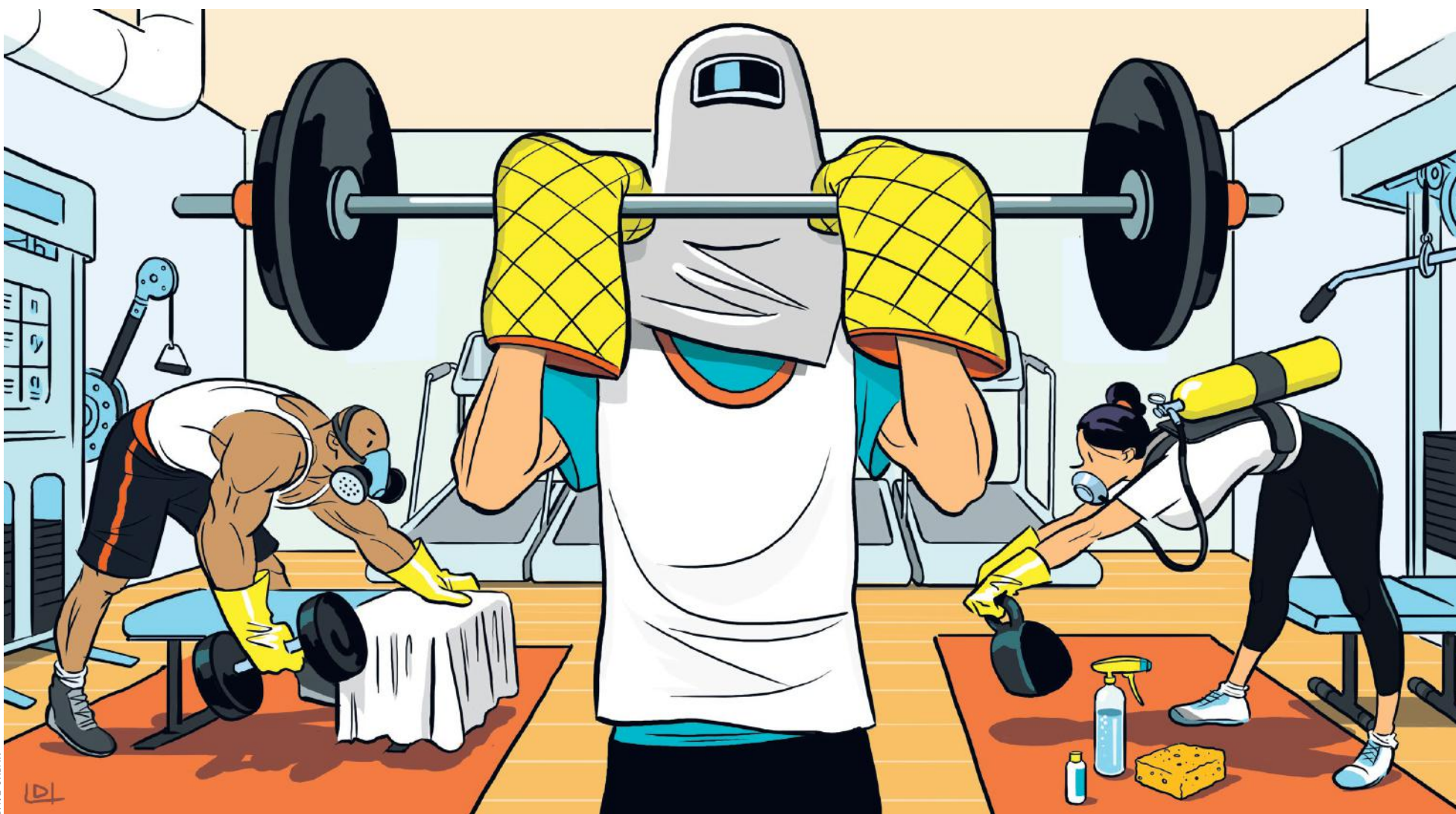


GEAR & GADGETS



By Ashley Mateo

FITNESS FACILITIES reopening across the U.S. haven't yet seen a mad dash back to machines, a la New Year's Day. But exercise addicts who can't handle another pixelated Zoom class spent hoisting soup cans instead of free weights are eager to enjoy dedicated workout space and real equipment.

To combat high-risk factors associated with gyms—close quarters, bad circulation, mouth breathers—many clubs are stepping up sanitization procedures, capping capacity at 50% and mandating masks. Some have created plastic pods to keep grunters and flirts at bay; others have erected domes for hot yoga or set up sweat shields between treadmills.

But even if your gym isn't Saran-wrapping individual workout spaces, you can take a few simple measures to protect yourself.

First, remember to bring your own water bottle, towels and simple equipment including mats and resistance bands, said Elizabeth Scott, Ph.D., a professor of applied microbiology at Simmons University in Boston. Because “every time you touch something someone else has used, you're potentially transmitting infectious agents to your face.”

To avoid direct contact with the gym's smooth and hard shared surfaces—on which Covid-19 can survive for longer periods according to new research in the medical journal, the *Lancet*—wrap stainless steel handles or grips with KleenWraps (from \$15, kleenwraps.com). These neoprene strips feature an antimicrobial agent that reduces the strength and transmission rate of pathogens it comes into contact with. Or pull on a pair of Spectral Body's compression gloves (\$26, spectralbody.com) that claim to kill viruses on contact thanks to the antimicrobial properties of copper, which is woven into the fabric. (Neither of product has been tested against Covid-19.)

While these products might help protect you, they can also “give people a false sense of security,” warned Ms. Scott. “You start using a glove or a wrap, and then you stop practicing the hand sanitizing.” For that reason, maintain your commitment to sanitizer and use it liber-

Do You Even Sanitize, Bro?

Fed up with Zoom workouts but fear the Covid-friendly confines of your local gym? Here's everything you need to enjoy a safe, hygienic return to your workout routine



THE NEW GYM BAG / FOUR ESSENTIALS FOR A SAFE RETURN TO THE GYM

The Bag Stash all your personal items (water, towels, resistance bands) in this Paravel Fold-Up Bag, a roomy nylon duffel. Before leaving the gym, remember to toss all used items in the deep interior zippered pocket. \$65, tourparavel.com

The Gloves Copper, useful in limiting how long viruses live on surfaces, is woven into Spectral Body's workout gloves. Rubber grips help you firmly grasp weights; compression helps circulate blood flow. \$26, spectralbody.com

The Wraps The neoprene in KleenWraps provides a barrier from high-contact surfaces and is treated with an antimicrobial agent that reduces the strength of pathogens it comes in contact with. From \$15, kleenwraps.com

The Mask Under Armour's breathable Sportsmask features a three-layer system of fabric—recommended by the World Health Organization—and adds antimicrobial tech to inhibit the growth of bacteria. \$30, underarmour.com

ally before and after you touch any surfaces.

Wearing a mask is also nonnegotiable, especially when it comes to protecting yourself from the grunts and pants of fellow gym-goers. Yes, it can feel uncomfortable and hot, but “even just a simple fabric mask can reduce the likelihood of transmission by 80% to 95% in an indoor environment,” explained Felipe Lobelo, M.D., an epidemiologist and senior physician consultant in population health research for Kaiser Permanente of Georgia.

Brands like Adidas and Reebok have recently debuted washable two-layer masks made from breathable fabrics; Under Armour, however, went a step further in creating a three-layer system that meets the World Health Organization's recommendations. The UA Sportsmask (\$30, underarmour.com), is structured to sit comfortably off your face and lips, with an adjustable nose bridge to keep it secure. It also features an inner lining made from performance fabric that keeps you cool.

“The closer the mask fits to the face, the better,” said Ms. Scott, adding that you want the mask to pinch closely to your nose and sit tightly against the cheeks.

If your spring workouts consisted of tracking steps in your backyard using gadgets from Fitbit, Garmin, Oura Ring or the Apple Watch, you may already be wearing an important tool for future virus detection. Stanford is using crowdsourced data like heart rate and skin temperature from such gizmos to analyze and predict potential Covid-19 cases. Whoop, a fitness tracker that measures recovery (from \$30 per month, whoop.com), is developing an algorithm that tracks respiratory rates to detect pre-symptomatic and symptomatic cases.

“It's useful to have these devices in order to monitor your own health trends,” said Dr. Lobelo. If your resting heart rate or respiratory rate suddenly jumps significantly from what's normal for you, that might be a red flag.

Still, one in four Americans say they'll never return to the gym, according to a survey by market research company OnePoll. If you're brave enough to head back, you'll likely enjoy more space, clean equipment and peace of mind—at least until everyone else gets sick of doing dumbbell presses with Minestrone.



For Rewinding Retro Mixtapes

If you've got some recently resurfaced DJ Bruce B mixtapes that need blasting, the GPO Brooklyn Boombox brings a cool '80s vibe to the hottest days of summer. It features retro VU meters, twin 40-watt speakers, a cassette deck and FM tuner but adds Bluetooth streaming and a USB jack to play songs off a thumb drive. The battery only offers about 4 hours per charge—not great, but cheaper than buying a bag of D-cells from the corner bodega. \$300 store.moma.org

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Better-Than-OK Boomers

IN THE '80S, few things were more satisfying than tossing a sound system on your shoulder and blasting some tunes while you walked the block. Now that classic boomboxes have thumped their last mixtape beats, a new breed is streaming sound from your smartphone as you hoist them by their handles. Here, five of our favorites.

For a Day on the Lake

With a 50-watt amp to help push out its 120 decibels of peak sound, optimized for the outdoors, this lunch-pail-size system can make serious waves. The Turtlebox weighs 9 pounds despite its tough ABS plastic shell and beefy battery that supports up to 50 hours of tunes at park-friendly volumes (or 8 hours at full blast). It has tie-down anchors so you can cinch it to the deck, but true to its namesake, it can survive being submerged for up to 30 minutes—should you want to scare fish into your boat. \$299, turtleboxaudio.com



For Pumping Up the Volume Poolside

Sure, the JBL Boombox 2 renders streamed music in impressively rich detail. But it's the sternum-thumping low end delivered from 4-inch bass radiators on either end that set this cylindrical boombox apart. At just 10 inches high, but 13 pounds, it



cuts a stout profile, though the rubberized handle makes it easy to tote. And if the party gets wet and

wild, the JBL can endure a dunk in shallow end, withstanding depths of up to 1 meter. \$500, jbl.com

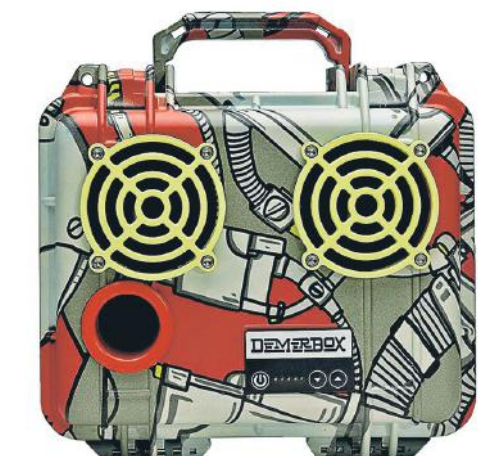
For an On-the-Go Disco

The audiophile's choice for walking-around sound, the DiamondBoxx M3 is surprisingly svelte 11 pounds. The heavy duty enclosure is handbuilt with MDF—the type of engineered wood used in professional speaker cabinets—and lacquered with a matte black all-weather coating. The M3's anodized aluminum face sports a pair of 4.3-inch cone woofers and 25 mm titanium dome tweeters—each driven by its own amp, totaling 400 watts. As for the diamond in the name, it's actually a 2 ct. cubic zirconia embedded in the face, which changes color



to reflect its battery life. If the 20-hour of pulsing sound the M3 offers isn't enough to power your roving party, there's an available 40-hour upgrade. From \$599, diamondboxx.com

—Matthew Kronsberg



For Epic Adventures

Crafted from the same Pelican cases pro photographers tote gear in, this indestructible boombox is ideal for off-road excursions. The battery lasts about 40 hours, while its watertight storage will keep your devices dry. Upgrade from basic black to this case by South African designers Hasie & the Robots. From \$399, demerbox.com