

Pro Tips from... *Cyrus Poncha*



Pro Tips: Improve your Squash with Cyrus Poncha

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Cyrus Poncha is Indian National Juniors Coach and a leading coach in the squash hotbed in Bombay, India. In addition to his highly regarded coaching activities, Cyrus and his brother Neville have created an excellent coaching website, dispensing information and advice for the improvement of your game. You can browse Cyrus's Squash Website at: <http://www.cyrus.indianet.org>

[\[Go to Cyrus's Column Number One: "Ten Basic Squash Tips"\]](#)

Dear Squash Player:

I have seen too many players just get onto the court and start the knock-up without stretching out and warming up the body.

Why? I'm young, you say - my body doesn't need that warm up that the old guys do. Wrong! The good players get that extra edge by getting their bodies warmed up and flexible enough to reach that extra half-meter to get that impossible drop shot!.

What you should do before every squash session

Before any squash game your body has to be warmed up for the exertion ahead. Simple warm-up exercises like jogging on the spot, on court sprints should be followed by stretching exercises.

Stretching is important for every activity or sport. Unfortunately many people neglect this aspect in their training schedule. Stretching will increase your flexibility and reduce chances of injuring or tearing muscles and also improve your performance. A flexible muscle reacts and contracts faster and stronger than a non-flexible muscle, increasing balance, agility and movement.

The following is a list of stretching exercises you must incorporate into your workout. Hold each stretch for 10-30 seconds and remember, do not bounce. Breathe deeply during the stretch.

It is advisable to do your stretches in a fixed pattern i.e. moving from toe to head or vice versa. This will enable you to remember the stretches and do it consistently.

Ankle Stretch

Ankle Stretch Keeping your toes on the floor rotate your right foot clockwise and counter-clockwise 20 times. Repeat with the other foot. Always remember to use a thin-soled shoe for squash. The quick rotation, back and front movement, puts a lot of pressure on the foot. The thin-soled shoe will prevent you from twisting your ankle.

Achilles Stretch

Achilles Stretch Facing a wall, stand with one leg in front of the other. The back leg should be kept straight with the heel flat on the floor. Bend your front knee keeping your hands on the wall. Lean toward the front knee, keeping the back foot and heel flat. Hold for 10 seconds. Repeat with the other leg. This will keep your foot flexible and avoid injuries that take place due to the constant thumping of your foot on the floor while playing.

Calf Stretch

Calf Stretch Get in a push up position, but put one knee on the ground. Put your weight on the toes of your other foot and then push the heel down until you feel a slight pull. Hold that position for a count of 10. Repeat thrice with each leg.

Hamstring Stretch

Hamstring Stretch Sitting on the floor, place one leg straight out in front of you. Bend the other leg alongside to form a triangle. With a straight back, bend from your hips, and touch the toe of your straight leg with both hands and hold for 20 seconds. Power & flexibility of movement depends on the strength of the hamstring. This injury occurs more frequently than others as athletes strive to attain high speed & flexibility and in doing so enormous pressure is put on this muscle.

Quadricep Stretch

Quadricep Stretch Standing, bend your right knee and bring it towards your buttock holding your foot with your right hand. Hold for 20 seconds. It is important to remember to keep your back straight and knees together. The opposite muscle to the hamstring, this muscle gives you the power to move on court.

Groin Stretch

Groin Stretch Sitting, put the soles of your feet together, with your knees as close as possible to the ground. Hold your ankles for 10 seconds. Repeat thrice. A Flexible Groin helps one to move freely taking big steps and moving swiftly on court.

Back Stretch

Back Stretch Lying on your back, raise one leg and holding it below the knee, slowly bring it up to your chest. Keeping your other leg straight and your head on the ground, hold this position for 8 seconds. Repeat thrice with each leg. While moving, a lot of the pressure falls on the back. Thus by keeping it strong & flexible you will be able to play for a long, long time.

Shoulder Stretch

Shoulder Stretch a. Move one arm across your body, hold the elbow of the arm in motion with your other hand and gently pull the arm further across your body to your shoulder. Hold for 10 seconds and repeat thrice with each arm. b. Arms overhead, hold the elbow of one arm with the hand of the other arm. Gently pull your elbow behind your head, stretching it and keep it for 15 seconds. The power generated in your stroke starts from the shoulder (back-swing). Keeping it strong & flexible will enable you to swing freely.

Arm Stretch

Extend your right arm straight out in front of you, palm downward. With the left hand, grasp the fingers of the right hand and pull back gently, stretching the wrist and forearm. Repeat with the left arm. The point of contact with the ball is controlled by the arm. A flexible & strong forearm will enable you to improve control of the ball and deception.

Neck Stretch

Turn your head to the side, touching your shoulder with your chin. Turn head back to center and repeat to the other side. Do this thrice. This will enable you to keep your eyes on the ball at all times.

Don't get lazy!

Even when you get to the club late - take the time to stretch properly.

And finally - Have fun!

Your friend, Cyrus
