

March 2nd, 2021

Dear Chancellor Merkel,  
Dear Minister-Presidents,

We can only imagine what a challenging time the pandemic has been for you as political decision-makers. Tomorrow you will once again be meeting in your role as leaders of the Federal and State governments to advise on the gradual opening-up and revival of the economy.

Since the forced closure of gyms and fitness centers, the fitness industry has experienced a drastic reduction in members and overall turnover, not only last year, but also in the current year. As things stand, it's hard to say how devastating the economic and health repercussions of the second lockdown will be for our industry and for people in general. But one thing is sure: we are already on the brink. Saying that we are "too big to fail" just won't cut it anymore. Everyone in the sector is feeling the pain: from small businesses right up to the major players. Fitness studios are likely to disappear due to market-related cashflow problems, which would be a disastrous scenario for Germany, not least for the health of German citizens. The fitness sector as a whole has its back against the wall.

My own group employs over 41,000 people worldwide. We run in excess of 1,000 fitness studios and are world leaders across all continents, with over 200 gyms in Germany alone. Fitness training is without a doubt the world's leading sporting activity.

Almost 12 million German citizens—all potential voters—train in fitness studios and gyms. Now, in these times of crisis, they are keener than ever to maintain, and even improve, their physical and mental health and fitness. Fitness is crucial for them, for us, and for the sector as a whole; as such it deserves to have priority status:

// because countless scientific studies have shown that good physical fitness provides an important foundation to help the body successfully fight off illness and plays a key role in protecting us from serious cases of infectious diseases;

// because sport is possible, even in a pandemic, as long as basic hygiene rules are observed;

// because fitness training is an individual sport and can be practiced responsibly, without any issues, providing certain conditions are met;

// because it makes no sense to allow hairdressers and nail salons to open while gyms remain closed;

// because millions of people are desperate to get back to exercising and sports;

// because a healthy body needs physical exercise.


**For the reasons outlined above, we would like to urge you to:**

- 1) Allow outdoor sport to open up again. According to world-renowned infectious diseases experts such as Professor Zastrow and biophysicists including Gerhard Scheuch, coronavirus particles are unlikely to be transmitted during physical training activities outdoors if fixed operating and organizational procedures are observed (see attached Hygiene Rules).**
- 2) Talk to us! Let's discuss how we can reopen indoor sport by introducing appropriate measures: implemented at the right time, in a controlled manner, on a sustainable basis, and subject to comprehensive health and safety rules.**

Millions of people regard gyms and fitness studios as an essential part of their daily routine. For that reason alone, they should be allowed to reopen subject to conditions such as strict hygiene rules.

We are convinced that you have the best interests of 12 million people and voters at heart—which includes their health and fitness. Please contact me directly to discuss this matter.

With best regards,



Rainer Schaller  
Founder & CEO, McFIT / RSG Group  
**#dontforgetfitness**