



# BEFORE YOU PLAY

## **Warm Up and Stretch**

Before you get out on the court take a little time to do some sort of warm-up and stretching routine. Start with some low-impact cardio, like walking or riding your bike to the courts, followed by a few minutes of stretching. Proper warm-up and stretching will help you to prevent injuries like muscle strain and tears and help you to play better. Our park offers some excellent classes that focus on stretching, balance and strengthening exercises including Bruce Kimmell's "Morning Stretch" and Ben Lindholm's "Tai Chi Gong" class.

## **Water/Hydration/Electrolytes**

During warm weather and/or rigorous play it's easy to get dehydrated and lose your electrolytes, resulting in muscle cramps and other physical problems. Be sure to bring plenty of water with you, along with some sort of sports drinks (or supplements) for electrolyte replenishment. Once you lose your electrolytes it takes a long time to replace them, so stay on top of it and hydrant frequently while playing. Bananas can also help, and some people find that mustard, apple cider vinegar or pickle juice can reduce or eliminate cramps if they do occur.

## **Footwear**

Wear appropriate footwear. This would include court shoes or cross trainers (with rounded rather than sharp-angled edges) and good support. Sandals, flip-flops, street shoes and tennis shoes with sharp annular bottoms are a recipe for disaster and can cause falls resulting in major injury. Court shoes can be found at popular sporting goods stores, tennis shops, and on-line sites. Our courts are hard on shoes, so if you play a lot you may want to invest in brands that offer a warranty, which varies depending on the manufacturer.

## **Eyewear Protection and Headwear**

Wear eye protection! Sunglasses are usually adequate to help prevent eye injuries due to errant balls. Yellow shooting glasses or clear or tinted biking glasses work well during cloudy weather and at night. It's a good idea to wear or bring along a hat or visor to block the sun. You may not always get the option of playing on the side you want because the sun is in your eyes, so be prepared.