

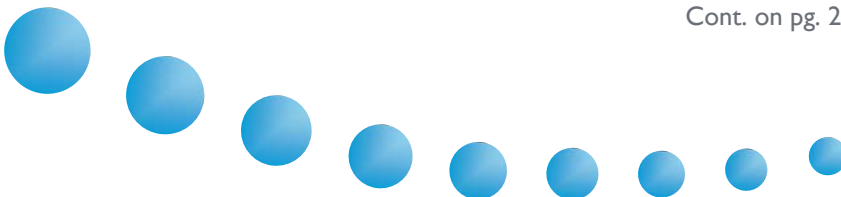
how to prepare to play tennis

Tennis can be a demanding game that involves quick starts and stops and a rather unusual range of motions at very high speeds. It's no wonder that recreational players often sustain injuries to the shoulder, elbow, wrist, back, leg and foot.

Tennis injuries are often caused by failing to warm up and stretch sufficiently, as well as a lack of flexibility, strength, and conditioning. In order to avoid injury, try to incorporate the following into your pre-game routine:

- **cardiovascular activity:** This includes jogging in place, skipping rope or jumping jacks. If you're playing at a sports club, you can warm up on a treadmill or a stationary bike.
- **stretches:** Focus on the hamstrings, thighs, calves, shoulders and trunk. Because of the side-to-side motion in tennis that creates tension in the inner thighs, try some "butterfly stretches" (sit on floor with bottoms of heels together, knees bent, and try to gently push knees toward the floor).
- **warm up the trunk:** Try some gentle twisting at the waist, bending side to side, in order to prepare for the rotational motion in tennis. Practicing strokes (with or without a racket) will help you get "muscle memory" back for forehand, backhand, volley and serve.
- **warm up the body:** After stretching, try some

Cont. on pg. 2



pre-game practice drills with your partner, gently hitting ground strokes and volleys at the net.

When you're finished playing, make sure to stretch out your leg muscles while they're still warm so they will elongate. If you don't take the time to stretch them, they may cool down in a shortened position.

The material and information contained in this article is for information only and is not intended to serve as medical advice or consultation. Consult your personal physician before beginning any exercise program or self-treatment.

