

Improving Your Tennis Performance Through Fitness

Tennis is one of the most physically demanding non-contact sports that one can choose to play. It requires multi-directional movement, intense acceleration, deceleration, balance and power. Similar to other sports, people spend countless hours practicing technique trying to better their game. What most people are un-aware of is that their true potential to excel is being hampered by what is often referred to as muscle imbalance. Muscle imbalances are postural deficiencies that will cause faulty movement patterns, discomfort or even pain during activities such as tennis. When one group of muscles is tight and shortened the opposing muscle group becomes weak and lengthened creating a postural imbalance. By stretching the tight muscles and strengthening the weak lengthened muscles we are able to correct the postural deficiencies and perform at our true potential with much less probability of injury. Unleash your true tennis playing potential by correcting the following common postural deficiencies.

Forward Head Position
Anterior (front) neck muscles (tight/shortened) - Stretch
Posterior (rear) neck muscles (weak/lengthened) – Strengthen

Rounded Forward Shoulders
Pectoral (chest) muscles (tight/shortened) - Stretch
Rhomboid (upper middle back) muscles (weak/lengthened) – Strengthen

Anterior Pelvic Tilt
Iliopsoas (hip flexor) muscles (tight/shortened) – Stretch
Quadriceps (front thigh) muscles (tight/shortened) – Stretch
Gluteal (buttocks) muscles (weakness) – Strengthen

Core Strength
In addition to muscle imbalances core strength plays a major role in the effectiveness of one's tennis game. The "core" of the body is often referred to as the "lumbo-pelvic hip complex" which consists of the pelvic floor muscles and the inner abdominal muscles. These muscles stabilize the spine during multi-planer functional movements such as tennis. Some core strength exercises include:

- Floor Bridges
- Planks
- Side Planks
- Resistance Swings
- Medicine Ball Toss
- Etc.

A strong core coupled with a balanced posture will vastly improve one's tennis performance and greatly decrease the probability of injury. A complete Tennis performance fitness program would consist of a corrective exercise program (posture balance), neuromuscular (joint stabilization) program, core stabilization program, strength program, and power program. Today's top athletes take part in similar fitness programs in order to compete at an elite level. Recreational athletes can take part in similar programs to also better their performance. If you would like more information about this article and article subjects similar to this one, please e-mail me at contact@fitnessprogramsplus.com or visit us at www.fitnessprogramsplus.com. By Craig LePage, CSCS, NASM-CPT President of Fitness Programs Plus

About the Author

When most adults think about exercise, they imagine working out in the gym on a treadmill or lifting weights. But for children, exercise.

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