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Health benefits of tennis

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Tennis is one of the most popular sports throughout the world, with approximately 75 million participants worldwide. It is a sport that you can play at every age and at every level. Children can start playing from the age of 4, using softer/slower balls and smaller rackets on modified courts (tennis10s, mini-tennis, tenniskids and so on) to make the game easier and more fun, gradually progressing after age 10 to regular rackets, balls and courts. Seniors can come to the sport at any age and can play all their life, with international tournaments up to the age categories of 80+ and even 85+. For the elite player, there are tournaments all over the world. The Association of Tennis Professionals and Women's Tennis Association offer 62 and 59 tournaments in 31 and 33 countries, respectively, whereas the International Tennis Federation (ITF) Men's and Women's Circuit offer 600+ and 500+ tournaments across 77 and 65 countries, respectively. There are over 210 nations affiliated to the ITF, and in 2017, 134 nations participated in the Davis Cup, making it the world's largest annual international team competition in sport.

A large majority of the people who play tennis continue playing all their life, and tennis is therefore an ideal sport to improve physical activity levels of the general population, with associated health benefits.[1–3] These health benefits of tennis are shown in the infographic below.

INCREASED BRAIN POWER

From alertness to tactical thinking, tennis enhances the neural connections in your brain. Kids who play tennis regularly get better grades.

BETTER HAND–EYE COORDINATION

Playing tennis involves regular skills that all contribute to good hand–eye coordination. You can improve your agility, balance, coordination, reaction time and more.

REDUCED STRESS

Tennis involves physical, mental, social and emotional challenges, which increase your capacity to deal with stress.

STRONG HEART

Compared with other sports, tennis players have the lowest incidence of cardiovascular disease. Playing just 3 hours a week will reduce your risk of heart disease by 56%.[4]

HIGHER FITNESS LEVELS

Playing tennis on a regular basis (2–3 times/week), either singles or doubles, meets the global exercise recommendations and leads to increased fitness levels.[5] The typical interval nature of tennis, which has been shown to occur in both elite and recreational tennis play, has a favourable effect even for recreational players.

LEANER BODY

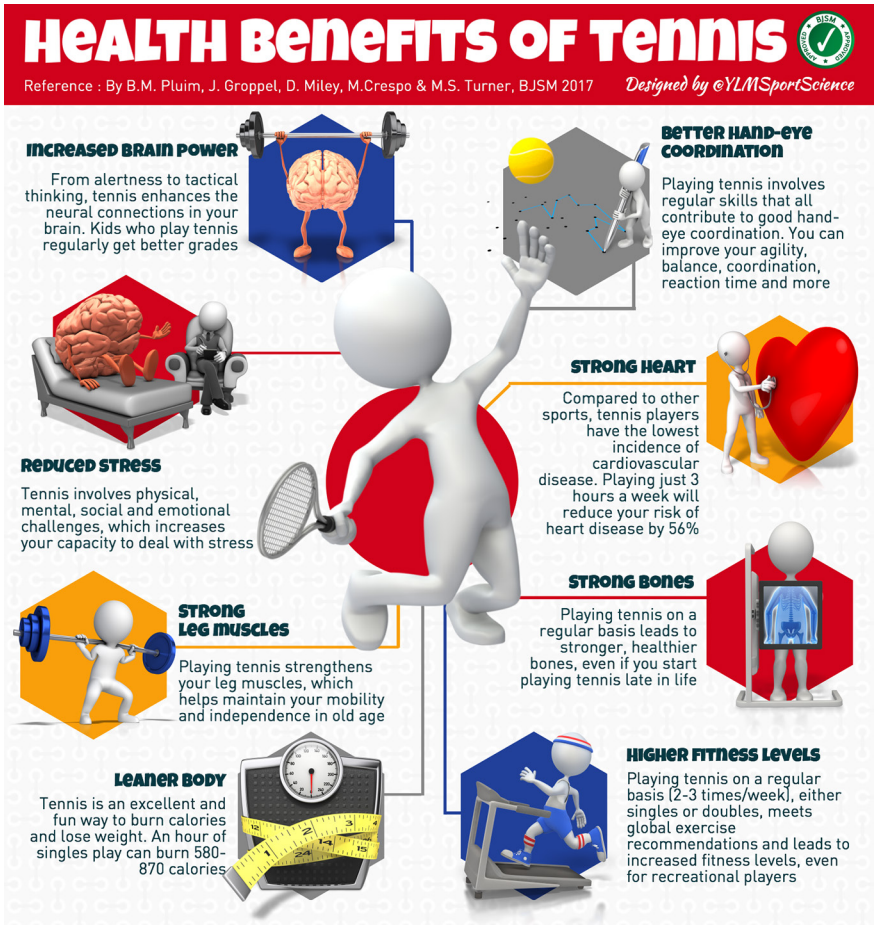
Tennis is an excellent and fun way to burn calories and lose weight. An hour of singles play can burn 580–870 calories.

STRONG BONES

Playing tennis on a regular basis leads to stronger, healthier bones. This effect is strongest in those who play tennis from an early age, but even if you start playing tennis later in life you can benefit from the positive effect on your bones.

STRONG LEG MUSCLES

Playing tennis strengthens your leg muscles, which helps maintain your mobility and independence in old age.



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