



Considerations For Safer Racquetball Play

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USA Racquetball understands that the opportunity to return to the courts safely will occur in some cities and states sooner than others. USA Racquetball recognizes that COVID-19 is affecting different areas of the country at different levels and phases. In conjunction with the Federal Government's "Opening Up America Again" approach, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/openingamerica/>, and if your area racquet club is within local government mandates to open, racquetball can once again become the sport we love that provides exercise, stress relief, reconnection, and in-person social interaction. We want to do our part to help players stay safer on and off the court. Please ensure that your local government mandates allow racquetball in their current Phase of "Opening Up America Again."

USA Racquetball has created a list of **Considerations for Safer Racquetball Play** in conjunction with recommendations from the following groups:

- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**
- **World Health Organization (WHO)**
- **National Strength & Conditioning Association (NSCA)**
- **United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee (USOPC)**
- **International Olympic Committee (IOC)**

By following these considerations, as well as mandates of local governments and health agencies, racquetball clubs and their players will be better prepared to make safer and more informed decisions when they are able to resume play.

CONSIDERATIONS PRIOR TO PLAYING RACQUETBALL

- Continue to adhere to state and local guidance as well as complementary CDC guidance, particularly with respect to face coverings.
- The best racquetball opponents are family members or others who live in the same household, or individuals who are considered to be low risk.
- Allow for extra warm-up time. Ease back into playing. After weeks/months of not competing and/or training, take your time ramping up to your previous racquetball routine. This will help reduce likelihood of injury or overtraining.
- Bring a personal water bottle instead of drinking directly from the community water fountain.
- Please do not play racquetball if any of the following apply:

- Currently testing positive for COVID-19 or exhibiting any symptoms of COVID-19: mild to severe respiratory illness with fever, cough and difficulty breathing, or other symptoms identified by the CDC.
- Have been in contact with someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days.
- Are a vulnerable individual and your state/region are in early phase levels. A vulnerable individual is an elderly individual and/or an individual with serious underlying health conditions, including but not limited to high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, obesity, asthma, and those whose immune system is compromised such as by chemotherapy for cancer and other conditions requiring such therapy. (For states and regions in Phase Three, a vulnerable individual can resume public interactions, including playing racquetball, but should practice physical distancing.)

CONSIDERATIONS FOR SAFER RACQUETBALL PLAY

- Play outdoor racquetball (fewer walls and less confinement). Consider playing an opponent from your same household. A family member or roommate might be the safest opponent, exposure-wise, as racquetball ramps up.
- Have one player designated as the “door opener/closer.” That person opens and closes the door between games and during timeouts.
- No shaking hands before or after games. No high fives or fist bumps after rallies.
- Play singles. Doubles may create incidental contact and close proximity.
- If you do play doubles, avoid close whispering/strategizing and consider each partner covering an exclusive area of the court (left/right or front/back). This will help reduce the possibility of physical contact between players.
- Wear a glove on both hands. Try not to touch your face after making contact with a ball, racquet, wall, etc. Wash your hands promptly before touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. Handwashing is the best defense, but considering keeping a small bottle of sanitizer in your bag to use until you can get to a sink and soap.
- Use more than one racquetball.
 - For Singles. Use two balls, one for each player. Use either a different color ball or make a marking on each ball with a Sharpie to differentiate. Each player serves their own ball. When receiving, a player keeps their ball in their pocket or safely in a back corner out of play.
 - For Doubles. Same as Singles, but with four balls.

Note: There is no evidence that racquetballs can spread COVID-19, but we have provided these suggestions for using multiple racquetballs when playing as we do know that respiratory droplets from an infected person can, perhaps, survive on a solid surface for up to three days.
- Do not pick up your opponent's ball with your hands. Use your racquet/foot to pick up balls and hit or kick them to your opponent.
- If a ball flies onto your court from another court, do not pick it up. Use your racquet or foot to send the ball to the door. The “door opener/closer” will open the door and put the ball in the hallway for the other court to retrieve.
- If you hit a ball onto another court, the “door opener/closer” can go retrieve it. Do not enter another court that is in use. Wait for them to move the ball into the hallway.

- Do not share balls, racquets, food, drinks, towels, etc.
- Keep a six-foot distance from your opponent and other players in the hallway before, after, and in between games.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR AFTER PLAYING RACQUETBALL

- Exit the court after play ends. Leave the court as soon as reasonably possible.
- Wash and sanitize your hands after exiting the court. Shower at home.
- Keep a six-foot distance if socializing after play. Limit post-game social engagement. Players should leave the racquetball club without delay after their match.

For clubs and tournament directors, please refer also to the USA Racquetball companion document entitled **Considerations for Safer Racquetball Tournaments**.

Be sure to check back with USA Racquetball periodically for updated content as it comes available.

These considerations should not be considered all-inclusive and should not be interpreted as medical advice. Clubs and players are encouraged to take additional safety measures as may be recommended by local governments and health agencies to make racquetball as safe an activity as possible in the midst of uncertain times.