



RETURN TO TENNIS

GOAL: To get back on the court and use tennis to rehabilitate your knee. Concomitantly, to use your repaired knee to rehabilitate your tennis game.

PROCESS:

INJURY = OPPORTUNITY

Coming back from an injury or surgery allows the opportunity for you to correct bad habits. Have your racquet within reach when you return from the doctor's office or hospital. By day 2 post-op/post-injury you should be standing and making easy strokes to maintain your muscle memory and to eliminate that vase you never liked. As you progress through your recovery, you should be spending time on simple, low stress skills with the racquet both on and off the court. Think footwork and eye to hand coordination in these early weeks. Getting a coach or tennis savvy friend involved early in your rehab would ease your return.

Stay at each Level for about 2 weeks. You can perform each Level of the "Return to Tennis" program 3-4 days per week alternating with "soft workouts" on the other days. If you have pain or swelling: RICE and back down one level until the swelling resolves. Think about what makes Federer so good.

LEVEL A

PURPOSE	Balance and coordination. Stroke/serve movement patterns. Letting the knee know what you plan to do in the coming days	
PROTOCOL	<p style="text-align: center;">Activity</p> Warm-up on the bike or with a walk. 1 step forehand and backhand. Soft serve Repeat both 5 more times.	<p style="text-align: center;">Time</p> 5 min. 2 min. 1 min. Total = 20 min.
COMMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideally someone is tossing (not hitting!) the balls in position for you to swing smoothly. • Start in the "ready position" when simulating forehand and backhand strokes. Return to the "ready position" and step into the next stroke. • Concentrate on the toss and feet work on your serves. Striking the ball is of lesser importance. • You can be doing these same exercises as <i>simulations</i> as soon as 2 days after surgery. • Ice and stretch afterwards. 	

LEVEL B:

PURPOSE	Skills, game simulation. Looking good in whites	
PROTOCOL	Activity Warm-up on the bike or treadmill. Volley, with & without ball. Repeat 5 times, w/1 min rest between sets	Time 5min. 3 min. Total = 25 min.
COMMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volley Simulation = using a racquet, but not a ball. This means moving right, left, forwards and backwards. The emphasis is on quality of movements, not speed. Begin by just walking through this simulation. • Have a partner toss you some balls. Gently play them back with controlled lateral efforts. • Advance to gentle wall volleys with a bounce (10 yards away), and work up to wall volleys with no bounce (5 yards away). Have a basket of balls so you're not chasing. • Remember to do a proper cool down, hydrate, and ice afterwards. • If you feel great, add another 19 minute session after a rest BUT THAT'S IT! Do not stay on the court until the knee is screaming. 	

LEVEL C:

PURPOSE	Thinking about Wimbledon. Partner Skills.	
PROTOCOL	Activity Warm-up on the bike or treadmill. Skills: Off Court Warm-Up - Game simulation moving with the racquet but not the ball. Net Volley. Mid Court Volley. Baseline Volley. On Court Movement - Net, mid, baseline, and serves.	Time 5min. 3 min. 5 min. 5 min. 5 min. 10 min. Total = 33 min. Repeat once if the knee feels GREAT.

COMMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When volleying, stay in the center of the court. This not the time for extreme lateral movements.• Select a partner that is willing to play “REHAB” tennis with you (i.e. someone who is pretty good and can keep the ball within your reach).• A well planned and consistently implemented warm-up is critical for post-injury athletes. To do this you must arrive early!• Follow a proper cool down program complete with stretching and icing.• HAVE FUN! Focus on movement, not victory.• Sign-up for that lesson if you haven’t already.
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RETURN TO COMPETITION:

Your return to competition progression, once comfortable with above program, should look something like this:

- Level D: 1 Set @ 50-75% intensity
- Level E: 2 Sets @ 50-75% intensity
- Level F: 3 Sets @ 50-75% intensity
- Level G: 1 Set @ 75%, 1 Set @ 100%
- Level H: 2 -3 Sets @ 100%

Move up one level when you are feeling GREAT, not just good. Spend at least two weeks at each level for experienced players, more than two weeks for most of us.