
Squash - preventing injury

Summary

- Squash is a popular sport that requires a reasonable level of fitness to be played competitively.
 - Always wear appropriate eye protection that conforms to Australian Standards.
 - If you incur an injury, seek urgent medical attention.
-

Squash is an indoor racquet game that is played in a four-walled court. There are over 900 squash facilities throughout Australia. You can enjoy the occasional game of squash socially, or play competitively.

When you start to play squash, it's best to begin with a modified game (for example, racquetball) to develop fitness and skills. While the risk of injury from playing squash isn't as high as in other sports, injuries that do occur may be serious.

Common squash injuries

Squash injuries include:

- muscle strains and sprains – particularly to the arms, legs and lower back. These injuries are often not severe but can limit game performance.
- fall injuries – from falling or slipping on court.
- impact injuries – for example, getting hit with a ball or a racquet or crashing into a wall.
- head and eye injuries – getting hit by a ball or racquet.
- heat stress – symptoms include dizziness and drop in performance.
- overuse injuries – such as tendonitis of the elbow ('tennis elbow').

Risk factors for squash injuries

Some of the factors that may increase your risk of injury include:

- Age – people aged over 40, mainly males, are at risk of injury. This is usually because older players are often in poor physical condition before they play.
- Poor fitness level – a general level of fitness is required to play active squash.
- Poor technique – puts unnecessary strain on joints and muscles. For example, holding the racquet incorrectly can cause stress to the wrist.
- Lack of protective equipment – neglecting to wear protective equipment, such as eyewear, may lead to severe eye injuries.
- Prior injuries – squash can exacerbate previous injuries, particularly those of the ankle.
- Time spent playing – people who compete or play frequently are at a greater risk of overuse injuries.

Health suggestions for playing squash

Suggestions include:

- If you have a medical condition, are overweight, are over 40 years old or haven't exercised regularly, see your doctor for a check-up.
 - Start with a slower game (for example, racquetball) before you take up squash as it will help to develop your fitness and skills.
 - Maintain fitness levels with aerobic (walking, jogging) and anaerobic activities (for example sprinting).
 - Take squash lessons from a qualified coach to develop adequate skills and technique.
-

- Respect your physical limitations. Don't continue playing when you're fatigued.
- Wear cool clothing that 'breathes', such as cotton.
- Drink plenty of fluids before, during and after the game.
- Have your shoes professionally fitted.
- Warm up thoroughly before playing. Include jogging on the spot and plenty of stretching.
- Allow sufficient time to cool down afterwards. Stretching is an important part of your cool-down routine.

Pre-exercise screening is used to identify people with medical conditions that may put them at a higher risk of a health problem during physical activity. It is a filter or 'safety net' to help decide if the potential benefits of exercise outweigh the risks for you. Print a copy of the [pre-exercise screening tool](#) and discuss it with your doctor or exercise professional.

Squash safety suggestions

Suggestions include:

- Use a ball that is appropriate for your skill and fitness level. Your local squash centre operator can assist.
- Don't enter the court when a game is in progress.
- Keep court doors closed when playing.
- Always wear appropriate eye protection that conforms to Australian Standards. Prescription glasses or sunglasses won't protect your eyes. Recommended brands are listed on the World Squash Federation website
- Don't stand too close to your opponent.
- Make sure your equipment is maintained in good repair.

Treatment for squash injuries

Suggestions include:

- Stop playing immediately if an injury occurs to prevent further damage. Playing through the pain will only aggravate the injury.
- Seek prompt medical treatment of injury. Early management will mean less time away from squash.
- Treat all soft tissue injuries (ligament sprains, muscle strains, bumps and bruises) with rest, ice, compression, elevation (raise the limb above your heart) and seek advice from a health professional.
- Stop playing immediately if you have symptoms of serious injury (for example, severe pain). Get medical treatment if you experience these symptoms.
- Do not resume activity until you have fully recovered from injury.
- Players with a history of joint injury (for example, ankle) should seek medical advice about taping or bracing their joint before playing.
- It is important to find the cause of any injury, so you can take steps to address the problem. Lessons will help to improve your technique.

Eye injuries when playing squash

Squash is a high-risk activity for eye injuries. In severe cases, if the squash ball hits hard enough, it can burst the eyeball, which can result in the loss of the injured eye. Suggestions include:

- Always wear appropriate eye protection that satisfies Australian standards, regardless of your skill or fitness levels.
- See your optometrist for advice on eye protection appropriate to your vision.
- If you have an eye injury, seek urgent medical attention.
- If in doubt about the severity of an eye injury, seek medical attention.
- Sit upright or in a semi-sitting position while waiting for the ambulance.
- To treat a black eye, apply cold compresses to the closed eye. Don't put ice on the eyeball itself.

Where to get help

- Your doctor
- In an emergency, call triple 000
- Physiotherapist
- Local squash facility
- Squash and Racquetball Victoria Tel. (03) 9682 2199
- Smartplay Tel: (03) 9674 8777

Things to remember

- Squash is a popular sport that requires a reasonable level of fitness to be played competitively.
- Always wear appropriate eye protection that conforms to Australian Standards.
- If you incur an injury, seek urgent medical attention.

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

Smartplay

Content on this website is provided for information purposes only. Information about a therapy, service, product or treatment does not in any way endorse or support such therapy, service, product or treatment and is not intended to replace advice from your doctor or other registered health professional. The information and materials contained on this website are not intended to constitute a comprehensive guide concerning all aspects of the therapy, product or treatment described on the website. All users are urged to always seek advice from a registered health care professional for diagnosis and answers to their medical questions and to ascertain whether the particular therapy, service, product or treatment described on the website is suitable in their circumstances. The State of Victoria and the Department of Health & Human Services shall not bear any liability for reliance by any user on the materials contained on this website.

For the latest updates and more information, visit www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au

Copyright © 1999/2019 State of Victoria. Reproduced from the Better Health Channel (www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au) at no cost with permission of the Victorian Minister for Health. Unauthorised reproduction and other uses comprised in the copyright are prohibited without permission.