



FACILITATING WALKING TENNIS



WHAT IS WALKING TENNIS?

It's just tennis, but with a few tweaks to the rules! Walking Tennis is a slowed down version of the game. Safe, fun, inclusive and a fantastic way to stay active and engage a wider audience.

Walking Tennis is quicker to pick up and more adaptable than traditional tennis. With a focus on the social benefits tennis offers, you will find you are able to provide activity for more people local to your venue.





WHY SHOULD MY VENUE DELIVER WALKING TENNIS?

SUPPORT RETENTION

Supports to attract lapsed players and retains existing membership – it's a great additional offer as part of your social tennis programme.

GROW MEMBERSHIP

Attract new players who may have limited opportunities to access other sports in their local community. These adaptations will be more attractive to those with long term health conditions or players recovering from an injury.

FILL COURT USAGE GAPS

Use off-peak times to schedule this programme.

LEVERAGE EXTERNAL FUNDING

Providing inclusive opportunities increases your funding options from the LTA and wider partners.

SUPPORT LOCAL COMMUNITY

Create a pathway for lifelong members to continue being physically active through a sport they already enjoy.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS TO PLAYERS?

- Accessible for all, no matter their ability or experience
- Great option for players just starting out with tennis
- Can be played on smaller courts with modified equipment to increase player confidence and activity
- The option of a double bounce and ball adaption provides more time to return the ball
- Levels the playing field – players on either side of the net can have different rules to meet their needs and ability
- Allows those who are less mobile to increase independence through continued movement and building strength
- Can utilise any traditional or adapted scoring formats if competition is relevant



INITIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- **Walking Tennis does not require a qualified coach to facilitate this session;** just a competent & organised individual (16+).

As Walking Tennis is considered facilitated play, you are covered under your LTA venue's insurance with Howdens as you would be for all other social sessions. As an external leader or volunteer you may then need to ensure you have up to date first aid and safeguarding training inline with your lead organisation.

- **Consider adapted equipment** to support those with limited mobility and/or additional needs e.g. hitting hands or catching mits.

- **Complete appropriate risks assessment for venue and participants.** Consider the language you use to request this information e.g. create an 'About Me' form upon registration for the session. To find examples of this please [visit this link](#).

- **Who do you want to engage with as part of this programme** and how would you broaden your reach e.g. who are your local connections local to your venue including Age UK sites, long term health support groups, the U3A and the wider care network. For template poster and flyers to promote your sessions please [visit this link](#).

- **Consider reaching out to other venues** already delivering Walking Tennis successfully within your County.

EXAMPLE RULES

- You can let the ball bounce twice for extra time
- Players can't run or jump
- The ball has to have the potential to bounce twice which stops big overhead lobs and long fast volleys
- Before the start of a match players shake hands on the agreed adaptive rules, e.g. serving from the service line



TIPS FOR SUCCESS

SOCIABLE

Making it sociable is key; why not add in a coffee and a chat after each session?

INCLUSIVE

Create a welcoming and inclusive environment by meeting participants off court and providing all equipment needed.

CONSISTENCY

Pick a regular weekly slot in your programme and stick to it – consult with player base to increase chances of success.

ADVICE

Speak with those who are delivering Walking Tennis successfully. If you're unsure who to speak to please contact your County Association Open Court lead or if in Scotland or Wales, contact Tennis Wales or Tennis Scotland via [this link](#).

PARTNERSHIPS

The LTA has various partnerships with national organisations who may have local branches near your venue including Age UK, Parkinsons UK and the U3A. For more information contact your local County Association Open Court lead or if in Scotland or Wales, contact Tennis Wales or Tennis Scotland via [this link](#).



ROLE OF THE FACILITATOR

Get your players as active as possible – remember this is facilitated play and technical coaching should not be involved. For example:

- Organise the session and check the area is safe to play
- Welcome the group/players
- Organise an informal warm up as well as games however there shouldn't be purposeful, expert or guided technical or tactical development given
- Provide the right equipment needed
- Feed the ball to help players get started
- Be aware of people's restrictions and impairments and be creative with rules



TESTIMONIALS



Our Walking Tennis programme has been brilliant to see flourish, for a lot of people our session is their first experience of tennis and our club and because of this we have seen numerous players transition into becoming full members of the club even new committee members.

Alison Smith,
Head Coach at Burton Tennis and Squash Club



Walking Tennis has allowed our venues throughout the County to engage with audiences they never previously would have, as well as generating interest and income for their venues specifically around non-peak times.

Neil Bates,
H&W Open Court Lead

A Walking Tennis case study from Lacey Green and Loosely Row Tennis Club is available to [view here](#).

