoroughly cleaned according to the latest guidance before and after each session.
- Any uprights / bars used should be cleaned before use and managed by dedicated individuals for the duration of the training session.
- Sand pits should be fully cleaned, by turning and raking of the sand before and after each individual athlete/user. A venue operator may choose to use a high mist spray of disinfecting solution which can be sprayed over the sand after use, as well as a turn and rake.
- Other equipment such as rakes, measuring tapes, should be managed by dedicated individuals for a particular session – i.e. one athlete or the coach – and cleaned between one athlete's series of jumps or between sessions.

## **Throws**

- Athletes can participate in throwing activities subject to facility access,
- Athletes should ensure all equipment is used by one athlete and then thoroughly cleaned according to guidance before and after each session.

## **Off track coaching**

Athletes running or training in a public space, other than a track and field facility, can take place on a one-to-one basis only (i.e. one coach and one athlete OR two athletes with no coach present). These two individuals do not need to be from the same family household, but both must adhere to the latest social distancing guidance.

Athletes should adhere to all restrictions that may be placed on a public space by the owner of that space.

A coach can carry out a coaching session with one athlete and then coach another athlete after the conclusion of the first session. Coaches should not coach more than one athlete at any one time.

Athletes should ensure they carry out standard safety procedures (e.g. phones, route planning etc) when accessing 'wild' public spaces.

Athletes aiming to access trails and mountains or public spaces a long way from assistance and emergency services should make themselves aware of any local guidance/considerations prior to travel/training. Consideration of whether the activity could add to pressure on emergency services should be taken. Any travel should be within current Government Guidelines.

### **1. Before you train**

You must stay at home if you or they:

- Have been in contact with someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days.
- Have been overseas or exposed to someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days.
- Have COVID-19 symptoms or are feeling unwell.
- Have been told to self-isolate as part of any contact tracing measures in place.

Please check with your GP prior to training if you are in a high-risk health category or are in the vulnerable and shielding category.

If you become unwell after training, you should first contact their GP/NHS 24, update any contact tracing App in use at that time, and then inform their club / Welsh athletics welfare team.

### **2. Preparing for a training session**

- It is advised that until suitable advice from Welsh Athletics is received athletes should continue to avoid all face to face contact with other athletes / coaches. Where possible, coaches should utilise online coaching measures following Welsh Athletics social media guidelines.
- When it becomes possible to undertake face to face training sessions, physical distancing must be maintained. All athletes must plan and prepare with their coaches / fellow athletes for each face to face training session and the planning must be aimed at minimising the risk of infection / transmission.
- At this time sessions should only take place outdoors and in public spaces in the local area. Please note your usual local facilities may be closed.
- Prepare a risk assessment based on planned activities/outdoor training space/age etc.



- Hygiene: Cleaning, hand and respiratory hygiene are core measures and provision should be made for these. Clear guidance and plans must be in place for cleaning of equipment and waste disposal. Note that toilets and other washing facilities will not be available.
- Identify and mitigate all circumstances where injuries or other accidents might occur and have agreed procedures and plans in place to manage such an issue while respecting all government guidance.
- Please **consider your current physical and psychosocial state** when planning specific training sessions, please take into consideration their current training level given the lockdown restrictions, their readiness to return to training (physical and psychological) and the lack of support services available.
- Training decisions should be made to minimise the injury and illness risk/NHS burden as a priority consideration.
- Where an athlete is under 18 the parent in attendance will have first aid responsibilities as the coach should not be within 2m of the child.
- Ensure where necessary that you get permission to carry out your session at the chosen outdoor space.

### **3. Prior to the session**

- Athletes of any age should not travel to and from training with a coach or other athlete unless they are in the same family group.
- Athletes should bring their own technical equipment.
- Athletes should arrive and leave via the agreed access/exit point and as close as possible to when you need them to be there.
- Preferably only one parent/guardian from the family should accompany an athlete under 18 years of age.
- Athletes should arrive ready to train as changing facilities are not available.
- Athletes and coaches should bring with them hand sanitizer and/or antiseptic wipes.

### **4. During the training session**

- At all times, coaches, athletes, and their parents and carers, should adhere to the Welsh Government's physical distancing guidelines of staying at least 2m away from others including when giving feedback and when athletes are resting.
- Only those who need to be at the training sessions should attend.
- Where the training group involves 2 or more athletes, they must run single file and maintain 5m distance, unless there is sufficient space where they can leave 2m between them while running side by side.
- Athletes must run in order of ability with the fastest athlete starting first to minimise overtaking.
- Hygiene: Cleaning, hand and respiratory hygiene measures must always be followed.
- Equipment: Do not let the athletes handle any coaching equipment (cones etc.). Only the coach should do this.

- Equipment: Athletes must always use their personal equipment and follow hygiene guidance. Personal equipment should not be shared, and measures must be put in place to reduce the risk of contamination.
- Be aware of what surfaces you or your athlete(s) touch. You must clean all equipment and surfaces thoroughly with disinfectant before you leave/before another session.
- When training sessions finish you must leave the coaching area promptly.

## **5. When Coaching is permitted with athletes from a different household**

The more contact a coach has with athletes from a different household the greater the risk of coming into contact with COVID-19. When it is possible for coaches to undertake separate face to face training sessions with athletes from a different household and the following guidelines should be followed:

- Coaching is permitted with members of your household and/or members of 1 other household.
- Training must be outdoors, and physical distancing must be maintained.
- A coach should not deliver training to more than 1 other household at any 1 time or provide training to more than 1 other household per day.
- Equipment should be disinfected thoroughly after use and where possible different equipment should be used for different households.

Additional information will be provided as the Welsh Government release more information / progress through the unlocking phases.

## **6. Safeguarding**

- Permission/agreement from the parent or guardian to coach an athlete who is under the age of 18
- In line with our safeguarding policies, athletes under 18 years of age should always be accompanied by a parent or a guardian throughout the session.
- Preferably only one parent/guardian from the family should attend in these circumstances.
- Coaching of athletes aged under 18 should be undertaken in sight of the parent or guardian.

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### **Disclaimer:**

Please note that the subject matter covered in this guidance is in no way exhaustive and the material does not stand on its own nor is intended to be relied upon as a substitute for obtaining specific legal advice. Individual circumstances will differ. The information contained in this guidance is given in good faith but any liability of Welsh Athletics Ltd or its professional advisors (including their respective members or employees) to you or any third party which may arise out of the reliance by you or any other party of the contents of this guidance is hereby excluded to the fullest extent permitted by law. Welsh Athletics

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## Links to related guidance

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Document	Version & Publication date
<a href="#">Lifting Athletics out of Lockdown</a>	V1- 1/06/2020
<a href="#">Return to Group Running</a>	V1 – 19/06/2020
<a href="#">Return to Coaching</a>	V1 – 19/06/2020