

Responses to Your Questions About Allaying Member Fears With Cleaning Protocols

Compiled by: Club Industry Staff

Answers by: Town Hall Participants



(Photo by Club Industry.) Panelists in part two of the Club Industry Town Hall "Allaying Member Fears with Good Cleaning Protocols After Reopening" responded to attendees' questions that panelists were not able to answer in part one, in addition to questions that were forwarded for part two. With still many unanswered questions, part one and two panelists were offered the chance to respond in writing to those questions in this article. Pictured here are moderator Pamela Kufahl (top left) along with three of the part two panelists (clockwise from upper right) Maria Turco of Honor Yoga, Dr. Bruce Sherman of GymValet, and Blair McHaney of Worx and MXM.

Should you buy electrostatic cleaning equipment? Should you take the temperature of members and staff when they enter your club? Are you required to provide personal protection equipment to your staff? Should you continue to offer towel service? How can you open the childcare area safely?

These are just some of the questions that were asked for the two most recent Town Halls from Club Industry, "**Allaying Member Fears With Good Cleaning Protocols After Reopening.**" **Around 100 questions were submitted**, and despite two Town Halls addressing this topic, time did not allow for all questions to be asked. Some of the panelists responded to some of the remaining questions in writing. Below are their answers on the following topics: **1) Cleaning Protocols, 2) Risk Management, 3) Staff and Member Safety, 4) Cleaning Product**

Recommendations and Securement, 5) Marketing of Cleaning Efforts, 6) Cleaning of Certain Areas of Clubs (group exercise, flooring, wet areas, childcare, locker rooms, aquatics areas), and more.

Part one of the town hall was sponsored by [The Abs Company](#), [Fitness EMS](#), [Go Charge](#) and [Gym Valet](#). Panelists for that town hall were Neil Lardon, director of building facilities at East Bank Club; Kate Golden, director of health and wellness operations at Newtown Athletic Club; Steve Ayers, multi-club franchisee at Workout Anytime; and Craig Pepin-Donat, executive vice president and partner at Crunch Franchise. It can be [viewed on-demand here](#).

Part two of the town hall was sponsored by [Fitness EMS](#), [Volt Guard](#) and [Zogics](#). Panelists were Blair McHaney, owner of Worx and CEO of MXM; Eddie Johnston, director of operations, Chelsea Piers Connecticut and regional operations director, Chelsea Piers Fitness; Maria Turco, founder of Honor Yoga and **Dr. Bruce Sherman, Ph.D., inventor and president of GymValet**. Part two of the town hall can be [viewed on-demand here](#).

Dr. Bruce Sherman's answers to the questions in the various areas are highlighted in yellow.

Cleaning Protocols

Q: If the 40-page Crunch manual is available for sale, would you please email us the information (price, how to order/pay, etc.)?

Pepin-Donat/Crunch Franchise: Unfortunately, we are not able to share due to proprietary information.

Q: How will the clubs be informed by their state health departments on the stipulations in place for reopening?

Pepin-Donat/Crunch Franchise: Typically with announcements by the governor, but there is no shortage of information on the internet for state and local government releases of information. Don't wait for someone to send you and update.

Sherman/Gym Valet: The state health departments will probably have some stipulations, but I can't see the stipulations going much beyond recommendations regarding masks, gloves, body temperature monitoring, social distancing, equipment distancing, and maximums for members working out in a given space.

Q: What specific information, protocols, tools/supplies and employee/customer protections are being recommended and/or utilized to make these decisions?

Pepin-Donat/Crunch Franchise: There's a lot to unpack in that question but the primary issues are cleanliness and safety, which can be achieved through social spacing policies within the gym,

proper signage, member communication and staff training. You're planning to cover every aspect of gym operation and interaction with as much detail as possible following or exceeding CDC recommendations.

Sherman/GymValet: No one specific governing/ruling body will be making blanket recommendations. The best practices/products approach will come from team meetings at the club/franchise/corporate level. A lot of ideas will be brought forth from the town halls and webinars that have been broadcast over the past two months.

Q: What cleaning guidelines are clubs following? CDC, FDA, EPA?

Sherman/GymValet: I wouldn't look for specific guidelines from the agencies listed. They might have some generalized sanitizing suggestions that could apply across many industries but nothing specific to the fitness industry. They are not familiar with what happens on the ground in the fitness center setting. As for the EPA regulations relating to sanitizing hard surfaces with EPA registered products, the EPA standards for registration are, basically, not practical (e.g., pre-cleaning with soap and water, five to 10 minute sanitizer dwell time, etc.) in the fitness center setting. Best practices in the context of real life in the fitness center setting will be the standard.

Q: How do you weigh the measures that are good for show to make people feel safer vs. the quieter ones that actually reduce risk?

Sherman/GymValet: In my opinion, placing sanitizing supplies around the perimeter of a fitness center is an example of "for show." I always call it "pretending to care." People might feel momentarily safe when they see the perimeter placements, but they will soon realize that the perimeter is no place to put sanitizing supplies when the intention/rules will be to sanitize equipment before and after each use. The quieter measures will be the ones that place sanitizing supplies within arm's reach of every piece of equipment—however that's done.

Q: Is there consideration being given by operators to closing down for an hour during the middle of the day to clean and disinfect and then reopen?

Lardon/East Bank: We have chosen to use a sanitizing agent that can be used with members present via electrostatic sprayer. It is completely safe and obviates the need to shut down areas.

Sherman/GymValet: To what end does that help? If cleaning is done continually between facility opening and closing, disinfecting will be ongoing. And remember, a facility can be clean upon opening, or after a close down, but if the first person in the room after cleaning is breathing, let alone have viral particles on their skin and/or clothes, you run the risk of virus transmission; that's just the nature of coronavirus. That's why ongoing sanitizing from open to close is the preferred option.

Q: How many times per day will cleaning and disinfecting help fight the spread of the virus? How often do we need to be formally cleaning equipment?

Lardon/East Bank: This is going to depend on the usage scenario and the patronage of the individual spaces. We will do a club wide disinfection overnight with our cleaning service and as needed per space during club hours.

Sherman/GymValet: It's not how many times per day; it should be done before and after every use! People breathe, people cough, people sneeze...people transmit. Droplets are landing on equipment surfaces, and members' surfaces (bodies) continually. Clean constantly. Minimize the chance of spread.

Q: Cleaning protocols in unstaffed onsite corporate wellness center. Is it even possible?

Sherman/GymValet: Post the rules and make the sanitizing supplies conveniently available. You can't do better than that.

Q: Can members use a cloth towel they take with them to wipe down machines that we wash after they are finished, or should we use only disposable paper towels at each machine?

Sherman/GymValet: Keep it simple; keep a wiping towel at the machine. Having members drag a wiping towel around with them is very inconvenient. They forget it, they misplace it, etc. Think of the cost and waste of using disposable paper towels at every machine. Cloth/microfiber towels are the way to go. The details of how to make that system work are readily available.

Q: Should members use a new disinfecting wipe with each piece of equipment they use?

Sherman/GymValet: Easy thought to throw out there, but consider the practicality, cost and waste. It is not practical with an extraordinary cost and amount of disposable waste.

Q: What is the protocol for leaving cleaning towels/ bottles out for members to wipe down equipment?

Sherman/GymValet: In our opinion, attach the sanitizing supplies—spray bottles and towels—directly on to the equipment. That way, before and after cleaning compliance is virtually guaranteed. Convenience equals cleaning compliance.

Q: What are the recommended cleaning protocols should an incident of COVID arise?

Sherman/GymValet: That's a question where the CDC might have recommended protocols.

Q: How many staff members are on the floor cleaning each hour or specifically during high traffic times?

Sherman/Gym Valet: Staff members in the new normal should have a “cleaning eye” on the floor at all times whether it is all staff or select staff during each shift. Additionally, members should be cleaning as they go. Staff and members are the cleaners. Don’t leave on-going equipment cleaning up to housekeeping. That’s not their job. Cleaning is a team sport—members and staff.

Q: Is there definitive information on what cleaning chemicals are effective in immediately eliminating the virus?

Sherman/Gym Valet: The most commonly occurring active ingredient in a variety of disinfecting solutions is Quaternary Ammonium (Quat.). Quats. are broad-spectrum disinfectants that are very effective in sanitizing the hard surfaces of the fitness industry and are relatively safe when used in the community setting. Remember, virus particles are very easy to eliminate on hard surfaces—if the right sanitizing product is used. However, immediately eliminating everything is basically not possible. Eliminating over a period of several seconds to several minutes is more reasonable.

Q: Do you see the use of disinfecting equipment wipes as an effective step in reducing the spread of germs, given the fact that wipes are not used properly according to product use directions (meaning, surfaces must remain visibly wet for three to five minutes)?

Sherman/Gym Valet: No disinfectant product can, generally, be used in accordance with EPA standards in the community fitness center setting. That’s just not how equipment surface sanitizing can be/is done. Fitness centers must do the best they can to provide disinfecting products so all equipment can (now) be sanitized before and after use. The members must be made aware of the limitations of the “system” and follow recommended hygienic practices while in the gym.

Q: What are your thoughts on the necessity of electrostatic sprayers (ex. Clorox total 360 system) over traditional cleaning processes (i.e. floor scrubbing, disinfectant sprays, wipes, etc.)?

Lardon/East Bank: We plan to use them as the slight charge they impart to the solution allows it to more effectively get into places that can otherwise be difficult to treat by better sticking to surfaces.

Sherman/Gym Valet: All are good in their own place and time. A combination of sanitizing modes would be the best recommendation.

Q: How often will we need to clean during the day?

Sherman/GymValet: Constantly.

Q: Cleaning products on machines for 10 minutes will be corrosive. Are you worried about warranties on machines?

Lardon/East Bank: We chose a product with a much shorter dwell time as we determined that 10 minutes was not a practical amount of time to leave a solution on a surface, especially during club hours.

Q: How much have you budgeted for cleaning? How do you figure this out?

Sherman/GymValet: Depends on the products/systems/methods that are used for sanitizing. Disposable products (wipes and paper towels) will break the bank. Safely implementing reusable systems will be very effective and relatively extremely economical.

Q: What does holding members accountable for cleaning equipment look like? How do you enforce in a customer-oriented manner?

Sherman/GymValet: Staff circulating and politely reminding members about equipment sanitizing policies/rules. Clubs should have a higher-placed staff person available for addressing more significant issues and conflict resolution.

Marketing of Cleaning Efforts

Q: Should we market our cleaning protocols? If so, how do we do that best in a member-facing approach? How do we promote the safety and cleanliness of the club out to members and prospects? Do you advise putting pictures or videos of cleaning being done on social media?

Sherman/GymValet: Promote safety and cleanliness through various means. Do live, in-person demonstrations of staff and members cleaning, and post pictures and videos of cleaning protocols on social media, etc. Make sure your actions are rewarded by word of mouth endorsements. Let new prospects look at and touch the equipment. Make sure that they see that the cleaning supplies are everywhere, that there is no evidence of dirty and dusty surfaces and that the staff is always busy cleaning. Make sure you leave the impression that “This/my club cares about me. This is the kind of club I want to belong to, and, anyone who wants to join a club should belong to!”

Risk Management/Lawsuits

Q: My gym is in New Jersey, and I have many concerns about being in phase one to reopen. Here is my point I have been stating for some time: I can spend all the money in the world on cleaning supplies and personnel, but it won't matter if a member walks into the club with COVID-19. The expectations at this point are unreasonable as we are not a sterile operating room. We are a gym, and it will be impossible to guarantee safeguarding all members and guests to COVID-19 or any illness for that matter. Any thoughts?

Sherman/GymValet: Great, realistic observation. Gyms are in the community setting. The expectations are to do the best you can in the community setting. One of the most practical recommendations I've ever heard about sanitizing expectations in the fitness center setting came from an infectious disease/epidemiology specialist, from the NYU Medical Center, when he spoke at a Club Industry-East conference in New York City several years ago. He said something to the effect of: the best we can expect to do in the fitness center (community setting) is "low level disinfection." Even in the new normal, that's about what we can expect because of the constant in and out flow of members and the fact that they are continually breathing and touching a variety of surfaces.

Staff and Member Protection and Cleaning Practices

Q: Are you supplying disposable face masks to your members/clients? Or are you communicating to them that they need to bring their own mask?

Lardon/East Bank: We plan to supply both disposable and washable masks to our members and employees.

Q: Do we as the employer need to supply our staff with the necessary safety equipment? Or do employees have to find their own?

Lardon/East Bank: This depends upon your local laws, but we feel that if we are to require our employees to wear masks that we need to supply them.

Q: Will you require members/guests to use gym wipes?

Lardon/East Bank: Yes, along with providing other sanitizing options sure as PureSan spray bottles and dry wipes.

Sherman/GymValet: Members/guests should use something before and after using equipment and/or touching surfaces in the gym. Convenient access to the disinfecting product(s) is vital to sanitizing success.

Q: Members wiping down equipment: Do you think having members bring a personal towel (to wipe their sweaty faces) is better than a stack of towels sitting at the front desk for people to grab?

Sherman/GymValet: It might be best for facilities to require members to use facility-provided towels for personal (face/body wiping) use. That way the facility has better control/oversight on the cleanliness of the personal use towels used in the gym. Don't forget: after body wiping, that towel will most likely be placed on or draped over multiple surfaces in the gym. Sanitizing that "trail of contact" needs to be addressed.

Q: Our members have always wiped down their equipment prior to COVID-19. How do we show them to be more thorough?

Sherman/GymValet: If possible, facilities could/should make videos and/or offer continuous demonstrations by staff (especially during the early part of re-opening) to show what an effective surface sanitizing process/protocol looks like. Active demonstrations are also good sales and marketing tools.

Q: Rules for members to clean equipment? Any thoughts?

Sherman/GymValet: Thoughtful and specific signage strategically and visibly placed throughout the gym is a good place to start. Rules should be reinforced, as necessary, by staff.

Q: Beyond club cleaning, what are strategies to allow users to clean equipment or sanitize their hands?

Sherman/GymValet: Position equipment sanitizing supplies to be located as conveniently as possible in relation to every piece of equipment. Recommendations should be to have members wash/sanitize their hands immediately before they enter the gym floor and as soon as possible when they leave.

Q: Any thoughts on targeted cleaning of equipment members have used: tracking what people member cleaning vs. staff cleaning?

Sherman/GymValet: Both must be cleaning. Cleaning is a team sport.

Q: How is your staffing model changing to address the increased needs for cleanliness?

Sherman/GymValet: Staff is not wallpaper, hanging around by the walls. Staff: get in there and clean, Earn your money and your members' trust and respect.

Cleaning Products

Q: Please tell us what products, protocols, and how often you will be cleaning and sanitizing in your respective clubs? What disinfecting solutions, spray bottle cleaners, wipes, hand sanitizers and equipment are you recommending?

Sherman/GymValet: All-encompassing question that would take several pages of writing to cover all of the considerations brought up. Answers to virtually all of the issues brought up can be found in answers to other questions scattered throughout this document.

Q: Steve, what has been your experience with airPHX?

Ayers/Workout Anytime: The airPHX has been one of my best purchases to date. It is an amazing air disinfectant for the safety and health of our members, plus it has been very much a noticed item by our members from the day we opened. It is a visual sign to our members that we care about their health and well-being. It was very easy to install and is almost maintenance free. Even though it does not generate a smell or fragrance, you can just feel the difference in air quality the second you walk in the club. Worth every penny!

Q: Steve. what type of fogging was used in your Virginia club?

Ayers/Workout Anytime: We chose MICROsure for our Virginia and Florida clubs. Great product.

Q: What is the product they (East Bank) make themselves? Can Neil share some information on that?

Lardon/East Bank: We are using equipment from Viking Pure Solutions that allows us to make two products in-house (PureSan and PureClean). Contacts for Viking Pure Solutions are Michael Vanaria (michael@ewatersolution.com or 914-804-1535) and John Farrelly (john@ewatersolution.com or 917-880-9875).

Q: Neil, can you provide more information on the UV lighting and re-circulated air?

Lardon/East Bank: The UV lighting is installed in the supply air duct of the air handler. The model we chose is the Respicaire AIRSTERILIZER PRO. The number of units needed is determined by the size of the air handler. As for the re-circulated air, we are increasing the amount of fresh air that we are bringing into the club and balancing it against our exhaust fans and relief fans to keep the building balanced. Going into the summer months, a building should maintain a slight positive pressure. You can find more about this product as www.respicaire.com or by calling 866-876-8044.

Q: Neil, what is the capital dollars needed for your upgrades?

Lardon/East Bank: Depends on the scale of your upgrades. We were able to outfit air handlers with UV lighting at a cost of approximately \$6,500 each plus any electrical work to provide an outlet to plug them in. The thermal camera that we are installing is just under \$20,000 installed. The Viking Pure Solution product that we make in-house is a leasing agreement that is individually negotiated by site.

Q: How often do surfaces need to be disinfected?

Sherman/GymValet: Constantly. Before and after each use. That is going to be the new normal. Get used to it. Plan for it.

Q: Once something has been wiped with EPA approved disinfectant how long is it clean for? Until someone touches the surface again?

Sherman/GymValet: Until the next person touches it and/or breathes near it. That's just the nature of the new/novel virus that the industry (and world) is trying to program around.

Q: Where are you finding the sanitizer supplies without being charged five times the normal cost?

Sherman/GymValet: Contact GymValet/B & D Specialty Concepts, Inc.: bruce@gymvalet.com, (216) 378-4298, www.gymvalet.com. We sell a good assortment of sanitizing products/accessories and we haven't raised our prices. Shame on those who do.

Q: Can you repeat on what dwell time is?

Sherman/GymValet: Dwell time is the time a disinfectant/sanitizing solution should stay in contact with the surface (the surface is wet) that is being sanitized before it is wiped off to ensure virtually total killing of the bacteria/virus/germs that may be on the surface. EPA dwell time recommendations vary from a few minutes to five to 10 minutes, depending on the bacteria/virus/germ that is being treated. However, in the fitness industry where equipment use can be turned-over very quickly—one person gets off and the next person is ready to get on—abiding by the recommended dwell time is virtually impossible. The piece of equipment is sanitized when the person finishes using it, and the body-contacted surfaces are sprayed/wiped and dried almost immediately thereafter. Generally, a majority of the bacteria/virus/germs on hard surfaces are killed on contact. The EPA dwell recommendations offer that extra measure of safety and security. The fitness industry needs to have sanitize-before-and-after-use protocols in place when clubs reopen. Yes, the industry will generally fall short on meeting EPA standards for dwell time. But, as mentioned above, the equipment will be well sanitized. The extra measure of safety comes when the members refrain from touching their eyes, nose and mouth while exercising, and sanitize/wash their hands ASAP after finishing their workout.

Q: Better to perform cleaning tasks by staff or hire out a professional cleaning/disinfecting company? How often for a deep, disinfecting clean?

Sherman/GymValet: Staff/employee team effort. Floor staff should be performing cleaning tasks throughout the day. Develop a staff cleaning manifest. The night crew/after-hours cleaners (where appropriate) should do a deeper, more thorough cleaning when no members are present.

Securing Cleaning Products

Q: How will you do a deep clean of facility with limited supplies and back log companies? What alternatives do you recommend if most disinfecting products are currently out of stock?

Sherman/GymValet: Deep cleaning can be done well with a broad-spectrum sanitizer such as Quaternary ammonium that is the active ingredient in many commercial and consumer hard surface disinfecting products. They're out there; you just have to know what to look for (on the label). With product(s) in hand, then it's a matter of spraying and cleaning every surface that is body contacted. With equal parts of quality disinfecting product and elbow grease, deep cleaning can be achieved. If products like disposable wipes are in limited supply, it's not an issue because wipes should not be used for deep cleaning. Use a quality disinfectant dispensed from a spray bottle and wiped up by a towel—microfiber or terrycloth. Simple and effective.

Q: Are you concerned there will be a shortage of cleaning supplies after re-opening that will require gyms to shut down a second time?

Sherman/GymValet: No, based on the products we sell and recommend. And, we have just added Unscented Gel Hand Sanitizer to our product offerings.

Q: Where can we buy gym wipes and containers?

Sherman/GymValet: Wipes can be very good for sanitizing equipment. But you must be aware of the cost associated with a wipes-based sanitizing system. What you will probably see after reopening in the new normal is that members will take double or triple the number of wipes (versus what they used to take) to clean each piece of equipment. That will cause the cost of using wipes to skyrocket even higher. And the amount of disposable waste that will be created by increased wipes use will be significantly noticeable. All systems have positives and negatives. Just sharing some observations/predictions.

Cleaning of Certain Areas of Clubs

Q: Can tennis balls be disinfected without damaging them?

Sherman/GymValet: Spray them and then wipe them dry or just let them air dry. No damage should occur.

Q: What is going to be the safest (best) way to incorporate circuit training into this new routine? For example, how would you suggest using equipment such as battle ropes and kettlebells when there are not enough pieces for each person to have their own?

Sherman/GymValet: Position sanitizing supplies near all forms of equipment. With convenient access to sanitizing supplies, circuit-trainers will/should/must be able to take a few seconds to sanitize equipment between circuit stations. If the supplies are convenient, they will do it because they will have no excuses. Create a new clean circuit culture. If new/better circuit sanitizing protocols aren't introduced, circuit-style gyms run the risk of becoming breeding grounds for coronavirus. Members should self-police circuit sanitizing effectiveness. Staff should constantly enforce sanitizing rules.

Group Fitness Areas:

Q: Neil, what are your strategies for starting group ex classes when you re-open?

Lardon/East Bank: We plan to limit the number of members in the individual classes and spaces so that social distancing can be maintained. Employees and members will be supplied with masks for areas where social distancing is hard to maintain. Each area will have gym wipes and PureSan disinfectant so that all touch points can be cleaned/sanitized. The fitness instructor leading the classes will be responsible for guiding members to properly sanitize any relevant equipment both before and after use. We will also be adding additional time between classes to make sure that we can properly sanitize the spaces.

Q: Without widespread vaccination, how will it ever be possible to have people participate safely in an enclosed room such as a Spinning studio or yoga studio? How would you approach cleaning measures in these types of studios?

Johnston/Chelsea Piers: Every situation is unique, but there are many steps that we can take to ensure we are providing the absolute safest environment. And I do believe that all of them need to be taken; we can't pick and choose what we want to do. First is to consider spacing. Obviously, occupancies need to be greatly adjusted, and we should always err on the side of caution, allowing more room than you think you might need or guidelines suggest (i.e. allow 7 feet of spacing on equipment to ensure 6 feet between people). Spacing should also include the

time between classes, sessions and registration periods. Next is disinfection. We must provide the staff, materials and time needed to properly disinfect. Review your protocol and retrain staff to make sure you are properly disinfecting all surfaces and doing it often. Lastly, air quality. Something must be done to mitigate the germs in the air. This should include allowing more fresh air into the space whether that is through your AC system or just by opening doors and windows to the outside. There are also many UV and other types of air cleaning products on the market that kill germs in the air. This is especially important in small rooms. No room can be 100 percent safe – and they never have been – but if we take all of these precautions, I believe we can create an environment that is safe to return to. Studios may consider the iWave C air purifying system. This can be installed on small commercial units and is about \$1,200 installed.

Q: How would you approach cleaning measures in a cycle studio?

Sherman/GymValet: Have cleaning and sanitizing supplies spread at least around the perimeter of the studio—not just in one place. Attach the sanitizing system to the walls around the perimeter of the studio for good visibility. The cycling instructor should not let anyone get on a bike unless they've sanitized the bike first, and no one should leave the studio before they sanitize the bike at the end of the class, or when they have to leave early.

Q: What should be the cleaning protocol in group fitness? How to handle shared small equipment in group fitness spaces (tubing, stability balls, Pilates rings, yoga blocks, etc.)? How to handle equipment after each group exercise class?

Sherman/GymValet: No sharing of equipment unless the equipment can be sanitized before the next user picks it up. That's just the new normal. Things like balls, rings, blocks, mats, etc., can be sanitized with a wet mist that can be allowed to air dry if there is not a class that will be using the same equipment in the next hour. If another class is coming in, the equipment can be sanitized (misted or wiped with wipes) and dried for the next group coming in. A wet misting of the equipment, leaving it to air dry, is a good idea at the end of the day.

Q: Recommended frequency of cleaning dumbbell handles and what products are best?

Sherman/GymValet: Every time they are touched. A Quaternary ammonium-based sanitizer is perfect for using on the hard surfaces of dumbbells. Spray and wipe or air dry, depending on how much use the piece is getting.

Childcare Areas:

Q: How would you suggest keeping the childcare area sanitized during business hours? Any suggestions on disinfectant solutions safe to use in our childcare when children are present?

Johnston/Chelsea Piers: This is a great question. You should be able to utilize the same disinfection procedure you are using on your fitness equipment, but you have to be mindful of exactly what chemical you are using. For those facilities that are upgrading and/or changing the solutions they are using – some may be changing to hospital grade – you should refer to the MSDS sheet to confirm whether or not it is safe to use. Some chemicals are toxic if they were to get into the body, even in small quantities, and will require extra steps after disinfection that includes wiping down the surface with a child-safe solution. Note that these should not be used during business hours and only for a deep disinfection while the facility is closed.

Flooring:

Q: How are studios addressing cleaning or disinfecting the turf areas? What is the best way to clean turf flooring on a daily basis? (You can't shampoo it nightly since it needs time to dry.)

Sherman/GymValet: Talk to the manufacturer. See what they recommend to use for disinfecting/sanitizing the surface. Don't necessarily trust the salesperson/distributor that sold the product to you. Go right to the manufacturer.

Q: COVID-19 can live on shoes, some studies are showing. How are studios addressing cleaning or disinfecting the turf areas? What is the best way to clean turf flooring on a daily basis? (You can't shampoo it nightly since it needs time to dry.) What about carpeted areas? What products should we use for disinfecting wood floors in studios?

Johnston/Chelsea Piers: Turf should be sprayed down – you can use a backpack sprayer – multiple times daily with your disinfectant of choice. You can shampoo the turf weekly (or more if you have the means). Carpets can follow the same procedure. Another good tip is to encourage mat usage on the turf. Mats can be easily wiped down. For hard wood floors, again you can utilize your disinfectant of choice, but be sure to wash back over the floors with a neutral pH floor cleaner, or just warm water, as some of these chemicals can be damaging to the floor. You may also consider putting disinfectant mats at the entrance to your facility that members must step on when they enter. There is a company called SaniStride (there are many others as well) that make all sizes of these mats.

Locker Rooms/Aquatics/Wet Areas:

Q: Please address recommendations for locker rooms. What is the view on the re-opening of locker areas and wet areas? Are saunas ok to use? Are you going to open showers for members at the same time as the rest of the club?

Johnston/Chelsea Piers: We are not planning to open showers, saunas or steam rooms when we reopen the rest of the club. Showers will be the first to reopen – this is something we will feel out based on the guidelines available around the time that we reopen. Steam and saunas will likely

be closed for some time. Most amenities will also be removed from the counter tops – especially those that may be touched by another member before using them, such as Q-tips, razors, combs, etc. If you have the means, changing faucets and soap dispensers to automatic styles is preferable. This can be expensive though, so another option is to put c-fold towel or tissue dispensers on the counter tops that members can use to turn sinks on/off and touch any product dispenser. Make sure paper towels are in an enclosed dispenser to prevent cross contamination. In the changing area we will be closing down many of the lockers and allowing only use of lockers that are spaced at least 6 feet apart.

Q: Please address recommendations for pool areas. Any thoughts on indoor/outdoor pools opening and what precautions should be taken? Is there a protocol for re-opening chlorine pools? Are any of you opening your indoor pools?

Johnston/Chelsea Piers: Pools should be handled on a case-by-case basis. You should follow the same distancing guidelines that you would follow in any other part of your club – at a minimum maintaining 6 feet between swimmers. For example, we are opening the pool in one of our clubs because it is an Olympic size pool, and we can space members out appropriately. However, we are not opening the pool in two other clubs because they are three and six lane pools, where our pool capacities would only be two and three, respectively. If you do have a large pool, consider how you will control the occupancy. Will you require reservations? Make sure to have a waiting area should swimmers show up early. In the pool that we are opening, we will be leaving the deck shower on for a rinse before and after swimming since locker room showers will be closed. Wipes will be available at the deck shower because the handle is not automatic. Also consider equipment. We normally provide fins, paddles, kickboards, etc. None of this will be available for use.

Q: How do you allow use of facilities like toilets and maintain new cleanliness standards?

Johnston/Chelsea Piers: The quick answer is to add cleaning staff and/or increase the amount of times you are cleaning your restrooms daily with a deep disinfection after closing (or before opening). Obviously, adding staff everywhere is not feasible, but this is one area you may want to consider focusing attention if you do choose to add staff. Touchless/automatic flushometers are a huge advantage. Many companies make battery-powered retrofit kits to convert your manual flushometers into automatic—there is no real plumbing or electric work involved as they install right over your manual handles. As mentioned above in the locker room section, touchless faucets and soap dispensers as well. Again, in the case that this is too cost prohibitive, make sure that you have towel, tissue or wipe dispensers at the entrance (at least, consider inside also) to all restrooms so that customers can use them to touch surfaces. Don't forget the trash receptacle—make sure these are emptied often. If you don't already have them, adding toilet seat covers is another layer of protection. Lastly, consider turning off your hand dryers and utilizing paper towels instead, as hand dryers can increase the spread of germs in the restroom. At a minimum, if your hand dryer has a filter, make sure it is replaced.

Flushometer retrofit examples: Sloan EBV-200-A & Zurn E-Z Flush Sensors (ZERK-CP)

Towel Service

Q: We used to offer towel service to our members. In light of this crisis, would it be safer to ask members to bring their own towels? Would this be a good area to reduce costs due to decrease in revenues we will be experiencing, especially in the first few months/year?

Johnston/Chelsea Piers: I don't think that it is necessarily safer for members to bring their own towels – COVID-19 will be killed in a proper laundry cycle – but this is definitely an area where you can save a lot of money. If you do laundry in-house, you may consider utilizing that staff out on the floor for disinfection – an increased floor presence is something all members will want to see. However, some clubs may not want to remove too many amenities to avoid member complaints related to their dues, and I believe this is one that can still be safely offered if this is a concern at your club. If you do decide to offer towels, they should be handed out from behind a desk and not available to grab from a shelf on the floor. This will ensure the member is receiving a clean towel, and at the same time it will help keep your laundry costs down due to fewer towels being used. If you have the means, you may consider installing an ozone injector for your laundry system.

Sherman/GymValet: Depending on the club, the members could bring their own towels for showering. However, if the club hands out towels for personal use (wiping off personal sweat), it is probably safest to require members to use club-issued towels. That way, a club can be sure of the cleanliness of the towel when it goes into "action."

Miscellaneous

Q: We had some feedback from members about accelerated breathing (working out - you breathe faster and harder) thus the range of six feet may not be enough. Also, if members are wearing masks, they may not be able to breathe as easily, therefore passing out. What are your thoughts?

Sherman/GymValet: Very interesting and real concerns. I am an everyday outside runner. I do not wear a mask while running. However, I run in lightly trafficked areas, and when coming upon pedestrians, etc., I extend social distancing to at least 10 feet. I agree that the mask inhibits breathing, and it is more difficult to exercise at any level of intensity with one on. When facilities open, an interesting dilemma that is sure to cause a significant level of conflict (if masks are required to be worn, especially on cardio machines) will arise. Mask or no masks? Masks everywhere, or only in certain areas and/or on certain types of machines/equipment? On the other hand, accelerated breathing is associated with increased respiratory droplets being deposited into the air, and droplets are responsible for the spread of coronavirus. Add the increased spread-distance of droplets by fans that are usually constantly blowing in fitness centers, and you have a significantly potentially contagious setting. Honestly, we're not quite sure how this one will play out.

Q: What protocols do the YMCAs follow?

Sherman/GymValet: There may be a YMCA governing body that will come up with recommendations for cleaning and sanitizing protocols when gyms re-open. To be determined.

Q: How do you “smell” clean? Nobody wants to work out in the janitor's closet, and many people have sensitivity to synthetic scents. Best scent distribution system?

Sherman/GymValet: Added scent is not necessary. A gym won't smell like a gym if members are consistently sanitizing equipment with a high-quality sanitizing solution that eliminates the biologic calling card left behind of equipment after someone has exercised on it. We sell a Quaternary ammonium-based sanitizing solution that has no added scent. Sanitized equipment, no body odor, no artificial fragrance lingering in the air that could cause allergic reactions. The product was developed specifically for sanitizing the surfaces of the fitness industry. Great product. Our customers love it.