

PHYSIOTHERAPY ASSESSMENT

FOR PADEL PLAYERS

Understanding Your Body to Stay on Court



WHY PADEL PUTS YOUR BODY TO WORK

1

Lateral Movements

Constant side-to-side shuffling and split-steps load your ankles and knees from multiple angles

2

Overhead Shots

Bandeja, vibora and smash require full shoulder range of motion under load — dozens per match

3

Explosive Direction Changes

Sprinting from the net to the back wall and sudden stops stress calves, Achilles and knees

4

Repetitive Grip & Wrist Work

Every shot loads your forearm extensors — cold tendons under stress from the first point

THE INJURY LANDSCAPE

40-95%

of padel players
experience injuries

3

injuries per 1,000
hours of training

8

injuries per 1,000
matches played

Most Affected Areas

Elbow

Knee

Shoulder

Lower Back

Ankle

Ranked by frequency — elbow injuries are the most common in padel

UPPER BODY HOTSPOTS

Padel Elbow

Lateral Epicondylitis

The #1 padel injury. The solid racket face transmits more vibration than a strung tennis racket.

Caused by: repetitive backhand strain, grip too small, off-centre hits, excessive grip pressure

Recovery: 4-12 weeks

Signs: pain on the outer elbow, weak grip, pain when twisting or lifting

Shoulder Strain

Rotator Cuff Tendinitis

Overhead shots (bandeja, vibora, smash) require the shoulder to generate force while raised and rotating.

Caused by: repetitive overhead movements, poor conditioning, playing through pain

Recovery: 2-8 weeks

Signs: pain in the front or side of shoulder, pain when raising arm, night-time aching

LOWER BODY HOTSPOTS

Ankle Sprains

The most common acute padel injury. Constant lateral movements and sudden direction changes stress ankle ligaments.

Recovery: 1-6 weeks

Swelling, bruising, pain on the outside of the ankle

Knee Injuries

Twisting, deep lunges and sudden stops on hard surfaces stress the knee joint, meniscus and ligaments.

Recovery: 2 weeks - 6+ months

Pain under kneecap, stiffness, swelling after play

Lower Back Strain

Poor rotation technique and core weakness lead to overload during the constant twisting movements of padel.

Recovery: 1-4 weeks

Stiffness, pain during rotation, discomfort after play

WHAT A PHYSIO ASSESSMENT COVERS

01 Movement Screening

Evaluates how you move — range of motion, flexibility and joint stability

02 Strength Testing

Identifies muscle imbalances in shoulders, core, hips and legs

03 Functional Assessment

Sport-specific tests: lateral agility, overhead reach, balance and landing mechanics

04 Risk Profile

Combines findings into a personalised injury risk score and action plan





YOUR 10-MINUTE PRE-MATCH WARM-UP

A structured warm-up reduces sports injury rates by 36%

Phase 1 2-3 min

Raise Heart Rate

Light jog, skipping, jumping jacks

Phase 2 5-7 min

Dynamic Stretches

Leg swings, walking lunges, arm circles, torso rotations

Phase 3 2-3 min

Court Activation

Mini rallies at net, gentle volleys, lateral shuffles

No static stretching before play — save it for after the match

INJURY PREVENTION EXERCISES

2-3 times per week or 10 minutes before each session

Ankle Stability

Single-Leg Balance With Reach

Stand on one leg, reach the other in a clock pattern. 8-10 reaches per leg.

Elbow Protection

Eccentric Wrist Curls

Slowly lower a light weight with palm down. 3 sets of 15 reps daily.

Shoulder Health

Band External Rotations

External rotations with resistance band at 90°. 3 sets of 12 each side.

Knee & Hip Strength

Lateral Lunges With Hold

Deep side lunge, hold 2 seconds at bottom. 10 each side.

Core & Back

Standing Med Ball Rotations

Controlled torso rotations with med ball. 3 sets of 10 each direction.

WHEN TO SEE A PHYSIOTHERAPIST

Warning Signs

- Pain lasting more than 2 weeks
- Swelling that doesn't go down after 48 hours
- Joint instability or giving way
- Pain that wakes you at night
- Numbness, tingling or weakness
- Pain that gets worse with each session

How a Physio Helps

- Accurate diagnosis — root cause, not just symptoms
- Tailored strengthening and conditioning plan
- Movement and technique correction
- Hands-on treatment: manual therapy, dry needling, taping
- Safe return-to-play plan with measurable milestones

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1 Padel is low-impact but not injury-free — elbow, shoulder, ankle and knee are the most common sites
- 2 Most injuries are overuse problems that build up over weeks — they're largely preventable
- 3 A 10-minute structured warm-up before every session cuts injury risk by over a third
- 4 Targeted exercises 2-3 times per week build resilience in ankles, shoulders, core and knees
- 5 Don't play through persistent pain — early physio assessment prevents chronic problems