

### Other safety tips

- Be sunsmart. Wear sun protective clothing, a hat, sunglasses and SPF 30+ sunscreen.
- In hot conditions, seek shade before, during and after play, and avoid playing in the middle of the day, if possible, when UV rays are most intense.
- Eat a well-balanced diet.
- Drink water before, during and after play.
- Exercise caution when playing in extreme heat/humidity or wet/cold conditions.

### If an injury occurs

- Stop playing if you experience an injury or illness.
- Injured players should seek prompt attention from qualified first aid personnel or a sports medicine professional.
- Injuries should be fully rehabilitated before returning to play.



### For further information contact

**Smartplay – Sports Medicine Australia**  
To contact Smartplay in your state visit  
[www.smartplay.com.au](http://www.smartplay.com.au) or [www.sma.org.au](http://www.sma.org.au)

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### References

For a full list of references, contact Smartplay.

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# Preventing Tennis Injuries



Facts and Safety  
Tips for Tennis



## Facts on tennis injuries

Tennis is a popular international sport catering to all ages and skill levels.

Statistics from the Australian Sports Commission's 2006 survey showed an estimated 1,130,700 Australians aged 15 years and older played tennis in the 12 months prior to being surveyed.

Tennis is a sport that can be played on a variety of surfaces (grass, artificial grass, hard court surfaces such as plexicushion and plexipave and clay/en-tout-cas), which requires speed, power, endurance, balance and coordination. As a result, injuries can and do occur.

### How many injuries?

- The rate of tennis injury in the general population is five injuries per 1,000 hours of participation.
- From 2002-2003, 505 people were admitted to hospitals across Australia for tennis-related injuries, at a rate of 33 injuries per 100,000 tennis players.
- In 2006, 127 people were admitted to Victorian hospitals while 382 people visited Victorian emergency departments for tennis-related injuries.

### The causes and types of injuries

- Lower limb (ankle, knee, and thigh) injuries are most common and are caused by the sprinting, stopping, pivoting and pounding nature of tennis. Lower limb tennis injuries are acute (e.g. ankle sprain) or chronic (e.g. knee tendon pain).
- Upper limb (elbow, shoulder, wrist) injuries are usually caused by the high-velocity and repetitive arm movements required in tennis. These injuries tend to be overuse in nature (e.g. tennis elbow).
- Back injuries and pain are common due to the rotation required to hit groundstrokes, and the combination of rotation, extension and lateral flexion involved in the serve.

## Factors affecting your injury risk

- Different court surfaces.
- Condition of tennis balls used.
- Type of racquet.
- Playing technique.
- Weather extremes.
- Inappropriate footwear.
- Poor physical conditioning.
- The amount and level of participation.
- Poor injury rehabilitation.

## Safety tips for tennis

### Good preparation is important

- Avoid playing with a pre-existing illness or injury. If in doubt, talk to a medical practitioner.
- Always warm up, stretch and cool down.
- Maintain an adequate fitness level. Undertake conditioning and training exercises specific to the physical demands of tennis.

### Good technique and practices will help prevent injury

- Seek instruction from a Tennis Australia qualified coach to develop correct skills and techniques.
- Avoid over-repetition of any one type of shot. Practise a range of strokes including groundstrokes, serves, return of serves, overhead smashes and volleys.

## Use appropriate equipment and make the environment safe

- Use a racquet suitable for your style of play and physical capabilities. Players, especially those with arm and shoulder injuries, should seek professional advice when selecting a racquet and choosing string tension.
- Use tennis balls appropriate for the playing surface. Avoid using wet or flat/dead balls.
- Check and maintain the playing surface to ensure it is in good condition and free of hazards.

## Wear the right protective equipment

- Seek professional advice on footwear.
- Players with a history of joint injury should seek professional advice about taping or bracing before play.

## Modify rules and equipment for children

- Encourage children and beginners to participate in grassroots tennis programs such as Aviva Tennis Hot Shots or similar beginner programs delivered by local clubs and coaches, to introduce new players to the game through modified equipment such as mini-nets and decompression balls. This will help new players develop good tennis skills and correct technique.
- Children should use equipment suitable to their age, size and skill level.

