



FRQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION FROM BEGINNING PICKLEBALL PLAYERS

1. *Where can I buy a pickleball paddle? How much do they cost?*

Many sporting goods stores carry pickleball equipment and you can also purchase paddles from online retailers like Amazon and from specialty websites – Pickleball Central, Selkirk, Joola, and Gamma – that carry a variety of paddles. Costs range widely, from \$40 to well over \$100. If possible, try out different models and ask more experienced players for their recommendations.

Note: The Howard County Pickleball Association (HCPA) offers discounts on paddles!

2. *What type of shoe is recommended for pickleball?*

Pickleball is typically played on courts with hard surfaces, so it is **strongly recommended** that you wear **court shoes**, not running shoes or causal sneakers. Look for shoes that provide the right amount of traction and support for lateral movement, along with good cushioning, breathable materials, and a good fit.

3. *Where can I find pickleball courts in this area? What about finding places to play when I am traveling outside of the area?*

Check out the Howard County Pickleball Association website. On the home page, click on the Places to Play tab to see a list of courts in the area, addresses and other information; e.g., need to bring a net, lighted courts, etc.

<https://howardcountypickleball.org/places-to-play/local-places-to-play/>

When traveling, check out these free apps to find courts: <https://pickleplay.com/> and <https://www.places2play.org/>

4. *I was told that I should warm up before playing and cool down after. What do you recommend?*

Warming up before playing prepares your muscles and joints for the physical activity and reduces the risk of injury. Start with light aerobic exercise to increase your heart rate and blood flow, followed by *dynamic stretching*, such as leg swings, arm circles, torso twists, and lunges. Focus on the wrists, shoulders, hips, knees, and ankles. Rotations and circular motions are effective for this purpose. *Static stretches* are more suitable for the cool-down phase following play. Here are videos and articles offering warmup exercises:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C4WYboITVJo>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CUYNbcFe-w>

Note: Since these videos are on YouTube, there may be a 4-5 second ad before the video begins.

Articles:

- <https://www.thepaseoclub.com/blog/seven-best-warm-ups-tennis-pickleball>
- <https://thepickler.com/blogs/pickleball-blog/pickleball-warm-up>

5. Do you have suggestions for practice drills and exercises that I can do to improve my game? Are there other courses I can take to improve?

Yes. The videos and articles listed below offer practice ideas, including hitting against a wall. (Note: Atholton Park has enclosed hitting walls between the tennis and PB courts.)

Videos:

- Practicing on Your Own - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VbftfnB_bQ
- Solo Drills - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VbftfnB_bQ
- Wall Drills - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nfTcDYLpi1o>

Articles:

- <https://gammaboutsports.blog/tips-how-players-practice/>
- <https://www.onixpickleball.com/blogs/learn-pickleball/best-practice-strategiesfrom-onix-pro-player>

6. What are the benefits of joining the Howard County Pickleball Association (HCPA)? How much does a membership cost? How can I join?

Joining the HCPA has many benefits, including:

- a) Community – You'll get to meet and connect with people who share a common interest in the sport, fostering new friendships.
- b) Skill Development – HCPA organizes and offers a variety of courses, clinics, and drill sessions for various levels conducted by experienced players/coaches.
- c) Discounts on pickleball paddles and nets.
- d) Regular Play Opportunities: – HCPA sponsors a number of "open play" and "sign up" sessions at multiple locations every week. The Stack Team app (available to members) provides easy access to the schedule of playing opportunities for all levels.
- e) Leagues and Tournaments – HCPA organizes leagues and tournaments that provide opportunities for friendly competition and a chance to gauge your progress as a player.
- f) Access to Indoor Facilities – HCPA has partnerships with the Howard County Recreation Department and other organizations. Membership gives you better access to court reservations for indoor pickleball courts in the area.
- g) Player Development Library – Access to more than 130 instructional videos and more than 50 articles offering tips and strategies to improve your game.
- h) Information – Regular Announcements are sent to all HCPA members about the latest events, courses, trends, equipment, etc. in the pickleball community.

HCPA has three membership types: Individual – \$30 per year; Couples – \$45 per year; Family – \$60 per year. To join, go to: <https://howardcountypickleball.org/join-2/join-paypal/>