

# Peterborough, Kawartha Lakes fitness providers go virtual amid COVID-19

*Sarah Sobanski*

Some fitness providers across Peterborough and the Kawarthas are taking their classes online to support residents stuck inside from COVID-19.

With social distancing encouraged across the province, heading to the gym to sweat within six inches of your neighbour isn't the best idea. That's especially true for child-friendly [Flex Fitness](#), where gym owner Cathy Steffler says moms regularly come to classes with their babies.

Steffler closed down her Lindsay-based studio space before the province declared a state of emergency (March 17). She says she can't afford to close – a situation she assumes many small businesses are finding themselves in – but she has to do what she can to help slow the spread of the virus.

“I know people are scared. I legit will go under. I don't know how I'm going to pay my rent next week,” she says. “We have a responsibility as a community to stay home.”

For now, Steffler says, she's putting her faith in the government supporting small businesses impacted by the outbreak. In turn, she's supporting her clients by taking her classes online.

“I'm a firm believer that moving our bodies makes our moods better,” she says. She adds she's been shocked by the number of people who've reached out to be a part of her classes online.

Every day, Steffler heads to her studio and streams her classes through video-conferencing app [Zoom](#). She maintains the same schedule she would have if her classes were running regularly.

Steffler is just one of many fitness professionals that are popping up all over social media to livestream, post and find alternatives to get their classes to their clients.

One municipality over, instructors at the [Peterborough Yoga Wellness Centre](#) are livestreaming through popular social apps such as Facebook and Instagram and recording classes to post on [YouTube](#).

Co-director of the studio [Laura Nugent](#) says the wellness centre has had to turn into an online business overnight, closing down as the state of emergency was announced. It's still transitioning, as instructors become familiar with the tech to record and post.

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Going online isn't a long-term business solution, Nugent says, but the wellness centre

is doing its best to continue providing wellness and fitness offerings to members. She adds a strong immune system is one of the best defences against COVID-19.

“There is a very high survival rate if you’re fit and healthy,” she says. “It’s pivotal.”

Nugent says people should be looking after their mental health as well as their physical health – two things that go hand in hand.

“Even those who don’t get the virus are going to be suffering from being stuck in their home, a lot of them alone,” she points out. “It is pivotal. It’s not optional. Everyone should be doing something physical for their well-being.”

Nugent says people should remember to seek out positive information, such as that in some places overseas the virus seems to be slowing down, people are making full recoveries, and more.

“It will end. As a business owner, and as humans, we need to act with integrity even in a time of turmoil,” she says. “When it’s all over, people will remember how you acted, [such as] that’s the guy who fought me for toilet paper.”

Both Steffler and Nugent sent well wishes to those struggling amid the COVID-19 crisis and thanks to clients and members who’ve been understanding and supportive about their closures.

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