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Creative workouts continue as studios prepare to reopen July 1

By Jon Kingdon



The Daily Method Photo provided

The gym and workout studios have not been immune to the effects of the coronavirus. Gold's Gym, a national chain filed for bankruptcy in May, temporarily closing its 700 global gyms while permanently closing 30 of those locations, while 24 Hour Fitness filed for bankruptcy, hoping to reopen in July, permanently closing 100 studios and keeping 300 clubs remaining open. It will be closing a total of 42 clubs in California though the only club that will be closed locally will be the Ygnacio Center in Walnut Creek.

Looking forward with great anticipation to reopening are the local workout studios like 9Round Fitness and The Dailey Method, both located in Lafayette. Last week, it was announced by Contra Costa County that the workout studios and gymnasiums would be allowed to reopen on July 1.

"We had been hoping to have a June 15th opening but we never got approval so we've been waiting to hear when we can officially and are now preparing to open back up on July 1st," said Christine Olson, co-owner of The Dailey Method which has group fitness classes inspired by Pilates, yoga and ballet.

Vladimir Volkov, the owner of 9Round Fitness, says that his clients will see a number of changes instituted for their safety: "We will be following all of the state and

local guidelines. Though we have always stressed having a clean studio, we will make sure to clean each piece of equipment that people come in contact with after every three-minute session."

Even with the clubs on hiatus, there has been an attempt to maintain contact with everyone: "We have been doing virtual classes, streaming one or two live classes a day," said Olson. "We are planning to stream our classes live and slowly add more classes as we see people wanting to come back. We used to have seven to eight classes a day. If we see that there are waitlists for one class, we'll add another class and as that waitlist grows, then we'll add another class, so by demand, we will continue to add live classes to the schedule. Even if the class is already filled, the class will be live streamed, and the people can still take that class at home or can come in for the next class that is available."

9Round has also made available on their website a daily workout for those who have wanted to continue to maintain their conditioning: "Even after we reopen, we will still make available a daily online workout for those members who want to take some time before they return to the gym," said Volkov. "Once they do return, we will start slowly to allow our clients to get back into the shape they were in when we had to shut down. After being away for three months, a lot of things will change so we will take it slow to build up their strength, power and techniques."

Avoiding any unnecessary contact will be strictly followed at The Dailey Method, said Olson: "Everything as much as possible will be touchless. All payments and scheduling will be taken care of online. When we open, to make sure that we follow all the precautions with our group fitness classes, which used to entail 22 students and one instructor, it will now be limited to nine students and one instructor. We will have the regular barre classes with more slow and isolated movements, which is our main class. Prior to the virus, we offered interval classes and other classes where you got your heart rate up and would be sweating a lot, but we are not going to be offering those classes at the beginning."

9Round is also taking the social distancing concept to heart, says Volkov: "We are going to stay with our philosophy of people being able to show up for an unscheduled workout. If our social distancing is filled, we will ask them to wait outside and it should only take a few minutes for a spot to become available."

Volkov and Olson sent out questionnaires to their clients and received a varied, yet mostly positive response in anticipation of their gyms reopening: "There were a few that were still a bit hesitant and will take their time to see how everything goes," said Volkov. "However, the majority of the members were excited at the prospect of coming back."

"We surveyed our clients and the reactions ran the full gamut," said Olson. "Many of them said how eager they were to come back and we had a good portion that will continue to work out at home with the Zoom classes. We even had a very small number that are going to wait for a vaccine before they will agree to come back to the studio."

Olson is going to put together an informational video for their website and Instagram along with emailing all of her clients, explaining how things will work at the studio, along with their new safety precautions: "We are installing an air scrubber into our AC and fan system so the air filtration is purified in the studio along with all of the sanitizing that we will be doing. Everyone will be wearing masks when they enter the studio and when they're in place and six feet apart, they will not have to wear their masks."

Volkov is also making similar adjustments to his studio: "We will have facemasks available for anyone that would like to use one and we have purchased gloves for those who are coming in for the first time to see if they would be interested in becoming a member of the studio. We now have an air purifier which will remove the airborne bacteria and along with our fans, allow the clear air to move through the studio." To encourage new membership, 9Round is offering a free month's trial for potential new clients.

There are also a number of 9Round members that have continued to pay their monthly membership fees, which has helped Volkov greatly: "As a small private gym, this has allowed us to point to the July 1st reopening and to not suffer the fate of many of the gyms that have been forced to close permanently."

If there is only one exercise that they could recommend for their clients or anyone else, for Volkov, it would be jumping rope for "its cardio benefits, burning calories and overall coordination."

For Olson: "At the Daily Method we would recommend planks, push-ups and squats because they efficiently build core musculature as well as upper and lower body strength."

As for her anticipating her studio's reopening, though speaking for herself, Olson's sentiments are certainly shared by all of the studios and gyms around the country: "We are really excited to have our community return. It's been so wonderful to see them on the Zoom classes and be able to see each other's faces, practicing something that we have done together for so long, but we have really missed seeing everyone live so we're excited to see the people in our community come back."

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