

N Prevent tennis injuries

Two-thirds of tennis-related injuries are due to overuse and often affect the shoulders, wrists and elbows, according to the American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine. Luckily, these tennis injuries can be avoided by changing certain playing techniques and training routines. The most common causes of injury are repetitive forceful motions and strokes, inadequate rest and recovery, incorrect tennis-specific conditioning, acquired inflexibility, and muscle weakness/imbalance.

To stay safe and healthy while playing tennis, follow these guidelines.

Elbow: Playing tennis or other racket sports can result in tennis elbow, which is a result of overuse. Common signs and symptoms include inflammation, pain and/or burning in the elbow, and weak grip strength.

Helpful tip: Be sure to use proper equipment. Use a midsize or oversize flexible racket with low string tension. Make sure your grip is properly fitted for your racket. A grip that is too small or too large may cause problems.

Wrist/Hand: The repetitive nature of tennis places strain on an athlete's wrist and hand, which can lead to injury. Tendonitis, stress fractures, sprains, and tears in the cartilage at the end of the forearm can affect performance.

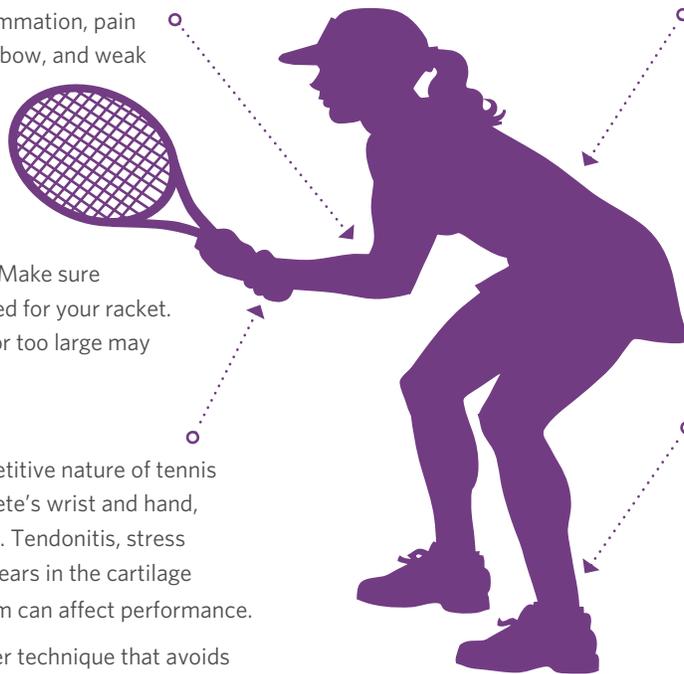
Helpful tip: Using proper technique that avoids extreme grips and limits the force placed on your wrist and hand can help prevent injury. By hitting the ball in front of the body, it is easier to stabilize your wrist.

Lower back: Common among tennis players, lower back pain can be caused by overuse, muscle weakness/tightness, or playing on a hard surface.

Helpful tip: Wear properly fitted shoes with heel inserts to help with shock absorption. Players should also do a thorough 10-minute cardio warmup and stretch before any tennis match. Focus on proper technique while serving the tennis ball. Avoid overarching the back unnecessarily.

Ankle: Sprained or twisted ankles are the most common tennis injury. It is common for athletes to accidentally land on the outside of their foot, which injures their lateral ankle ligaments. The best treatment is RICE (rest, ice, compression, elevate) during the first 48 hours of injury.

Helpful tip: You can lower your risk of ankle injury by using proper warmup and cool-down techniques, wearing suitable tennis shoes with good shock absorption and performing regular strength training exercises to build up muscle strength in your ankles.



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