

Healthy Living

Health benefits of pickleball

Pickleball has exploded in popularity in recent years. Devoted players may not realize it, but pickleball was created in 1965 as a backyard pastime by three dads: Joel Pritchard, Barney McCallum and Bill Bell. The Sports & Fitness Industry Association says around 19.8 million people played pickleball in 2024. It's also the fastest-growing sport in the United States for the fourth consecutive year.

While pickleball can be fun and is generally considered to be less intense than tennis, the sport's staying power also can be attributed to the significant health benefits it offers. The combination of social interaction, cognitive impact and aerobic exercise make pickleball a particularly beneficial activity. Here is a deep look at the many health benefits of pickleball.

- **Helps heart health:** The Journal of Functional Morphology and Kinesiology has found

that middle-aged and older adults who played pickleball one hour per day, three days a week for six weeks saw significant improvements in blood pressure, cholesterol levels and cardiorespiratory fitness.

- **Burns calories:** Players can burn between 400 and 600 calories per hour playing pickleball, says the National Institutes of Health. Research shows that playing doubles pickleball results in 36 percent more calories burned than taking a leisurely walk. Also, pickleball doubles often match or exceed the calorie burn of tennis doubles because rallies tend to be longer with less down time.

- **Lowers stress levels:** The more people play, the better they feel from a mental perspective. The NIH reports a 2025 study of more than 1,700 players found that playing three or more times a week was linked to significantly higher mental well-being scores. This exercise can trigger endor-

phin release and lower cortisol levels.

- **Boosts the brain:** Pickleball stimulates cognitive function because the game features fast-paced strategy and requires thinking on your feet. Plus, the fast pace often induces a "flow state," which

is a mental zone where players are so focused they lose track of time, which helps to reduce anxiety.

- **Combats loneliness:** Pickleball is a social sport, with new centers and leagues popping up each year. That

makes it easy for players to make new friends through the sport.

- **Promotes physical agility:** Pickleball can be a tool for maintaining independence through physical agility. Baptist Health says pickleball can help

improve balance and stability in seniors. Because pickleball is a weight-bearing sport, it also helps strengthen bones and muscles.

Pickleball is all the rage and a great way for players to have fun and boost health in the process.

Prevent pest problems

Pests can be problematic for homeowners. Pests can be frightening, and an infestation can result in property damage if it is not discovered or treated promptly. According to Green Pest Management, termites can hollow out beams, beetles can tunnel through hardwood, and rodents can chew through wiring and insulation. It doesn't take long for damage to escalate. And homeowners may not know issues are building until problems have become visible.

To address pests effectively, both inside and outside of the home, homeowners should prioritize prevention

and physical barriers first. Chemicals and professional pest treatment services may be necessary if initial efforts are not enough. Here are some strategies homeowners can try.

- **Check the perimeter.** Pests can enter a home through small gaps in the foundation, as well as around windows and doors. Use silicone caulk around windows and stuff steel wool in gaps around plumbing pipes.

- **Address moisture issues.** Many insects are attracted to dampness. It's important to fix leaky faucets immediately and use a dehumidifier in basements or crawl

spaces to make the environment less hospitable to pests.

- **Manage crumbs and trash.** Pests like an easy food source, so move dry goods into glass or sealed plastic containers. Clean up crumbs around the kitchen, empty catches in the sink drain readily, and be sure to take out the garbage before it gets full and malodorous; otherwise, you might be luring pests indoors.

- **Create a buffer zone outside.** Try not to plant vegetation too close to the home. While mulch is coveted for its use in landscaping, it can act as a highway for termites and ants. Gravel or bare dirt may be better against the house.

- **Eliminate standing water.** Clear gutters and address low-lying areas of the landscape. Turlock Mosquito Abatement District says mosquitoes grow in standing water, and they can develop into biting mosquitoes in

amounts of water as small as that needed to fill a bottle cap. Tip and toss out any water to prevent mosquito breeding.

- **Use natural repellents.** Peppermint oil might deter spiders and rodents near entry points. Diatomaceous earth is a fine powder made from fossilized, microscopic remains of hard-shelled aquatic organisms. While used primarily in some pool filtration systems, DE also can dehydrate insects with exoskeletons, like ants or roaches.

If pests become problematic and first-line treatments are not working, consult with a professional pest company to see what might be the answer.

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Spring INTO BETTER HEARING

Spring is the season of fresh starts, and St Patrick's Day is a reminder that a little luck goes a long way. But when it comes to your hearing, healthy habits matter even more.

One simple way to support your hearing? *Get moving.* Try these gentle activities for a positive difference!

- WALKING
- SWIMMING
- GARDENING
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