



VICTORY IS IN THE BAG

Physically Speaking

February 2010

The only thing that comes between you and your racquet is, quite literally, your racquet bag. Today's racquet bags are smartly designed to allow tennis athletes to organize their racquets as well as carry other essential tennis equipment to and from the court. Using the racquet bag for more than it was designed, however, puts you and your racquets at risk.

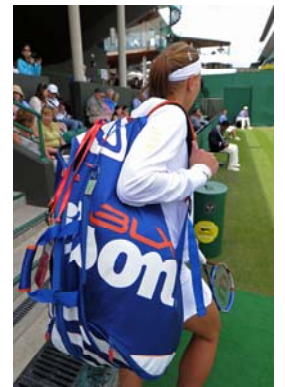
- Is your racquet bag weighing you down?
- Do you have trouble finding what you need in your racquet bag because there is too much stuff to sort through?
- Could the way you use your racquet bag contribute to injuries and conditions that can lead to decreased performance on court?

BAG BASICS

Racquet bags come in all shapes and sizes to meet the different needs of each tennis athlete.

What do you need?

- **OCCASION:** daily practice/training at home, travelling as either checked or carry-on luggage, practice session while at an event, or match day – singles and/or doubles.
- **DESIGN TYPE:** 2 racquet backpack, triple, 6 pack, Combi, Super 6, 9 pack, or 12 pack.
- **SIZE:** ranges from 25 x15 x72 cm (45 Liter volume) → 34x39x79 cm (130 Liter volume).
- **WEIGHT:** Bag alone weighs between 0.6 to 3.2 kg. Your contents add to that weight:
** ONE strung racquet or ONE water bottle weighs 12.5 ounces/0.32 kg.
- **TECHNOLOGICAL PROPERTIES:** moisture- and thermo-guard materials as well as padding to protect racquets; abrasion and dirt resistant materials for durability; waterproof, antimicrobial pouch for shoes and/or clothes; mesh laundry sack; accessory pouch, water-bottle pocket; ergonomic shape and anti-slip, padded double shoulder straps to protect athlete.
- **SECURITY:** number of lockable compartments, zipper style, and unique identification.
- **APPEARANCE:** color and design to compliment your style, personality, apparel, and game!



All Tennis and Sport Photos: Getty Images

ESSENTIALS

As a professional tennis player trotting the globe, your racquet bag is a constant companion from the airport to the courts to the hotel. Don't let it become your "junk drawer"; be prepared but keep it simple. Bits for your bag:

- | | | | |
|-----------------|------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| • Racquets | • Tennis Shoes | • Sunscreen | • Shower Gear |
| • Strings | • Extra Shoelaces | • Sunglasses | • Towel |
| • Extra Grips | • Extra Set of Apparel | • Visor/Cap | • Shower Shoes |
| • Stencil & Ink | • Sport Drink | • Hand Sanitizer | • Toiletries |
| • Dampeners | • Snack | • Tissues | • Laundry Pouch |
| • Balls | • Phone/MP3 | • First Aid/Blister Kit | • Keys/Wallet |



Racquet bags & contents photos: WTA collection

Other important items to have handy in case of emergency may include: super glue for a shoe blow out, small scissors to remove unwanted clothing tags, safety pins to rescue torn clothing or broken zippers, small sewing kit for attaching patches, contact lens case with extra lenses, eye drops for windy days, electrolytes on sweaty days, prescription medication such as a rescue inhaler, and an extra WTA patch.



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IS YOUR BAGGAGE WEIGHING YOU DOWN?

EXCESS LUGGAGE

How exactly did your racquet bag get so *smelly*, so *disorganized* and so *heavy*? Could it be that school text book that you have been meaning to study, or the loose currency floating around from the last trip, or maybe it is the ankle brace you haven't worn in a year? Stop the madness!

- **EMPTY AND RE-ORGANIZE YOUR BAG:** prior to every trip and at least once during an event.
- **THROW OUT:** expired foods, drinks/bottles, or medicines, used tissues & tapes, old grips, worn-out shoes, and smelly socks.
- **REMOVE:** unused items such as old braces/support sleeves, credentials from past events, dirty laundry, other currencies, any school work not current, extra cables, adapters, and power chargers.
- **THINK TWICE ABOUT:** that 1000 page novel, computer, video player, large headphones, camera, and pillow. These items are more suitable for a separate bag such as a rucksack or carry-all purse.



Unbalanced Bag at 12Kg!

"My life is pretty much packed into my racquet bag — it is my most valuable piece of luggage, whether in my hotel room, heading to an early morning workout or in the middle of a night match at the U.S Open. Wherever I am, my racquet bag is usually with me so it has to be able to withstand what tennis players put it through, but also look great on court." Jelena Jankovic

IT MAY BE A PAIN IN THE NECK, BUT...

Is your bag in a Zen-like state? Inspired, balanced, free from excess weight? An unbalanced, overweight, and/or incorrectly carried racquet bag can have a negative impact on your performance. Using **poor body mechanics to lift** and lay the racquet bag may aggravate injuries or create additional stress on your body.

- Lifting an overloaded or imbalanced bag → low back pain/strain
 - Loading on already fatigued or injured muscles and joints can aggravate the injury and hinder performance.
- Carrying an overloaded or imbalanced bag → neck/upper back pain/strain, headache, shoulder pain/dysfunction
 - Increased forward head and trunk lean increases stress on shoulder and upper back causing limited shoulder mobility and function, especially for serving and overhead strokes.
 - Kyphotic posture (rounded shoulders and back) limits trunk rotation for ground strokes and over time can lead to decreased lung capacity which reduces your aerobic endurance on court.
 - A scientific study showed that lung capacity is significantly decreased in school children whose backpacks weighed more than 20% of their body weight! Check the weight of your racquet bag!
- Carrying a bag with one strap → muscle imbalance and joint dysfunction
 - Frequent or constant pressure on the same shoulder leads to muscle trigger points and spasm which may cause headaches and limited shoulder and neck mobility.
 - Increased lateral bend of trunk and shoulder elevation in resting posture requires more effort and energy to move into proper position for stroke execution.

PACK FOR PROPER POSTURE

When you have decided what actually needs to be in your racquet bag on any given day, consider how you will fit it all into the bag. Balance the contents of your bag and take care to use good mechanics and posture to lift and carry the bag.

- **ORGANIZE CONTENTS:** distribute the weight evenly left to right, front to back, and top to bottom; keep racquets separate to protect them; use separate pouch for clean apparel and another for shoes.
- **SAFE LIFTING MECHANICS:** use your legs to squat to lift the bag—do not bend, and avoid swinging it over one shoulder.
- **SMART CARRY:** wear both shoulder straps of the bag and tighten them so the bag rests high on your back.



Organized Bag
Balanced at 4 kg

You work hard to excel on the court.

Exercise the same discipline with your racquet bag and it will be a friend instead.