Tennis – preventing injury

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Tennis is one of the most popular sports in the world. More than one million Australians play each year. Playing tennis is a great way to stay physically fit, and it’s also a great way to make new friends.

Tennis requires a variety of physical attributes including speed, power, endurance, strength, balance and specific playing skills. Both competitive and social players should carry out a conditioning and training program to cope with the demands of play and reduce the risk of injury.

While the risk of injury from playing tennis is relatively low compared to other sports, common tennis injuries include injuries to the ankle, knee and wrist.

**Risk factors for tennis injuries**

Some of the factors that can increase the risk of injury include:

- Incorrect technique – using the correct serving and stroke action is important to prevent injury, particularly to the elbow and wrist. An incorrect swinging action can be caused by the player relying only on the arm to hit the ball, rather than the body’s full strength. The greatest amount of power in tennis can be generated through correct timing of the ball, combined with strength and coordinated rotation of the legs, hips and trunk.
- Failure to warm up and cool down – warming up and cooling down is extremely important to reduce the risk of muscle and joint injuries. Warming up will not only help avoid injury but will also improve performance.
- Time spent playing – overexertion is one of the most common causes of injury in tennis. Your body needs rest and recovery between training and matches. If you don’t allow your body sufficient time to rest and recover, you may not receive the total benefits of your game. You’ll also have an increased risk of overuse injury.
- Previous injury – a previous injury can lead to similar injuries in future, particularly if you haven’t taken enough time to properly recover.

**General health and safety suggestions**

Before you take up tennis, keep these suggestions in mind:

- See your doctor for a check-up if you have a medical condition, are overweight, are over 40 years of age or haven’t participated in regular physical activity for a long period of time.
- Take lessons from a qualified coach to develop adequate skills and technique.
- Warm up and stretch before you play to improve joint range of motion, promote elasticity of tendons and ligaments, and prevent muscular strain. Good preparation is important.
- Cool down after play to help with your recovery.
- Be Sunsmart. Always wear a t-shirt and hat, and use 30+ sunscreen on exposed skin.
- Drink water before, during and after activity to keep hydrated.
Conditioning and fitness tips

Some further tips include:

- Competitive and recreational players should have a skills development and training program that builds up gradually.
- Players should consult a qualified tennis coach about their individual training requirements.

Hot weather and water

If you play during hot weather you should be aware of the dangers of heat-related illness, including heat stroke. You should:

- Wear 30+ sunscreen, a sun hat and light, protective clothing.
- Consider modifying the format of your play in the event of extreme weather conditions.
- Make sure you replace lost fluids by drinking plenty of fluids before, during and after play.
- Take advantage of breaks in play to rest out of the sun and have a drink.
- Drink two to three glasses half to one hour before exercise.
- Drink one glass every 10 to 15 minutes during exercise.

Choose appropriate playing equipment

The right equipment, kept in good condition, is very important to prevent injury:

- Seek professional help when you choose a racquet and string tension, especially if you’ve had arm and shoulder problems.
- Consider playing indoors or at another time if court conditions are wet, as a slippery surface and heavy, wet balls may contribute to injuries.
- Choose shoes carefully, preferably with professional advice on the most appropriate shoe for your foot type and for the playing surface on which you play.

What to do if an injury occurs

Clubs should have a well-stocked first aid kit, a supply of ice packs, an accessible telephone and emergency contact numbers on display. If you’ve been injured, you should:

- Stop playing immediately to prevent further damage. Playing through the pain will only make your injury worse.
- Seek prompt first aid or medical treatment for any injury. This is important for all injured players, regardless of how severe the injury is.
- Get expert advice on appropriate taping or bracing and rehabilitation if you have repeated injuries.
- Don’t resume play until you have completely recovered from the injury.

Where to get help

- Your doctor
- Physiotherapist
- Tennis Australia qualified coach
- Tennis Victoria Tel. (03) 8420 8420
- Smartplay Tel. (03) 9674 8777

Things to remember

- Consult a qualified tennis coach for your individual training needs.
- During hot weather, be aware of the dangers of heat illness. Make sure you wear a sun hat, apply 30+ sunscreen and drink plenty of fluids.
- Remember to warm up, stretch and cool down after every game.
- Seek prompt treatment for any injury. Early management will mean less time away from your sport or activity.

References

- Preventing tennis injuries, Smartplay. More information here.
• Your comments
• Questions
• Your details

Please note that we cannot answer personal medical queries. If you are looking for health or medical advice we recommend that you:

• talk to your doctor or pharmacist
• dial triple zero (000) in an emergency
• ring NURSE-ON-CALL Tel. 1300 60 60 24.

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More information

Keeping active

The following content is displayed as Tabs. Once you have activated a link navigate to the end of the list to view its associated content. The activated link is defined as Active Tab

• Keeping active basics
• Getting started
• Staying fit and motivated
• Exercise safety and injury prevention
• Healthy eating and exercise
• Keeping active throughout life
• Health conditions and exercise

Keeping active basics

• Balancing energy in and energy out

A kilojoule is a unit of measure of energy, in the same way that kilometres measure distance...

• Body mass index (BMI)
Body mass index or BMI is an approximate measure of your total body fat.

- **Energy in food (kilojoules and calories)**
  A kilojoule is a unit of measure of energy, in the same way that kilometres measure distance.

- **Exercise intensity**
  If you can talk but not sing, you're exercising at the right intensity.

- **Exercise in your local surroundings (video)**
  Want to exercise, but find gym boring or expensive? Sue Stanley and Shane Bilsborough team up to show you how to exercise indoors and outdoors using your local surroundings - whether it's running up.

- **Exercise - the low-down on hydration**
  You need to drink enough and regularly to keep hydrated during exercise.

- **Exercise with a friend**
  Exercise is important for your physical and mental health. Working out with a friend means you're more likely to have fun and stick to your exercise plan.

- **Fitness centres – how to choose one**
  Do some research before signing up at a fitness centre.

- **How to make exercise fun (slideshow)**
  Many of us find it difficult to stick to some form of exercise, others don't know where to start. Experts say the key to taking up or keeping to any form of physical activity is to have fun. Get off.

- **Kids and energy needs**
  It's important for kids to eat a wide variety of foods for a healthy, well-balanced diet and to be physically active. Creating healthy habits during childhood helps to ensure lifelong healthy.

- **Personal trainers -- how to choose one**
  Make sure your personal trainer is properly qualified before entering into any agreement.

- **Physical activity for men**
  Many men are only motivated to become more active after they have a health scare.

- **Physical activity for seniors**
  Physical activity can help older people maintain independence, recover from illness and reduce their risk of disease.

- **Physical activity for women**
  If you can't make the time to exercise for yourself, do it for your family.

- **Physical activity - how to get active when you are busy**
  Even if you're busy, you still need to find a way to be physically active.

- **Physical activity - it's important**
  Just 30 minutes of moderate activity each day can improve your health and reduce the risk of developing certain conditions or diseases.

- **Physical activity -- setting yourself goals**
  When you're trying to become more physically active, set realistic health and fitness goals.

- **Physical activity - what's your excuse?**
  There are many excuses we can come up with to avoid being active, but the truth is there is always a way to fit some physical activity into your day.

- **Resistance training -- health benefits**
  If you do resistance training repeatedly and consistently, your muscles become stronger.

- **Secrets to healthy ageing (slideshow)**
  Experts say the key to living well into our 80s and 90s is making a commitment to live healthily. Check out these simple ideas and embrace your senior years!

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**Getting started**

- **Exercise programs**
  If you are unfamiliar with what is involved, starting an exercise program can be challenging.

- **Exercise - the low-down on hydration**
You need to drink enough and regularly to keep hydrated during exercise.

- **Exercise with a friend**
  
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- **Gardening for children**
  
  Children can learn new skills, have fun and develop self-confidence when they grow their own plants.

- **Gardening for health - starting out**
  
  Gardening is a healthy activity that can be enjoyed by everyone.

- **Gardening for older people**
  
  Garden spaces and equipment can be modified or adapted to help older people enjoy gardening.

- **Gardening safety**
  
  Gardening is an enjoyable form of exercise, but you need to take care.

- **Getting active - tucker talk tips**
  
  The main thing is to choose physical activities that you enjoy and that you can stick to in the long term.

- **How to make exercise fun (slideshow)**
  
  Many of us find it difficult to stick to some form of exercise, others don't know where to start. Experts say the key to taking up or keeping to any form of physical activity is to have fun. Get off...

- **Physical activity - choosing a provider**
  
  Choosing the right fitness centre or service provider requires some research.

- **Physical activity – choosing the one for you**
  
  You are more likely to keep up a healthy lifestyle change if your chosen activity suits you.

- **Physical activity for men**
  
  Many men are only motivated to become more active after they have a health scare.

- **Physical activity for seniors**
  
  Physical activity can help older people maintain independence, recover from illness and reduce their risk of disease.

- **Physical activity for women**
  
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- **Physical activity - how to get active when you are busy**
  
  Even if you're busy, you still need to find a way to be physically active.

- **Physical activity – how to get started**
  
  If you've been inactive and want to begin physical activity, see a doctor first.

- **Physical activity - learn how to swim (video)**
  
  Swimming is a great low-impact exercise for all ages and abilities. Australian marathon swimmer, Tammy Van Wisse shows ex-AFL (Australian Football League) player and coach, Tony Shaw some swimming.

- **Physical activity - overcoming barriers (video)**
  
  Former world aerobics champion, Sue Stanley shows us how to overcome common exercise excuses.

- **Physical activity – setting yourself goals**
  
  When you're trying to become more physically active, set realistic health and fitness goals.

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**Staying fit and motivated**

- **10 tips to plan your exercise**
  
  Physical activity won't just happen. Most activities require planning – starting and maintaining a physical activity program does too. Here are some tips for getting ready to exercise: Make...

- **10 tips to stay active year round**

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Pick an activity you enjoy ... 10 tips to stay active year round...

- **Exercise and mood**
  
  Exercise can have an enormous impact on your mood. Not only can exercise help in treating depression, it can also prevent people from becoming depressed again. So it’s important to keep up an exercise...

- **Exercise - everyday activities**
  
  There are lots of everyday activities that provide an opportunity to be active and provide health benefits...

- **Exercise in your local surroundings (video)**
  
  Want to exercise, but find gyms boring or expensive? Sue Stanley and Shane Bilsborough team up to show you how to exercise indoors and outdoors using your local surroundings - whether it's running up...

- **Exercise programs**
  
  If you are unfamiliar with what is involved, starting an exercise program can be challenging...

- **Exercise with a friend**
  
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- **How to make exercise fun (slide show)**
  
  Many of us find it difficult to stick to some form of exercise, others don’t know where to start. Experts say the key to taking up or keeping to any form of physical activity is to have fun. Get off...

- **Pets can make you healthy (video)**
  
  Australians have one of the highest rates of pet ownership in the world...

- **Physical activity – choosing the one for you**
  
  You are more likely to keep up a healthy lifestyle change if your chosen activity suits you...

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- **Physical activity - overcoming barriers (video)**
  
  Former world aerobics champion, Sue Stanley shows us how to overcome common exercise excuses...

- **Physical activity – staying active during summer (video)**
  
  Physical Activity and Fitness Trainer Sherri Bourne gives us some great tips for staying active over the summer months...

- **Physical activity - staying motivated**
  
  Pick an exercise or fitness activity that appeals to you and suits your lifestyle...

- **Physical activity - what’s your excuse?**
  
  There are many excuses we can come up with to avoid being active, but the truth is there is always a way to fit some physical activity into your day...

- **Stretching exercise in winter (video)**
  
  When starting out an exercise program, it's really important to do a warm up and cool down before and after exercise...

**Exercise safety and injury prevention**

- **10 tips for safe stretching**
  
  Make stretching part of your life ... 10 tips for safe stretching...

- **10 tips to exercise safely**

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Exercising regularly has wide-ranging physical, emotional and social health benefits. You need to exercise safely to remain healthy and injury-free. If it's safe and painless, you're more... 

- **Aerobics - preventing injury**
  Aerobics injuries are usually caused by trauma and overuse, but can be prevented by using the right techniques and equipment... 

- **Australian rules football - preventing injury**
  Australian rules football is a physical contact sport that often results in injuries from tackling, kicking, running and constant competition for the ball... 

- **Basketball - health benefits**
  Basketball is a sport enjoyed by people of all ages and abilities... 

- **Basketball - preventing injury**
  Basketball is a fast game with frequent and aggressive body contacts - injuries can and do occur... 

- **Canoeing and kayaking - health benefits**
  Canoeing and kayaking can be done as a hobby, a competitive sport or as a fun activity on holidays... 

- **Canoeing and kayaking - preventing injury**
  Careful preparation and the right equipment can help prevent canoeing and kayaking injuries... 

- **Cricket - health benefits**
  To play cricket you need to be fit and strong and have good hand-eye coordination and ball-handling skills... 

- **Cricket - preventing injury**
  Cricket is a very popular sport. Injuries are often caused by overuse, being struck by a cricket ball and falls... 

- **Cycling - health benefits**
  Cycling can help to protect you from serious diseases... 

- **Cycling - preventing injury**
  You are much more likely to hurt yourself by falling off your bike or hitting a stationary object than colliding with another vehicle... 

- **Dance - health benefits**
  Dancing can be a fun way to stay fit for people of all ages and abilities... 

- **Dancing - preventing injury**
  Dancing is fun and a great form of exercise, but make sure you avoid injuries... 

- **Dog walking - the health benefits**
  If you are planning to buy a dog, make sure you choose a breed that's appropriate to your lifestyle... 

- **Exercise safety**
  Training too hard or fast is a common cause of sports-related injuries... 

- **Fishing - preventing injury**
  Never go fishing alone? always fish with someone else and, ideally, with two other people... 

- **Golf - health benefits**
  Golf provides a stimulating challenge, combined with a healthy walk in pleasant surroundings... 

- **Golf - preventing injury**
  The average golfer playing an 18-hole game walks about seven kilometres... 

- **Heat stress and exercise**
  Heat stress occurs when sweat can't evaporate fast enough to keep the body sufficiently cool during physical activity... 

### Healthy eating and exercise

- **Food for sport – tucker talk tips**
  Carbohydrate is the most important nutrient for athletes... 

- **Secrets to healthy ageing (slideshow)**
  Experts say the key to living well into our 80s and 90s is making a commitment to live healthily. Check out these simple ideas and embrace your senior years!...
• Sporting performance and food
  Good nutrition and a healthy diet are essential to improving your sports performance...

• The amount of physical activity you need
  It’s important for your health that you get enough physical activity every day, and that you limit your sedentary behaviour. But getting the amount of physical activity you need doesn’t have to be...

Keeping active throughout life

• 10 tips for active seniors
  Stay independent for longer with regular exercise... 10 tips for active seniors...

• Children – keeping them active
  A young child is naturally active, so build upon their inclinations to use their body...

• Exercise and stretching in the office (video)
  Sitting behind a desk all day doesn't mean you can't exercise...

• Gardens for all – a health activity
  Gardening has many health and therapeutic benefits, and is an activity that most people can enjoy...

• 10 tips for active seniors
  Stay independent for longer with regular exercise... 10 tips for active seniors...

• Healthy active Koori kids - tucker talk tips
  Good nutrition and physical exercise help to keep Koori kids healthy and avoid diseases when they get older...

• Healthy ageing – stay involved
  Reach out to the world around you for fun, a sense of achievement, social contact and mental stimulation...

• Healthy and active ageing
  Being physically active, eating well, socialising and improving your health can help you live a healthy, happy and active life as you get older...

• How to make exercise fun (slideshow)
  Many of us find it difficult to stick to some form of exercise, others don’t know where to start. Experts say the key to taking up or keeping to any form of physical activity is to have fun. Get off...

• How to volunteer and boost your health (slideshow)
  Volunteering is great for our health – it makes us feel good, while helping others in the process...

• Older people in hospital – Get well soon
  Learn about improving and maintaining your health during a hospital stay...

• Parent's guide for active girls
  Physical activity is an important part of health and wellbeing, and girls should remain active as they grow up...

• Physical activity for men
  Many men are only motivated to become more active after they have a health scare...

• Physical activity for seniors
  Physical activity can help older people maintain independence, recover from illness and reduce their risk of disease...

• Physical activity for seniors – staying active during summer (video)
  Physical Activity and Fitness Trainer - Sherri Bourne shares a few easy and low-impact ways for seniors to stay healthy over the summer months...

• Physical activity for women
  If you can't make the time to exercise for yourself, do it for your family...

• Physical activity - what's your excuse?
  There are many excuses we can come up with to avoid being active, but the truth is there is always a way to fit some physical activity into your day...

• Postnatal exercise
  Always consult with your doctor or midwife before starting any postnatal exercise program...

• Pregnancy and exercise

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Unless you have complications, you should be able to exercise throughout your pregnancy.

- **Secrets to healthy ageing (slide show)**
  Experts say the key to living well into our 80s and 90s is making a commitment to live healthily. Check out these simple ideas and embrace your senior years!

- **Sport and children**
  Make sure that some family outings offer opportunities for physical activity, such as playing sport together.

- **The amount of physical activity you need**
  It’s important for your health that you get enough physical activity every day, and that you limit your sedentary behaviour. But getting the amount of physical activity you need doesn’t have to be...

- **Vision loss and sport**
  Many sports can be adapted to suit people who are blind or have low vision.

- **Walking for good health**
  Walking will improve your fitness and reduce your risk of heart disease.

- **Walking - the benefits for older people**
  Walking is great exercise for older people. It has a range of health and social benefits, and most people can do it.

### Health conditions and exercise

- **Arthritis and exercise**
  Exercise can reduce some of the symptoms of arthritis, and improve joint mobility and strength.

- **Asthma and exercise**
  Exercise-induced asthma can be prevented with medication and by preparing for exercise and physical activity.

- **Breathing problems and exercise**
  A little physical activity and some breathing exercises can help people with lung disease.

- **Cancer - exercise to help you cope**
  People with cancer should be as physically active as their abilities and condition allow.

- **Dementia - reducing your risk**
  Adopting a ‘brain healthy’ lifestyle may reduce your risk of dementia in later life.

- **Diabetes - issues for children and teenagers**
  Many parents worry when their child with diabetes starts or returns to school.

- **Epilepsy and employment**
  Many people living with epilepsy are successfully employed across a range of professional fields.

- **Epilepsy and exercise**
  It is rare for a person with epilepsy to have a seizure during physical activity, but you should always take safety precautions when exercising.

- **Exercise and mood**
  Exercise can have an enormous impact on your mood. Not only can exercise help in treating depression, it can also prevent people from becoming depressed again. So it’s important to keep up an exercise.

- **Exercise in your local surroundings (video)**
  Want to exercise, but find gyms boring or expensive? Sue Stanley and Shane Billsborough team up to show you how to exercise indoors and outdoors using your local surroundings - whether it’s running up...

- **HIV, hepatitis and sport**
  People with HIV or hepatitis B or C participate in a wide range of sports without restrictions, and the risk of transmission to another player is extremely small.

- **Menstruation - athletic amenorrhoea**
  Women who are athletes or who exercise a lot on a regular basis are at risk of developing athletic amenorrhoea, which is the absence of periods.

- **Osteoporosis and exercise**
  Exercise can reduce the risk of fractures resulting from osteoporosis by both slowing the rate of bone loss, and reducing the person’s risk of falling by building muscle strength and improving balance.
Sports injuries
A sports injury may be more severe than you think...

Type 2 diabetes - healthy eating and exercise (video)
People with type 2 diabetes talk about positive lifestyle changes that improve their quality of life...

Related Information

- Older people in hospital – Get well soon
  Learn about improving and maintaining your health during a hospital stay...

- Running and jogging - preventing injury
  Warm up before running and do lots of slow and sustained stretches as part of your cool-down routine...

- Dog walking - the health benefits
  If you are planning to buy a dog, make sure you choose a breed that's appropriate to your lifestyle...

- Surfing - preventing injury
  The main cause of injury when surfing is contact with a surfer's own board or that of another surfer...

- Australian rules football - preventing injury
  Australian rules football is a physical contact sport that often results in injuries from tackling, kicking, running and constant competition for the ball...

Related information on other websites

- Hazard Report Edition No. 74, Summer 2012, Monash Injury Research Institute...
- UV exposure and heat illness guide.

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