

Just Yoga Covid effective action prevention policy.

Executive Summary.

Just Yoga will be adopting a policy of *shared responsibility* for effective prevention of COVID infection. Just Yoga will implement mitigations that endeavour to effectively reduce the risk of COVID infection within the studio. Students are expected to share this responsibility by taking personal actions to further mitigate their own infection risk, as they deem appropriate.

From the implementation of this policy:

- Just Yoga will monitor and maintain air quality to reduce the risk of COVID infection.
- Just Yoga staff will discontinue the practice of cleaning surfaces between each class, as this is an ineffectual mitigation.
- The use of Just Yoga props will be recommenced as prior to COVID.
- Students are recommended to:
 - Wear well fitted masks in class.
 - Wash hands before and after class
- Students can bring their own props to class.

Introduction

At the beginning of the COVID pandemic Just Yoga adopted numerous measures to limit the potential transmission of COVID amongst our clients. These actions included:

- Shutdown the studio for 6 weeks in early 2020, (and at other stages in 2021 and 2022)
- Clean high contact surface between each class,
- Suspended the use of studio props,
- Had students bring their own kit of props to each class,
- Require students be vaccinated,

- Reduce the occupancy of the studio to increase the social distance between students.
- Request students wash their hands before and after class, and
- Request students wear masks in class.

During the early stages of the pandemic these actions were important and appropriate as so little was known about the virus - except for its terrible death toll in countries like Italy and the United Kingdom and cities like New York. These actions gave us time to develop/get vaccinated as well as prepare our health systems to handle the expected increased patient load.

It's now over 2 years since the first cases were recorded in Australia and so much more is known. We now understand COVID is transmitted via aerosol droplets in the air expelled in the breath of infected individuals.

COVID vaccines have now been developed, and whilst not able to totally arrest COVID infection, they have been effective in reducing the symptoms, hospitalisation and death. The impact of the virus has now been dramatically reduced.

It has also now become apparent that COVID is likely to be with us for a considerable period of time – at least for several years.

It is thought that COVID will transition from a pandemic to an endemic, where the disease is still around but at a level not causing significant disruption in the population's daily lives.[3] New variants of the virus, may require the reintroduction previous measures to battle unacceptable swelling of infection numbers. We will likely be required get repeated vaccinations to maintain our individual vaccination status, in similar manner as we do for the flu each year.

Suggesting COVID will become an endemic disease is not to say that it will become harmless. Other diseases are already endemic in our community, but still quite harmful and impactful to infected individuals. Ross River virus is an example of disease endemic in Australia.[5] and it has no vaccine available to prevent it.[6] In 2021 the Greater Geelong area recorded 119 cases up from 16 in 2020, almost double the previous record of 66 case in 2017.[4] The common cold and the annual flu are other examples of endemic diseases requiring institutions, such as aged care, and individuals to take the mitigations as necessary for each specific circumstance.

This raises the question how should Just Yoga respond going forward?

Just yoga could shut down it's in studio classes and only deliver classes online. This would certainly stop the risk of infection from within a yoga class, but it would also drastically diminish the quality of yoga learning process. Online classes create a barrier to an effective teacher student interaction, diminishing the effective identification of posture corrections in individual students and importantly removing opportunity for hands-on adjustments so often vital in the learning process.

Of course, for some students, online class may be their preference for yoga instruction and for these students there is now a plethora of online choices.

But for Just Yoga online classes will never be the predominant delivery mechanism.

COVID infection Risk mitigation via shared responsibility of effective action.

Just Yoga accepts it has a duty of care to provide a safe environment for its students, but students also have a personal duty or responsibility. What in the context of COVID though does this mean?

Just Yoga will be adopting a policy of *shared responsibility* for effective risk mitigation of COVID infection. Just Yoga shall take actions that deliver an effective prevention of COVID transmission. Studio staff will not expend resources in actions against low risk circumstances.

At the same time students will be expected to take individual actions for their own protection as they deem appropriate that may involve:

- Maintaining a up to date vaccination status,
- Wearing suitable well fitted face masks in class,
- Washing of hands before and after class
- Using their own prop kit

Transmission through the air.

It has now been well established that COVID is transmitted through the aerosol droplets of expelled breath. After vaccines the next best protective measures against COVID infection are:

- Avoiding confined spaces
- Wearing suitable well fitted face masks in confined spaces
- Maintaining the air quality of confined spaces
- Maintaining social distance

Confined Space

As the Just Yoga studio is a confined space its not possible to avoid it and attend classes in person.

Face Masks

Face masks offer an effective low impact protection. Like car seat belts whilst unable to stop an accident reduce the impact of injuries, face masks can't stop you from being around the COVID virus, but they do offer an excellent level of protection against infection when worn regularly and well fitted.

Whilst it will not be mandatory to wear a face mask in the studio, it is strongly recommended.

Ventilation

As COVID is an air disease ventilation of closed spaces is important.

Existing students will know that the studio has always been well ventilated with the air conditioner. Air from outside the building is drawn into replace the studio air which is expelled from the studio. The replacement of the studio air negates the need the need for a HEPA filter.

Whilst it is not possible to measure COVID viral load within a closed space it is possible to measure CO2 load and use this as a proxy for potential COVID viral load in a given air space. The studio space air is monitored to ensure that air quality is maintained.

In a confined space the National Construction Code mandates carbon dioxide levels of less than 850 ppm inside a building averaged over eight hours. [7] The relative risk of COVID infection indicated by CO2 ppm (assumed average over 8 hours) is stated by health.wa.gov.au [7] as follows:

- < 800 ppm low
- 801 - 1,500 ppm moderate
- >1,501 ppm high

The studio's air conditioner will be used to maintain air quality at a minimum of moderate risk of COVID infection. This may require students who are sensitive to cold to wear extra layers of clothing stay warm.

Social Distance

As part of its COVID mitigation actions Just Yoga has reduce studio occupancy to 15 students max to increase the social distance between students. This is a studio occupancy reduction from 18 students prior to COVID. This will for the present be maintained to reduce the amount of expired air generated in each class.

Transmission from surfaces.

Early on it was thought that COVID infection was possible surfaces (fomite transmission). COVID cannot penetrate the skin and for infection from surface to occur it would need by for example live virus to be transferred hand and then from the hand to the face for infection to occur from a surface.[2]

Surface contact infection is considered to be extremely unlikely and estimated at less than a 1 in 10,000 chance.[1]

Given the low risk of infection from a surface the ongoing cleaning surfaces between classes is an ineffective action. An efficient approach is for individuals to continue wash their hands before and after each class and to not touch your face during class. Individuals can, if they wish to, continue to bring their own props kit.

Sources:

- 1 Science Brief: SARS-CoV-2 and Surface (Fomite) Transmission for Indoor Community Environments, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/more/science-and-research/surface-transmission.html#:~:text=After%20a%20person%20with%20suspected,%2C%2011%2C%2012%2C%2013.>
- 2 How long the virus can survive, <https://www.csiro.au/en/research/health-medical/diseases/covid-19-research/how-long-the-virus-can-survive>
- 3 How we will know when COVID-19 has become endemic, <https://www.ama-assn.org/delivering-care/public-health/how-we-will-know-when-covid-19-has-become-endemic>
- 4 Record Ross River cases, [https://timesnewsgroup.com.au/surfcoasttimes/news/record-ross-river-cases_web/.](https://timesnewsgroup.com.au/surfcoasttimes/news/record-ross-river-cases_web/)
- 5 Ross River Virus Transmission, Infection, and Disease: a Cross-Disciplinary Review, [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC89008/#:~:text=Ross%20River%20virus%20\(RRV\)%20is%20a%20mosquito%2Dtransmitted%20Alphavirus,130%2C%20162%2C%20197\).](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC89008/#:~:text=Ross%20River%20virus%20(RRV)%20is%20a%20mosquito%2Dtransmitted%20Alphavirus,130%2C%20162%2C%20197).)
- 6 An Inactivated Ross River Virus Vaccine Is Well Tolerated and Immunogenic in an Adult Population in a Randomized Phase 3 Trial , [https://journals.asm.org/doi/10.1128/CVI.00546-14#:~:text=Ross%20River%20virus%20\(RRV\)%20is,available%20to%20prevent%20RRV%20disease.](https://journals.asm.org/doi/10.1128/CVI.00546-14#:~:text=Ross%20River%20virus%20(RRV)%20is,available%20to%20prevent%20RRV%20disease.)
- 7 Information on COVID-19 and building ventilation, <https://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/~media/Corp/Documents/Health-for/Infectious-disease/COVID19/COVID-19-ventilation-in-buildings.pdf>