



A POTENT BLEND: Practising yoga has helped Novak Djokovic develop his remarkable strength, balance and flexibility.

A HOLISTIC APPROACH

Novak Djokovic has relied on a holistic approach that incorporates yoga to maintain his long-term dominance. **NATHAN** and **GISELLE MARTIN** explain how players of all standards can benefit from his positive example.

It is great to see how much tennis has evolved off court in the past five years.

We see players focusing more on their health and recovery than ever before. Players such as Novak Djokovic have opened up avenues for other athletes to explore.

The world No.1 advocates healthy eating, following a gluten, dairy and sugar-free diet. Djokovic also practises yoga and meditates. Such lifestyle choices keep him balanced and on top of his game.

Yoga has been around for centuries and it has many benefits. For tennis players, it helps elongate muscle tissue, improves balance and co-ordination. Due to the focus on breathing, when practiced regularly it improves player's ability to breath more effectively, which helps with recovery between points.

We have developed our own tennis yoga program that we have been using with our tennis players for many years. There is a misconception that yoga is only for the middle aged, however we have had some fantastic results from our players as young as 10 years old.

It's great to use as a workout or even to recover after a hard match or training

session. It sets their pathway for years to come.

Try these four tennis yoga poses for 10 days straight. Start by holding the poses for 20 seconds and then build to 40 second holds for each exercise.

Try to complete two-three sets of these for the 10 days straight and see for yourself, how your flexibility, balance and strength improves.

Performing these exercises on a regular basis, you will be surprised how you will increase mobility in your joints and lengthen muscles throughout the body, which will enable you to maintain optimal functional movement.

Your shot execution and control will improve and you will feel more balance over the ball.



▲ 1. STAR POINTER

FOCUS:

Hip flexors, lumbar, pectorals, latissimus

TIPS:

- ▶ Drive hip forward as far as possible
- ▶ Stretch arm away from body as far as possible
- ▶ Allow lumbar to extend



◀ 2. WARRIOR POSE

FOCUS:

Trunk rotators, gluteals, hamstring, adductors, balance

TIPS:

- ▶ Wide leg base
- ▶ Drive front knee forward as far as possible
- ▶ Rotate torso as far as is comfortable



◀ 3. SPLIT POSE

FOCUS:

Hip flexors, latissimus, shoulders, balance

TIPS:

- ▶ Wide leg base
- ▶ Drive hip forward
- ▶ Stretch up pushing arms away from the body as far as possible



▶ 4. STRONG POINTER 2

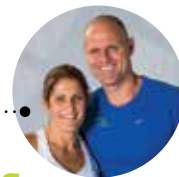
FOCUS:

Hamstring, shoulder stability, balance

TIPS:

- ▶ Keep hips in neutral
- ▶ Keep leg as straight as possible
- ▶ Maintain a straight back
- ▶ Draw arms back by recruiting posterior shoulder muscles and hold

If you would like more specific yoga exercises that can help improve your flexibility, balance and core strength, we have just released our new "Tennis Fitness Yoga Program" which has over 14 exercises. Check it out at yoga.tennisfitness.com **ATM**



STAR TRAINERS

NATHAN AND GISELLE MARTIN, of Tennis Fitness, have been in the health and fitness industry for 20 years. They travelled on the WTA Tour for numerous years and also worked at the Sanchez Casal Tennis Academy in Barcelona, Spain. They've worked with Sam Stosur, Svetlana Kuznetsova, Jennifer Capriati, Arantxa Sanchez Vicario, Monica Seles, Martina Navratilova, Casey Dellacqua and Lleyton Hewitt. For further information and for previous articles, visit tennisfitness.com.

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