
Squash - health benefits

Summary

Squash is an indoor racquet sport, played by two or four players in a four-walled court with a small, hollow rubber ball. Squash can be a fast-moving sport that provides an excellent cardiovascular workout.

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.

Squash is 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 of playing squash

In squash, a player can use a lot more energy than most other sports. Squash helps to:

- improve cardiovascular health. A game of squash can 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 of playing squash

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 racquet 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. Single dot, 'big' or 'tubby' balls are recommended for beginners, as they offer more bounce, while the slower double dot balls bounce less and are used for competition.
- 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 \$15–30 an hour.

Avoiding injury

Squash can involve frequent stopping and starting, so it is important to follow a few safety tips, including:

- 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.
- It is recommended that all players should wear eye protection that complies with the current Australian Standard. Protective eyewear is mandatory for all players 19 years and under who are participating in any Squash Australia affiliated state/association/club activities. Wear purpose-designed squash shoes or indoor court shoes to ensure appropriate grip on the floor and stability to protect your ankles.
- Do warm-up exercises before you begin to play.
- Drink plenty of water before, during and after playing.
- Do cool-down exercises after you finish your game.

Where to get help

- Racquetball Victoria Tel. (03) 9682 2199
- 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.
- It is recommended that all players should wear eye protection that complies with the current Australian Standard. Protective eyewear is mandatory for all players 19 years and under who are participating in any Squash Australia affiliated state/association/club activities.
- Drink plenty of water before, during and after playing.

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

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