



Climbing Gyms: Getting Started Again

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So much great work has been done around the world by the climbing community to address the ongoing business concerns caused by the COVID-19 shutdowns. **It's**

been amazing to see professionals band together in transparency and help each other figure out industry solutions to minimize the long-term impacts of this pandemic. As we get closer to reopening, it's clear that **it's not going to be business as usual, especially in the near future.**

During this time, we've been talking to our partners around the globe, listening to CWA's informative Community Calls, testing disinfecting methods on our products, and trying to support our customers however we can. Head Rush Technologies is in the unique position of having our devices installed in over 60 countries around the world, and each country has been going through a similar set of circumstances.

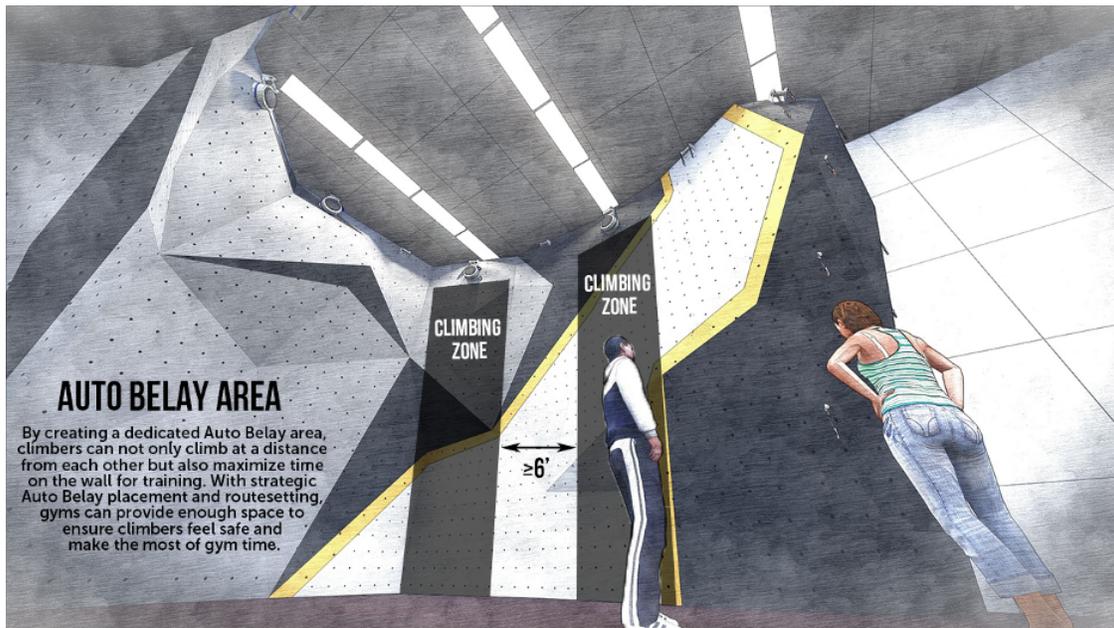
Below is our attempt to consolidate what the global climbing community is doing in response to COVID-19, including how gyms are approaching reopening, cleaning, and hygiene. **We hope you will find some actionable insights that can be put to use right away.**

REOPENING

Every gym will need to develop protocols that are comfortable for their business, customers and members. Here are a few recommendations to consider.

- If available, use a reservation system to control capacity and manage the check-in/waiver process
- Stagger entry times to avoid lines and crowding in the entrance of the gym
- Divide the gym into sections. For example, you might:
 - Extend the distance between routes and roped areas
 - Reduce the number of climbing lanes to promote social distancing
 - Create Auto Belay specific zones to minimize contact among climbers and reduce the handling of equipment
 - Tape off bouldering areas to encourage giving adequate space
- Set your routes in a way that make your customers feel comfortable
 - Reduce density of routes
 - Tape off, or otherwise mark, climbing lanes
- Potentially have participants sign COVID specific waivers that outline the steps your gym is taking to mitigate risk
- Education your customers

- Hang posters or signage around the gym to eliminate confusion
 - Check out these [free downloadable print materials](#) from the CDC
- Include information in your waiver or on your website to help set expectations
- Communicate what you're doing so that your customer base will feel comfortable coming back to the gym



HYGIENE

There may not be a perfect answer, but implementing controls and procedures that make people feel at ease and reduce risk is essential. Proper signage, procedure and policing of gym hygiene will drive confidence. Some suggestions include:

- Increase hand washing
 - Wash hands before climbing
- No bare feet
- Eliminate or reduce locker room activity
- Create additional hand washing or sanitizing stations
- Encourage or require all climbers and employees to wear masks
- Per CDC recommendations, customers or employees that are feeling sick should not enter the facility
- Liquid Chalk may act as a disinfectant if its alcohol level is over 70%. This would be used in conjunction with rigorous hand washing. It is important to

note that Liquid Chalk will only have disinfecting characteristics when initially applied.

CLEANING

This will be one of the most important and difficult operations to tackle in the gym. Not only will active cleaning help with disinfecting, but it will also boost customer confidence. Consider taking the following steps to ensure your gym is as clean as possible:

- Clean frequently-touched surfaces more often, from the front door to the floors
- Take caution pressure washing your holds as it can release an aerosol like spray into the air. Consider disinfecting holds prior to pressure washing by soaking them in a high pH soap and water
- Set a rigorous schedule for how often high-touch areas are cleaned
- Here's a great [list of disinfectants from the EPA](#). Note that you should always check with your equipment manufacturer to verify if cleaning agents are acceptable to use.

INDUSTRY RESOURCES

Christian Popien led an amazing strategy outline for [COVID-19 Risk Mitigation in Climbing Gyms](#) for Vertical Life. It was broken into three key categories:

- Occupancy Flow and Capacity Management
- Hygiene Protocol & Protective Measures
- Political Dialogue Lobbying Communication

The Climbing Business Journal has put together an in-depth list of resources from CWA, climbing gym owners, manufacturers and other climbing organizations. The topics range widely from finance, to employment guidance, to marketing and gym operations as a whole. [Learn more](#)

The CWA (Climbing Wall Association in the U.S.) has done an excellent job with Community Calls via Zoom twice a week, bringing a host of experts together to talk about what they're going through and how to plan for success coming out of this pandemic. [Watch the Community Calls](#)

MANUFACTURER RECOMMENDATIONS

At Head Rush, we've published a [White Paper](#) on protecting and disinfecting your device. For other manufactures, we advise contacting them directly for all products in use in your facilities to ensure their recommendations and guidelines are adhered to. That said, here are a few recommendations from climbing manufacturers that might be of interest to you:

- [Petzl: Cleaning and disinfection recommendations](#)
- [Eldorado Climbing Walls: Guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting climbing walls, holds, flooring, ropes, and TRUBLUE Auto Belays](#)
- [Edelrid: Cleanser and disinfectant recommendations](#)
- [Teufelberger: Rope disinfection recommendations](#)

GOVERNMENT/REGULATORY RESOURCES

- [CDC Guidelines](#)
- [OSHA Guidelines](#)
- [EPA Disinfectants](#)
- [WHO Technical Guidance for Workplaces](#)

This piece was put together to help guide businesses through the reopening process and link you to some wonderful resources that have been put together throughout the global climbing industry. It's important to remember that these are recommendations and that you should always follow pandemic guidelines handed down to you by your local, state and federal levels of government.