

New Study Finds Gym Bags Can Harbour High Levels of Biological Matter

3 months ago



Thousands of Brits no doubt took the start of the year as an opportunity to kickstart a fitness regime, but new research by [Initial Washroom Hygiene](#) has found that people's gym bags could be unknowingly exposing them to high levels of microbial contamination (germs).

The results of this snapshot swabbing research** showed that the average level of contamination recorded among gym bags was 697 units - 39% higher than what hygiene experts consider to be a high level*** of contamination, with several samples giving readings of well over 1,000 units and one of almost 9,000 units!

The swabbing results were gathered using ATP* swabs and an ATP bioluminescence reader to measure biological activity not visible by eye.

[NHS England](#) has recently reported increased rates of norovirus (also known as the winter vomiting bug), [a highly contagious virus](#) which can easily be spread from person to person, including through direct contact with an infected individual and via cross contamination from touching surfaces or objects that have viral particles on them. As many returned swabbing readings came back with results that were well above the range that hygiene experts would consider normal** for biological contamination on an object or surface, gymgoers should seriously consider what invisible pathogens their gym kit could be harbouring.

Initial Washroom Hygiene advises gymgoers to regularly wash their gym kit after coming home from the gym, ensuring that post-workout clothes are not left to fester in a bag where bacteria are more likely to multiply, particularly if the items are moist and warm.

People should also consider washing the bag itself or wiping it with an antibacterial wipe every couple of

weeks to remove odours and help prevent the build up of germs.

Jamie Woodhall, UK Technical & Innovations Manager at Initial Washroom Hygiene, comments: “With a significant rise in norovirus cases lately, we wanted to remind people that germs are invisible and high levels can be found on surprising items, including personal possessions. Pathogens can easily be picked up from touching objects that most frequently come in contact with people’s hands, and that includes gym equipment as well as the clothes worn to work out in.”

“No one wants to catch a seasonal bug, so it’s advisable to regularly wash and dry your hands using warm water and soap, fully covering your palms, the backs of your hands, between your fingers and under nails, followed by a thorough rinse. With **80%** of infections being transmitted through hands, the power to curb infections is literally in our own hands, so always wash your hands after using the toilet, before preparing food or eating, or after coughing or sneezing.”

Initial Washroom Hygiene recommends:

- The first line of defence in preventing the spread of illnesses is washing your hands thoroughly and often. Remember to use soap, wash for 20-30 seconds, thoroughly rinse and dry your hands with a warm air dryer or paper towel, especially after touching shared surfaces.
- Use hand sanitiser when washing facilities aren’t available. It is advisable to carry a small bottle of hand sanitiser with you at all times and always sanitise your hands before eating and after using the toilet.
- Avoid touching your face, particularly your eyes, nose and mouth, particularly after coming into contact with public touchpoints. If you do need to touch your face, then make sure you wash your hands.
- To help reduce the transmission of seasonal illnesses, cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze, using a tissue or your elbow, NOT your hands (even when wearing gloves!), as you could contaminate surfaces you touch afterwards.
- Germs can easily transfer from surfaces, touchpoints and shared items onto our hands. Regularly clean and disinfect surfaces or objects that are likely to be touched by multiple hands, such as door handles and rails, remote controls and light switches, to reduce cross contamination risks.
- Dispose of used tissues immediately (REMEMBER – Catch it, Bin it!)