

```html

Pickleball's popularity has exploded, with players cutting across ages and skill levels—from energetic 20-somethings to spirited seniors. After years chatting with orthopaedists, physical therapists, and rec-league grinders on the Suncoast, plus my routine morning pickleball sessions (yes, I count those warm-up minutes out loud!), I'm here to decode whether protein after pickleball truly supports recovery or if it's just hype.

Photo credit: Brendan Sapp / Unsplash

## The Real Story Behind Pickleball Injuries: Overuse & Aging Tendons

Most players jump [lateral epicondylitis pickleball](#) to blame a bad slice or that one desperate backhand for an injury, but the truth I hear on the benches regularly is different: injuries usually stem from **overuse and frequency** of play, not a single dramatic moment.

Aging tendons adapt slower and tolerate sudden loads less well than younger ones. This means that if you ramp up play too quickly, the odds of irritation rise—especially in common areas like the rotator cuff and elbows.



### Rotator Cuff Irritation – Night Pain and “Behind-the-Back” Limits

The rotator cuff does the heavy lifting stabilizing your shoulder during every serve and volley. When it becomes irritated, players often report:

- Pain flaring up at night, making sleep miserable
- Difficulty reaching behind their back or tucking in a shirt

This stiffness and discomfort isn't usually about one wild swing gone wrong but rather a slow wear-and-tear process aggravated by repetitive swings and insufficient rest or muscle repair.

### Elbow Pain – More Than Just the Paddle Grip

Another common complaint is elbow pain, often misattributed solely to the paddle. The reality? It often comes from a combination of tight grip mechanics and arm-dominant strokes. Players obsessing over paddle brands miss

the bigger picture: technique and muscle balance.

## Does Protein After Pickleball Support Muscle Repair?

Protein plays a pivotal role in **muscle repair support** after any physical activity, pickleball included. When you tear microscopic muscle fibers during play, dietary protein provides amino acids to rebuild and strengthen those fibers. But timing, type, and amount matter.

### Why Protein Post Play Makes Sense

After you finish your game, muscle repair processes kick into gear. Providing the body with quality protein immediately or within 30–60 minutes helps kickstart muscle synthesis faster. That said, it's not a magic fix to instantly erase soreness—good news for those of us skeptical about "miracle fixes."



- **Avoid skipping the warm-up and cool-down:** just like I always ask players, "What changed in the last two weeks?" skipping prep or recovery routines often contributes to lingering aches.
- **Combine protein with carbs:** to replenish glycogen stores and fuel recovery
- **Stay hydrated:** dehydration worsens muscle soreness and slows healing

### Types of Protein for Post Pickleball Recovery

Whey protein is fast-absorbing and popular among athletes for quick recovery meals, but plant-based options can be just as effective if combined properly. Don't forget whole foods like eggs, lean meats, or dairy.

## Post Play Meal Ideas to Reduce Next Day Soreness

For players looking to create balanced post game plates, here are some practical, tasty ideas that provide ideal protein, carbs, and nutrients for recovery:

1. **Grilled chicken with quinoa and steamed broccoli:** lean protein plus fiber and antioxidants
2. **Greek yogurt parfait with berries and granola:** probiotics support gut health and protein fuels repair
3. **Whole grain toast with avocado and poached eggs:** nutritious fat and high-quality protein for sustained recovery

4. **Salmon with roasted sweet potatoes and greens:** omega-3s reduce inflammation alongside protein
5. **Protein smoothie:** blend protein powder, banana, spinach, almond milk, and a scoop of Joy Organics organic CBD gummies (CBD can aid in muscle relaxation and mild pain management)

Speaking of CBD, I keep a light resistance band in my paddle bag along with a small stash of Joy Organics organic CBD gummies. Many players who've tried them say these gummies help reduce next day soreness and improve overall recovery quality, without the foggy feeling some fear.

## Summary Table: Key Tips for Post-Pickleball Recovery

| Focus Area | Recommendation                                             | Why It Helps                                          | Muscle Repair Support                                   | Consume                                   |
|------------|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
|            | 20-30 grams of quality protein within 60 minutes post-play | Speeds up muscle synthesis and recovery               | Managing Overuse Injuries                               | Limit play frequency; prioritize days off |
|            | Prevents gradual tendon irritation and inflammation        | Rotator Cuff Care                                     | Stretch & strengthen shoulder; address night pain early | Maintains shoulder mobility and comfort   |
|            | Elbow Health                                               | Work on technique, grip relaxation, forearm exercises | Reduces strain from arm-dominant mechanics              | Recovery Tools                            |
|            | Consider CBD gummies like Joy Organics for mild soreness   | Natural relaxation and inflammation support           |                                                         |                                           |

## Final Thoughts

Protein isn't a panacea but incorporating adequate protein in your post-play meal is a key part of a holistic recovery strategy—combined with proper warm-ups, rest days, technique correction, and hydration.

Remember: consistent overuse drives most common pickleball injuries. Aging tendons need more patience and proactive care. If your shoulder starts barking at night or grip-related elbow pain emerges, it's time to reorder your priorities, tweak your recovery eats (with protein in the spotlight), and maybe try those Joy Organics CBD gummies for an extra edge.

Keep counting those warm-up minutes and enjoy your next match—well recovered and ready for the next round!

...