

Playing pickleball five mornings a week might sound like a dream regimen for any enthusiastic player looking to stay active. But if you find yourself sidelined by nagging pain or frustrating injuries, you're not alone. As someone who's spent nearly a decade interviewing orthopaedists, physical therapists, and rec-league athletes, I can tell you that most pickleball injuries—especially for frequent players—aren't caused by a single dramatic moment on the court. Instead, **overuse and frequency drive injuries** more than spectacular falls or sudden hits.

In this post, we'll break down why you may be getting injured despite (or because of) your frequent play, how aging affects tendon recovery, and common injury patterns among pickleball enthusiasts. Plus, I'll share some practical tips on how to minimize your injury risk and promote healing—including how natural solutions like Joy Organics' organic CBD gummies might support your recovery journey.

 Pickleball player warming up Photo credit: Brendan Sapp / Unsplash

1. Overuse and Frequency Drive Injuries More Than Rare Dramatic Moments

One thing I always ask players after listening to their injury stories: *"What changed in the last two weeks?"* More often than not, it's been the sudden jump in activity, not a single smash or awkward step, that set the injury wheels turning.



Playing pickleball five mornings a week means you're putting your muscles, tendons, and joints through repetitive stress day after day. Over time, even low-level inflammation from continuous use accumulates, ultimately compromising tissue integrity—a process best described as **accumulating fatigue**.

Unlike acute injuries, overuse injuries develop gradually and tend to be accompanied by persistent dull aches, stiffness, or subtle functional limitations. If you've been skipping essential warm-up routines (I always count up those 8 full minutes—yes, I'm that guy!), or pushing hard without enough recovery, your body simply can't keep up.

Common Overuse Injuries in Frequent Pickleball Players

- Tendonitis or tendinosis in the shoulder, elbow, or wrist
- Rotator cuff irritation
- Medial or lateral epicondylitis (“golfer’s” or “tennis” elbow)
- Muscle strains due to fatigue
- Lower back pain from poor movement patterns

2. Tendon Recovery Slower With Age—Why Your Aging Tendons Are More Vulnerable

One truth I’ve learned through countless chats with orthopaedists is this: **tendon recovery slows significantly with age**. If you’re in your 40s, 50s, or beyond, your tendons don’t bounce back like they did in your 20s or 30s. Structural changes, reduced blood flow, and less effective cell repair mechanisms all contribute to slower healing times.

What does this mean when you’re playing pickleball five days a week? Your tendons adapt slower and tolerate sudden loads less well. That means every unexpected overhead shot, sudden acceleration, or tricky backhand can irritate pre-existing micro-damage.

Rotator Cuff Irritation: A Classic Example

The rotator cuff’s role is crucial in all upper-body movements during pickleball. When irritated, it tends to present as:

- **Night pain:** The shoulder aches or wakes you up during the night, a classic symptom reported by aging players.
- **Behind-the-back reach limits:** Difficulty reaching behind your back to grab something or tuck in a shirt shows a loss of shoulder mobility, often pointing to rotator cuff tendinopathy or bursitis.

Ignoring these symptoms only leads to more chronic issues. It’s a sign that your tendons need a break—even if you feel ready to jump back into the game.

3. Elbow Pain Often Comes From Tight Grip and Arm-Dominant Mechanics

Elbow pain is another common complaint I hear in locker rooms. Let’s be clear: it’s rarely because your paddle is “too heavy” or “not right.” In fact, blaming gear for a tendon problem is a pet peeve of mine, because it overlooks what’s really going on:

- **Tight grip:** Clenching your paddle too hard wastes energy and puts stress on the forearm tendons attaching near the elbow.
- **Arm-dominant mechanics:** Relying exclusively on your elbow and wrist, instead of using your whole body (legs, hips, core), increases the load on small tendon attachments, prompting pain and inflammation.

This tends to show up as medial or lateral epicondylitis—better known as “golfer’s” or “tennis” elbow depending on which side is affected.



How to Spot These Issues Early

1. Does squeezing the paddle during play or practice feel exhausting?
2. Do you get sharp or burning pain on the inside or outside of the elbow after sessions?
3. Is wrist or grip strength noticeably weaker on one hand?

If you answered yes, it's [wrist fracture fall risk](#) time to rethink your technique and workload. Incorporate full-body movements and try consciously relaxing your grip.

4. What Can You Do to Prevent and Manage These Injuries?

First, accept that playing five mornings a week is a double-edged sword: you're building fitness and skills, but at the cost of accumulating fatigue if you don't balance rest and recovery.

Key Strategies to Protect Your Body

1. **Warm-up thoroughly:** Don't skip those first 8–10 minutes. Start with dynamic stretches, light cardio, and paddle swings to prep tendons and muscles. (I literally count those warm-up minutes out loud, and I'm not kidding.)
2. **Mix in cross-training:** Include days focused on low-impact activities or strength work that targets supporting muscle groups.
3. **Monitor your pain:** Use the question "What changed in the last two weeks?" to pinpoint workload spikes or altered mechanics that might trigger symptoms.
4. **Improve mechanics:** Consider a session with a coach or physical therapist to ensure you're using your legs, hips, and core efficiently to reduce strain on your arm tendons.
5. **Incorporate recovery aids:** Products like Joy Organics organic CBD gummies are gaining popularity for their potential to ease inflammation and support natural healing after tough sessions.
6. **Listen to your body:** Don't push through night pain or restricted range of motion—those are clear signs your tendons need rest or professional care.

When to Seek Medical Advice

Symptom	Possible Cause	Recommended Action
Persistent night pain in shoulder	Rotator cuff irritation/tendinopathy	Consult orthopaedist; consider imaging and physical therapy
Elbow pain with gripping or wrist motion	Epicondylitis (tennis/golfer's elbow)	Modify grip, rest, and seek treatment if no improvement in 2 weeks
Sudden sharp pain or inability to move arm	Possible tear or muscle strain	Immediate assessment by healthcare provider

Final Thoughts: Pickleball and Injury Prevention Are a Balancing Act

Playing pickleball five mornings a week is a fantastic way to stay active, social, and sharp. But the **frequency of play** combined with **slower tendon recovery as we age** sets the stage for those nagging overuse injuries. The key is to recognize the subtle signs early, prioritize warm-ups, tweak your mechanics, and use smart recovery tools like Joy Organics organic CBD gummies to keep your tissues healthy and pain low.

So, next time you're on the court, take a moment to enjoy the game but also respect the limits of your body. Remember, it's not just about the big game-winning shot—it's about sustaining your passion for pickleball injury-free for the long haul.

And yes, don't forget those warm-up minutes—I'll be counting.