

Guidance for Tennis Players

COVID-19: RETURN TO RESTRICTED PLAY

Version 1 – Published 12 May 2020



TENNIS
FOR BRITAIN

PLAY SAFE GUIDELINES - RETURN TO RESTRICTED PLAY

These guidelines currently apply to England only, and have been produced in line with the Government guidance on public spaces, outdoor activity and exercise published on 11 May 2020, which can be read on the [Gov.uk website](#).

Tennis courts in Scotland and Wales should remain closed.

INTRODUCTION

We know how important it is for people to be active, and the particular role tennis can have in the physical and mental wellbeing of those that play it. By its very nature, tennis is an activity whereby close person to person contact can be avoided, with the Government saying tennis is a good example of an activity that can be undertaken in a way compliant with social distancing restrictions.

Based on our discussions with Government and following the adjustment of lockdown restrictions, the LTA has developed a set of practical guidelines to follow so that tennis can be played in England during lockdown, where the local environment allows.

These guidelines apply to both tennis and padel, and outline adaptations so that tennis activity can be enjoyed in a way that is in line with Government advice and helps to prevent the spread of COVID-19. They include measures to limit hand to hand contact and shared surface contact and minimise unnecessary interactions with others.

At all times, players should adhere to the Government's social distancing guidelines (staying at least 2m away from others), and practice public health advice for hygiene.

Given the length of time tennis activity has been suspended, it is advised that anyone returning to court eases themselves back in to play gently.

Please be aware that not all courts may be open, as venues will need to make an assessment based on their own individual circumstances as to whether they feel they can facilitate safe play at their venue. Where they chose to remain closed please respect this decision.

Should you have any questions, [please refer to the FAQs on the LTA website](#).

We hope you enjoy getting back on court!

IMPORTANT: Do not leave your home to play tennis if Government advice means you should stay at home because you or someone you live with has or has had symptoms of COVID-19, or you are in the most vulnerable category and have been advised to shield from the coronavirus.

Alongside these guidelines, players should read the information published by [Sport England](#), and specifically their [Q&A](#).

SECTION 1: BEFORE & AFTER PLAY

STAY UP TO DATE

- Government information around social distancing is available [here](#) and should be read in full
- Be aware guidance can change and restrictions may be reintroduced - ensure you have checked the latest version of the LTA's guidelines for tennis players on the LTA website

BEFORE LEAVING HOME & AFTER YOU RETURN

- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before leaving home to go to the court (or use an alcohol gel if washing hands is not possible)

COURT BOOKINGS

- Where the facility allows, ensure you have booked a court in advance and make payment online
- Play should only take place on outdoor courts, with indoor courts and bubble courts remaining closed
- The LTA's online booking platform has courts that can be booked in over 300 parks and clubs nationwide - the site www.lta.org.uk/rally will be live from Wednesday 20 May

EQUIPMENT

- Take hand sanitizer with you
- Take all your own equipment (do not share equipment such as rackets, grips, hats and towels)
- Only take the minimum amount of equipment with you that you need to play
- Clean and wipe down your equipment, including racquets and water bottles before and after use
- Bring a full water bottle, and do not share food or drink with others
- Bring your own tennis balls that are clearly marked (e.g. with your initials)
- Ensure you take all your belongings with you at the end of the session and do not leave anything on court

TRAVELLING TO AND FROM THE COURT

- Avoid using public transport
- Arrive as close as possible to when you need to be there
- Avoid touching court gates, fences, benches, etc. if you can
- Allow others to leave before you enter the court - if you need to wait then do so away from the courts and clear of the gates
- Ensure you leave the court before the end of your allotted time so that it is empty for the next players
- Arrive changed and ready to play. Shower at home, and do not use the venue's changing area
- Do not congregate after playing. No extra-curricular or social activity should take place

SECTION 2: DURING PLAY

COURT LIMITS

- Maximum of two people per court (singles play only). Players can be from different households
- The only exception to the above is where a group of four players are all from the same household in which case they can play doubles
- Coached sessions should be limited to one to one coaching activity only

MAINTAIN SOCIAL DISTANCING

- Stay at least two metres away from other players at all times (including during play, when taking breaks and before and after play)
- Do not make physical contact with other players (such as shaking hands or high five)
- Stay on your side of court and avoid changing ends, or agree to change ends at opposite sides of the net
- Avoid chasing the ball down to another court if other players are using it

EQUIPMENT & FACILITIES

- Use your own clearly marked tennis balls
- Avoid using your hands to pick up tennis balls that aren't yours - use your racquet/foot to hit/kick them to your opponent or return them to another court
- Avoid using other equipment such as courtside benches, net handles or court sweepers where possible
- When playing padel, try to avoid touching the court walls
- Be aware that onsite toilet facilities may not be open. Where they are open, players are advised to take particular care when using them

HYGIENE

- If you need to sneeze or cough, do so into a tissue or upper sleeve
- Avoid touching your face

COMPETITIONS

- The initial focus during this phase should be on facilitating recreational and social play, and letting players spend time practicing
- Some formats of competition will be able to resume before others, and [Local Tennis Leagues](#) and singles box leagues/ladders can be played from 13 May as long as they adhere to the guidelines in place
- All LTA staged and LTA approved competitions (grade 1 to 6) up to at least Sunday 28th June 2020 have been cancelled
- The LTA will be providing guidelines for the resumption of competitive tennis activity in due course