

Pilates for Squash Players: How to Improve Your Game

By Amy Sommer, Pilates Instructor

At Seattle Athletic Club, we are widely recognized for our superior squash program. More than 500 members compete in tournaments, and many people seek out our club to study with the legendary Khan family. Coincidentally, Seattle Athletic Club also has an excellent authentic Pilates program. All of the instructors have graduated from the most rigorous authentic training program, under the tutelage of master teachers hand-picked by Joseph Pilates and his protégés. The common denominator here is the availability to receive the best cross-training method in addition to the best squash instruction.

So, how can Pilates improve your squash game? Racket sports, by nature, are repeatedly one-sided. Half of the body, generally speaking, is used more than the other half. Also, the rotation required in the torso, let alone the extremities, is significant in the game of squash. Furthermore, the mental focus and physical stamina required in squash is crucial to the outcome.

Pilates is designed to work the body evenly, building strength in the torso to aide in the mobility of the entire body. A program of specific exercises will work the body more uniformly in order to prevent overdevelopment of one side. The custom Pilates workout will also strengthen the deep abdominal muscles providing a stable base from which to hit the ultimate 'kill shot'. The range of motion through the middle of the body is improved upon during every Pilates exercise, as the core initiates all movement. The shoulders and upper back, typically a difficult region to stretch, will gain flexibility through precise movements that will subsequently enhance far-reaching swings, and your ability to reach that drop shot.

The focus required for your Pilates workout will increase your focus on the court. The ability to decelerate in your Pilates workout in order to develop the specificity of the work, will inherently improve your concentration in any fast paced sport. You will, perhaps, be able to anticipate and prepare shots that were once more hurried and less skillful. Also, the breath control that is essential to your Pilates workout, will enhance your innate ability to find that last energetic lungful in order to successfully complete the game.

The benefits of Pilates will follow you through your daily routine, condition your body so that you stay injury-free, and will clearly aide in the mastering of your chosen sport. Squash is a challenging game of athleticism, and Pilates is clearly a 'straight drive' to your success!

