



# COVID-19 Guidance for Tennis Players

during Step 1 of The Northern Ireland Executive  
Approach to Removing the Covid-19 Restrictions



# Step 1

## Return to Restricted Play Always follow the Government Guidelines of Good Hand Hygiene – Respiratory Etiquette – Social Distancing

The guidelines in this document relate to Step 1 of the Northern Ireland Executive Approach to Removing the Covid-19 Restrictions.

### This step:

1. Permits sporting activity in open outdoor public sports amenities (e.g. pitches, tennis courts, golf courses etc.) where social distancing can be maintained
2. Permits people to engage in outdoor sporting and fitness activities, either individually or in very small groups (maximum 4-6 people), where social distancing can be maintained and where there is no contact

This practical guide, prepared by our team in consultation with international norms and medical experts, outlines the robust measures Tennis Ireland would like clubs to implement and coaches and players maintain to help safeguard staff and members during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The measures, which relate to Step 1 of the Northern Ireland Executive Approach to Removing the Covid-19 Restrictions, cover each step of the journey from home to the club gate and back home again.

These measures should be in place seven days a week and until further notice.

Our measures and procedures are under constant review and updated as advice from government, health authorities and governing bodies evolves in line with the gradual lifting of social restrictions.

### Before you Play

You must stay at home if you:

- Have been in contact with someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days
- Have been overseas or exposed to someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days
- Have flu-like symptoms or are feeling unwell

You must:

- Check with your GP prior to playing if you are in a high-risk health category
- Find out what protocols are in place at the club
- Ensure your club has up-to-date contact details for you

Note: Frontline workers can play but should personally assess the risk of passing on infection and follow recommended NHS Guidelines

### Attending Tennis Activities

- Pre book your court online or via phone
- Only people core to playing should attend tennis activities such as players, participants, coaches and operational personnel
- Arrive and leave as close as possible to when you are due on court
- Play should be limited to singles only during this phase of the reopening. The only exception for doubles play is if playing partners are from the same household. Further doubles play will be considered in future stages of reopening.
- Players should arrive ready to play as their will be no access to dressing rooms during this phase
- Players should ensure that they utilise toilet facilities in their own home prior to arriving at the club as toilet facilities will not be available during this phase.
- Players should, ideally, bring a small bottle of hand sanitizer with them and keep it in their pocket of bag for use.
- Juniors, under 18 years, must be supervised by a parent / guardian in this stage of reopening.

### Social Distancing Behaviours

To protect against infection:

- Players must refrain from handshakes and high fives
- Keep 2 metres away from other people at all times
- Do not share food, towels and drinks
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or hand-sanitiser when available, before and after eating, after going to the toilet, sneezing and coughing
- Cover your coughs and sneezes and dispose of any used tissue in your own bag and bring it home with you
- Avoid touching your face
- Keep your distance from people who are obviously sick
- Try not to touch any surfaces, but if you do sanitise your hands as soon as possible
- Change ends at opposite sides of the net. If this is not possible then do not change ends.
- Use two sets of clearly marked tennis balls. These should be alternated for serving with each player only touching their individual tennis balls.
- Use your racquet / foot to pick up balls and hit them to your opponent. Avoid using your hands to pick up the balls.
- Remain apart from other players when taking a break.
- If a ball from another court comes across, send it back with a kick or with a racquet.

### When Play Finishes

- Once play has finished players should leave the club promptly
- Hands should be washed and sanitised as soon as possible
- Ensure equipment is cleaned thoroughly after use. Tennis balls can be sprayed with a disinfectant
- If a player becomes unwell after playing, they should first contact their GP/NHS and then inform their club. The club will then follow advice provided to them by the NHS on the next steps
- Members should be encouraged to remind other members of the guidelines, in a gentle way, when they witness poor practices. Repeated poor practice should be reported to the club as soon as possible

### Tennis Balls

- Practice caution with the Tennis Balls
- Although there is no specific evidence that tennis balls can spread COVID-19, we know that contamination from respiratory droplets from an infected person can potentially survive on hard surfaces for up to three days.
- Replace balls if someone suspected of having COVID 19 comes in contact with them
- Consider spraying balls with a disinfectant spray at the conclusion of play. Using new balls on a very regular basis is highly encouraged.



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