

Despite the clear evidence that obesity is a risk factor in COVID-19 leading to serious complications or death, the past year of cyclic lockdowns has done nothing but worsen the obesity crisis. With gyms and sport facilities closed for months, and the comforts of alcohol and takeaways during lockdown, the government needs to put health and fitness at the forefront of the recovery strategy to get Britain running (or cycling, swimming, playing or walking) again.

### SO, WHAT IS THE TIMELINE FOR FITNESS FACILITIES TO REOPEN?

**MARCH 29:** Outdoor sport facilities such as golf courses, tennis courts, and basketball courts will reopen. However, with the exception of formally organised sports, the rule of six will still apply, making it difficult to get a group together for a kick (or throw) around on the court.

**APRIL 12:** Gyms are expected to reopen

With several weeks to go until gyms can reopen and fitness facilities can operate fully, there remains questions about what the government can do to not only save the struggling fitness industry but to revitalise Brits to get out and get fit.

Following the success of the Eat Out to Help Out Scheme last summer, there have been suggestions of a Work Out To Help Out scheme for this summer, to support the fitness industry and empower individuals to take control of their health and fitness. An online petition for such a scheme garnered over 200,00 responses, although the government have responded saying they do not intend to fund such a scheme – although over three hundred million has been promised to local authority centres, community sport clubs and exercise centres and more. But investment in health centres alone is not enough. With working from home set to continue for a few months at least, sedentary lifestyles pose an ongoing threat for the population.

So far, the government has created a number of schemes to get people active, promote healthy lifestyles and investments in fitness facilities will do a lot to support citizens. But facilities are not enough, investment is needed to help people access available spaces at a fair cost, give people easy access to green spaces like playgrounds and walking trails.

What's more, investment is needed in the social environment to encourage individuals to work with their friends and family to get fit and get outdoors.

