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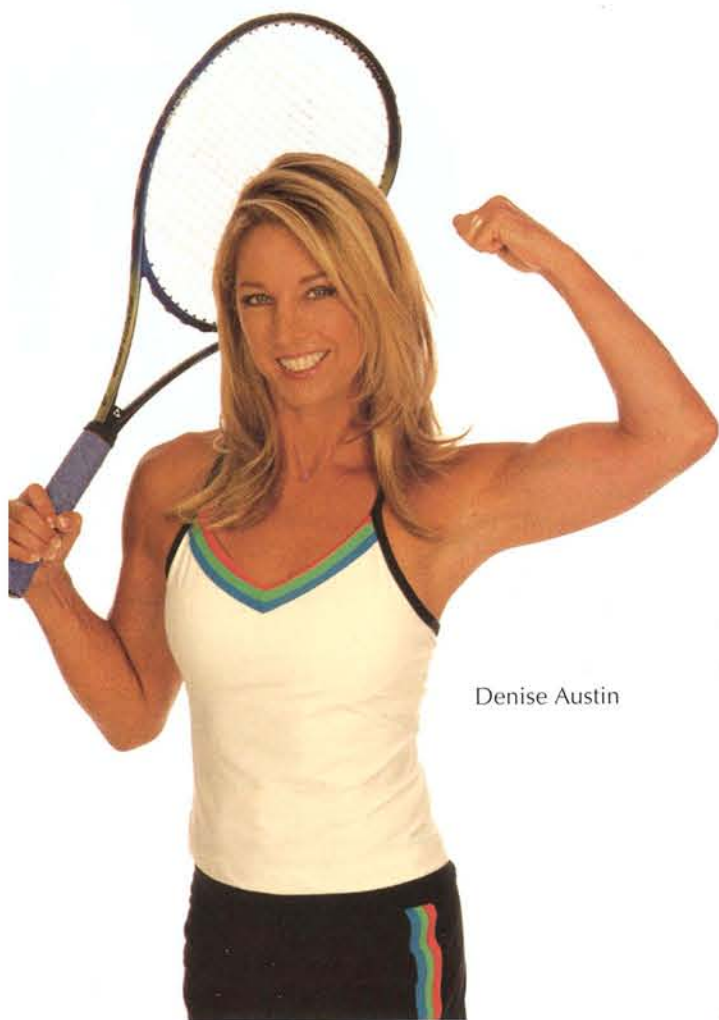
YOUR ULTIMATE PRESCRIPTION FOR A BETTER BODY

Holiday Special



club scene *By Carol Ann Weber*

Cardio Tennis— A Fat Loss Grand Slam



Denise Austin

When you think tennis, no doubt visions of the ultra-athletic Venus and Serena Williams bounce through your head. Watching those lean and mean machines fly across the court could lead to the conclusion that if you play tennis, you could have a Serena body. But unfortunately for most of us, tennis can be as anaerobic as it is aerobic, mainly because only a small portion of our total court time involves vigorous activity.

Well, Jim Baugh, president of the Tennis Industry Association (TIA), and Gordon Blackburn, PhD, Program Director of Cardiac Rehabilitation and Preventative Cardiology at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation in Cleveland, Ohio, have devised an innovative exercise program that will definitely help you get rid of those unwanted extra pounds. It's called Cardio Tennis.

"What Cardio Tennis does," says Dr. Blackburn, "is take all the aerobic benefits found in tennis, take away the competition and the focus on perfecting the stroke and put the emphasis on continuous activity at a moderate intensity." Class size ranges anywhere from six to 10 participants, and students are taught to use a heart rate monitor to keep themselves in the aerobic range. So whether you're a pro or a novice, you're guaranteed to burn some serious calories (anywhere from 300 to 600 an hour).

If you intend to use this program as your primary cardio program, explains Dr. Blackburn, you should participate in a class at least three times a week. "We realize it's not realistic to get to a tennis court five days a week, so you should mix it in with your regular routine. Combine cardio tennis with a good dietary program and your other exercise activities and you will lose weight."

The best part of cardio tennis is that it's certainly a lot

more fun than the treadmill or a step class. According to the national cardio tennis program director, Michele Kraus, the non-stop activity throughout the hour-long class (and where allowed, accompanied by some hip upbeat background music) will definitely keep you from getting bored. A 16-year tennis pro and cardio tennis instructor herself, Ms. Kraus describes the program, which consists of three segments, as follows:

1. Warm-up: five to 10 minutes

General warm-up with light hitting and some dynamic stretching. The goal is to get the heart rate up and get the brain talking to the muscles. Example: shadow medley, where participants follow the instructor by emulating the strokes, but don't actually hit the ball.

2. Cardio: 30 to 50 minutes

a. Drill-based routine: for a more fitness-oriented group. Players run through hitting sequences in one- or two-line formations. Example: two single file lines go through a sequence where players take turns of any combination of two to six balls using all the different strokes of the game,

like ground stroke, approach and a volley. Then they exit to the sidelines and do footwork drills. *Note:* It doesn't matter where you hit the ball, you just need to hit it and keep moving.

b. Play-based routine: for more experienced players who want some competition. More like real tennis, where points are being played either in a competitive or non-competitive situation. Example: triples, three players versus three players. The ball stays in play longer, therefore players are staying in heart rate range longer.

3. Cool-down: five to 10 minutes

Brings the heart rate down and flushes the system of metabolic waste. Go to the short court for some light hitting, and then incorporate static stretching.

Cardio Tennis classes are now being offered in more than 650 tennis clubs throughout the country. You can go to their websites, www.Partners.CardioTennis.com or www.CardioTennis.com, to find a class near you.

