

Do I Need a Restring?

If your strings have broken then the answer is easy – Yes! If they haven't (and we get asked this question all the time) then it may benefit you to invest in a restring (after all, most people service their car regularly rather than waiting for it to break

Over time, strings stretch and lose their ability to return to their original length (technically known as elongation). Equate it to an elastic band that no longer keeps whatever it's around tight anymore! As this occurs, tension is lost and your racket becomes less responsive on ball impact meaning your racket will feel 'dead' and/or 'soggy'. Also, look out for signs of arm or shoulder problems – dead strings will give you more vibration.

As the strings lose their elasticity and tension, they will also lose their power – not to be confused with an increase in power from a freshly strung racket at a lower tension!

The speed at which your strings deteriorate depends on how much work they have to do – higher workloads include frequent play, using high ball impact speeds (fast racket head speed) and being strung at higher tensions – even subjecting your racket to extreme changes in temperature (keeping your racket in the car for example) is considered a high workload. But if you don't do any of these, your strings will still deteriorate over time. A common rule of thumb is to string your racket in relation to the number of times you play a week. So, if you play once a week, you should string once a year, twice a week, string twice a year and so on. (Ok, I can hear you saying you haven't had your racket strung in five years!!)

But can this be measured scientifically? Yes it can, but very few people have the necessary expensive equipment. You need to measure the tension (more correctly known as string bed stiffness or dynamic tension) in a freshly strung racket. You can then re-measure it at any time in the future and see how much it has dropped – anything more than 50% (maybe even less) means its time for a re-string!

So, after all this, do I need a restring? Maybe if you are asking this question you can already notice a difference in the responsiveness of your racket and have already answered your own question? But if you are playing well (and winning!!) and have no arm injuries, then why change? These things can be quite psychological so don't change a winning formula!

At *Top Spin Tennis* we often say that a fresh set of strings and a new grip can feel like a new racket – have you forgotten just how good it used to be? It's also cheaper to restring and re-grip than investing in a new racket.

So if you have decided to invest in a restring, you now probably need some advice on what string and tension you need. That is a complex subject with hundreds of strings on the market, so take some time to choose – pop in and chat with us and we can recommend a number of strings to suite you and your play or see our information sheet on string basics.



Why Do Strings Break?

Abrasion/friction burn – the most common reason for breakage: constant rubbing of main strings against cross strings on spin serves, slices and topspin

Hard hitting – produces excessive stretching (elongation) of the string which in turn reduces the life of the string

Court surface – clay courts or heavily sanded astra turf: the small fragments of razor-sharp grit are well known for cutting the strings

Miss hits – as if! Especially on a serve: the string sheers against the frame grommets – look out for breakage at the edge of the frame

Damaged grommets – worn bumper strips or damaged grommets can cut into the string. These should be replaced at the time of restringing.

Poor quality stringing equipment – poorly maintained or inferior quality stringing machines, especially clamps can damage the string as it is installed

Untrained stringer – there are many poor techniques that an untrained stringer can use. Use fully trained and experienced stringers.