

# Tennis with FMT

Dr Steven Kofsky

As Tennis legends Roger Federer, Novak Djokovic, Pete Sampras proved when they enthralled Delhiites as part of the IPTL tour in December, there are many ways to hit a shot. The body inherently has the ability to adjust position, strength and velocity of the swing to put the racquet head in contact with the ball.

If the body is not able to appropriately and efficiently adjust position, it's not just a matter of missing the shot. Injury is often the result. Tennis injuries can be divided into two categories, acute and chronic overuse. Chronic

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overuse injuries are more common to the arms, while acute injuries are found more often in the legs.

The tennis swing has been studied extensively with the results having a recurring theme: If there is a dysfunction in the legs, less motion or less strength is produced and, therefore, the load to the arms increases. This increased load to the arms often causes the chronic overuse injury to the shoulder, elbow or wrist.

The United States Tennis Association Sports Science Committee describes the tennis swing as using the efficient kinetic chain of the body. This means that from the feet through the legs, hips, trunk, and down the arms to the hand, each body segment plays an important role



in generating the swing. The Functional Manual Therapist is an expert in the movement of the body and has the ability to identify the dysfunctional segments, treat those segments individually and then help the player integrate the treated segments into the kinetic chain in order to produce the most efficient swing.

The "tennis elbow" pain that many players experience is a result of tissue breakdown in the elbow. However, there is likely extra stress being placed on the elbow from a different area of the body lacking efficient motion, such as hip rotation, or strength, or shoulder rotation. Both the area of pain and the weak link in the kinetic chain need to be treated for the pain to resolve and the player to successfully return to tennis without re-injury.

The role of the Functional Manual Therapist in aiding the tennis athlete goes beyond identifying the area of pain and the weak link in the kinetic chain. All of the areas of concern, such as the elbow and hip, will be assessed within the FMT paradigm of Mechanical, Neuromuscular and Motor Control. In the Mechanical assessment of an area, FMT looks at the body's physical ability to complete a motion through the muscles and joints. Neuromuscular training focuses on the body's ability to have initiation, strength, and endurance of muscles or muscle groups. Motor control integrates movement at each body segment to form an efficient whole body motion.

The goal of the treatment of the tennis athlete is not to change the swing technique, but to allow you to complete your swing efficiently and to remain injury-free.

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**Functional Manual Therapy™ (FMT)** is a comprehensive approach to physiotherapy, which identifies and facilitates your existing potential through an in-depth examination and treatment of your mechanical capacity, neuromuscular function and motor control. Discover your potential to have less pain and function better with FMT!

To schedule your appointment at the VARDAN Centre (New Delhi):  
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