

# LTA Walking Tennis

A quick guide for coaches



TENNIS  
FOR BRITAIN

## **What is Walking Tennis?**

Walking Tennis offers a slower format of the traditional game by introducing simple rules to make it less physically demanding, easier to learn, but just as much fun. The Walking Tennis rules are:

- Players can't run or jump
- Players are allowed to let the ball bounce twice, although this is optional
- It can be played on a smaller court with modified equipment

## **Why was Walking Tennis developed?**

Walking Tennis was created not only to make the game of tennis more accessible, but also as a vehicle to get older people in particular physically active and address health related issues such as falls prevention, osteoporosis, diabetes, cognitive degeneration and in some respects social isolation.

## **How should coaches deliver Walking Tennis?**

The key to delivering a great Walking Tennis programme and keeping participants coming back is to include lots of opportunities for social interaction, keep it informal and ensure everyone has fun. As well as older adults with possible limited mobility, by its nature you might also get disabled players, those returning from an injury or beginners to tennis who just want a comfortable safe place to build their confidence, technical and tactical awareness.

Coaches should deliver Walking Tennis just as they do other adult programmes, but with consideration of the ability of players taking part and with the inclusion of the modified rules. Coaches should focus on facilitating player self-learning by increasing awareness of the game. Technical guidance should be limited to fundamentals and foundational skills only. A full suite of session plans and resources for coaches will be developed over time. In the meantime we have provided some ideas to help you get started.

## GETTING STARTED

Arrive early! Given the player demographic you will need time to check in with everyone, get a sense of any health issues that need to be considered and collect any medical declarations (optional but advisable). Try doing the introductions and checks in as part of a 'Walk and Talk' to get participants moving and allow them time to catch up with each other.

## BODY WARM UP






### Walk Awareness

Continue walking and start mobilisations:

- Get participants to think about posture while walking tall, stretch their arms high above their head and lengthen their middle.
- Ask participants to bring awareness to their feet, striking the floor with their heel and rolling through to their toes.
- Rotate shoulders and swing arms freely with relaxed elbows

### Fundamental Functional Movement Patterns

Functional movement can deteriorate with age, an injury or generally without regular training. Maintaining good patterns of movement will help not only the ability to play tennis, but complete everyday life tasks.

Ideas to build functional movement training into sessions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold arms horizontal to the floor with palms down.</li> <li>• Bring arms down and behind body midline to extend the shoulder</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repeat step 1 above.</li> <li>• This time leading with elbow pull arms behind back, bringing shoulder blades together</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Starting with one arm up and one down, move arms concurrently in a scissor movement</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start with arms outstretched in a crucifix position</li> <li>• Give yourself a hug, focusing on pulling the shoulder blades forward</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using the court fencing get into an inclined push up position</li> <li>• Perform a push up</li> <li>• When pushing up, leading with elbow squeeze shoulder blade – alternate arms each time</li> </ul>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Face a partner with right arms up at 90° angles and palms together</li> <li>• Lift the same leg</li> <li>• Both partners push against each other for 10 seconds. Change arms</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start with feet together. Take a large step to one side, flexing at the hip, knee and ankle.</li> <li>• Return back to standing and repeat on opposite side</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start with feet together</li> <li>• Take a step back, imagining feet are on train track</li> <li>• Simultaneously lift arms above the head</li> <li>• Back to standing and repeat on other side</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With hands on shoulders and arms crossed perform a forward lunge</li> <li>• Twist arms, keeping torso facing forwards, over the bent leg</li> <li>• Return back to the middle and back to standing</li> <li>• Repeat on the other side</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With feet hip width apart, raise arms and hinge forward from the hips</li> <li>• Bend the knees and squat down as far as possible</li> <li>• Push straight up to return to standing</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Starting with feet together, lift one leg straight behind while hinging forward at the hip</li> <li>• With arm outstretched reach as far down as you can, aiming to touch the floor</li> <li>• Return to standing and repeat on other side</li> </ul>	

## TENNIS WARM UP

The amount of time spent on the tennis warm up will depend on the ability and level of the players.

### Ideas for a tennis warm up

#### Volley practise

- Starting with both close together, feeding by hand to a racket, increasing the distance once both are comfortable and progressing to both using rackets
- Practise both forehand and backhand volley
- The next stage is starting at the service line, moving forward towards the ball. Start with hand feeding and move onto both using rackets

## Push serve

- A push serve is performed with the racket held directly above the participant's head with the elbow straight (arm in line with the ear)
- The participant is aiming to get the first bounce only midway up the service box. The returner aims to hit the ball after one bounce and then close into the net, the server should come into the net immediately after the serve (serve and volley).

## Double bounce box 'push' groundstrokes

- Participants should start hitting the ball over the net and allowing a double bounce within the service box before returning

## One in one out

- Transitioning to the baseline, participants continue to hit the ball to each other with a double bounce.
- The first bounce should be within the service box and the second outside but within the court

## SITUATIONAL GAMES, CONDITIONED POINTS AND MATCH PLAY

This part of the session is about making choices during common game play situations. Coaches should introduce common game plays and coach participants through the tactics that should be adopted. Remember one of the focus areas of Walking Tennis is social interaction and fun, so keep coaching tips light and easy to follow, and make sure you allow plenty of time for matches.

## COOL DOWN

Ensuring participants cool down appropriately is really important, particularly for older participants or those with bone or muscular related health conditions. A mix of static and active cool down activities should be implemented. Use the opportunity to create some banter, engage with players and provide the opportunity to ask questions or receive feedback.

## POST SESSION SOCIAL

The Social aspect of Walking Tennis is very important so try to encourage participants to stick around for a bit by setting up post tennis coffee, teas etc.