Ultimate Tennis Training Manual
Tennis Conditioning Guide for Optimal Performance

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Conditioning for Tennis can get confusing. Over the years it’s been passed down by "gurus" that long slow conditioning is the best thing to do to improve speed, agility, and overall oncourt conditioning performance.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

Tennis is a game of short intense bursts of speed and power. Sure, you’ll need "stamina", but not the type of stamina 3-5 mile runs will give you.

Take a sprinter, for example. They don’t train for speed by hopping out on the road or on a track and running miles and miles at a time.

A sprinter trains in short sprints of 10-200 meters at a time. They Train for their sport. It wouldn’t make sense for them to run for long distance, because it’ll train their muscles for getting really good at running miles and miles at a time.

The same holds true for long distance runners. They don’t practice sprinting, they practice long distance running. If their next meet is a 26 1/2 mile marathon, they’ll train by running 30-50 miles at a time. Because it trains their muscles to endure long periods at a time of slow steady running.

Since tennis is a sport of short intense bursts, the best thing for tennis conditioning is interval training – whether it’s done by using sprints or by using bodyweight & weight training circuits.

Now this is not to say that the long couple mile jogs don’t do any good. It’s just that if you follow our path to peak conditioning, then the long jogs will act just as a supplemental tool to our overall training.

The long distance (a couple miles at a time) does serve a purpose in the realm of aerobic strength – but by following the path I’ve used,
you’ll be training to directly influence and improve your performance on the court. Which means less sucking wind, and MORE chasing down balls slapping them back at your opponent for a winner.

**Why Long Distance Training Has Little Transfer to the Court**

For some reason or another, long distance training is widely practiced when training for tennis performance. You get to the court and your coach says “gimme 5 laps” or “we’re gonna run 3 miles today, you need to be in better shape.” I just do not agree with this. I believe running a few miles has its place, but there are certainly better options.

Think about it. How many times during a match are you constantly jogging or running for 20-30 minutes straight?

NONE.

So why in the hell would our main conditioning program consist of training to get our 1 mile, 2 mile, or 3 mile time down under a certain time limit?

Long distance training does wonders for increasing the efficiency of oxygen consumption. It trains our heart to pump more blood with less effort. It decreases the risk of heart disease. It helps burn fat. It does tons of things. Long distance running’s main source of fuel is oxygen, which means it’s an oxidative activity. And it’s a sport of its own.

Understand tennis is not an oxidative sport. Meaning its main source of fuel is NOT oxygen. So it makes no sense to train in an oxidative manner.

Tennis is an immediate energy sport. During a match, a player is constantly starting and stopping. It’s a sport that consists of short intense bursts of speed and muscular contractions.

Because of this, tennis uses 80% immediate energy sources for fuel. These sources are ATP and Creatine Phosphate. So you should condition your body to use these energy sources at
maximum efficiency. And we’ll get into how to do this in a later section.

I’m not completely writing off long distance training. I’m just writing it off as a sole means to increase your performance on the tennis court.

Now that we know which way we’re headed, here’s a quick schedule that I use personally for conditioning, and you can adapt it to your program as well.

**Interval Training** – Bodyweight/Weight Resistance and sprinting 3 to 4 times per week

**Long Distance Conditioning** – 1-3 mile jog, 1-2 times per week.

You’ll notice that I put more emphasis on conditioning for actual explosive points and less emphasis on training to run a marathon.

And it’s paid off a ton, because just this past summer we played in the Mississippi USTA State Tournament in **115+ degree temps**. I was sucking hot air, no doubt. But the intervals had me sucking air a hell of a lot less than my opponents (and my doubles partner), because my body was conditioned for short explosive movements.

You’ll see how effective this stuff is in the coming weeks as you put it to use.

**Quick rundown on Traditional Interval Training**

If you enjoy running, then Interval Sprints will be what you’ll likely use the most. It’s a bit more taxing on the joints, but it’s highly effective because it goes above and beyond simulating points you’ll play in a match.

Interval training is defined as a short intense bout of exercise lasting 15-30 seconds followed by an active rest period of 30-90 seconds. The two combined equals one ‘round.’
The intense phase of exercise is performed at about 80-90% of an all out effort. The following active rest period consists of a slow jog, a walk, or even standing still and is used to recover so you can repeat the intense phase again with the same effort as the previous phase.

Here’s how to do Interval Sprints

**Beginner** –

1. Warm-up for 5-minutes with a light jog.

2. Work for 30 seconds at an 8/10 level of intensity. Follow that with “active rest” for 90 seconds at a level of intensity of 3 on a scale from 1-10.

3. Repeat for 3-8 intervals.

4. Finish with 5-10 minutes of slow cardio for “transition” and cool-down. A slow, casual walk will be okay at this point.

When you become accustomed to the intervals in the beginner’s protocol, you can increase the intensity by following the more experienced protocol.

**Advanced Protocol** –

1. Warm-up for 5-minutes with a light jog.

2. Work for 30 seconds at an 9/10 level of intensity. Follow that with “active rest” for 60 seconds at a level of intensity of 3 on a scale from 1-10.

3. Repeat for 4-10 intervals.

4. Finish with 5 minutes of slow cardio for “transition” and cool-down. A slow, casual walk will be okay at this point.

Though High Intensity Interval Training is by far and away the most effective fat burning tool available, it is an INCREDIBLE tool for conditioning for intense matches. So
you can literally kill 2 birds with one stone here… burn fat and increase your endurance, **at the same time.**

**Where to do Interval Training Sprints**

Interval training can be performed on a treadmill, a stationary bike, a bicycle, an elliptical machine, on a tennis court, on a track, on a football field, or anywhere you can ramp the intensity to 80-90%, follow it up with a recovery phase, and repeat.

Though, you can perform interval training on a tennis court, I don’t recommend it. Mainly because of the sheering forces on the knee and hip joints. If you’d prefer to perform the intervals outside, I highly using a grass field or a rubberized track is the best choice to decrease the stress on your joints.

If you practice short bursts with little rests (interval sprints), and you’ll see improvement on the courts almost immediately. It’ll help you not only catch your breath faster, but you’ll be more in tune and able to focus on each point one at a time. Your mind won’t be on the pain, it’ll be on hitting your next Winner!!

Now, if you don’t have a place to perform interval training for your tennis conditioning, then no sweat. Last year I developed the Tennis Matrix programs for this very purpose, and we’re about to go over how to perform them with sample workouts you can do at the gym, on the courts, or even at your house.

If you have any doubts as to whether this is as effective as interval sprints, I can assure you not only do I personally use them myself, but many of my customers just like you have written in about how the Tennis Matrix has dramatically improved their game and allowed them to beat players they’ve never beaten before - because now they can focus on their technique and strategy during a match as opposed to focusing on Catching their breath.
Interval Training Circuits with Weight

How to use these Conditioning Workouts:

There are 5 Tennis Matrix Interval Workouts total. You don’t necessarily need every single one of them. It’s recommended that you choose just 2-3 of your favorite workouts, and rotate them for your cardio training.

Example: Pick 2-3 Matrix workouts & rotate through them over a 4 week period. Do them every other day or so. You CAN do them every day as long as it isn’t the same workout.

Let’s say you choose to rotate workouts #3, #6, & #7:

day 1, week 1: Matrix Workout #3
day 2, week 1: OFF
day 3, week 1: Matrix Workout #1
day 4, week 1: OFF
day 5, week 1: Matrix Workout #4
day 6, week 1: OFF
day 7, week 1: Matrix Workout #1

day 1, week 2: OFF
day 2, week 2, Matrix Workout #4

And follow the same format throughout the 4 weeks. At the end of 4 weeks, exchange the 3 previous workouts with 3 brand new matrix workouts and repeat.

Only perform 1 Interval workout per day. there’s no need to do more than 1

These workouts should be done either first thing in the morning, or immediately after your workout.

How to perform each workout:

In the charts below, each workout contains 3 exercises. Each exercise is assigned it’s own number of reps to be performed.
For example, let’s say you choose to do Workout #1.

You’ll do 10 reps of the DB High Swing, without rest, you’ll immediately move to Line Jumps for 30 seconds and as soon as you’re done, you’ll immediately move into mountain climbers (40 reps) without rest.

As soon as the last rep of the 3rd exercise is complete, that’s 1 set. You’ll then rest 60 seconds and repeat.

Perform 6-12 sets total for 1 workout.

Triple Tennis Matrix Conditioning Workouts

TTM Workout #1

DB High Swing x 10 each arm
Line Jump x 30 Seconds
Mountain Climbers x 40 reps

TTM Workout #2

Dumbbell hang Clean x 8
Burpee x 15 reps
Jump Rope x 50 or 1 Minute

TTM Workout #3

2 Leg Barrier Jump x 30 seconds
Russian Hop x 20 reps
Spider Pushup x 16 reps

TTM Workout #4

Mountain Climbers x 50 reps
Russian Hop x 20 reps
Spider pushup x 16 reps

TTM Workout #5

Barrier Jump x 30 Seconds
Squat Jump x 15 reps
Explosive Pushup x 12 reps
For Conditioning Purposes, I usually like to mix things up. If I’m planning to do 4 Interval Workouts this week, then I’ll vary which protocol I use. Some days I’ll choose the interval weight circuits and other days I’ll do interval sprints just to keep everything fresh.

Now, these 5 interval workouts are enough to keep you busy for at least 8 weeks, but if you plan to just use weight intervals, you may want to consider getting a copy of Matrix 1.0 and 2.0. You can get them here: http://TennisFitnessTips.com/MatrixII.

Now, we don’t necessarily have to restrict ourselves to just weights or sprints. Below is an article I wrote a few years ago that can you’re your mind thinking about other ways to introduce interval training into your program. Thinking outside of the box:

**High Intensity Interval Training for Tennis**  
by Todd Scott

**High Intensity Tennis Training** without any gym equipment except a jump rope, and a do it yourself, old school training gadget....

... A homemade sandbag

Yep, a 'sandbag' - I'll tell you more later on how you can get the stuff at your local Home Depot for about 15 bucks and make it yourself, but let's dive into the tennis training for now.

The sandbags can range anywhere between 10-100+ lbs, depending on how you make it, and your current strength level.
For the purpose of this tennis training Segment, I'd recommend using a sandbag weighing around 20-40 lbs.

20 lb bag for a female
40 lb bag for a male

So, here's what you need:

1. Homemade Sandbag
2. Jump Rope

You'll be doing 6 rounds total.

First place the sandbag on your right shoulder, and perform 15 squats.

As soon as your done, drop the bag, rest 20 seconds, and move on to the jump rope performing 40 jumps *OR* for a 20 second time limit - whichever comes first.

That's one round.

Rest 20 seconds and repeat, except this time, you'll place the sandbag on your left shoulder.

Alternate shoulders for the sandbag for each round.

Complete 6 rounds.
Example:

Rd 1
SB Squat - Right Shoulder
20 second rest
JR
20 second rest

Rd 2
SB Squat - Left Shoulder
20 second rest
JR
20 second rest

Rd 3
SB Squat - Right Shoulder
20 second rest
JR
20 second rest

Again, continue alternating shoulders with each round until you complete 6 rounds.

As we become more and more tired during a match, our mind begins to wander, we lose focus, and we begin to make errors we wouldn't normally make.

To combat this naturally occurring phenomenon, we've gotta train past the point of fatigue that we would normally face in a tennis match, and then force ourselves to concentrate.

The concentration point for this Interval is jumping rope.

If you've ever jumped rope before (and I'm sure you have), it's not THAT easy, and when you're tired it makes it that much more difficult, forcing you to concentrate.

This tennis training routine will translate DIRECTLY to the tennis courts and not only improve your recovery time between points, but also your concentration levels while you're fatigued.