

This document is intended to provide guidance to registered clinical exercise physiologists practicing at different Alert Levels of the Covid-19 response. The guidelines within this document are a summary of information provided by the Ministry of Health. Practitioners are recommended to review the Ministry of Health webpage for [Allied Health Professionals](#) to check for updates. Please consider the advice below and apply caution when practicing as most clinical exercise physiologists work with vulnerable groups doing potentially higher risk activities.

Alert Level 3 Guidelines

Virtual appointments should be provided where possible and is the preferred method of service delivery. Face to face appointments may be provided for **urgent care only** so long as professional can take appropriate measures to manage public health.

‘Urgent care’ for community allied health professionals is defined as:

- a condition which is life of limb threatening **OR**
- treatment required to maintain the basic necessities of life **OR**
- treatment that cannot be delayed or carried out remotely without risk of significant harm or permanent and/or significant disability

AND

- which cannot be delivered by a service which is currently operating or by health professionals that are already in contact with the patient.

Clinical Exercise Physiology **does not** meet any of the requirements for urgent care and therefore appointments must only be held virtually during Alert Level 3.

Alert Level 2 Guidelines

Virtual appointments are the preferred option at Alert Level 2. Face to face appointments can be used assuming appropriate health and safety processes are put in place.

Screening for COVID-19 symptoms prior to face to face appointments

- You should not be treating patients who are unwell.
- Practitioners should screen patients prior to care for symptoms including fever, cough, sore throat, sneezing or runny nose, temporary loss of sense of smell, and trouble breathing.
- If patients have recently had contact with others who have had symptoms or have symptoms they should be directed to receive testing for COVID-19 and to self-isolate.

Practicing good infection prevention control procedures.

- The best defence is basic hygiene, especially washing hands regularly.
- Practitioners should wash hands before and after patient contact or touching an aseptic surface, use proper cough and sneezing etiquette, avoid touching their face,

and clean surfaces regularly, especially common surfaces like touch screens, exercise equipment, blood pressure cuff, door handles etc.

Using the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).

- The risk of community transmission is minimal at Alert Level 2. Use of PPE depends on the activity. Practitioners should assess the infection risk with the patient before a face to face appointment.
- When providing care for individuals who do not have symptoms or do not have COVID-19, a surgical mask should be used if it is not possible to maintain physical distancing of 1 metre or if the activity is aerosol-generating. Exercise itself is not considered aerosol generating but apply caution.
- Higher risk activities including cardiopulmonary exercise testing, spirometry, and blood sampling may require higher levels of PPE.
- PPE should not be reused and used PPE can be disposed of in a separate bag and sealed before placing in general waste

Keeping accurate documentation of appointments to aid contact tracing if required.

- Practitioners are expected to maintain accurate clinical notes should contact tracing be required

Physical distancing

- Numbers of patients should be restricted to maintain physical distancing of 1 metre between patients and practitioners
- Group exercise classes can occur so long as physical distancing is in place and class size is limited to 10 participants including the practitioner(s).

Alert Level 1 Guidelines

Community allied health services can return to normal at Alert Level. Practitioner should still be vigilant as COVID-19 remains uncontrolled overseas.

To remain prepared, all business are recommended to have a QR code at the entrance to their premises. This will allow fast contact tracing if COVID-19 re-emerges. Businesses can get their official NZ COVID Tracer QR code posters through the [self-service webform](#).

Practitioners should continue to screen patients prior to face-to-face appointments and not treat people who are unwell. Continue to follow good infection prevention control measures.

Physical distancing is not a requirement at Alert Level 1. Normal cleaning practices are adequate, however, you may wish to clean high-touch surfaces more often.