



Guidance for Tennis Players in England

COVID-19: RETURN TO MANAGED PLAY

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PLAY SAFE GUIDELINES - RETURN TO MANAGED PLAY

These guidelines apply to England only and from Monday 1 June 2020. They have been produced in line with the Government announcement on Thursday 28 May on the easing of lockdown restrictions – further amendments may be made once the updated Government guidance on [gatherings, public spaces, and outdoor activities](#) and the [phased return of outdoor sport and recreation](#) has been published on the Gov.uk website.

These guidelines are for non-professional players. Separate guidelines are in place for elite tennis, which is subject to specific and additional protocols.

Guidelines for playing tennis in Scotland can be read [here](#). Tennis courts in Wales should currently 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 continued discussions with Government and following the further easing of restrictions, the LTA has developed this updated set of practical guidelines to follow so that tennis can be played in England, where the local environment allows.

We have indicated the key additions and updates to these guidelines with [NEW] and [UPDATED] on the following pages.

These guidelines apply to both tennis and padel, and outline adaptations and considerations 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 maintain hygiene 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.

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, or you are in the clinically extremely vulnerable category and have been advised to shield from the coronavirus.

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

EQUIPMENT

- Take hand sanitizer with you
- **[UPDATED]** Use your own equipment where possible. Equipment such as rackets can be shared, but where this happens ensure thorough cleaning before and after use. Players should not share items such as 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
- 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 if possible
- Arrive as close as possible to when you need to be there
- **[UPDATED]** Use alcohol gel after touching any court gates, fences, benches, etc, and avoid doing so where possible
- 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
- Avoid congregating on or around the court after playing to allow access for others

SECTION 2: DURING PLAY

TENNIS ACTIVITY **[NEW]**

- Both singles play and doubles play is now permitted with people from outside of your household, as long as you remain 2 metres apart as far as possible – meaning that four people from different households can now play doubles
- For padel, doubles play is also permitted but extra care is advised and it should only be done so where players are confident they can maintain 2 metres apart
- Coached sessions should be limited to groups of no more than 6 people, including the coach(es)

MAINTAIN SOCIAL DISTANCING

Other than where players are from the same household:

- Stay at least two metres away from other players (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)
- Avoid chasing the ball down to another court if other players are using it
- **[NEW]** For doubles, consider agreeing in advance which player will take the shot if a ball travels to the centre of the court
- For coached sessions, pay careful attention to the instructions of the coach

HYGIENE

- **[NEW]** Hand hygiene is imperative - use alcohol gel to clean your hands after touching a shared surface
- If you need to sneeze or cough, do so into a tissue or upper sleeve
- Avoid touching your face

EQUIPMENT & FACILITIES

- **[NEW]** Players do not now need to use their own clearly marked tennis balls – however, if you choose to use shared balls then extra care must be taken to ensure you do not touch your face during play, and you should clean your hands before play and immediately after finishing (use alcohol gel if required)
- Players should still avoid using their hands to pick up tennis balls from other courts where possible - use your racket/foot to return them
- 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 and clean hands thoroughly after use

SUPERVISION

- **[UPDATED]** Where attendance of a parent/guardian (non-participant) is required, or a carer for a disabled player, it is permitted and is not counted as part of the maximum group size of six, but should be off court and limited to one per player where possible, with social distancing strictly observed while watching the sessions

COMPETITIONS **[UPDATED]**

- Some formats of competition will be able to resume before others, and [Local Tennis Leagues](#) LTA Youth Box Leagues and internal singles and doubles box leagues/ladders can be played 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 26 July 2020 have been cancelled
- LTA approved competitions (Grade 6) such as Matchplays and County & District Leagues may be able to resume earlier than 26 July based on Government advice - we will provide an update on these competitions in due course