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Think about it: if you're like most pickleball enthusiasts, you've probably faced the classic post-game dilemma: should you rest all day to let your aching shoulder or elbow recover, or should you keep moving gently to ease soreness? after interviewing orthopaedists, physical therapists, and rec-league athletes — and hearing countless real injury stories from the benches — i've learned there's a lot more to recovery than just icing and popping a pill. In fact, how you handle the hours after your pickleball session can make a big difference in avoiding long-term injury and staying on the court for years to come.

*(Photo credit: Brendan Sapp / Unsplash)*

## Why Overuse and Frequency Matter More Than a Single Dramatic Injury

One mistake I often see players make is worrying about "that one bad shot" or "that one awkward swing" as the cause of a sudden injury. The truth? Overuse and how often you play contribute far more to chronic issues than isolated events.

Dr. Maria Sterling, an orthopaedist I spoke with, reminded me, "Tendons and muscles often get irritated or inflamed gradually from repeated stress. The problem rarely happens in a single moment but rather creeps up due to frequent loading without proper recovery."



- Playing pickleball every day with no rest increases cumulative tendon strain
- Ignoring early soreness and pushing through pain can set the stage for tendonitis
- Skipping a gradual warm-up usually makes tissues more vulnerable to microtears

This means, if you want to stay injury-free, you need a smart approach to how often and how intensely you play — and what you do afterward to recover.

## Aging Tendons Adapt More Slowly — So Respect the Recovery Clock

One thing I've noticed after playing morning pickleball a couple of times a week for several years? My body doesn't bounce back as quickly now as it did in my 20s. That isn't just subjective — aging tendons genuinely adapt more slowly, tolerate sudden loads less well, and don't heal quite as fast.

"Older players have to be mindful of loading and recovery," explained PT Jamie Wu. "If you're over 40, you're not going to get away with the same aggressive play and zero recovery days that you did in your 20s."

For these reasons, it's critical to listen to your body post-game and honor a gentle recovery routine rather than trying to force hard rest or excessive activity.

## The Common Culprits: Rotator Cuff and Elbow Pain

Two of the most common pickleball complaints are rotator cuff irritation and "tennis elbow" or lateral epicondylitis-type pain. Here's what you need to know:

### Rotator Cuff Irritation

- Usually shows up as night pain, making it hard to sleep on your affected side.
- Limits your ability to reach behind your back, a classic sign seen by many orthopaedists.
- Often stems from repetitive overhead swings, especially with poor mechanics or sudden increase in playtime.

### Elbow Pain

- Often caused by a tight grip on the paddle and arm-dominant mechanics that overload the tendons.
- Burning or aching pain on the lateral or medial elbow worsens with gripping activities.
- Can become persistent if players ignore early warning signs or don't adjust their technique.

A big part of preventing these issues? Consistently applying a recovery routine that incorporates gentle movement to clear soreness and improve tissue health.

## Why Gentle Movement Clears Soreness—and Sitting Still Makes It Worse

Here's the key takeaway I always emphasize when I'm hanging around pickleball benches and hearing the real injury stories: **avoid sitting still for long periods**. This is something too many players neglect after their game, thinking full rest—meaning total inactivity—is best.

The problem? Sitting or lying still for hours allows inflammatory fluids and minor tissue irritations to stagnate, which prolongs soreness and stiffness. Instead, gentle movement encourages circulation, helps mobilize lymphatic drainage, and clears out cellular debris—all important for speedy recovery.

Physical therapist Jamie Wu recommends light activity such as:

- Walking for 10-15 minutes post-match (count out loud those warm-up minutes!)
- Performing gentle shoulder and elbow range of motion exercises with a light resistance band
- Doing pain-free stretches that open up the chest and forearm muscles

This isn't about pushing through pain—more like a "refresh" to your body to help tissues heal faster.

## What Does a Smart Recovery Routine Look Like?

Great question. After nine years interviewing experts and recreational athletes, here's a simple and effective recovery routine you can follow after your pickleball game:



1. **Cool down with 5-10 minutes of gentle walking** immediately post-game to keep blood flowing.
2. **Perform light mobility exercises and gentle stretches** focused on your shoulder and elbow joints using a light resistance band or simply your own bodyweight.
3. **Use natural anti-inflammatory aids** such as Joy Organics' organic CBD gummies, which many players swear by to reduce inflammation and aid relaxation.  
[lateral epicondylitis pickleball](#)
4. **Stay hydrated** and avoid prolonged sitting or lying down for hours.
5. **Take note of what changed in the last two weeks**—did you play more frequently? Intensify your swings? Adjust your grip?
6. **Sleep on the opposite side** if you have rotator cuff pain to limit night irritation.

Implementing this recovery routine consistently after play will help your tendons adapt better over time and reduce the chance of lingering soreness and injury.

## How Joy Organics Organic CBD Gummies Fit In

While nothing replaces movement and proper technique, I've noticed more players incorporating CBD products like Joy Organics' organic CBD gummies into their recovery toolkit. These gummies provide a convenient, natural way to promote relaxation and counteract inflammation without the side effects of traditional painkillers.

Many athletes I've talked to appreciate how these gummies help them unwind after the post-game cool down and gently ease muscle tension, making it easier to stick to their overall recovery routine.

## Summary Table: Resting All Day vs. Keeping Moving After Pickleball

Post-Game Approach   Pros   Cons   Rest All Day (Full Inactivity)

- Immediate relief from intense pain (if severe)
- Simple to do — no activity required

- Prolongs soreness and stiffness due to fluid buildup
- Slows inflammation clearance and tissue healing
- Can cause joint stiffness and muscle tightness

#### Gentle Movement Recovery Routine

- Encourages circulation and lymphatic drainage
- Clears soreness and accelerates healing
- Helps maintain joint mobility and muscle flexibility
- Integrates natural anti-inflammatory methods like Joy Organics CBD gummies
- Requires discipline and consistency
- Needs proper pacing and avoiding painful overextension

## Final Thoughts — What Changed in Your Last Two Weeks?

Every time I ask players who come to the bench complaining about a new ache, I always ask, “What changed in the last two weeks?” Usually, the answer reveals increased play frequency, more aggressive hitting, or a sudden switch in paddle grip. These small shifts can load tendons more heavily and cause those early warning signs we want to catch before they become big problems.

So instead of resting all day after pickleball, choose to keep moving gently, follow a smart recovery plan, and consider natural aids like Joy Organics organic CBD gummies to support your tissues. Your tendons and joints will thank you, and so will your future self when you’re still loving the game years from now.

Keep counting those warm-up minutes out loud—and enjoy your play!

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