
Tennis – health benefits

Summary

- Tennis is a good sport for maintaining health, fitness, strength and agility. It also has social and psychological benefits.
 - You can play with a club or with friends and family as a social activity.
 - Make sure you have plenty of fluids on hand and rehydrate regularly.
 - Don't overdo it. Mix up your physical activity with other low-impact sports.
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Tennis is a very popular sport in Australia and is played by people of all ages. Tennis can be played by two people (called 'playing singles') or four people ('doubles'). Players use racquets to hit a ball over a net into the other side of the court.

A game of tennis involves a variety of types of play, including serving the ball over the net, rallies (when the ball is hit back and forth between opponents), fast movements and strategic game play.

Tennis can be played as a sport or as a recreational activity with friends and family. Either way, playing tennis is a good sport to maintain your health, fitness, strength and agility. It has been calculated that an hour-long game of singles tennis burns around 600 calories for men and 420 calories for women.

In addition to the fitness and physical health benefits, tennis also provides numerous social and mental health benefits as well.

Health benefits of tennis

Tennis can be a great workout and lots of fun. Playing tennis has many health benefits including:

- increasing aerobic capacities
- lowering resting heart rate and blood pressure
- improving metabolic function
- increasing bone density
- lowering body fat
- improving muscle tone, strength and flexibility
- increasing reaction times.

Other benefits of tennis

As well as being a great physical workout, tennis is also:

- a non-impact sport
- a great way to meet people and spend time with friends
- suitable for all ages and skill levels. Whatever your level, you can find someone of a similar ability to play with
- helpful to reduce stress
- not dependent on youth or strength – you can play for a lifetime or start the game at any age
- played all over Australia and through many parts of the world.

Starting playing tennis

Tennis is very popular in Australia and is played in organised competitions as well as social games. In order to play tennis you need a racquet, a ball, a court with a net, and an opponent.

Club courts and public courts are available for hire in most suburbs and towns. If you can't find someone to play against, many tennis clubs host organised social play, competitions and tournaments that will provide fellow tennis players for you to play with and against. Alternatively, if you don't have a tennis partner, you can always practise your skills by hitting a tennis ball against a wall.

Avoiding tennis injuries

- Avoid playing with a pre-existing illness or injury. If in doubt, talk to a doctor.
- Warm up your muscles and joints before hitting the court.
- Maintain an adequate fitness level. Undertake conditioning and training exercises specific to the physical demands of tennis.
- Occasionally, injuries caused through repetition of strokes can occur in tennis. Correct technique and playing the volume of tennis appropriate to your fitness levels can prevent injury. Make sure you have plenty of fluids on hand and drink regularly.
- Play at a level according to your age and physical condition..
- If the court conditions are wet, consider playing indoors or postponing your match, especially if the surface is slippery.

Where to get help

- Local council
- Local tennis club
- Tennis Victoria Tel. (03) 8420 8420
- Smartplay Tel. (03) 9674 8777

Things to remember

- Tennis is a good sport for maintaining health, fitness, strength and agility. It also has social and psychological benefits.
- You can play with a club or with friends and family as a social activity.
- Make sure you have plenty of fluids on hand and rehydrate regularly.
- Don't overdo it. Mix up your physical activity with other low-impact sports.

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