

Maintenance of Park Courts.

The majority of park courts are Porous asphalt. These consist of a permeable foundation of broken, graded stone, on which is the asphalt base-course and wearing course (or playing surface) are laid. This is then coated with a coloured, acrylic surface coating. The play-lines are then painted onto the coloured surface, but self-adhesive tapes may also be used.

The resulting tennis surface is fully permeable, hard-wearing, and playable throughout the year and requires relatively little maintenance. No matter how modest the maintenance requirement, it is, nevertheless, of vital importance if the surface is to remain good to look at, good to play on and long-lasting. Indeed, the installer's guarantee is likely to be conditional upon the recommended maintenance requirements being carried out with reasonable efficiency.

What maintenance and why

The maintenance procedures are designed to ensure that:

- The playing surface is kept scrupulously clean;
- The free drainage of surface water is maintained throughout the life of the court;
- The court looks attractive and well cared for at all times;
- The court has a reasonable, useful life span.

Maintenance Schedule

It is better to adopt a regular maintenance regime as neglect allows moss and algae to damage the surface and leads to rapid deterioration. These are minimum recommendations. Common sense and careful observation should prevail. Venues which are located next to trees, hedges and/or are in shade will require more frequent maintenance. If a venue has specific maintenance issues, then they should contact the installer of the tennis surface. The contact details should be contained in the operation and maintenance manual.



Period	Maintenance Requirements	Notes & Cost (£)
Weekly	Sweep or blow leaves and detritus from court	To be undertaken by venue
Early Spring &/or Autumn*.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Kill moss & algae. Chemical treatment (<i>Water Based</i>) should be accurately applied to control growth. • Moss grows more vigorously on a shaded or damp surface and during mild winters or very wet summers. • In these situations, treatment is required on a regular basis. 	£150 per court (If courts require power washing annually then this will not be required)
Bi Annually or Annually (dependant on site location)*	<p>Thorough pressure cleaning with water to remove moss, algae and other detritus will improve grip and drainage.</p> <p>A suitable water supply will be required next to the courts. If a water supply is not available, then the cost of washing courts will increase due to a temporary supply having to be brought next to the courts.</p>	£350 per court.
Gate Maintenance	Completing an annual entrance gate maintenance programme (where installed)	c.£400-£600 p/a depending on the type of gate system installed.

* Venues which are located next to trees, hedges and/or are in shade will require more frequent maintenance. The table above provides indicative maintenance periods and costs for venues that are not affected by trees etc. Venues should be inspected annually to ascertain the maintenance required.

Keeping the surface clean

Leaves, tree flowers, pine needles, conkers, fluff from tennis balls and other detritus should not be allowed to remain on the surface for any length of time. If this happens, they rapidly rot down and settle into the interstices of the surface, impairing drainage and providing a growing medium for algae and moss. A wide soft broom can be used to sweep the surface, but this tends to push smaller material into the surface. A rubber-tined rake is usually better, albeit rather slow and arduous. Best of all is a mechanical garden



vacuum cleaner, which will greatly speed up the operation and do it more efficiently. Mechanical leaf sweepers can also be good. The equipment should be well maintained and carefully operated to avoid contamination of, or physical damage to, the playing surface.

At least once a year the court surface will benefit from a vigorous wash. This not only has the effect of keeping the surface interstices clean and free-draining but is also essential for maintaining good foothold. Courts near busy roads are particularly susceptible to becoming coated with “traffic film”, while those near trees may become coated with “honey-dew” from aphids. The resulting black film from either can make the courts very slippery after rain.

If the water pressure is reasonably high, washing can be carried out with a domestic hosepipe, assisted by a mild cold-water detergent. Even more effective are the cold-water pressure washers, which are available from most equipment hire outlets. These must be used with care, however, with the greatest attention being paid to ensure the process does not dislodge the coloured surface coating or stone chippings. Mild, non-foaming detergent increases the efficiency of the operation. Steam cleaners should not be used. If the court surface has become very badly sealed and does not respond satisfactorily to this treatment, consult the installer or a firm that specialises in cleaning tennis courts.

Bird Damage

An unusual nuisance that may sometimes be experienced is damage caused by bird droppings. This is usually only a significant problem

- during the first year or two of the court’s life
- in summer and
- where branches overhang the court

The droppings adhere to the surface, dry out in warm weather and shrink. In the process the paint coating and even stone chippings may be pulled off.

The remedy is to cut back overhanging branches. If the droppings are already in-situ they should be hosed away. Damaged spots should be carefully firmed with the foot and touched up with surfacing paint.

Worms

Another rare cause of surface damage is that caused by worms. In mild, wet weather worms sometimes appear on the court surface, usually in ones or twos but very occasionally in larger numbers. How they get there is something of a mystery, but once on the surface they seem unable to get any further and usually die. In warm weather, they then adhere to the surface and shrink causing very similar damage to bird droppings.



Worms on the playing surface should be removed as soon as possible. Damaged spots should be carefully firmed with the foot and touched up with surfacing paint.

Snow and ice

Snow and ice should not prove harmful and can be allowed to melt through in due course. Powdery snow can be swept away using a wide soft broom or wooden scraper. Metal shovels or scrapers should not be used because they may damage the surface, as will mechanical snow removing equipment, such as mini tractors.

Do not use salt, urea or other chemical de-icing agents. Their effect is unpredictable, and they can cause severe damage.

Court Renovation Costs

The table below shows how the recommended contribution of £1,200 per court per annum, (£1,800 if the court is floodlit to allow for bulb replacement/repair) will ensure the long-term sustainability of park tennis courts. If courts are located next to trees, hedges and/or in the shade will require more frequent maintenance and therefore the annual maintenance periods will reduce and costs will be increased. The costs below should only be used as a guide and venues should be inspected annually to ascertain the maintenance required.



Year	Contribution to future court renovation costs	Court Re-Painting Cost	Court Re-Surface Cost	Maintenance Cost	Cumulative amount contributed, minus costs
1	£1,200				£1,200
2	£1,200			£150	£2,250
3	£1,200				£3,450
4	£1,200			£350	£4,300
5	£1,200				£5,500
6	£1,200	£2,000			£4,700
7	£1,200				£5,900
8	£1,200			£150	£6,950
9	£1,200				£8,150
10	£1,200			£350	£9,000
11	£1,200				£10,200
12	£1,200		£11,000		£400

