

## Keeping Courts Busy For Fun and Fitness

**Returning Members + New Members = Increased Profit = Keeping Courts = Win/Win!**

This article brings USA Racquetball's and US Handball's collective efforts to brainstorm as many ways as possible that courts can be kept busy and profitable. These ideas are gathered loosely into categories, a veritable smorgasbord: pick and choose, start small or go with a full-course meal. The amount of effort and organization needed will be up to the approach taken by the club and the resources available, with the concept of keeping courts playable.

### Low-Hanging Fruit

Work with your own members who would appreciate the court space, manage it themselves, advertise ideas and encourage court reservations:

- **Of course:** Racquetball, Handball, Paddleball;
- **Classes:** Zumba / Fitness / Yoga /

Martial Arts;

- **Personal Training:** Mats and Hand Weights);
- **One-on-one lessons or group practice sessions:** Soccer, Volleyball, Tennis, Badminton, Tai Kwon Do, Softball Drills (cross training), Dodge Ball, Spike Ball, SocCourt, International Court Soccer, Fencing.

### Mid-Range Ideas

Might take a bit of organization and modest equipment investment by the club:

- Wallyball;
- Half-court basketball (hang a basket over the back wall from the gallery at the correct height);
- Corn hole (aka bags); how about a family tournament?
- Ping Pong (aka table tennis).

### Full-Out Programming for Members/Guests

May require a paid or volunteer CPC (Court Programming Coordinator) to promote/manage:

- For larger facilities with on-site staff and programming: small/private exercise classes; clinics and classes; challenge courts, etc.
- Leagues/informal groups/clinics/camps for Racquetball, Handball, Paddleball, Wallyball, etc.
- Seasonal camps for junior and adult players; leverage local pros if available.
- Source of revenue for outside groups (see the lists above and turn your CPC loose on social media advertising and business calls). Be cognizant of and manage liability issues.

### Thinking "Inside the Box"

Fun ideas way off the beaten path:

- Parties: birthday, graduation, retirement
- A rented bounce house for kids' parties will fit on a court!
- Rotate courts, have different challenges/activities on each: soft obstacle courses, cornhole, etc.
- Try sport-specific "Minute to Win It" challenges in each court (e.g., dropping

and hitting a handball/racquetball to hit a ball can on the floor against the front wall or prizes taped to the front wall; hitting ceiling shots that drop into a box in the left back corner; or just crazy challenges for kids who don't have anything to do with a sport.

■ Check out [bit.ly/clubinsider129](http://bit.ly/clubinsider129) for 14 games for racquetball courts.

Believing in the wisdom of helping clubs keep courts busy and profitable (a win-win for everyone!), we have collected a lot of information about a number of these activities. The info is easily found by online search, but if you want an easier route, contact **Mike Wedel** (Racquetball) or **Matt Krueger** (Handball) and we'll be happy to share (See the **Ad on This Page**).

### Conclusion

"Squickle Ball"?? Inspiration so often comes from the ideas of others. Mr. John Archer inspired us with this creative approach (Pandemic Plan B), adapted by doubles squash players at *Club Atwater* in Montréal. Check out a video interview by **Pierre Obendrauf** of the *Montreal Gazette* by going to [bit.ly/clubinsider130](http://bit.ly/clubinsider130).

Give us your ideas, too, please. We volunteer to grow and nurture the database! Submit your ideas or Learn more at [bit.ly/clubinsider124](http://bit.ly/clubinsider124).

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## Engagement: Building Your Club's Real Social Network

By: **Jeffrey Pinkerton**

Driving engagement. Growing followers. Encouraging comments. Gaining likes. If you have a presence on social media, your team has no doubt discussed these metrics. And, for the purpose of the platform, each of these is important to understand and track when measuring the effectiveness of your social media reach. But, is online engagement (now highly driven by a somewhat-mysterious, ever-changing, self-serving algorithm) giving us all a false sense of connection? Has the hot-topic conversation of "virtual" and video fitness clouded the core importance of personal connection, shared experiences and building your club's real social network?

Driving (genuine) engagement. Growing members. Encouraging interaction and conversation. Gaining likes (raving fans). The importance of building your club's culture of connection has never been more important. With mask mandates easing and capacity restrictions soon to follow, those clubs that excel at building a welcoming, inviting and engaging social experience will thrive as people look for ways to safely re-engage in life. In a world where most people are socially starved and screen-fatigued, health clubs have a unique opportunity to literally come to the rescue for people as a place to improve both their mental and physical health.

According to the *American Psychological Association's* recent report

*Stress in America*, the pandemic has increased stress levels with 75% of adults reporting a high stress level during the past year related to the pandemic. To make matters worse, people's level of physical activity has decreased, with more than half of U.S. adults (53%) reporting being less physically active than they wanted to be. Their recommendations? Staying active. Limiting screen-time. And, social connection.

Building a culture that places a high value on social connection and community takes strategic direction and organizational intent. It must be part of everything you do: the people you hire, the programming you offer, the events you host and the pathway you set members on when they join your facility. It should inform every choice you make in marketing and messaging, and ultimately, it should direct every choice you make when mapping out the member experience. Time spent improving the social strength of your business is an investment that will pay dividends as connection and interaction can have a huge impact on member satisfaction and member retention.

According to **Dr. Melvyn Hillson**, interactions with members can improve the likelihood they will return, can reduce cancellations and improve retention. So, as you look at your people and your processes, are you intentionally helping members get connected? Are you providing

(See **Jeffrey Pinkerton Page 22**)



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WE WANT TO HELP BRING  
FITNESS, EXCITEMENT, AND PROFITABILITY  
TO CLUBS AND COURTS ACROSS THE NATION!