

Wearing a mask while exercising is safe for most, study finds

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A small study suggests there's no harm in masking up during exercise for most people. "What we found was, that it is safe to run at peak exercise in both an N95 mask and a cloth face mask," said lead author Matthew

Kampert, DO, of Cleveland Clinic.

Dr. Kampert and his colleagues studied 20 healthy people with an average age of 37. Participants ran on a treadmill to peak exhaustion while wearing an N95 mask, a cloth mask and no mask. Results show none of the runners experienced any safety concerns while running in either type of mask. In addition, researchers didn't detect any [abnormal heart rhythms](#) or unsafe drops in oxygen in the runners.

They found the main reason participants stopped running was due to mask discomfort. According to the latest Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines, it's okay for people who are fully vaccinated to exercise indoors without a mask. But it's a different story for those who have yet to receive a vaccine.

"If they have not been vaccinated, they should continue to wear a mask for their own safety but those who are vaccinated, they're not required to wear a mask and it's not recommended by the CDC at this point in time," said Dr. Kampert.

Dr. Kampert said his study did not include people with underlying heart and lung problems, or chronic disease. Those with underlying conditions should talk to their doctor about exercising with or without a mask.

More information: Matthew Kampert et al, Effects of Wearing an N95 Respirator or Cloth Mask Among Adults at Peak Exercise, *JAMA Network Open* (2021). [DOI: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2021.15219](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2021.15219)

Provided by Cleveland Clinic

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