

5 Ways Coaches Can Protect Their Bodies and Careers

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Most tennis coaches don't get injured in one dramatic moment. They wear down.

It's the thousands of balls fed, the endless demos, the standing on hard courts for hours, the late nights followed by early mornings. Somewhere in the middle of a busy season, or a busy career, their body starts sending signals: sore knees, aching shoulders, tight hips, low energy, and creeping burnout.

The problem isn't that coaches don't love the job. It's that many never learned how to **protect their bodies while doing it**.

If you want to coach for decades, not just survive your 30s and 40s, these five principles matter.

1. Train Your Body Like an Athlete (Not Just a Coach)

Coaches often stop training once they stop competing.

That's a mistake.

You may not be playing tournaments, but your body still performs athletic work every day, cutting, lunging, feeding, sprinting to pick up balls, and repeating strokes hundreds of times.

What helps:

- 2–3 short strength sessions per week
- Focus on legs, glutes, core, and shoulder stability.
- Simple movements: squats, lunges, hinges, rows, presses

You don't need extreme workouts. You need **durability**.

2. Warm Up Before You Teach (Yes, Really)

Many coaches roll onto the court cold and start feeding immediately.

That's asking for trouble.

A five-minute warm-up before your first lesson can drastically reduce the risk of injury.

Simple warm-up checklist:

- Arm circles and band work
- Hip openers and lunges
- Light shadow swings
- A few easy jogs or skips

Think of your first lesson as a match warm-up—not a surprise test.

3. Stop Demonstrating Every Ball

One of the fastest paths to elbow, shoulder, and back pain, or your body breaking down?

Over-demonstration.

Great coaches don't hit every ball. They **teach smarter**.

Protective habits:

- Use players to demo whenever possible.
- Feed from positions that reduce strain.
- Use shorter swing sizes when feeding instead of full swings.
- Demonstrate once, then coach verbally.

Your words last longer than your forehands.

4. Schedule Recovery Like It's a Lesson

Most coaches schedule lessons meticulously but leave recovery to chance.

Recovery is not a luxury. It's part of the job.

Non-negotiables:

- At least one true day off per week
- Daily mobility or stretching (10–15 minutes)
- Hydration and real meals, not just snacks
- Sleep that actually restores you.

Burnout usually shows up **in the body first**, not the mind.

5. Protect Your Energy, Not Just Your Joints

Physical burnout often starts as emotional overload.

Too many lessons. Too many favors. Too many “yeses.” Too many overbearing parents.

Mid-career coaches often feel trapped by their own schedules.

Career-saving mindset shifts:

- Build breaks into your teaching blocks.
- Say no to lessons that consistently drain you.
- Rotate formats (groups, clinics, on-court coaching)
- Remember: longevity beats volume.

You can love coaching and still need boundaries.

Coaching Is a Long Game

The best coaches aren't the ones who work the hardest in a single season.

They're the ones who are still energized, healthy, and sharp **20–30 years in**.

Your body is your most important coaching tool. Treat it with the same intention you bring to your players' development.

Your future self and your students will thank you.