

Interval Tennis Program

Perform each stage a specified number of times (2-3 times) before progressing to the next stage. For example: Perform stage 1 on Monday and Wednesday then progress to Stage 2. Do not progress to the next stage if you have pain or excessive fatigue on your previous outing; remain at the previous stage until you can perform that part of the program without fatigue or pain.

Stage 1

- a. Have a partner feed 20 forehand groundstrokes to you from the net using a foam ball. (Partner must use a slow, looping feed that results in a waist high ball bounce for player contact.)
- b. Have a partner feed 20 backhand groundstrokes as in 1a above with a foam ball.
- c. Rest 5 minutes.
- d. Repeat 20 forehand and backhand feeds as above.

Stage 2

Repeat Stage 1 with a low compression ball.

Stage 3

Repeat Stage 1 with a real (regulation) tennis ball.

Stage 4

- a. Begin as in Stage 3 above, with partner feeding 10 forehands and 10 backhands from the net as a warm-up.
- b. Rally with partner from baseline, hitting controlled groundstrokes until you have hit 50-60 strokes. (Alternate between forehands and backhands and allow 20-30 seconds rest after every 2-3 rallies.)
- c. Rest 5 minutes.
- d. Repeat the rally instructions in "b" above.

Stage 5

- a. Rally groundstrokes (forehands and backhands) from the baseline for 15 minutes.
- b. Rest 5 minutes.
- c. Hit 10-15 forehand and 10-15 backhand volleys, emphasizing a contact point in front of your body.
- d. Rally groundstrokes for 15 additional minutes from the baseline.
- e. Hit 10-15 forehand and backhand volleys as listed above.

PRE-SERVE Interval: (Perform prior to Stage 6)

(Note. This can be performed off court and is meant solely to determine readiness for progression into stage 6 of the interval tennis program.)

- a. After stretching, with racquet in hand, perform serving motion for 10-15 repetitions without a ball or any ball contact.
- b. Using a foam ball, hit 10-15 serves without concern for performance result (only focusing on form, contact point, and the presence or absence of symptoms)
- c. If successful and pain-free progress to stage 6.

Stage 6

- a. Hit 20-30 minutes of groundstrokes, mixing in volleys using an 80% groundstroke / 20% volley format.

- b. Perform 5-10 simulated serves without a ball.
- c. Perform 5-10 serves using a foam ball
- d. Perform 10-15 serves using a standard tennis ball at approximately 75% effort. (Note: It is important to hit flat or slice serves not kick serves in the initial phase of the interval tennis program.)
- e. Finish with 10-15 minutes of groundstrokes.

Stage 7

- a. Hit 30 minutes of groundstrokes, mixing in volleys using an 80% groundstroke/20% volley format.
- b. Perform 5-10 serves using a foam ball
- c. Perform 10-15 serves using a standard tennis ball at approximately 75% effort.
- d. Rest 5 minutes
- e. Perform 10-15 additional serves as in "d" above.
- f. Finish with 15-20 minutes of groundstrokes.

Stage 8

- a. Repeat Stage 7 listed above increasing the number of serves to 20 to 25 instead of 10 to 15.
- b. Before resting between serving sessions, have a partner feed easy short lobs to attempt 4-5 controlled overheads.

Stage 9

Prior to attempting match play, complete steps 1-8 without pain or excess fatigue in the upper extremity. Continue to progress the amount of time rallying with groundstrokes and volleys in addition to increasing the number of serves per workout until 60-80 overall serves can be performed interspersed throughout a workout. Initiate kick serves once the initial stages of the program have been completed. Remember that an average of up to 120 serves can be performed in a singles tennis match, therefore be prepared to gradually increase the number of serves in the interval program before full competitive play is engaged.