

**ON THE MOVE:** Swift on-court movement makes Felix Auger-Aliassime a dangerous opponent.

# PRINCIPLES OF Movement

A more targeted approach is an effective way to improve on-court movement, as **NATHAN & GISELLE MARTIN** explain

## 1. POSTURE

Setting good posture enables players to move from a good platform, have better balance and maintain control of shots. Most players know what the ready position is, but what happens after this, when they actually move and change direction or have to stop? Learning how to hold posture through movement and when hitting is important.

## 2. CO-ORDINATION

Co-ordination is often undertrained in tennis players. Improving the connection within the neuromuscular system is critical for enhanced hand-eye/foot-eye co-ordination, ball tracking and reaction times. The biggest benefit of a focus in this area is a player's ability to make better preparation steps or adjustment steps. Players often take lazy small steps or large power steps, but having the ability to take small controlled steps is important for getting in the right position for ball striking.

## 3. BRAKING/DECELERATION

This principle is the most undertrained area in on-court conditioning. Everyone wants to move quicker - but not many drills focus on deceleration. Having the capacity to stop effectively and absorb load through the right chain (joints and muscles) is crucial for injury prevention, better positioning for ball contact, balance and setting up a good platform for transition. It is very important to train this principle in a controlled environment - get the technique right, overload the body and then let it recover.

links. By targeting the weakest links, this encourages the chain to move more effectively. For example, a player might excel at acceleration but struggle with deceleration. A targeted approach on enhancing specific braking skills - rather than overall agility - is a more effective way to improve in this area.

Incorporate these seven principles in your fitness training and just as we have, you will notice positive results:

on-court movement training. Our 'Seven Tennis Movement Principles' define seven areas that affect overall tennis court movement. These are then broken down individually with specific methods for improvement. This approach boosts confidence in athletes, educating them on the importance of breaking down movement and improving weaker movement patterns.

Think of a chain with seven

It is important to constantly learn and grow - without this approach, not much will change. Everyone should adopt this growth mindset, including us as fitness trainers.

We are constantly looking for ways to benefit the players we train. This means being open, willing to try new things and being creative in what we do.

Over the past six months, we have developed a structure to give us clearer guidelines for



## 4. FIRST STEPS/ACCELERATION

Dynamic movement is important, as the first steps set up speed and determine how effectively a player gets from point A to point B. Athletes love to work on acceleration - but training needs focus. Contact with the ground and taking strong forceful steps are two areas that can dramatically improve first-step speed.

## 5. REACTION

When a player is highly reactive, they have the capacity to focus on more than just the ball. They start to read body language and anticipate better. Overloading of sensors when

training stimulates the nervous system and challenges response time, which leads to rapid improvement. However, it is important to restrict reactive drills to 5-10 minutes, as there are other key elements to follow in order to gain maximal results.

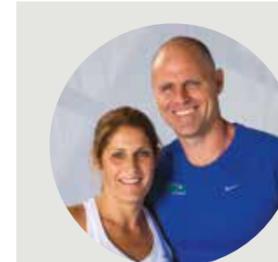
## 6. CHANGE OF DIRECTION/AGILITY

Change of direction is the movement following a sequence where you know what you are doing and where you are going. Agility involves stimulus and is a more reaction-based movement. Change of direction drills focus on certain chains of movement and technique, while agility drills focus on direct

specificity to court movement and match play. This principle is where we pull everything together and encourage players to move using their targeted areas as focal points. This allows players to understand how isolating movement and then incorporating it into movement that is more specific is so effective.

## 7. INTENSITY

The first six principles are futile if we do not adopt the right attitude towards movement. Trainers need to motivate athletes, so we have developed some great techniques to encourage aggressive, proactive and high-intensity movement.



## STAR TRAINERS

**NATHAN AND GISELLE MARTIN**, of Tennis Fitness, have been in the health and fitness industry for 20 years. They travelled on the WTA Tour for numerous years and also worked at the Sanchez Casal Tennis Academy in Barcelona, Spain. They've worked with Sam Stosur, Svetlana Kuznetsova, Jennifer Capriati, Arantxa Sanchez Vicario, Monica Seles, Martina Navratilova, Casey Dellacqua and Lleyton Hewitt. For further information and for previous articles, visit [tennisfitness.com](http://tennisfitness.com).

A simple one is using a stopwatch and encouraging athletes to keep improving their times. Encouraging athletes to work at a higher intensity and push their physical capabilities is important to develop both physically and mentally. **AT&T**

# UNDERSTANDING FOOT FAULTS

Leading up to serve, there are many factors to consider. Where do you want to direct the ball? How hard should you hit it? What spin is needed? Conditions, such as wind or sun, can affect which option is best.

Yet none of these technical and tactical service decisions will matter if you can't get the ball into play.

Faults are something every player wants to avoid. A service fault - when the ball hits the net or lands outside the service box - is easy to understand. A foot fault is less common and often not so clear.

## WHAT IS A FOOT FAULT?

International Tennis Federation rules stipulate that a foot fault occurs when the server does any of the following before striking the ball during their service motion:

- ▶ Changes position by walking or running [slight movements of the feet are permitted]
- ▶ Touches the baseline or the court with either foot

- ▶ Touches the area outside the imaginary extension of the sideline with either foot
- ▶ Touches the imaginary extension of the centre mark with either foot.

## CALLING FOOT FAULTS

Only officials, such as a chair umpire or a lines person, should call a foot fault. It is considered poor etiquette for a receiver to call a foot fault against the server.

In matches without officials on court, a player who believes an opponent is committing foot faults should request a referee or court supervisor to observe and warn them.

## HOW TO AVOID FOOT FAULTS

- ▶ Develop a consistent service routine, starting in a similar position each time
- ▶ If service action involves dragging foot forward, move a few centimetres further behind baseline to avoid illegally touching the line
- ▶ Stay aware of court position at all times.

