



Beating the Heat

We might enjoy feeling the warm sun on our skin during summer but it can also bring some of the toughest weather conditions for playing outdoor tennis.

It's important to be aware of precautions you should take to avoid heat illness or other harmful effects from playing in hot conditions. Hardcourts and rebound ace surfaces are especially notorious for heating up due to the radiant heat that these courts absorb from the sun.

• **SCHEDULE WISELY:** Avoid playing during the hottest time of the day, and schedule your practice or match times in the cooler morning hours or early evening.

• **SUN PROTECTION:** Remember to wear a water-resistant sunblock containing zinc and titanium dioxide, and to re-apply every two hours. Don't forget those neglected areas like the back of your neck, eyelids and ears!

• **DRESS FOR SUCCESS:** Synthetic fabrics with moisture-wicking properties will help keep you drier and cooler on the court. When your clothes become wet during play, changing into dry tennis gear helps to facilitate evaporation of sweat off your body. Keep your head covered with a synthetic material or mesh hat or visor for added sun protection.

• **DON'T GO THIRSTY:** It's critical to hydrate with sport drinks and water before, during and after play. It's especially important when playing in hot or humid weather, as your body will need more fluid intake to replace fluid lost when sweating.

• **STAY COOL:** To prevent overheating, or to manage symptoms of dehydration or heat illness, try placing two large ice bags high under your armpits, and place an additional two ice bags in your lap (in the front of your groin). This technique helps to cool the area where your lymph nodes are, which helps to effectively lower your body temperature. You can also try using a cooling vest or neck sausage, such as the design the professionals use on court during the Australian Open.

WATCH OUT FOR THE WARNING SIGNS

It's important to recognize signs of dehydration and heat illness, so appropriate care can be taken to manage the symptoms. These include: Headache, decreased energy,



Gael Monfils escapes the heat during a hot Australian Open.

dizziness, dark yellow urine, loss of coordination and muscle cramps.

What to do if dehydrated:

It's important to listen to your body if you are experiencing any of the above symptoms. Replenishing fluid loss by drinking a combination of sport drinks and water is crucial.

Muscle cramps:

It's best to gently massage the affected area and to provide a stretch to the muscle while you continue to hydrate. If the cramping persists or is affecting several muscle groups, seek medical attention.

HEAT EXHAUSTION occurs when the body is unable to cool itself in hot and/or humid weather conditions, or when significantly dehydrated. This is a serious condition where medical attention may be necessary.

SYMPTOMS OF HEAT EXHAUSTION

Dizziness or light-headedness, nausea/vomiting, profuse sweating, weakness/ fatigue, rapid/weak pulse, impaired performance, significant muscle cramping and body chills.

What to do for heat exhaustion:

Seek medical attention and lie in a cool, shaded area with legs elevated above your heart. Replace fluids lost with sport drinks if able to keep fluids down. Remove wet clothing and place ice bags in key areas (see above). If heat exhaustion goes untreated, it can lead to a life-threatening condition called HEAT STROKE.

SYMPTOMS OF HEAT STROKE

Red, hot, dry skin, sweating has stopped, high body temperature, unconsciousness, full and bounding pulse, and rapid, shallow breathing.

What to do for Heat Stroke:

As this is a medical emergency, call for an ambulance ASAP. While waiting for medical care to arrive, follow guidelines for care of heat exhaustion, and aggressively cool the body by immersion in cool water. ●