

1. One Hour while People are Waiting: If there are people waiting for a court, and you've been there longer than an hour, it's time to give it up. Some courts might have a sign that says 1.5 hours, but the rule of thumb is 1 hour if it isn't otherwise posted. "But," you say, "What if there are other people on other courts who have been on longer than me, and they're not getting off?" It's easy to rationalize why it's okay to keep playing by pointing out the jerks who don't care about manners, but I'll tell you what my mom always told me. **Two wrongs don't make a right.** Do the right thing because the world needs more people like you.



2. Fetch the Ball!: You're in the middle of a rally when, suddenly, a ball comes out of nowhere and bounces across your court. What do you do? You stop playing and fetch is what you do. If you were playing a game then that point becomes a do-over (call a let when that happens). A lot of private clubs have partitions between courts to prevent this sort of interruption, but most public courts don't. You aren't playing in Wimbledon anyway, right? Besides, the fellow who hit the bad shot will probably be embarrassed and apologize, and this gives you a chance to be a good guy by not making him run through your court like a clown for his ball.



3. No Swearing!: Yeah, you're Pete Sampras, I know. Hitting that bad shot is totally abnormal for you. Still, try to restrain yourself. Mothers have a hard enough time teaching their kids to be good sports on the tennis court. Don't add to their woes by making them explain why it's not okay to act stupid over a missed shot while the grown man/woman on the next court is acting stupid over a missed shot. Also, remember last year when Serena Williams lost a game because she yelled "COME ON!" (I think that's what it was) in the middle of a rally. It's impossible on public courts to play an undisturbed game. Nevertheless, we can do our part to be the solution and not the problem.



4. Don't Walk Through a Point: Why did the tennis player cross the court? To get to the other side, of course! (crickets) Anyway, Not all courts have individual entrances. Sometimes it's necessary to walk across a court or two to get to yours. I'm not kidding when I tell you I had to stop a point about a month ago (I was about to serve) when a kid walked right through my court, at the net no less, to get to his court on the other side. I was shocked that this bit of knowledge was not present in the kid's head. So, maybe it needs saying: Wait patiently until the point is done then cross quickly, behind the baseline, so as not to interrupt the flow of the game.



5. Pick up your Trash: Tennis ball cans that roll around on a court like plastic tumbleweeds are annoying. But, the aluminum lids that keep the can pressurized and which all too frequently get tossed aside without a second thought are downright hazardous. Having once or twice carelessly picked one up and cut myself on the sharp edges, and with respect for my fellow players, I always throw them away. Think about all the kids that will use a court on any given day. Do you really want to risk hurting one of them just because you're too lazy to walk to a trash can? Trash is trash, it doesn't matter if it's on the street or on the court — **don't litter.**