

Pickleball and Good Health

As children most of us played a variety of sports and loved playing outside until dark. My favorite game was kick the can. I participated and competed in field hockey, soccer and running. As I have gotten older injuries and my age have presented me from doing these activities. I have taken up golf and most recently pickleball to remain active, have fun and make new friends here at The Villages.



Pickleball is one of the fastest growing racket sports among older adults. It blends tennis and table tennis. The paddle size is in between a ping pong paddle and a tennis racket. It is played both indoors and outdoors and the court is about the size of a double badminton court. The net is lower than a tennis net which makes it easier to hit the ball over. Pickleball is played with a small wiffle ball.

As a racket sport pickleball improves your lateral movement forcing you to move back and forth and side to side. This improves balance and weight shifting which can lower your risk of falls according to information provided to the *Harvard Health Blog* by Matthew Solan.

The *British Journal of Sports* did a study for 9 years looking at six kinds of exercise and the risk of early death. They looked at racket sports, swimming, aerobics, cycling, running and soccer. The people ranged in age between 30 to 98. Racket sport participants who played regularly during the period studied were 47% less likely to die of any cause and 56% less likely to die of cardiovascular disease.

As a retired P.E. Teacher I often told my students to find a sport or activity they enjoy and do it often. Moving is so important to the mind and the body. As the saying goes...**"USE IT OR LOSE IT!"** Come out and try pickleball and support pickleball for everyone here at The Villages.

- Drop-in instruction and play is Wednesday and Friday at 1pm on tennis courts 5 and 6. All equipment is supplied, but players must wear non-marking court shoes.
- Check out our website: villagespickleball.org