

Health and Wellness Benefits of Pickleball



Pickleball is an engaging sport that blends elements of tennis, badminton, and table tennis, and is rapidly gaining popularity, particularly among older adults. Its growth reflects a broader trend towards inclusive, low-impact activities that promote overall health and wellness. Here's why pickleball is an excellent choice for people of all ages and athletes seeking to enhance their well-being.

What is Pickleball?

Pickleball is played on a smaller court with a paddle and a perforated plastic ball. It can be enjoyed in both singles and doubles formats, making it a versatile option for players of all skill levels.

Who is it for?

While pickleball is suitable for all ages, it has become particularly popular among seniors due to its low-impact nature and social appeal. However, the benefits extend to adults and athletes of various backgrounds who are looking for a manageable yet effective way to stay active.

Health and Wellness Benefits

- 1. Physical Fitness:** Pickleball offers a comprehensive workout that improves cardiovascular health, strengthens muscles, and enhances flexibility. For adults and athletes, it provides a practical way to achieve the recommended 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise per week. The game helps manage weight, supports bone health and lowers the risk of chronic conditions, making it a valuable addition to any fitness routine.
- 2. Joint Protection:** Unlike high-impact sports, pickleball's low-impact nature reduces stress on joints. This makes it an ideal choice for those recovering from injuries or dealing with joint concerns. The sport's gentle movements can aid in rehabilitation and prevent further strain.
- 3. Mental Health:** Engaging in pickleball also has positive effects on mental health. The physical activity involved boosts mood, reduces stress and enhances cognitive function. The social aspect of the game fosters connections and combats feelings of isolation, contributing to overall emotional well-being.

Growth of Pickleball

Pickleball's rapid expansion is evident from its increasing player base. The number of participants in the U.S. rose from 3.5 million in 2019 to 8.9 million in 2022, with projections suggesting a rise to 22 million this year. This growth can be attributed to several factors:

- 1. Accessibility:** Pickleball is easy to learn and requires minimal equipment, making it accessible to a wide audience. Its low-impact nature is particularly appealing to those looking for a less strenuous alternative to other sports.
- 2. Community and Social Engagement:** The sport's inclusive and social nature attracts players from various backgrounds. It provides a fun and engaging way to stay active while building social connections.
- 3. Seasonal Appeal:** Pickleball's popularity increases during warmer months and is especially favored in regions with large senior populations.

Considerations for Injury Prevention

While pickleball offers numerous benefits, it's important to be aware of potential injuries. Common issues include sprains, strains and fractures, particularly among older players. To maximize benefits and minimize risks, focus on proper technique, using appropriate equipment, and incorporate injury prevention strategies.

Conclusion

Pickleball is more than just a recreational activity; it's a valuable component of a healthy lifestyle for active adults and athletes alike. Its ability to combine physical exercise with social interaction makes it an effective way to enhance overall well-being. As the sport continues to grow, ensuring safe play and addressing potential injuries will be key to sustaining its positive impact on health and wellness.

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