The Most Frequently Asked Questions About Racquet Re-stringing

#1 - How often should I need to re-string my racquet?

The rule of thumb is...the number of hours you play a week is the optimal number of times to re-string your racquet in a year. For example, if you play 4 hours a week you would re-string every 3 months or so. Other indicators are deeply notched strings at the cross sections or that you hear a loud crunchy sound when you try and move them.

#2 - My strings move out of place...why? Can I make them stop?

This is perfectly normal. More flexing is more power...but more flexing also means strings slide over each other and then move back into place. Strings don't spring back into place each time, so often you'll notice your strings have moved and they are no longer lined up perfectly. You can ignore it or you can realign the strings using your fingers between points as the majority of the players do.

If you can't stand it, you can get around this as most manufacturers do. For example while they might list the optimum string tension for racquetball at 30-34 lbs., they don't want complaints about moving or loose strings. To avoid this, out of the factory racquets come strung as high as 45 lbs. in some cases.

Ask yourself...is the racquet still playing fine...in most cases it is. Once you understand that the strings are still playing well because they are still moving...it shouldn't bother you as much.

#3 - I'm a notorious string breaker...what can I do?

If you find yourself breaking your strings more frequently than what was outline in question #1, its official you are a string breaker. Here are a few things you may consider changing.

Start with increasing the gauge of string you play with, if you're playing with 18 gauge change to 17 gauge or even 16 gauge.

If that's not enough move to a polyester string. These are tougher, stronger strings...they don't play as well but the durability is much higher. You may still want to use regular strings for the crosses to add some playability.

The next time you have your racquet re-strung make sure your grommets are in good condition, if not; have the broken one(s) replaced or have the entire bumper and grommet set replaced. It will cost a lot less than having your racquet re-strung prematurely.

#4 - How to extend the life of my racquet strings?

Repeatedly scraping the wall or floor (especially at 2 o'clock and 10 o'clock) will cause your bumper to wear down on the outside of your frame. If you wear them down enough the channel they create to protect your strings will wear to the point of no longer protecting the strings. When that happens, it takes very little to break the strings even if you just had your racquet re-strung recently. Like in #3, replace worn bumper and grommet sets when necessary.
Friction is the other problem...so put some protective tape on the head of your racquet it can extend the life of your outside bumper substantially.

#5- Is there a warranty on strings?

There is no warranty on strings. If you hit the ball consistently in the middle of the racquet they'll be good to you, so be good to them!

#6 - Is there a big difference between strings?

In general, strings can be classified into two groups (outside of gauge). Monocore and Multicore.

Monocore strings are usually less expensive. They have a simple outer casing that can pop any time their main center core breaks. They offer good pop and in general don't stretch that much. They can dry out. Most of the factory strings are this kind of string.

Multicore strings tend to be more expensive and have a center core made up of hundreds and sometimes thousands of smaller individual strings. They play softer, stretch more and usually don't just break...they tend to fray. They offer much more springiness. However, the strings that live fast and flex better do die a quicker death.

#7 - What string gauge should I use?

String gauge refers to the thickness of the string; the most common are 16, 17 and 18 gauges. The lower the number the thicker it is. Thicker, 16 gauge string, offers better durability...it's a little stiffer and thus offers less playability. 17 gauge is the most common thickness. It allows you decent durability coupled with very good playability. 18 gauge strings enhances playability (power and spin) but the reduced durability does make using this gauge more costly.

#8 - How will a different tension affect the performance of my racquet?

The tighter your strings (higher tension) the better control and durability you'll have. The looser your strings (to a point) the more power and spin you'll have as well as being easier on your arm. Think of it this way…

The tighter your strings, the less flex there is and the less time the ball sits on your string bed. Less flex means that you get less energy springing back off the strings bed…less time means that the ball will be directed at the angle the ball contacts the string bed and that the arc of your swing as it changes the angle will have less impact on the direction of the ball.

The opposite is true for power…think of a trampoline…a very tight trampoline doesn't allow you to bounce that high…but loosen it up to the right point and you're bouncing higher than a house. Same holds true for a string bed. Having less control is due to the fact that the ball sits on your strings longer. As you swing through your arc, you don't know exactly when that ball will release from your string bed….thus you have less control and can create more spin.

#9 - Why are there 4 knots on my racquet?

Many racquets today have complicated patterns. These patterns can help reduce breakage, deliver more power or offer more control. As a result, most racquetball and squash racquets have a 2 piece stringing method (4 knots) in addition to the traditional 1 piece method (2 knots).

#10 - How does stringing my mains and crosses at different tension affect my racquet's performance?

Having the crosses at a lower tension (2-4lbs.) in relation to the mains will give you a larger sweet spot, more power and increased spin. This is how it works; the tension of the crosses (shorter) dictate how much the mains (longer) will move. There's no point of having longer mains (responsible for greater power) if the string bed is limited by the shorter crosses' effective tension.

#11- I had my racquet re-strung with a "premium string". I've played with it a few times and the string is "wearing" out where the mains meet the crosses. Why?

Premium strings (Multicore) can have a center core made up of hundreds and sometimes thousands of smaller individual strings wrapped with an outer sheath. With up to 1200 individual strings, it will eventually begin to fray and grow "fuzzy" this is not a defect in the strings but normal. Fraying can bother some players who have never experienced it before but once you see and feel the performance benefits of a superior string you'll never look back.