

# HAVE FUN and Get IN SHAPE While Playing Tennis

So you love playing tennis, but you feel like it isn't quite enough to keep you in shape? My doctor recently said, "You get in shape to play tennis, you don't play tennis to get in shape."

How true. I play tennis nearly everyday, usually singles, but I am still lugging around a spare tire in the middle. I try to force myself into the work-out room and lift weights, but that's boring and a little creepy. The treadmill? It's like—well, being on a treadmill!

Wouldn't it be great if there was a way to be on the tennis court AND get an aerobic workout and build muscle? Drum roll, please . . .

Hopefully coming to a tennis club near you...**Cardio Tennis** and **TRX Training!** Build your endurance and build your muscles in between hitting tennis balls!

Leaders of the two very different activities held a training weekend at the IMG Academy. Teaching pros and fitness instructors from as far away as Missouri and Pennsylvania came to Nick Bollettieri's home courts in Bradenton to learn more about merging the disciplines.

## Cardio Tennis

You've probably heard, seen, or even played Cardio Tennis—loud music, lots of players and non-stop running around. Instructors had us strap on heart monitors under our shirts and high-tech watches on our wrists. After each drill, they'd ask us to gesture with a thumbs up, thumbs down, or flat hand on whether or not we were in our target heart rate zone. (Even your best singles game doesn't give you this workout!)

Afterwards, those watches also told us how long we worked out, how long we were really getting our heart rate going during that work out—and how many calories we burned.

Cardio Tennis involves softer balls. Organizers call them "The Great Equalizers:" Players of different levels are able to have more fun with these forgiving little nerf balls. They're also less dangerous with so many balls flying around during each drill. (One positive thing about the softer balls—they require you to really focus on racquet-head speed to get the ball over the net.)

Drills range from "Triples" (three players on each side—in a triangle—playing out a point), to exercises that have you running around like a third grade gym class. But, all the drills have one goal: Getting the heart going and getting in better shape!

After our first session, I lost 500 calories in less than an hour. I didn't even know I was working out that

hard! You certainly won't lose that much standing around playing doubles where the average point lasts a few hits at most. There are times I feel I could have stayed in my street clothes to play doubles.

## TRX (Total body Resistance eXercise) Training

This is the new kid on the block when it comes to cross-training with tennis. While cardio tennis has been around for years, TRX suspension training is relatively new to the tennis court. (Suspension training relies on the user's body weight to provide full-body work-outs.) Brochures boast, "TRX is shifting the way tennis players train by developing core strength, building rotational strength, and increased flexibility.

You may have seen TRX classes in your health club—people pulling on black and yellow straps hanging from the wall with loud music blaring. But make no mistake, it's not a party; it's all about building core stability, rotational power, and improved balance. After all, TRX was invented by a former Navy SEAL.

Now those straps are coming out of the work-out rooms and are being attached to the fence posts around the tennis courts. Trainers can have one group hitting tennis balls while another group is doing stretches and pull-downs on the straps—and then rotate. More than a dozen players on a tennis court get more of a work-out and often have more fun than during traditional tennis? Not a bad thing!

Finally, a way to really get in shape, build muscle and have fun—on the tennis court! For More information visit: [www.CardioTennis.com](http://www.CardioTennis.com) or [www.TRXtraining.com/tennis](http://www.TRXtraining.com/tennis).

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