



# Guidance for Tennis Players in England

COVID-19: RETURN TO MANAGED PLAY

Version 3 – Published 1 July 2020



TENNIS  
FOR BRITAIN

## PLAY SAFE GUIDELINES - RETURN TO MANAGED PLAY

These guidelines apply to England only. They have been produced in line with Government announcements on the easing of lockdown restrictions, and the subsequent Government guidance on [gatherings, public spaces, and outdoor activities](#) and the [phased return of outdoor sport and recreation](#) 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](#) and guidelines for Wales can be read [here](#).

### 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 for Version 3 of this document 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.

Please be aware that not all courts or associated facilities may be open, as venues will need to make an assessment based on their own individual circumstances as to what they feel there can open safely 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!

**[NEW] IMPORTANT:** Where a local lockdown is in place alternative measures and guidelines may be in place – players in these areas are advised to check our main coronavirus information page at [www.lta.org.uk/coronavirus](http://www.lta.org.uk/coronavirus) before playing.

## SECTION 1: BEFORE & AFTER PLAY

### STAY UP TO DATE

- **[UPDATED]** Government information around social distancing from 4 July is available [here](#) and should be read in full (information up to 4 July can be read [here](#))
- 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

### WHO CAN PLAY **[NEW]**

- If you are symptomatic or living in a household with someone else who has a possible or confirmed COVID-19 infection you should remain at home and you should not have visitors to your household
- If you have been asked to isolate by NHS Test and Trace because you are a contact of a known COVID-19 case, do not exercise outside your own home or garden and do not exercise with others
- If you are in [a clinically vulnerable group](#) (e.g. over 70) you can play tennis but should be especially careful and diligent about social distancing and hand hygiene
- If you are classified as [clinically extremely vulnerable](#), from 6 July you can consider playing tennis and meeting up with one person outside your household, always maintaining social distancing and with robust hand and respiratory hygiene. Further guidance is [available here](#)

### 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 (use an alcohol gel if washing hands is not possible)
- Arrive at the venue changed and ready to play. Shower at home, and do not use the venue's changing area (these should remain closed)

### 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](http://www.lta.org.uk/rally)
- **[NEW]** Please note that to support NHS Test and Trace, venues and coaches may need to take additional details from you when booking so that they have appropriate temporary records in place to assist this service

### EQUIPMENT

- Take hand sanitizer with you
- 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
- 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
- Avoid congregating on or around the court after playing to allow access for others

## USING VENUE FACILITIES

- 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
- Changing rooms should not be used
- [NEW] If takeaway catering facilities are open at the venue, respect social distancing whilst queuing for food and drink.
- [NEW] For indoor bars and restaurants, be aware that the Government guidelines for meeting people indoors differs from that for outdoors, and is limited meeting people from no more than one other household (while maintaining social distancing at all times)

## SECTION 2: DURING PLAY

### TENNIS ACTIVITY

- 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)
- [NEW] Any individual groups should not interact with anyone outside of the group they are attending the venue with (e.g. players on another court or in a different coaching group)

### MAINTAIN SOCIAL DISTANCING

#### Other than where players are from the same household:

- Stay at least two metres away from other players (including during play as far as possible, 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

- 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
- **[NEW]** Where you cannot maintain a two metre distance then further precautions should be put in place as part of 'one metre plus mitigations' guidance (see the Government's advice on ['Staying safe outside your home'](#) for more details)

## HYGIENE

- Hand hygiene is imperative - hand sanitise at intervals if you have to touch communal surfaces
- If you need to sneeze or cough, do so into a tissue or upper sleeve
- Avoid touching your face

## EQUIPMENT & FACILITIES

- Players do not now need to use their own clearly marked tennis balls – however, players can choose to use this approach if they wish
- 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 racquet/foot to return them as those players may have decided to continue to use their own marked tennis balls
- 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

## SUPERVISION

- 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

- 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
- **[UPDATED]** All LTA staged and LTA approved competitions (grade 1 to 5) up to at least Monday 31 August 2020 have been cancelled
- **[UPDATED]** LTA approved competitions (Grade 6) such as Matchplays and County & District Leagues may be able to resume earlier than 31 August based on Government advice - we will provide an update on these competitions in due course