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## Serving up a new workout

Cardio tennis breaks the country club stereotype and gets players moving.

By **BLYTHE BERNHARD**

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Does the U.S. Open tennis championship have you dusting off that racket?

Now there's a way anybody can play tennis, even if you never make it to center court at Flushing Meadows.

Cardio tennis is a group fitness class that's more about getting a workout than staying between the lines or aching that serve.

"It's not in your face like how tennis can be," said tennis professional Brian Anteckki of Irvine, who offers cardio tennis classes through his company, Revitalize With Exercise. "You don't have to be good to hit balls."

The Tennis Industry Association and the U.S. Tennis Association introduced cardio tennis a couple of years ago to bring in new players to the sport when participation had stagnated. The idea was to create an up-tempo aerobic workout for the sport, much like Spinning is to bicycling.

A big goal of the marketing push was to rid tennis of its stuffy image. You won't hear "Quiet, please" in a cardio tennis class.

Dance music keeps the energy level up. Classes start out with a 10-minute warm-up which can include hopscotch, jumping on colored markers or other footwork drills.

The 40-minute high-intensity portion includes games like three-on-three, where players rally across the net while keeping the ball in the air.

Like any tennis class, players take turns hitting forehands and backhands. But they don't wait in line – if you're not hitting balls, you're jumping rope, jogging a lap around the court or doing sit-ups.

Cardio tennis players don't keep score, they keep fit. Even when rounding up the balls, players do deep-knee lunges. A 10-minute cool-down at the end of class uses the racket as a stretching aid.

At a recent Saturday class at an Irvine neighborhood court, Anteckki launched balls at the players and ducked behind the net as the balls came back rapid-fire. Technique isn't an issue – the instructors don't take timeouts to change grips or reposition feet.

"No time to stop, no time to think!" Anteckki calls out to his class.

The six players in the class laugh, knowing it doesn't matter if their ball sails over the fence or straight into the net. As long as they're moving, they're doing it right.

Junior tennis players Sam Yoon, 12, David Housky, 16, and Heano Kim, 13, take Anteckki's class to help with footwork and fitness. Heano plans to try out for water polo at University High School this year, and he wants to be in great shape.

For David, the class is a relaxed way to get in some ground stroke practice while having fun. Compared to private or group lessons, cardio tennis "is a lot more relaxed and Brian's not the kind of coach who just yells at you," he said.

It's not just tennis players who can improve their game. Athletes from other sports can work on their coordination and stamina. For body builders, cardio tennis is a good way to improve quickness and agility.

Joining the class for the first time were fitness trainers Bryan Nie and Alley Miesch-Nie. Miesch-Nie, a former professional volleyball player with little tennis experience, said anybody could have an energetic workout regardless of skill.

"It's moving, and like most workouts if it's stagnant you lose people's attention," she said. And instead of a gym workout, "we're in the great outdoors, taking in the sunshine."

So don't worry about buying the latest titanium racket or making it through the winners' bracket at the country club tournament. The idea is to get as many people on to the courts as possible, Anteckki said.

"Cardio tennis is the best vehicle in this industry for getting new players into the game, and bringing former players back to the game."

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**WHAT'S THE RACKET?** Bryan Nie and his wife Alley Miesch-Nie do aerobics during a cardio tennis class, a fast-paced workout of tennis drills set to music.

MINDY SCHAUER, THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

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### Tennis anyone?

Revitalize With Exercise of Irvine offers cardio tennis classes throughout the year, for all levels of players.

**Cost:** \$12 for each one-hour class

**Contact:** Certified instructor Brian Anteckki, 949-337-3818 or [www.antecki.usptapro.com](http://www.antecki.usptapro.com)

**More:** To find other classes in your area, visit [www.cardiotennis.com](http://www.cardiotennis.com)