



SKYLIGHT CIRCUS ARTS

COVID - 19 NEWSLETTER
EFFECT ON SKYLIGHT
MEMBERS

www.skylightcircusarts.com

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LOCKDOWN STORIES

On the 18th March 2020 Skylight Circus Arts **closed its doors until further notice due to the Covid - 19 pandemic**. All classes, projects and upcoming performances were forced to be postponed or cancelled while the virus began to spread throughout the world.

Throughout this time, hundreds and thousands of lives have been affected by the virus as we entered a national lockdown. Schools, gyms, shops were forced to close, exams were cancelled and families were asked to stay at home.

As a small arts organisation, we were **extremely worried for all of our staff, members and their families**. We could only **wonder how life would look after lockdown**. As the wave of virus declined and lockdown measures began to ease, we were left wondering, **how can we do circus and keep people safe?**

We **brainstormed** ideas, spoke with other **circus professionals**, and saw a **glimmer of hope** when we began to **understand the possibilities** of what we may be able to do.

A crucial part of this process was **speaking to our members**, to **understand how they had been affected** and hear how we can best **support them moving forward**.

We managed to speak with **67.8% of our regular members** throughout the second week of July 2020.

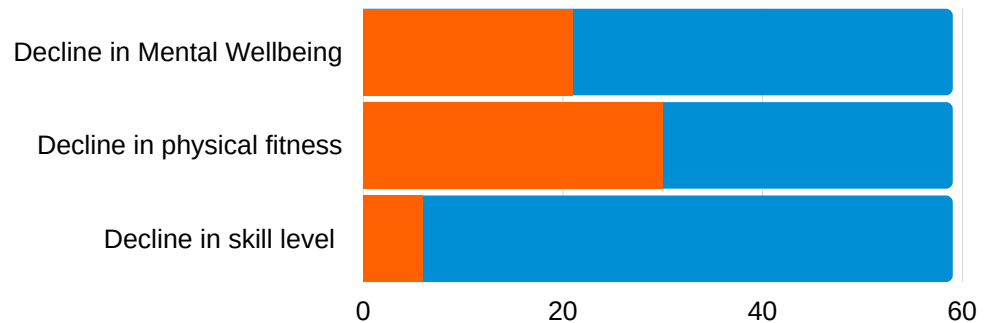
This document gives the feedback from those members, ranging in age from **4 - 75**.





We asked our members,

"What changes have you noticed since not attending Skylight?"



"I have got very depressed with not seeing people at Skylight. I miss learning new things. It takes the quality of life down and I'm sad because I will of lost some my fitness too."

Silver Circus member age 69

"Definite decline in my strength, stamina, fitness, and my mood. General happiness and wellbeing have declined, largely attributed to going to skylight"

Adult aerial member

" Yes my flexibility, I have more difficulty getting up and down the stairs. Your joints seize up if you're not using them."

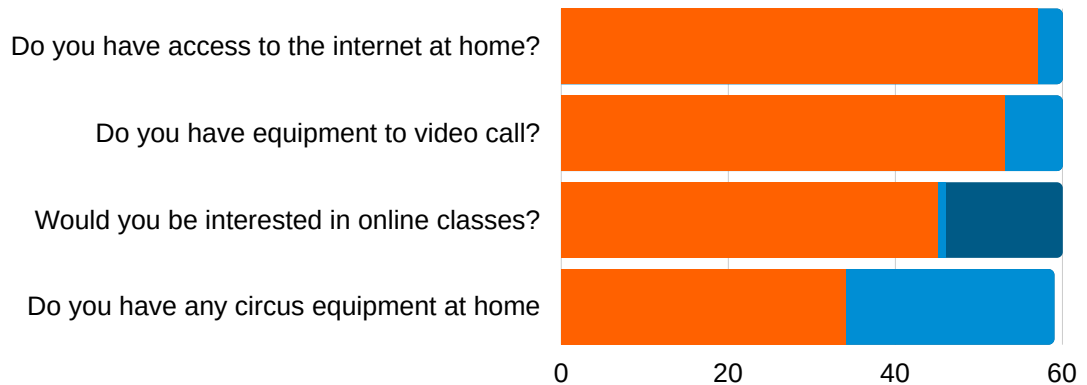
Silver Circus Member age 71



Throughout the lockdown period we saw a huge range of fantastic online resources for people to keep learning and being creative at home. We wanted to **understand our members' situation** and ask if online sessions would be **helpful to them**. We also wanted to know what **technology and equipment** they have at home.

Key:

Yes **No** **Maybe**



"I think tutorial videos might be good, and then going off to practice and send a video back to you guys. Live zooms are so hard to get everyone together and fit around when I'm working. Conditioning, strength building and stretching might be good, linking to other circus skills like trapeze"

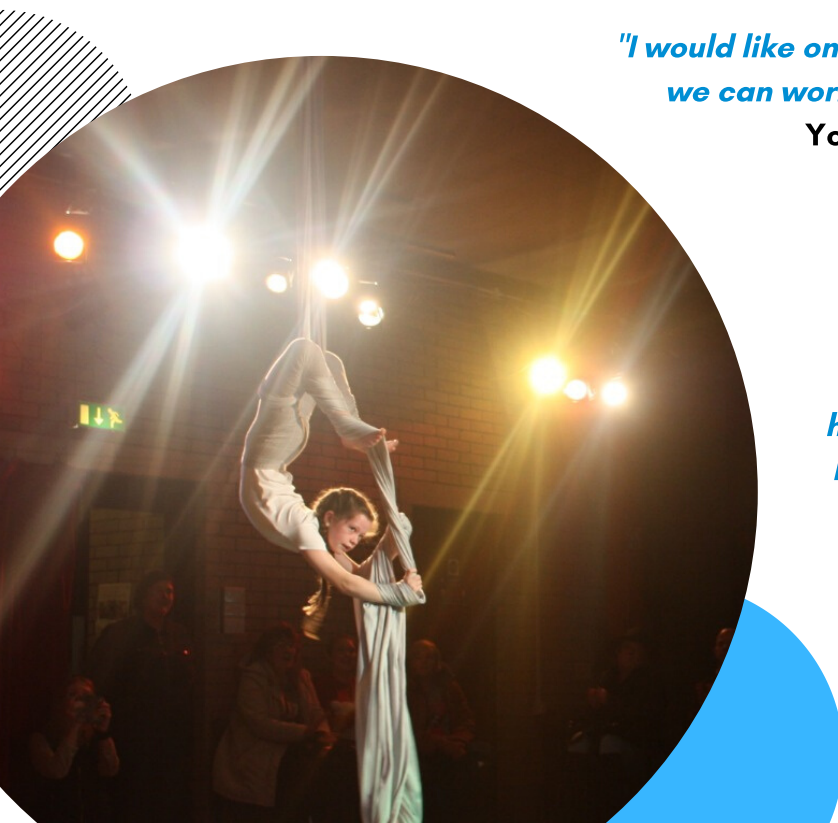
Parent of Youth Circus Member

"I would like online contortion or stretching classes, so we can work towards specific things like splits"

Youth Circus Member age 16

"She's not been doing as much stretching. Aerial is such a creative outlet and cocoon helps her express herself. She hasn't been able to express herself at home, usually on a Friday she comes home full of beans and she has really missed that since lockdown"

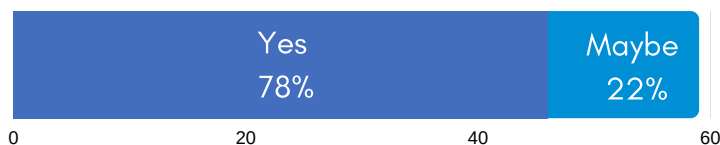
Parent of youth aerial member age 12





We asked:

"Would you attend Skylight classes if we put social distancing in place?"



"Are you worried about returning to Skylight due to Covid-19?"

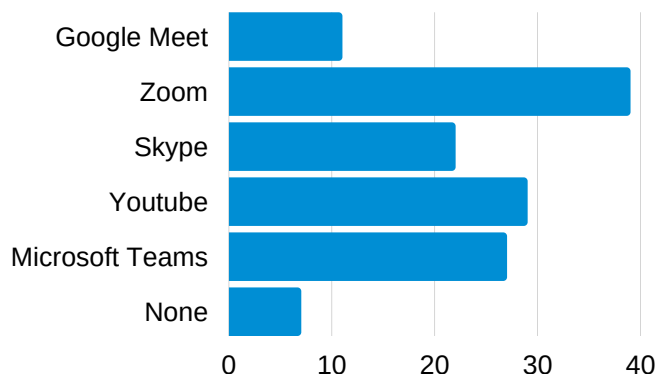


"Skylight is important because I am able to socialize, and I miss not being able to see people that are quite good at certain activities. I think that if you are forced into being a hermit, you get a bit frightened of going out. Without skylight, it increases anxiety levels, so that is why it is important that I get back to being gregarious (mixing with people) with others of the same mind"

Silver Circus member age 75

We also wanted to know the best way of communicating and sharing circus skills with our members through online platforms, and to understand this we asked:

Have you used any of these platforms in the past?



Moving forward, we are hoping to bring back some of our circus classes for children and adults. We wanted to know how people felt about returning to Skylight if we were able to put social distancing in place and regular cleaning of equipment and space.



WHAT DOES SKYLIGHT MEAN TO OUR MEMBERS?

We always **value the feedback from our members**, to provide the circus skills and support for the children and adults that attend Skylight.

The Covid - 19 pandemic has meant that for the first time ever, organisations like Skylight have had to close their doors for a number of months.

Throughout this time we have been able to really understand why circus is so important to people's social, emotional and physical wellbeing.



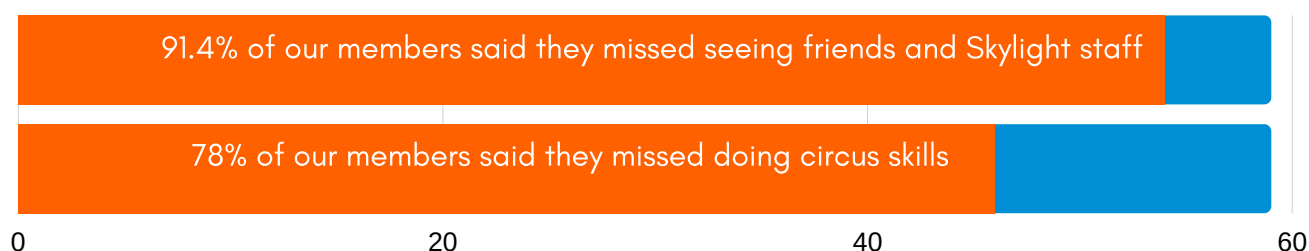
We asked our members what they missed about Skylight

"He misses seeing the other children, he would get excited about trying new things, he misses learning new skills, misses learning something unusual."

Parent of Youth Circus member age 4

"She has missed seeing other people and making friends, it's been a real game-changer for her to meet other people and staff. Skylight staff had previously given me some support for my daughter when she was struggling with personal issues, and pointed me towards some external support systems for our family which we found extremely helpful and still use today"

Parent of youth aerial member age 13



"I miss the people, friends, the support from staff, circus skills like tightwire and group acro and doing acrobatics. I don't have the motivation at home and I miss coming every week and always improving. Skylight makes me feel like I've accomplished something, oh and I miss aerial cause I can't do that at home."

Youth Circus member age 16

"They miss meeting different children from outside of where they live; that are interested in different things. It's not competitive, and it is a very supportive environment. They get a big confidence boost from coming to Skylight. They also miss using their strengths, being physical in a non competitive environment. Girls don't usually get encouraged to be strong in other skills, but they do in circus"

Parent of youth circus members age 7 and 10

"I miss the social aspect of seeing and chatting to people. It's not the same doing circus on your own, I need other people to bounce off. I miss the whole atmosphere, I really miss it on Monday mornings! I miss it so much! I also miss doing the silks"

Silver Circus Member age 69



COMING SOON!

"We've missed circus with everyone so much! Our staff are now preparing the building ready to welcome you all back! We'll be doing a gradual roll out of activities. Watch this space as we re-emerge!"

**Martine Bradford
Creative Director
(& Sanitisation Station
Coordinator!)**

