

Squash - health benefits

Squash is an indoor racquet sport, played by two or four players in a four-walled court with a small, hollow rubber ball. Squash is a fast-moving and high-impact sport that provides an excellent cardiovascular workout but can place strain on the joints, especially the knees.

Although you need a partner to play squash, many squash centres and clubs offer friendly tournaments and games where you can meet and compete with other squash players.

Suitable for all ages

Squash is a game that can be played at any age. It is easy to learn and there are modified games and equipment to suit every size and skill level. Squash can be played for leisure or as a competitive sport.

Health benefits

Squash is a strenuous sport, in which a player can use a lot more energy than most other sports. Squash helps to:

- Improve cardiovascular health; a game of squash will see you running, leaping and diving for the ball
- Increase strength and fitness
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Increase flexibility and strength in the back
- Promote good coordination, agility and flexibility
- Build hand-eye coordination.

Other benefits

Squash also has many other benefits including:

- Improved general and psychological wellbeing
- Greater self-confidence and self-esteem
- Better social skills and an opportunity to make new friends
- Improved concentration
- Stress release
- All weather activity – as it's an indoor sport, weather conditions don't prevent you from playing.

Getting started – equipment

Before you set out to play a game of squash, there are certain issues regarding equipment and where you play, that are important to consider:

- **Racquet** – you can choose to either buy your own racket or hire one from a squash centre. Smaller (mini) racquets are available for children.
- **Ball** – the type of ball you use is best determined by the level you play at. The colour of the dot on the ball indicates its speed and degree of bounce.
- **Clothing** – squash requires a lot of movement, so light clothes like t-shirts, shorts and skirts are recommended.
- **Squash court** – you can hire squash courts at a squash or fitness centre for around \$15-25 an hour.

Avoiding injury

Squash is a high-impact and very strenuous sport. As it also involves a lot of energy, with frequent stopping and starting, it is important to follow these safety tips:

- See your doctor for a check-up if you have a medical condition, are overweight, are over 40 years of age or haven't exercised for a long time.
- Don't play if you have a heart condition.
- Always wear protective eyewear.
- Wear purpose-designed squash shoes or indoor court shoes to ensure appropriate grip on the floor and stability to protect your ankles.
- Do warm-ups before you begin to play.
- Ensure you have shoes with good ankle support.
- Drink plenty of water before, during and after playing.
- Do cool-down exercises after you finish your game.
- Don't push yourself too far or too fast, especially if you are a beginner.

Where to get help

- Squash Australia Tel. (07) 3367 3200
- Look in the *Yellow Pages* for squash courts in your area
- Smartplay Tel. (03) 9674 8777

Things to remember

- Squash can be strenuous, so if you haven't been active for a while and your fitness level is low, have a medical check-up before you start.
- Start at a level that suits your fitness.
- To prevent serious eye injuries, all players should wear eye protection that complies with the current Australian Standard.
- Drink plenty of water before, during and after playing.

This page has been produced in consultation with, and approved by:

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