

playtennisfast

6 sessions (1 hour each)

ABOUT PLAY TENNIS FAST

Play Tennis Fast is designed as a 6-session course of six, 1 hour lessons and is a specific starter player course that has been developed to introduce (or welcome back) adult players to tennis using the slower balls.

It is similar to the ITF's Tennis Xpress program, with the exception that starter adults learn to serve, rally and score (play the game) in the first session (using the Instant Tennis format) and move on to ensure that by the end of the course:

- all adults will know the basic techniques, tactics and the basic Rules of Tennis
- all adults will be able to play competitive points using the Green ball on a full court

For the purpose of this course, adult starter players are defined as those who:

- are complete beginners to tennis i.e. have never played tennis before, or
- who have received basic coaching but have never played the game outside of a coaching environment, or
- beginners returning to tennis after a long absence

The program has been developed to capture the declining audience of adult participants in tennis.

WHAT DO ADULTS WANT FROM TENNIS?

Research conducted in three major tennis nations shows what adults consider very important when choosing leisure activities:

- Health & exercise benefits while having a good workout
- Social experience, fun and meeting new people
- A sense of belonging
- Learning and improving at something new
- Being able to participate in an activity at a time that suits them

It is the role of the certified tennis coach to try to organize the Play Tennis Fast course so that each of these important elements is incorporated into all the sessions.

ABOUT SLOWER BALLS

Slower balls are not just for children; starter players of all ages, including adults, can benefit from playing with slower Orange and Green balls on appropriate sized courts.

The use of the balls is fundamental to this course, and to helping starter adults to learn to play tennis quickly. However, it is also recognized that adults learn at different speeds and have different experiences and transferrable skills. For this reason, while the use of slower balls is mandatory for this course, coaches should be flexible in their approach concerning:

... Which ball to use

- The recommendation is that the course is centered around the use of Orange or Green balls.
However, it is recognized that the red ball will be used when necessary as a teaching aid or to make the session more active.

... When players can progress

- It is important to remember that players progress at different rates, and coaches should therefore be prepared to choose either Orange or Green balls for different players within the same lesson if necessary

... When players should regress

- In some tasks, it may be necessary for players to regress temporarily from one ball to another. For example, to develop confidence in a task, it may be suitable for players using an Orange ball to develop new skills by first starting with the Red ball for part of the lesson before going back to the Orange ball.

... How far players can progress

- While the stated aim is for participants to play fun competition with a Green ball by the end of the course, some players will achieve this more quickly than others. Some players may feel more confident using an Orange ball at the end of the course but the vast majority will be able to progress more using the Green ball by the end of the course.

In all cases, it is the responsibility of the certified tennis coach, using the guidance notes for the course, to decide which slower ball should be used, and at what point players should progress to another ball.

THE COURSE

The aim is to provide a fast, active and dynamic introduction to playing tennis, while at the same time offering sufficient learning and practice time in each lesson to allow the players to achieve success throughout the course. A full detailed breakdown of the Play Tennis Fast course content and supporting resources for registered tennis facilities and their coaches to access are available at PlayTennis.com Resource Section.

Course Format

Play Tennis Fast is 6 x 1.0 hour lessons with a coach. In such cases, it is essential to provide players with opportunities to practice between sessions in order to reinforce learning, develop confidence and to direct participants to suitable playing opportunities at the end of the course.

However, it is recognized that some flexibility may be needed with lesson duration, based on court availability and the number of starter adults. Therefore, a suitable alternative delivery model could also include:

- 6 x 1.0 hour sessions (once a week), comprising 6 x 1.0 hour lessons with the coach, plus an additional 30 minutes of unsupervised, free practice, play or fun match play per session (six hours total coaching)
- All sessions are supervised by the coach
- In such cases it is up to the discretion of the coach/facility to charge for the additional 30 minutes of court time in the cost of the program

Session Overview

Session 1 – Course welcome, Instant Tennis introduction and objectives

Session 2 – Consistency from the baseline (Red / Orange ball)

Session 3 – Moving the opponent using a basic serve and return (Red / Orange ball)

Session 4 – Learning to play from the net in singles (Orange / Green ball)

Session 5 – Learning to play from the net in doubles (Orange / Green ball)

Session 6 – Playing a singles and doubles competition using different game situations and game styles (Orange / Green)

6-WEEK SESSION OUTLINE

SESSION 1* 0HRS - 1.0HRS

Activity *Course welcome, introduction and objectives.*

- Slower balls and game situations.
 - Instant Tennis – Learn the primary strokes in the game; forehand groundstroke, backhand groundstroke, forehand volley, backhand volley, overhead and serve (Red/Orange ball).
 - Learn to rally - basic techniques for developing consistency from the baseline (Red/Orange ball).
 - Develop a basic serve and return (Red/Orange ball).
 - Basic doubles formation - “one up, one back” (Red/Orange ball).
 - Learn and play with regular game scoring (Red/Orange ball).
 - Decision to use Red or Orange ball should be based on the pro’s observation of the group’s overall skill level
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SESSION 2* 1.0HRS - 2HRS

Activity *Consistency from the baseline (Red / Orange ball).*

- Moving the opponent from the baseline and maintaining good position (Red / Orange ball).
 - Serve and return (Red / Orange ball).
 - Continue learning to score in a set / match.
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SESSION 3* 2HRS – 3HRS

Activity *Moving the opponent using a basic serve and return (Red / Orange ball).*

- Understanding court positioning in singles.
 - Playing from the baseline in singles and doubles.
 - Playing with tie break scoring (Red / Orange ball).
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SESSION 4* 3HRS – 4HRS

Activity *Learning to play from the net in singles (Orange / Green ball).*

- Combining different game situations in singles (Orange / Green ball).
 - Learning to play basic doubles as a team / doubles court positioning (Orange / Green ball).
 - Serve and return in doubles (Orange ball).
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SESSION 5* 4HRS – 5HRS

Activity *Learning to play from the net in doubles (Orange / Green ball).*

- Playing singles and doubles with regular tennis scoring (Orange / Green ball).
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SESSION 6* 5HRS – 6HRS

Activity *Playing a singles and doubles competition using different game situations and game styles (Orange / Green).*

- Signposting - opportunities for play, competition and coaching at the club.

0-5 MINUTES:**COURSE WELCOME & INTRODUCTION****Activity***Coaches introduce themselves. Ask participants to introduce themselves.***5-10 MINUTES:****WHAT IS INSTANT TENNIS?****Activity***Coach explains Instant Tennis and introduces players to the 'SELF RALLY: Red ball 3x3 ft. square' or court dots. Add in target with self rally.***10-15 MINUTES:****GROUP WARM UP: Red ball in 6x6 ft. square*****Activity***In 6x6 ft. squares or court dots; players hit the ball up alternately trying to hit same target in pairs.***Use lines or cones to make the squares***15-20 MINUTES:****GROUP RALLY (Red balls*)****Activity***In pairs, with one player on the doubles sideline and one player on the singles sideline, players place a target in front of each other, line up their racquet faces forehand to forehand, gently hit the ball up and aim for each other's target. Players count and try to get the longest rally.***Use court dots for targets***20-25 MINUTES:*****DEVELOP A CONSISTENT GROUNDSTROKE RALLY: (Red balls)****Activity***In pairs, players use the same targets, line their racquet faces over the net forehand to forehand from each other, back up between the service line and the net and rally over the net aiming for each other's targets. Players count and try to get the longest rally. Emphasize no backswing***25-30 MINUTES:*****DEVELOP A CONSISTENT GROUNDSTROKE RALLY: (Red balls)****Activity***In pairs, players play forehand to backhand groundstroke rally between service line and the net on each side
Players count and try to get the longest rally. Emphasize no backswing***30-35 MINUTES:*****DEVELOP FOREHAND VOLLEY (Red balls)****Activity***In pairs, one player hits forehand groundstrokes to the other player's forehand volley at net. Switch roles after 2.5 minutes.***It is important that player's line up their racquet faces before beginning this exercise. Emphasize no backswing***35-40 MINUTES:*****DEVELOP BACKHAND VOLLEY (Red balls)****Activity***In pairs, one player hits forehand groundstrokes to the other player's backhand volley at net. Switch roles after 2.5 minutes.***It is important that player's line up their racquet faces before beginning this exercise Emphasize no backswing***40-45 MINUTES:****DEVELOP OVERHEAD (Red balls)****Activity***In pairs, one player at service line hits bounce feed lob (or underhand feed) to player at net. Player at net starts sideways with racquet in back-scratch position, reaches up to bump each feed fully extended. Switch roles after 2.5 minutes.*

45-50 MINUTES: ***DEVELOP A SERVE (Red balls)**
Activity *In pairs, with both players on the service line, one player serves overhand and the other player catches the ball and returns with a serve. Both players on each side gradually progress back to the baseline. *Pro demonstrates abbreviated serve motion.*

50-55 MINUTES: **DEVELOP A CONSISTENT SERVE AND RETURN (Red balls)**
Activity *Players move back to the baseline and now add the serve return. Emphasize when a ball is in or out.*

55-60 MINUTES: **WRAP-UP**
Activity *Coach's summary of the session and key points covered. This could be done as a question and answer session. It is also important to allow participants to ask questions.*

Congratulate players on completing their first session, and encourage them to play with a friend or family member before the next session (it may be necessary to let the players borrow some Red balls to do this). Suggest serve, return and rally practice emphasizing keeping the ball in play for maximum number of hits.

SESSION TWO: Consistency from the baseline (Red or Orange balls)

0-5 MINUTES: **WELCOME, REVIEW LAST SESSION AND EXPLAIN CURRENT SESSION**
Activity *Ask players what was done in the previous session, and how they did with their practice. Explain objectives of this session.*

5-10 MINUTES: **GROUP WARM-UP (Red/Orange balls)**
Activity *In pairs, player A on the doubles sideline and player B on the singles sideline. Both players face the court.
Player A calls 1, 2 or 3 and throws the ball underarm over the shoulder of player B.
Player B chases the ball letting the ball bounce either 1,2 or 3 times before catching.
Players change after 30 seconds. Mix pairs after 3 mins.*

10-15 MINUTES: **PREVIOUS SESSION'S PRACTICE: CONSISTENCY IN A HALF-COURT RALLY (Red/Orange balls)**
Activity *In pairs, players rally using forehands and backhands in the service box on 36 ft. court. Switch partners every 2 minutes. Count the longest rally.*
Rules Check *Ensure that players know when the ball is in or out. If the ball is out, the opponent must call it clearly and immediately, and the rally stops. A ball which bounces on the line is in.*

15-20 MINUTES: **DEVELOP CONSISTENCY IN A BASELINE RALLY (60 ft. (Orange) court and Orange balls)**
Activity *In pairs, players rally half court on the longer 60 ft. (Orange) court. Switch pairs every 3 minutes. Players count and try to get the longest rally.*

20-25 MINUTES: **MOVE THE OPPONENT IN A BASELINE RALLY (60 ft. (Orange) court and Orange balls)**
Activity *In pairs, players divide their court space in half and rally with one player hitting cross-court only and the other down the line.
The serve can be used to start the rally. Switch roles every 2 minutes. Count the longest rally. Depending on numbers in the group, it may be necessary to mark two 60 ft. (Orange) courts on a tennis court, or to rotate players so they have one rally on and one rally off.*

25-35 MINUTES: **EXPLAIN DOUBLES POSITIONS & BEGIN POINT PLAY (Red balls)**
Activity All players learn to play doubles positions through point play with the serve starting the point. Switch positions every 2 minutes. Coach emphasizes where each player starts the point and how to switch after each point.

35-40 MINUTES: **LEARN REGULAR SCORING (Orange balls)**
Activity Coach explains use of regular scoring method and variation of “No Ad” scoring (game point at 40-40). 4 players play 1 game using regular scoring. The coach scores at the net, other players in the group watch.

40-55 MINUTES: **RALLYING AND LEARNING TO SCORE (60 ft. (Orange) court and Orange ball)**
Activity Competitive rallying and scoring. Coach breaks up players into pairs trying to keep alike skill levels together. Try to give each player on each court the opportunity to serve once by alternating servers after each game.

55-60 MINUTES: **WRAP-UP**
Activity Coach’s summary of the session and key points covered. This could be done as a question and answer session. Reinforce two tactics of consistency and moving the opponent. Encourage players to play with a friend or family member before the next session (it may be necessary to let the players borrow some Red or Orange balls to do this).

60-90 MINUTES: **FREEPLAY (60 ft. (Orange) court and Orange ball)**
Activity Players in groups of 4. Play 1 game with regular scoring and “No-Ad” scoring method at deuce (game point at 40-40). Switch roles after each game so all players experience each position.

THIS ACTIVITY CAN BE UNSUPERVISED – THE COACH SHOULD PROVIDE THE PARTICIPANTS WITH ACCESS TO THE SLOWER BALLS

SESSION THREE: Moving the opponent using a basic serve and return (Red or Orange ball)

0-5 MINUTES: **WELCOME AND EXPLAIN THE SESSION**
Activity Ask players what was done in previous session, and how they got on in their practice. Ask in particular if anyone managed to play competitive rallies or matches to practice using tennis scoring. Explain objectives of this session.

5-10 MINUTES: **GROUP WARM-UP (Orange ball)**
Activity In pairs, players rally cooperatively cross court in the service boxes, starting with an underhand or overhand serve.

10-20 MINUTES: **MOVE THE OPPONENT IN A BASELINE RALLY (Orange ball)**
Activity In pairs using 4 service boxes, players rally to move the opponent. Players may hit the ball anywhere in the opposing player’s service boxes but should try to hit away from the opponent to make them move. The player starting the point should start from the right court and serve diagonally. Coach should ensure that the focus is on the ability of the players to move the opponent using groundstrokes.

20-30 MINUTES:

Activity

MOVING THE OPPONENT WITH SERVE AND RETURN (Orange ball)

In pairs playing in diagonal service boxes, one player serves overhand (they get 2 serves) and the other player returns. Count number of successful serves and returns. Switch roles after 3 points.

Point out to players that a ball that hits the net and lands in the service box is a let and the server may repeat a first serve. A ball which bounces on the line is in. If the ball is out, the returner should call immediately and clearly, and a second serve should be played. Two errors on serve make a double fault, giving the point to the returner.

30-40 MINUTES:

Activity

MOVING THE OPPONENT WITH SERVE AND RETURN (Orange ball)

In pairs playing on the 60 ft. (Orange) court, one player serves overhand (they get 2 serves) and the other player returns down the line, with both players playing out the rally.

Count number of successful serves cross court and returns down the line as a pair. Switch roles after 3 points. Coaches may also need to rotate players if the numbers in the group mean that there are players waiting off court.

40-55 MINUTES:

Activity

LEARN MATCH TIE-BREAKER SCORING (Orange balls)

Coach explains the purpose and scoring of the match tie-breaker. 4 players play 1 game using match tie-breaker scoring. The coach scores at the net, other players in the group watch.

Players are then broken up into pairs to give each an opportunity to score a tie-breaker using the doubles format. Switch servers after each tie-breaker.

55-60 MINUTES:

Activity

WRAP-UP

Coach's summary of the session and key points covered. This could be done as a question and answer session. It is also important to allow participants to ask questions. Encourage them to play with a friend or family member before the next session (it may be necessary to let the players borrow some Orange balls to do this).

60-90 MINUTES:

Activity

FREEPLAY - SERVE, RETURN AND PLAY THE POINT BY MOVING THE OPPONENT (Orange balls)

In pairs, players play tie-breakers taking turns to serve. Players can use either singles or doubles format.

THIS ACTIVITY CAN BE UNSUPERVISED – THE COACH SHOULD PROVIDE THE PARTICIPANTS WITH ACCESS TO THE SLOWER BALLS

SESSION 4:

Learning to play from the net in singles (Orange or Green balls)

0-5 MINUTES:

Activity

WELCOME, REVIEW LAST SESSION AND EXPLAIN CURRENT SESSION

Ask players about the previous session, how they felt they did, and explain the objectives of the upcoming session.

5-10 MINUTES:

Activity

IDENTIFY IDEAL POINT OF CONTACT

Warm-up: Divide players in pairs. From the service line, one player throws, either underhand or overhand, to the receiver who hits the ball back. Players alternate who throws and who hits. Person throwing the ball may move the receiver in the service box. Emphasis is for the receiver to identify an ideal point of contact and use a short compact swing with a full follow through.

10-25 MINUTES:**Activity****LEARNING HOW TO ACHIEVE PROPER SHOT SELECTION**

Game situations in singles using serves. One player serves and the other returns, playing the point after this exchange. Emphasize point situations and introduce the strategic element of their shot selection. Players must understand that there are three dimensions to consider when deciding on the shot to hit: Your position on the court, your opponents position on the court, and the location of the ball.

25-40 MINUTES:**Activity****LEARNING DOUBLES MOVEMENT**

Start players in one up, one back position. Emphasize the movement of the net players. They should follow the path of the ball and know who or what to keep their focus on. Baseline players can rally cross court and the net players do not poach; just work on their movement. This can be drop fed or one player can serve and the other returns. The rally does not have to be baseline to baseline.

40-55 MINUTES:**Activity****SUPERVISED DOUBLES PLAY**

Supervised doubles play with coach. Players will play one set using “No-Ad” scoring and switching sides on odd games as in regular match play. Coach will emphasize the net players moving with the ball and the baseline players to try to work their way to the net behind a short ball.

55-60 MINUTES:**Activity****WRAP-UP**

Coach’s summary of the session and key points covered. This could be done as a question and answer session. It is also important to allow participants to ask questions. Encourage them to play with a friend or family member before the next session (it may be necessary to let the players borrow some Orange or Green balls to do this). Encourage players to play a complete set of singles and/or doubles before next session. Emphasize getting into the net whenever possible to work on their volleying skills.

SESSION 5:**Learning to play from the net in doubles (Orange or Green balls)****0-5 MINUTES:****Activity****WELCOME, REVIEW LAST SESSION AND EXPLAIN CURRENT SESSION**

Ask players about the previous session, how they felt they did, and explain the objectives of the upcoming session.

5-10 MINUTES:**Activity****WARM-UP FOOTWORK AND POINT-OF-CONTACT**

Service Line warm-up: Either toss and catch or rally back and forth down the line in their own service box.

10-15 MINUTES:**Activity****DEVELOP DEPTH WHEN RALLYING**

Baseline rally: Either crosscourt or down the line, emphasizing simple smooth swing to lift the ball over the net. Players should concentrate on hitting the ball high above the net and contact point with a full follow-through.

15-30 MINUTES:**Activity****LEARNING THE COMPLETE VOLLEY**

One feeder and one volleyer with the feeder throwing the ball and catching the volleyer’s shot. Keep switching roles. Emphasize ready position, turning the shoulders, racquet head up, continental grip on both sides, and blocking the ball while stepping into the court. Have the volleyer picture “catching” the ball and that’s how the volley should look. Player should not volley close to the net (Rule Check at this point – they cannot touch or reach over the net).

30-40 MINUTES: **ESSENTIAL VOLLEYING STRATEGY FOR DOUBLES**
Activity *One up and One back drill. The volleyers are able to intercept a ball during the crosscourt rally while realizing they could be passed down the line. Emphasize good decision making and shot selection. This can be done either by feeding in the ball or the player serving the ball in to start the rally.*

40-55 MINUTES: **SUPERVISED DOUBLES PLAY**
Activity *Supervised doubles play with coach. Players will play match set tie-breakers using proper switching and serve rotation.*

55-60 MINUTES: **WRAP-UP**
Activity *Coach's summary of the session and key points covered. This could be done as a question and answer session. It is also important to allow participants to ask questions. Encourage them to play with a friend or family member before the next session (it may be necessary to let the players borrow some Orange or Green balls to do this). Emphasize trying to cut the ball off across the middle when playing doubles.*

SESSION 6: Playing a singles and doubles competition using different game situations and game styles. (Green balls)

0-5 MINUTES: **WELCOME, REVIEW LAST SESSION AND EXPLAIN CURRENT SESSION**
Activity *Ask players about the previous session, how they felt they did, and explain the objectives of the upcoming session.*

5-10 MINUTES: **CONTROLLED WARM-UP WITH GREEN BALL**
Activity *Green Ball warm-up using all the shots from the service line.*

10-15 MINUTES: **CONTROLLED WARM-UP WITH GREEN BALL**
Activity *Green Ball warm-up using all the shots from baseline.*

15-30 MINUTES: **SUPERVISED SINGLES PLAY (green ball)**
Activity *Singles Play. Coach sets up players in a two-on-one singles king/queen-of-the-hill format. The king/queen is receiving while the two players (challengers) serving play a regular scoring game against them alternating out every two points. The first challenger to win their game becomes the new king/queen and all games start over. All players score 1 point per game won. Winning player is the one with the most points after 15 minutes. (Note: The coach should try to match up the skill levels of the players as evenly as possible using the Orange or Green ball depending on skill level)*

30-55 MINUTES: **LEARN TO PLAY DOUBLES IN A COMPETITIVE ENVIRONMENT (green ball)**
Activity *Supervised doubles play competition with coach. Players will play a progressive format using "No-Ad" scoring with a total of four (4) games each round (ties will be broken by a one-point sudden death playoff). Winners of each round move up a court and split partners while runner-ups move down a court and split partners. Spin the racquet to decide partnerships each round. Have players report their scores to coach after each round (Optional - give prizes to top three scorers)*

55-60 MINUTES: **WRAP-UP**
Activity *Coach's summary of the session and key points covered. This could be done as a question and answer session. It is also important to allow participants to ask questions. Encourage them to join an introductory league either intraclub or USTA Adult League. Introduce follow-up Supervised Play program, 6-8 week session to keep players engaged.*