

Sports Physiotherapist Procedures

W/M15, M25, W35, W50, W75

A. Prior to the Tournament

1. Complete the ITF Physiotherapy Education Module on the ITF Academy – available here: <https://www.itf-academy.com/index.php?academy=103&course=4116>

All users will need an active ITF Academy account to access the course. You can register on the ITF Academy site. This course needs to be completed every second year and a valid certificate shown to the ITF Supervisor on arrival at the tournament.

This module will take you through all the areas you need to be aware of to be a Sports Physiotherapist at a successful ITF event. This includes information on your roles and responsibilities as physio, tournament preparation and physio room set up, physio room and on court supplies, the Medical Time Out rule and information regarding common tennis injuries and commonly used taping techniques in tennis.

2. Complete the ITF Introduction to Safeguarding Children in Tennis online module on the ITF Academy – available here: <https://www.itf-academy.com/?academy=103&course=1711>

The course takes 20-45 minutes to complete and gives an overview of what safeguarding is, how to recognise signs of abuse and poor practice and who to report those concerns to. It supports our Safeguarding Policies which can be found on the Safeguarding pages of the ITF website. This course only needs to be completed once.

3. Read the ***ITF Guide to Recommended Health Care Standards for Tennis Tournaments*** – available here: https://www.itftennis.com/media/1989/itf_care_guidelines_2023-english.pdf

This guide will provide additional information about Treatment Area Requirements, Medical Treatments, Nutrition, Weather Monitoring and Infection Control Guidelines.

4. Communicate with the Tournament Organiser to ensure all of the requirements in the guidelines above are being followed for the tournament.
5. Order medical supplies. A list of required items is in Appendix 2 of the above guide.
6. Ensure the tournament has a sling psychrometer or wet bulb to measure the heat index each day or has a plan to attain this information from a local weather station / airport.
7. Ensure the tournament has an Automated External Defibrillator (AED).
8. Ensure the tournament has a treatment table available for each physiotherapist.
9. Get contact details for the Tournament Doctor and local ambulance service and hospital and ensure a Medical Emergency Action Plan (MEAP) is in place. Example of an MEAP is available as Appendix 1 at the end of this document.
10. Speak with the Tournament Doctor and discuss when and how the Doctor will be available and the best way to communicate with them for routine appointments and in

emergencies. Discuss the MEAP.

B. Upon Arrival at the Tournament

Upon arrival at the Tournament Site or hotel, contact the ITF Supervisor to arrange a meeting to determine the following (note: you can pre-arrange a meeting time via email):

1. Show the valid certificates from completing the ITF Physiotherapy Education Module and Introduction to Safeguarding Children in Tennis Module.
2. The match schedule and start times each day.
3. How to obtain transportation to/from site each day.
4. Where to pick up credentials .
5. Where to locate supplies if sent to site.
6. Ensure you have the Tournament Doctor contact details and local emergency numbers as well as directions to the hospital.

C. On site at the Tournament

1. Set up the treatment area, locate supplies, unpack, set up equipment, copy necessary paperwork and post signs (ITF specific Physically Speaking Topics are on the ITF website, signs are available to download from the ITF Physiotherapy Education Program - print off copies before travelling). **The Physio should arrive 1 hour prior to matches and should be available 30 minutes after matches.**
2. Make sure you have a good supply of clean towels, ice, water, plastic bags for ice, paper towels, soap etc., available in the training room each day.
3. There should be a Sports Massage Therapist (MT) available to do massage for the players. This will free you up to concentrate on treating players. If an MT is not available, then it will be necessary for you to undertake soft tissue work for injury prevention purposes.
4. Meet with the Tournament Doctor to discuss procedure for attending to players, discuss the emergency action plan and how it will be enacted if required.
5. ***Important: Sports Physiotherapists must not dispense any medication. Any medication brought onsite by the Tournament Doctor must be locked away when the Sport Physiotherapist/Doctor is not present in the treatment area.***
6. Meet with the ITF Supervisor/ Chief Official to get your walkie talkie and to determine how you will be notified for court calls.
7. Walk around the courts and familiarize yourself with the court numbering and how to access each court. Determine where an ambulance may be situated and in cases of emergency how each court can be accessed by the emergency services. It is recommended to rehearse the Medical Emergency Action Plan with the Tournament Doctor and ITF Supervisor before matches start on the first day. See details on Medical Emergency Meeting in Appendix 1.

D. Physiotherapy Room Set Up

Set up the Physiotherapy room to enable you to move freely around the treatment beds and to have supplies and information readily accessible.

1. Taping/supplies table (lay everything out to enable you to work with a few rolls at a time – store the rest in the box under the table). **No medications should be given.**
2. Treatment beds – ensure a clean treatment bed is available for each physiotherapist, preferably high-low bed (electric or hydraulic) in good working condition.
3. Make sure you have a good supply of clean towels, ice, water, plastic bags for ice, paper towels, soap etc., available in the training room each day.
4. Desk [with lockable drawer]
5. Internet with high-speed access if possible.
6. Phone numbers for doctor, emergency services etc. and relevant off-site numbers.
7. Ice – have an ice box/freezer with ice bags close to training room and/or within view – enabling you to check players who are icing, but who haven't asked for treatment.

E. Prioritising

1. **Medical emergencies and court calls take priority over all treatments.** In all other cases players must be treated on a “first come, first served” basis subject to:
 - a. players getting ready for matches have priority over players waiting for regular treatment, rehabilitation or cool-down;
 - b. players who have lost in the tournament may be treated, but only after the needs of players still in the tournament have been met.
2. Speak to all players entering the treatment room and find out their needs so you can prioritise. Reassure players required to wait that you will help them in due course.
3. On Finals day, your priority is the players competing on that day. You will be required to sit courtside during the singles & doubles finals. Arrive two hours in advance of the first final to attend to players and to pack up remaining supplies.

F. Interpersonal Communication

1. All Sport Physiotherapists are expected to maintain the highest level of professionalism:
 - a. Continuing Professional Development maintained and up to date
 - b. Membership of professional associations
 - c. Insurance cover of adequate level for elite athletes
 - d. No request for photographs or autographs from players
 - e. Maintain player-therapist confidentiality
 - f. Gratuities may not be accepted
2. On arriving at the site and before leaving the site each day, please check with the ITF Supervisor and Tournament Director to see if they have any questions (however do not break player medical confidentiality at any time).

3. Please print off the players treatment plan (SOAP) note for them to give to their next therapist if going to their next ITF or WTA/ ATP event or home for ongoing care.

G. Breaks

Each Sports Physiotherapist is entitled to a 30 min break for lunch and dinner, to be taken at a time determined appropriate by the Sports Physiotherapist. If working on your own: when taking a break, place a sign on the door to inform players where you are and do not leave the site. You should also notify the ITF Supervisor when you are taking a break. Breaks should not be taken within the first hour of the working day.

If you are the only physiotherapist, please make sure you have your walkie talkie with you and your court kit so you can respond to court calls during your break. Please be flexible to the needs of the players – thank you.

H. Documentation

IMPORTANT – Ensure daily treatment log sheets are filled out with **ALL** treatment and advice given duly recorded.

I. Hydration

Hang signs for hydration and Sports Drink close together within the Physiotherapy room.

J. Therex Area

If you are fortunate enough to have a large treatment room/adjoining area, we encourage you to set up a wobble cushion, theraband, foam roller, Swiss ball, etc., for use by players if you have them available.

K. Signs

ITF information signs and leaflets are available on the ITF website and within the ITF Physiotherapy Education Program. Please familiarize yourself with them so that you can refer players to them as required. Please print off and hang signs that are more relevant to your tournament such as Heat and Altitude related topics.

<https://www.itftennis.com/en/about-us/tennis-tech/science-and-medicine/>

L. Court Preparation

Courts should have:

- a) Individually sealed containers of bottled water, supplied in coolers
- b) Ice and Ice bags kept in coolers
- c) Towels
- d) Individually sealed container Sports Drinks (Anti-Doping compliant) may be provided by tournament or available to purchase at the tournament.
- e) Umbrellas to provide on court shade

It is our job to remind tournament staff to set courts up correctly. Spot checks are advisable! Also make sure you know the closest AED location to each court.

M. Wet-bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT) Calculations

To conform to the Extreme Weather Regulation (Appendix F) of the ITF World Tennis Tour Regulations, the tournament must have a temperature and humidity recording device (e.g. sling psychrometer) to measure the Heat Index. A Heat Stress Meter is the preferred method of measuring Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT).

Typically, there is a sunlight exposure setting on the device which should be selected depending on whether the measurement is taken in direct sunlight or in the shade. The device should be held/mounted approximately 1 m above the ground and allowed to acclimatise for 2-3 minutes before the measurement is recorded. Alternatively, there must be access to the local airport weather report, and the Heat Index can be determined from the Heat Index Chart (see Appendix 1).

Open the following link then add it to your favourites so you can use it to calculate the WBGT. It will tell you if the rule is in or out. http://www.zunis.org/WTA/WTA_SP_F.htm

Please be careful when entering the data to the heat readings form. Enter the dry temperature taken from the dry bulb, the humidity which is the % number on the calculator (not the wet thermometer) then the WBGT from the calculator, the weather cloud cover are entered into the calculator, then if the heat rule is IN or OUT, then lastly if there were any heat illness cases during this time. The Heat readings form can be downloaded from the ITF Physiotherapy Education Program.

N. Anti-Doping

Sports Physios MUST NOT provide medication to players and must not advise on Antidoping Questions. Players that have questions about Anti-Doping should be directed to go to the ITIA website. <https://www.itia.tennis/tadp/>

Tournament Doctors should be aware of the prohibited list before prescribing any medication to a player. Players should be encouraged to download the ITIA Anti-Doping app.

Appendix 1 – ITF MEDICAL EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN (MEAP)

Purpose:

Medical emergencies and acute injuries may occur at any time during the tennis event. The emergency action plan is in place to ensure timely and effective delivery of medical care in cases of severe and or life-threatening injury/ illness. Competence in carrying out this action plan includes (but is not limited to) the following:

- Formulating and actioning a clear communication plan .
- Clear delegation of the roles and responsibilities of each physio and tournament personnel at your disposal – in particular who will be responsible for calling EMS in the case of emergency.
- Identify and safety check all available emergency equipment including AED, wheelchair, stretcher.
- Ensure walkie-talkies work for the full range of the venue and that the team members are proficient in use.

Emergency Meeting

It is recommended that the Tournament Physios, Tournament Doctor and onsite Ambulance Staff (if available), Tournament Director and Supervisor/ Referee complete a venue walk-through to:

- assess emergency court access across the venue and review evacuation on and off each court inclusive of wheelchair and stretch evacuation
- review location of medical equipment and medical facilities (i.e. AED, stretcher, wheelchair, etc.) An AED should ideally be available within 3 minutes of each court.
- discuss roles and responsibilities of the physio and tournament personnel.
- review action steps in case of an event
- review communication plan and
- test Walkie Talkie's/Radio's to ensure service throughout venue.

The following medical situations and action steps should be discussed within the emergency action plan:

- **Sudden cardiac arrest** - check location and operation of AED and pads
- **Heat Illness** - Transfer from court, Cooling method (ice massage V cold water immersion). Followed by hospital transport and timing of this where required.
- **Anaphylaxis** - Administration of Epinephrine (adrenaline) EMS
- **Concussion** – use of Physical Incapacity Rule
- **Dislocation/ Fracture** – evacuation from court to training room / ambulance via wheelchair/ stretcher
- **Cervical spine injury** – Role delineation, Physio, Doctor, EMS
- **On court biohazardous material (blood/vomit)** - location of spill kit and education of court staff
- **Psychiatric emergency response plan** - If an athlete were to need emergency psychiatric care, confirm hospital location and contact information of treating psychiatrist/psychologist on-call.

| EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN | |
|---|--|
| TOURNAMENT ADDRESS & DIRECTIONS | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| WHAT 3 WORDS LOCATION | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| COUNTRY SPECIFIC EMERGENCY # | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| TOURNAMENT EMERGENCY # | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| HOSPITAL NAME(S) and ADDRESS <i>*Specify if more than one depending on medical case including Emergency Psychiatric Care</i> | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| AMBULANCE, FIRST AID, & AED LOCATION(S) <i>(if not on map)</i> | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| EQUIPMENT LOCATION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AED • Wheelchair • Stretcher • Crutches | |
| WALKIE TALKIE CHANNELS | Physio: Click or tap here to enter text. Doctor: Click or tap here to enter text. EMS: Click or tap here to enter text. Sup/Referee: Click or tap here to enter text. Chair Umpire: Click or tap here to enter text. Security: Click or tap here to enter text. Court Services: Click or tap here to enter text. |
| ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES | Click or tap here to enter text. |

***PRINT AND POST WITH ACCOMPANYING VENUE MAP**

In the event a player exhibits any of the below serious or life-threatening conditions, activate the On Court Medical Emergency Plan.

- Sudden collapse
- Unresponsive or not moving
- Extreme difficulty in breathing
- Choking (usually signified by the player clutching her throat)
- Uncontrolled shaking accompanied by unresponsiveness (usually signifying a seizure)

On Court Medical Emergency Plan

- 1) Chair Umpire: Immediate notification to Physio, Tournament Doctor and Emergency Medical Services (EMS)/First Aid (if available onsite) and Supervisor of need on court due to a medical emergency.
- 2) Medical personnel arrive to activate medical care as determined during onsite emergency medical meeting
- 3) Physio may direct official staff such as the Supervisor, Referee, or Chair Umpire to:
 - a. Retrieve AED
 - b. Call EMS
 - c. Retrieve Medical Equipment
 - i. Wheelchair
 - ii. Stretcher
 - iii. Crutches
- 4) Official staff (sup/ref/chair) will communicate to security to ensure crowd control and player evacuation routes are cleared to and from the court.
- 5) Physio/ Doctor will direct evacuation of athlete to ambulance, Doctors office, or training room as required. Handoff of care to EMS & transport to hospital if necessary (Physio to make every effort to ride with athlete).