



Movement and Pickleball

BY JOE DINOFFER

We all hate to admit it, but despite pickleball's many attractions (which include exercise and fitness!), most people play pickleball over tennis because the court is smaller and there is less movement! That's right: for most pickleballers, less is more. After all, it's better to get a modest amount of exercise than be overwhelmed by the size of a tennis court and not play very often. Let's compare the number of steps to cover a pickleball court in doubles versus tennis.

The pickleball court is 20 feet wide with a diagonal from two feet behind one baseline corner to the center of the kitchen line that measures about 18 feet. In tennis, the diagonal from two feet behind one corner of the doubles sideline to the center of the net is much farther at 45 feet (two-and-a-half times farther). With an average tennis or pickleball movement stride length of three feet, you can see the huge difference in movement demands between these two sports.

In pickleball, the longest "run" to the ball demands six steps or strides. In tennis, the number jumps 250% to 15 steps in the time it takes the ball to travel from your opponent's racquet to yours. This is just one of the reasons why pickleball is an easier sport than tennis to feel comfortable and confident playing for all ages and skill levels.

Is it a surprise that pickleball is growing much faster than tennis among baby boomers? The most common reasons are it's fun, easy, social, and accommodates aging bodies with less running than tennis. Compare the number of steps in doubles to cover a pickleball court versus tennis. The numbers don't lie. •



Joe Dinoffer is a USPTA and PTR master professional, has written 7 tennis books and 22 DVDs, and has appeared on the Tennis Channel. His company www.OnCourtOffCourt.com manufactures training aids for pickleball and tennis, and is also the exclusive distributor for the Pickleball Tutor in the United States.