

Giving your opponent a hard time!

Tennis is played on various surfaces and often players must adapt very quickly from one to another. In this article I will explain how you could you improve your game on hard surfaces.

- **Play close to the baseline** - Clay courts favour baseliners, players who position themselves well behind the baseline and grind their opponent into an eventual error with high-bouncing topspin returns. But playing on less-forgiving hard courts, where the truer-surface absorbs less speed from the ball, position yourself closer to the baseline to play low, aggressive tennis. This also puts you in a good position to rush to the net and win the point as quickly as possible.
- **Flatten your returns** - Good players apply heavy topspin on clay resulting in bounces that go to opponent's shoulder height, making it very uncomfortable to hit it. On hard courts you want a lower, faster shot that will put the ball out of play before your opponent has a chance to return it.
- **Play offensively** - Clay court players at times can play a painfully defensive game. The fast speed of hard courts, however, promotes a more aggressive game. Playing on the hard-courts you must step up your offense, rushing the net more frequently, changing up your returns to alter the pace and constantly looking for weaknesses in your opponent's game that can work to your advantage.
- **Shorten the point** - Because of the faster pace of the game you can also use the one-handed backhand slice; this allows you time to approach the net and prepare for a winning volley.
- **Ace your first serve** - On hard courts, your first serve is your best weapon. You should vary the both the speed and the placement of your first serve, giving your opponent less time to react. Invest the time to increase the speed and accuracy of your first serve and the results will pay off in certain victories.
- **Look after your body** - It is very important to stretch thoroughly before and after play. Hard courts place a good deal of strain on the body. Limbering up your muscles and tendons help prepare your body for quick movements and change of direction that could otherwise result in injury. Finally increase your speed and stamina by regular jogging so your aerobic capacity allows you to recover quickly between points, which in a long match can have a decisive role.

Good luck to you all!

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