

How many drills do you run in a session?

by **Dino Bondallian, USPTA**

Ten, 20, 30 drills ... What is the right number of drills for your Cardio Tennis program? Donnia and I have studied this and learned after years of trial and error. The answer is simple. The number of drills you use is the right amount for your program and your customers. The suggested format for Cardio Tennis programs starts with five to 10 minutes of warm-up drills; 30 to 50 minutes for cardio drills and ends with five to 10 minutes of cool-down drills. Mix in lots of *fun*, keep it challenging, keep 'em moving and you've got a great program.

In the warm-up segment, we have found great success using four to five drills in our program. These drills are not performed at top speed but rather at an easy pace including dynamic stretching. I have run into some pros who are confused about the topic of stretching. For warm-up, you should use dynamic stretching including drills like "shadow hitting" or light hitting activities such as variations of mini tennis and volleys or a combination of both.

For the cardio workout portion, we use eight to 12 drills (for a 60-minute program) depending on our theme for the month and the level of the group. Be sure your players are in their heart-rate zone and check your players every 10 minutes or have heart-rate monitors available. We believe in having variety in the drills to keep them engaging and fun. To do this, we vary intensity of the drills by changing the speed of the feeds, the direction of the ball and, lastly, the timing of the feeds. The pro is the most important part of the cardio session and needs to take on a variety of roles such as aerobic instructor, drill sergeant with a heart, and leader of the pack ... whatever it takes to run a successful program. Donnia and I are constantly reading our players to make sure they are ***constantly moving, not bored, and having fun.*** Getting them to laugh through the workout is a must. We like to have each player not only have a great fitness workout aerobically, but we also want to challenge their anaerobic threshold – the intensity at which the exercise "switches" from being primarily aerobic to anaerobic.

Over the years we have discovered that the success of our program is determined by the order or sequence of the drills once we consider the type of cardio workout we want to deliver. Next we decide the number of balls to be fed for each drill. Place each drill in the proper order to ensure a fun and safe workout. For a great aerobic workout use three to four ball combination drills and have a work to rest ratio of 1:1 (for every second a player is engaged in a drill give an equal amount of rest or lower intensity activity). Sometimes, however, we like to mix it up and make the drills even more challenging and get into some anaerobic training. To make it an anaerobic workout, use eight-to 14-ball combination drills and challenge the players to work for a slightly longer period of time at a higher intensity. To allow for proper recovery in this situation, use a work to rest ratio of 1:2 to 1:3 – for every second engaged in the drill, give two to three seconds of true rest. It is possible to use a six- to eight-ball combination to challenge their anaerobic threshold by

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changing the speed of the feed and direction. Whether the drill is aerobic or anaerobic depends primarily on the intensity of the exercise. Have players monitor their heart rate. If the heart rate goes above the aerobic zone they are likely training anaerobically and will need additional rest time to properly recover for the next drill.

Because most of the drills come in pairs there is an illusion that we are running 22 to 24 drills. Your students won't know what hit them until it is over. Remember the key element is they need to have *fun*.

For the cool-down phase, we use three to four drills. This is a very important phase and cannot be overlooked as our goal is to bring the heart rate back down slowly. While we focus on drills that are lighter hitting, we might also include some slower games as part of the cool down. If you are looking for some drill ideas for any of these segments, always refer to the Cardio Tennis DVD or visit Partners.CardioTennis.com and go to the curriculum area. There are great drills on the Web site. We are constantly adding new drills in the "View Drills" section of the Partners.CardioTennis.com Web site. You always want to keep your program fresh with new challenging drills.

Finally, be creative, ***let your personality shine!*** Have fun with your students and have a great heart-pumping workout. If you do, we are sure you will have as much fun with this program as we have had over the years. And, it is great for business too! Our program is 60 percent of our income and we run eight to ten classes per week, both 60 and 90 minutes. We suggest that you use the 60-minute format. Don't hesitate, get out there and start your program today. ☺

Dino Bondallian is a lifelong believer in Cardio Tennis. In Kona, Hawaii, Dino and Donnia have been running their successful TennisCize program for years at the Holua Tennis Club.