

MY  
TENNIS  
HQ

# Think Less, Win More

7 Pro Mindset Secrets That Quickly  
Transform Your Tennis Game



# You've Picked the Right Coaches!

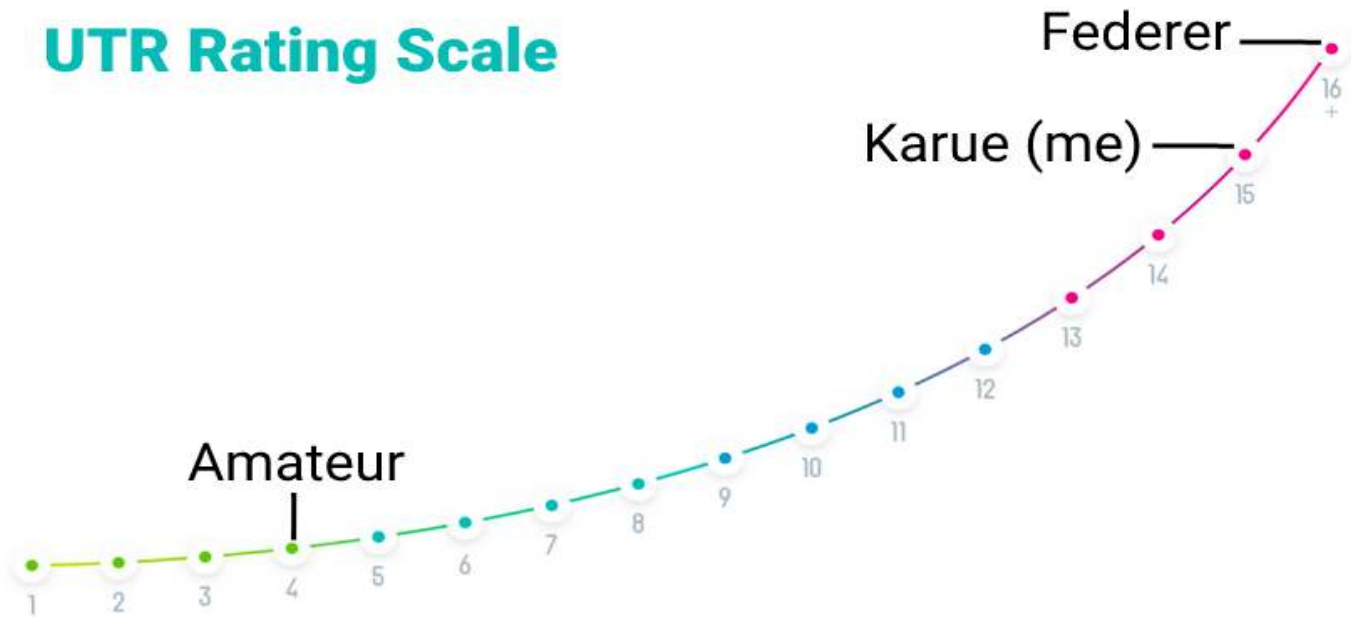
My Tennis HQ is brought to you by Gui Hadlich and Karue Sell, passionate former D1 college and ATP professional players. With 20+ years of experience at the highest levels of tennis, we're excited to give you the secrets we learned from the top coaches and most elite academies.



We reveal pro tennis tips that help amateur players quickly win more. Our simple yet powerful advice will transform your tennis game so you can dominate your court and love playing.



## UTR Rating Scale



# Here's What Players Like You Say About Our Coaching...

“I couldn’t believe how fast I saw my game improve. people at my club literally asked me ‘what the hell have you been doing? you’re like a different player.” —Ben G.

“This helped me so much. it just clicked in my head. I tried it on court and **my game sky rocketed!**” —Agas O.

“These are great keys for any player. **The guide made me redefine how I want to play**—and that’s with more FUN and less F#\*%.” —Mike M.

“You're a phenomenal teacher Karue 👍 **I love how clearly you can express the details and ideas** from your extensive tennis knowledge.” — Liam A.

“Tried this today and it was **the best my groundstrokes felt in a long, long time.** Thanks 👍” — Cade N.

“**I won mens 4.0 in Savannah** this weekend. 4 matches. Thx for the awesome advice. It has helped me :)” — Chris C.

“**A big factor of my improvement in tennis has been the mental tips you’ve shared.** I love how it’s simple and immediately actionable.” — Randy I.

*Get ready to win a lot more matches and love playing. But first we have to mention this...*

## Disclaimer

The contents of this guide are intended for educational and informational purposes only and are not intended to serve as medical, psychological, or professional advice. You should consult your physician or other healthcare professionals before starting this or any other fitness program to determine if it is right for your unique physical and mental needs. You should not rely on this information as a substitute for, nor does it replace professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. The use of any information provided in this guide is solely at your own risk.

# **Think Less, Win More**

---

7 Pro Mindset Secrets That Quickly  
Transform Your Tennis Game

---

# Table Of Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Pro Secret #1: Have A Plan Before You Step On The Court</b>	<b>19</b>
Know Your Weapons	20
Pick a Target	21
Carry Your Compass (Your Routine)	23
<b>Pro Secret #2: Tame Physical Panic</b>	<b>25</b>
Add a Grunt	26
Be a Duck	27
Breathe Like a SEAL (“Box Breathing”)	28
<b>Pro Secret #3: Simulate Match-Play During Practice</b>	<b>30</b>
Add Pressure to Your Practice	31
Visualize the Pressure and Your Calm Reaction	33
Keep Matches in Perspective	34
EVERY Point in Tennis Ends With a Mistake	34
<b>Pro Secret #4: Know Your “Unique Player Identity”</b>	<b>36</b>
Identify Your “Unique Player Identity” (UPI)	37

Use Your UPI Shortcut	38
<b>Pro Secret #5: Conquer “The Yips”</b>	<b>41</b>
Understand The Yips Happen to Everyone	42
Take Some Time Off	44
Come Back in a Low-Pressure Setting	44
<b>Pro Secret #6: Stop Obsessing About Technique</b>	<b>47</b>
Swing Your Swing	49
Play Tennis Like You Drive a Car	50
Focus on These 2 Things	51
<b>Pro Secret #7: Get Out of Your Head and Onto the Court</b>	<b>52</b>
Don’t Let Your Opponent Dictate the Match	54
Adapt Your Play in Real-Time	55
Think Like a Boss	56
<b>Your Quick Recap &amp; Next Steps</b>	<b>58</b>



# Introduction

*“Tennis is mostly mental. You win or lose the match before you even go out there.”*

— Venus Williams

You step onto the court. You’re pumped. Confident. Ready to dominate. And why wouldn’t you? You played great in practice the other day. Sure, your hands are sweaty on your racket grip. But, hey, that’s normal.

You feel your heart race in your chest, but that’s just pre-match jitters. As soon as you start playing, they’ll disappear — right?

But then you make a silly unforced error. *What the hell was that?* You yell in your head. Ok, ok. You just need to concentrate harder on the different parts of the forehand you’ve been studying. *Just go through your checklist and you’ll nail it*, you tell yourself.

But now you’re in your head. You’re not thinking about what shot you want to hit. Instead, you’re just reacting to your opponent’s ball. You feel the pace of the match tilting in their favor.

You need to get back in this. You go for a big winner, but your footwork is off and you hit from a bad position and drive the ball straight into the net.

You yell, %&\$#@! – this time out loud. You're pissed. *Why am I playing this way? I'm better than this.*

And just like that, you're locked in a downward spiral that continues the rest of the match.

We've all been there. It doesn't matter your level of play. It doesn't matter how many years you've been playing. It doesn't matter if you play daily or once a week. And it doesn't matter if you're a new, recreational player or a seasoned professional on the ATP Tour.

If you've played tennis then you've found yourself in at least one, if not several of these situations:

- ✓ You play great during practice but not so well in matches with others.
- ✓ You lose to players you know you should beat.
- ✓ You make too many unforced errors.
- ✓ You fall into double-fault holes you feel you can't get out of.

- ✓ You yell at yourself internally (or worse, out loud).
- ✓ You feel like your game is stuck in neutral, no matter how hard you practice or concentrate.
- ✓ You've lost a shot that used to be strong.
- ✓ You feel like you're letting yourself (and your doubles partner) down.

So what's the root cause behind each of these very common tennis challenges?

➔ **One word: Mindset.**

Tennis is relatively easy to learn but incredibly challenging to master. That's because it's such a difficult game mentally.

We're under constant pressure to make complex decisions in fractions-of-a-second — all the while coordinating our entire body to execute one of an infinite number of shots — every time the ball comes our way.

Who wouldn't feel intense pressure facing that?

It's well known that this game is as much mental as it is physical. In fact, many say that **tennis is 80% mental and only 20% physical.**

Achieving success as a tennis player, regardless of your level, depends on your ability to deal with pressure on the court. **The first opponent we face is ourselves.**

## I've Been There Too...

I've played at the highest levels of D1 college, and internationally as a professional on the ATP Tour. And if I could go back in time to the beginning of my career and give myself one piece of advice to dramatically improve my play, it would be this: **work harder on my mental game.** When I look back to the biggest wins of my career, the part I vividly remember is how my mind was in the right place during those key moments. I was focused, poised, and nothing was going to stop me.

I didn't win those tournaments because I had radically changed my strokes. **I won because I was mentally strong.**

But that feeling of being "in the zone" is incredibly hard to replicate week in and week out if you don't actively focus on this part of your game.

In tennis, success and failure are both a part of the game. All players face setbacks, and our ability to overcome problems on and off the court is key to our success.

My co-founder at My Tennis HQ, Gui, and I have seen this countless times on the D1 and ATP Pro tours: Players who are mentally tough are much more likely to succeed than players who have great strokes but are weak between the ears.

## The Good News for You (and the Pros)

Even though tennis is such a challenging sport for our minds, **anyone can learn the skills to turn their mindset into a weapon** instead of a liability. You just need to learn the secrets that the pros use in the highest pressure situations and apply them to your own game!

And that's exactly what I'm going to guide you through here, step-by-step.

Remember, nobody is born knowing how to be calm under pressure. Part of what has helped humans survive throughout our history is our "fight-or-flight" reaction when we find ourselves in intense situations. We've evolved to react this way. But while it may have saved our lives in the wild, it absolutely destroys our tennis game.

So instead of letting your basic animal instincts take over when you're under pressure on the court, you need to reprogram yourself to stay calm in those moments so you can play smart and with your best technique. It's something we need to learn and practice.

Think about the intense pressure professional players regularly find themselves under. This isn't a recreational match for them. It's their career; their livelihood. There can be millions of dollars on the line. There's a stadium full of people staring at them. Every shot is broadcast to TVs around the world. They're exhausted. They're in a fifth-set do-or-die battle. Everything is on the line for them.

So what do you think determines if they win or lose in a moment like that? Technique? Racket? Sneakers?

Of course not. You already know **the answer is their mindset.**

But just like every amateur player that ever steps on the court, Nadal, Federer, and Williams — each a shining example of mental strength — had to learn the techniques to control their mindset. And they have to practice them regularly.

*"I've done so much mindfulness training that my brain functions better now automatically...I used to freeze up whenever I made a mistake. Now when I blow a serve or shank a backhand I still get those flashes of self-doubt but I know how to handle them."*

*— Novak Djokovic*

## **The Source of Nerves for Recreational Players**

You can easily see why a pro gets stressed during a huge televised match. But what about amateur players? Why do they get in their heads when the stakes seem to be so much lower?

At the core, you get nervous because you're doing something you care about. You put work into improving your game, you invest in your racket and gear, you take time out of your day to play, you pay for court time — so you understandably want to see forward progress.

**Naturally, this also creates pressure for you.**

There are lots of other factors that can dial up the pressure for players:

- ✓ You've been practicing a new technique and you really want to get it right in your match. But practice is way different than match play.
- ✓ You're on the court with better players so self-doubt and embarrassment start to creep in.
- ✓ You might be really competitive and want to win badly, so each shot feels like life-and-death.

That pressure then creates physiological symptoms like a rapid heart rate, quickened breathing, and mental fog. Feeling physical anxiety often induces even more psychological anxiety, creating a runaway train of panic, going downhill with no brakes.





But don't worry – the vicious cycle of mental pressure that's sabotaging your game ends today for you!

With the simple secrets in this guide, you'll have every tool you need to stop the panic train before it even starts. **Starting now, you're going to turn your mindset into your secret weapon.**

## Most Amateurs Will Never Know What YOU Are About to Discover

You're about to unlock the most valuable secrets Gui and I learned from over 20 years of intense tennis play at the highest levels.

As D1 and professional ATP players, we were fortunate to have access to coaches most can only dream of working with. We played around the world, trained at the best facilities and academies, and spent time with other top-tier athletes where we traded secrets about what really improves your tennis play.

We both put an incredible amount of work into our tennis careers. It wasn't always easy. But it was always rewarding and, because we love this game so much, we feel privileged to experience tennis at the elite level.

And we're honored that we can hand you **the very best-of-the-best** of what we discovered from these elite coaches, sports psychologists, and academies so you can transform your game. We promise that if you follow our advice, you absolutely will:

- 1 Quickly start playing at a higher level.
- 2 Feel confident that you have a secret weapon every time you play.
- 3 Let go of stress and fall in love with tennis on a new level.

## Here's How to Maximize Your Results from these Secrets...

- ✓ **Read this fast, then get out on the court.** I made your guide short so you don't have to remember too much. I want to **calm your mind**, not crowd it with more information. I'm handing you only my best secrets learned over 20 years of high-level tennis play stripped down to their essence for you. I want you to get out on the court faster instead of spending long hours reading.

- ✓ **Continue your training.** If you're also working with a coach or pro, be sure to continue to do that. They are an invaluable resource for you. And be open about your mindset challenges so they can help you implement the solutions in this guide.
- ✓ **Apply your mindset secrets in every scenario.** In this guide, I speak in the singular about your opponent, but everything in here applies equally to singles and doubles play.
- ✓ **Keep it simple.** You'll find a lot of overlap in the strategies below. That's because the problems and solutions are so interconnected. This is great news for you because it means you don't have to worry about solving tons of unique problems with many unique solutions. Identifying your biggest challenges from those below will help you **focus on the few, high-leverage solutions that will work to solve multiple challenges for you!**
- ✓ **Be kind to yourself.** You can't completely eliminate nerves. But this isn't a bad thing — some level of anxiety helps you focus and compete harder. I'm going to hand you the secrets to managing your mental game so you can **use anxiety to your advantage on the court without ever feeling overwhelmed.**

So let's unlock the secrets so you can transform your game the next time you step on the court!

# Pro Secret #1: Have A Plan Before You Step On The Court

*"If one does not know to which port one is sailing, no wind is favorable."*

— Seneca

I see so many players walk onto the court and start to play by simply reacting to whatever comes at them. It's clear they haven't thought ahead about how they'll play, even in the most basic sense.

Ideally, you want to think about how you'll play against a particular opponent. But most players don't even have a basic plan, such as, "I'm going to work to get in position for my best stroke, and I'm going to try to keep the ball away from my opponent's strong shot."

Just trying to get the ball back over the net is not a plan. Hoping you'll win points is not a plan.

If you go out there and hope for the best, you're not prepared to handle things when they inevitably go sideways. When you play without a strategy, your mind has nothing to anchor itself to, so it begins to float wildly.

## Know Your Weapons

Most amateur players rarely think about their game (a problem we'll address in-depth in a few minutes). So when they get on the court they can't make decisions that will set themselves up for easy success.

Spend a little time thinking about your one or two best strokes. Is it your forehand, your slice backhand, your poach volley?

They don't have to be guaranteed winners. As long as they're shots you feel comfortable with, that's a great place to start. Focus on these and make a point to **get yourself to these strokes more often**. Doing this will build your confidence quickly, especially at the start of the match as you're settling in.

## Pick a Target

So now you've identified a stroke you feel good about. But you don't want to hit it just anywhere and hope it works out.

A big challenge I see in many of the players I coach is that they don't think ahead about where to hit shots. That's why coaches spend so much time with drills where you specifically have to hit down the line, cross-court, or at a target.

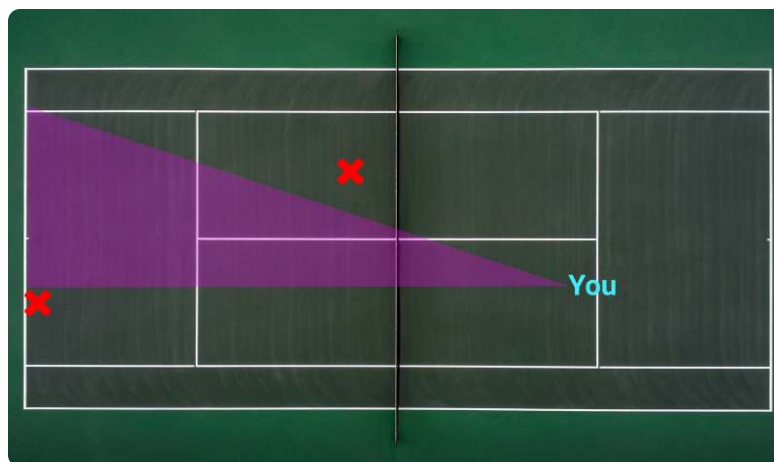
But without someone telling you where to aim during match play, combined with the need to make quick decisions, many players end up giving no thought to where they're actually trying to hit the shot. This ends up with **a weak shot that hands the advantage to your opponent.**

Professional players are able to ingrain "tactical patterns" in our brains after many years of training. But that's not an option for most amateur players.

Instead, you need to **think ahead about a few key places you want to hit the ball** and stick to that with most of your shots.

This can vary by opponent and singles vs. doubles, but overall, here are a few safe places to aim:

- ✓ **Cross-court** – This gives you the longest distance on the court which allows you to safely clear the net and still have the ball land inside the lines.
- ✓ **Down the middle** – There's a reason every young tennis player learns, "Down the Middle Solves the Riddle." It's the safest shot with the most forgiveness. This is even truer in doubles.
- ✓ **At their feet** (when at the net) – Low volleys toward the middle are very hard to return and very safe.
- ✓ **To your opponent's weak shot** – A little more advanced, but when you do this you'll quickly see big gains (and you'll frustrate them!).



## Carry Your Compass (Your Routine)

If you've ever watched a professional tennis match, you've noticed the players doing all kinds of things between points and games. Guess what? Those are not random. They are carefully planned routines. Every player has their own unique routine, but they all have one. Why?

**Routines are vital for coping with stress during matches and for resetting your mind after a tough point, game, or set.**

Very few amateur players have routines. But that's about to change for you.

Some possible routines you can use:

- ✓ Turn away from the court as a signal to yourself to move on to the next point and to forget the previous one.
- ✓ Take one long slow breath in, and one slow exhale out.
- ✓ Remind yourself about your plan: your best shot and your chosen target (from above).
- ✓ Visualize what you plan to do on the next point.
- ✓ Wipe your hands on your towel.



- ✓ Think about where your opponent is continually having success and how to adapt (for breaks between games/sets).
- ✓ Have a positive phrase you say to yourself after each point (“Nice effort!”, “I’m happy I’m playing tennis!”, “I’ve got this!”).

Don’t use all these habits. You want to keep your routine **simple and easy to repeat**. Then it will become a powerful tool in your arsenal.

Your routine is your compass that always points you back to “True North” and keeps you on your path forward. Take comfort in knowing you always have your routine with you at any and every moment you need it!



Having a simple plan and routine in mind before you even lace up your sneakers will reduce the pressure greatly, give your mind something to focus on, and dramatically increase your success on the court!

## **Pro Secret #2: Tame Physical Panic**

- X** Racing heart
- X** Rapid, shallow breathing
- X** Difficulty swallowing
- X** Sweaty palms
- X** Diminished fine-motor skills
- X** Heavy legs
- X** Butterflies in your stomach

That list alone is enough to induce panic in most people. And these are just some of the physical symptoms of stress you can experience when you play tennis.

These symptoms can create that negative feedback loop we can't break, where a physical sign of stress becomes a signal to our conscious mind, which then creates more stress and more physical symptoms. Before you know it, you're behind before you even hit your first shot.

The good news is that sports psychologists and other experts — like the Navy SEALs — have discovered some incredibly effective ways to reduce our physical symptoms when we feel we're under pressure.

Here are the secrets the pros use to get in “the zone” before they step on the court...

## **Add a Grunt**

Let's start with a simple one: adding a grunt to your shot. It's your choice if it's quiet or loud, but grunting reminds you to breathe.

So many recreational players hold their breath during play. Adding a grunt forces you to exhale as you hit your shot and then take a breath in to fill your lungs for the next shot.

Like a boxer breathing out on a right cross, a grunt adds power to your tennis shot. It also synchronizes your mind and body as you hit so everything is working together in your favor.

## Be a Duck

One of the most common things I see in players is when they get stressed, they get tight in their bodies. This results in stiff arm movements and slow footwork that leaves them in bad positioning for each shot.

A simple solution is to visualize yourself as a duck!

Think about how a duck swims. They're calm on top, but under the water, their feet are moving furiously. And every great tennis coach will tell you, that's how you want to play tennis.



Keep the top of your body loose and calm, and let your feet move fast to get you into the right position for each shot.

## Breathe Like a SEAL (“Box Breathing”)

If you want to learn how to reduce the physical symptoms of intense pressure, then you go to the best in the world: The Navy SEALs. They deal with life-and-death situations all the time and have to perform flawlessly. So we can learn a lot from them about how to calm our bodies under pressure.



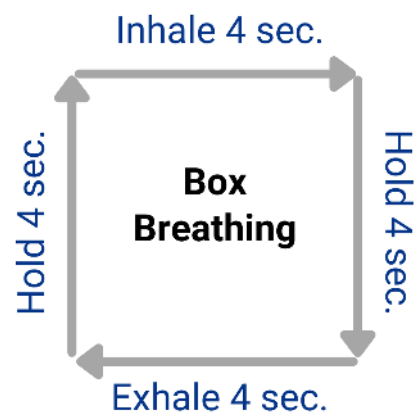
The SEALs use a simple yet powerful technique called “**Box Breathing**,” which combines optimal breathing patterns with mindfulness to slow the entire body down. Here’s how you do it:

1. Breathe through your nose during each step.
2. Visualize a box.

4. Inhale for 4 seconds as you visualize moving across the top of the box.
5. Hold for 4 seconds as you visualize moving down the right side of the box.
6. Exhale the breath for 4 seconds as you visualize moving across the bottom of the box.
7. Hold the breath for 4 seconds as you visualize moving up the left side of the box (If this feels too long here, you can shorten the exhale hold).
8. Repeat.

You can't completely eliminate stress or your physical response. It's deeply ingrained in all humans.

But now that you have these powerful secrets, you will be able to quickly take control of your body so it's working for you, not against you, on the court!



## Pro Secret #3: Simulate Match-Play During Practice

Not being able to play in matches the way you do in practice is one of the single biggest sources of frustration for tennis players. Logically, it doesn't make sense. If you can hit a shot one day during practice, why are you suddenly unable to do the same thing a few days later in a match? Nothing has fundamentally changed.

Or has it?

This one speaks to the heart of the mental game in tennis. If all that mattered was your technique, then you'd play the same in every situation once you learned a technique.

But even the pros know this is far from true.

The truth is, practice and matches are very different **because of one key factor: pressure.**

As I explained earlier, you need to be loose to play well.

During practice, the pressure is low, you stay loose, and, therefore, you play better.

In practice, you focus on a particular shot and a target (see: 'Have a Plan' above). You also don't beat yourself up for missing a shot in practice. After all, that's why you're there.

But when you get into a match this all changes instantly. Everything seems to matter. Your body locks up. You overthink. You beat yourself up for mistakes. And you quickly end up in a downward spiral that feeds itself.

But don't worry. In my career, I've spent countless hours going between practice courts to pro tournaments, and I've got the secrets to playing like you practice... especially when it counts!

## Add Pressure to Your Practice

If you want to play matches as well as you play in practice, **you need to practice like you're in a match.** You'll want to think about the situations in your matches that create the most stress for you and replicate them as much as possible when you practice.



Here are a few scenarios to have in your head that will add pressure to your practice:

- **Big points** — Imagine you're down 40-15 on the shot you're about to return.
- **Everyone is watching you**— Playing with this in mind adds a lot of pressure and pushing through it will help you get comfortable with this during a match.
- **Crucial Serve**— You've just double-faulted, and you're on your second serve that you have to get in.
- **Unforced Error Streak**— Work on staying loose and calm after multiple unforced errors.

The more you can shift your mindset in practice to that of match play, the more familiar everything will feel when you get to the match. And that will bring you an increased sense of calm.

## Visualize the Pressure and Your Calm Reaction

Great news – you can actually work on your game without even being on a tennis court. I'm a big believer in the power of visualization. This is a technique used by elite athletes in every sport, and you should be using it too.

Visualize yourself experiencing pressure in your match, but remaining calm despite it. **You're the calm eye of the storm.** See yourself handling tough shots using your plan. Visualize making mistakes but recovering the next point.



See yourself using your routine between points to stay on your path (your Compass).

You'll play the game you want in your mind before you've ever left your house.

## Keep Matches in Perspective

You play differently in matches than in practice because you put more importance on them. And this increases the pressure on you. Simply reframing how you view matches can lower the stress and help you play better. Remember:

- You're not in a **Grand Slam final**.
- You play tennis because **you love it**.
- Mistakes are a **learning opportunity**.
- There's always **next week**.

**Most importantly, remember this:**

**EVERY Point in Tennis Ends With a Mistake**

If you take away just one thing from this guide, then make it this fact: ***Every point in tennis ends with a mistake.***



A double-fault. A shot outside the lines. A ball into the net. A poorly hit ball that sets up an easy winner for your opponent. These are the only ways points in tennis are won. If it weren't for a mistake that ends a point, you'd still be playing the first rally you ever started!

This makes tennis rare among sports. Understanding and accepting that mistakes are an inherent part of every point of every game in a match will instantly reduce the mental pressure you put on yourself.

Just watch the pros. They make mistakes all match long.

So don't beat yourself up for what is simply a part of the sport of tennis. Keep your head in the game and know you've got another chance on the very next point!

## **Pro Secret #4: Know Your “Unique Player Identity”**

We've talked a lot about simple improvements that can have a huge impact on your game, like playing more to your strengths. But that begs the question: What are your strengths?

So many players I work with never take the time to think about who they are as a player. Are you strong at the net? Are you a serve and volley player? Do you grind from the baseline? Are you an endurance player who can outlast others in a rally? Or is your aim to end a point fast?

And, just as important as your strengths, what are the big weaknesses that you want to avoid?

Looking at yourself holistically is vital to improving your game, but it's rarely taught at the recreational level. In fact, I wasn't taught this skill until I began playing at elite levels with world-class coaches. But YOU can do it, starting now.

## Identify Your “Unique Player Identity” (UPI)

An essential part of my coaching for players at all levels is identifying what I call **Unique Player Identity (UPI)**. Determining your UPI involves taking a close look at the 3 key aspects of your game to assess both your strengths and weaknesses:

- **Technical** (e.g. swing path)
- **Physical** (e.g. footwork, stamina)
- **Mental** (e.g. panic)

This is much deeper than a general statement about yourself, such as, “I’m a baseline player” or “I hit with topspin.” It’s about knowing where you feel comfortable and strong, and where you feel vulnerable, as a player.

There are no right or wrong answers here. Every player naturally feels confident in different strokes and situations. **This is about figuring out where you feel comfortable and using that to your advantage.**

At the same time, you don’t want to overcomplicate these insights so that they become a distraction while you’re playing.

## Start Small

You want to avoid overwhelm, so when you're developing your UPI, start small. You don't have to be fully aware of every part of your game at once.

Even a small amount of awareness will dramatically increase your performance on the court.

And once you feel comfortable, you can add additional layers to your UPI.

Start with the basics and over time move to more advanced elements of your game. For example, focus on which groundstroke is your weapon before you look at something advanced like your court positioning on second serves.

Any level of increased self-awareness is a big win for you.

## Use Your UPI Shortcut

If you have a coach or a pro you're working with, I definitely recommend getting their input. Getting external advice is very valuable. But if you don't, I've got a simple tool to help you.

Here's a quick way to start understanding your Unique Player Identity: Spend some time taking an honest look at your game the next time you're playing a match. It's important to do this during a match instead of practice because the pressure will bring your strengths and weaknesses into focus much faster.

You can print this chart and fill in the details during a break in play or after you're done with the match. But do it while you're still on the court so you don't forget...

Doing this UPI exercise will quickly give you a more accurate view of who you are as a player. Then, take that knowledge with you on the court and see how much it improves your game to **play with a clear intention of who you are as a player** (instead of just reacting to what comes at you).

Once you've identified your UPI, you'll find **it becomes a part of the armor you wear on the court** to give you the mental strength and confidence to face any opponent!



## Your "Unique Player Identity" Shortcut

	My Biggest Strength Is...	My Biggest Weakness Is...
<b>Technical</b>	<i>(Example: Big topspin on my forehand)</i>	<i>(Example: Inconsistent serves)</i>
<b>Physical</b>	<i>(Example: Great footwork to get in optimal hitting position)</i>	<i>(Example: I tire quicker than other players)</i>
<b>Mental</b>	<i>(Example: I'm not afraid to be at the net)</i>	<i>(Example: I get upset about unforced errors &amp; can't recover)</i>

## Pro Secret #5: Conquer “The Yips”

It happens to players at every level. One day your stroke — often your forehand — is strong and working reliably for you. **Then suddenly, without explanation, you lose that stroke.**

It's like you can't remember how it should feel or what it should look like. It's just... bad.

It happens once and you think it's just an off day or a fluke. Then it happens again. And again. Before you know it, weeks have gone by and you can't hit the shot that was once your go-to.

How could this be? You haven't changed anything. You're doing the same things you did before when the stroke was working great. Now you're confused and frustrated at what seems like a completely random problem.

So what happens? You try focusing harder to fix the shot, but that doesn't help. You get more frustrated, and that only makes the problem worse. Once again, you're stuck in a loop that you can't get out of.

Take a deep breath because I've got good news for you. You haven't lost your stroke. You just have "The Yips."

Here's how sports psychologists define The Yips:

*"A sudden loss of fine motor skills that comes on without apparent explanation and is usually suffered by mature athletes with years of experience."*

This isn't confined to tennis. Athletes in nearly every sport experience The Yips.

Someone who just started playing tennis won't get The Yips. They're still learning and don't have a lot of the skills honed.

However, if you've been playing tennis for a while and you feel like you're suddenly in a slump where you can't break free, you're probably dealing with The Yips.

This phase could involve struggling with a single stroke or your entire game, but the constant struggle causes you to assume that you've just "lost your touch." That can be very discouraging and defeating.

But don't worry —as frustrating as The Yips can be, together we will fix this for you and get you back to form.

## Understand The Yips Happen to Everyone

Watch professional tennis and you'll regularly see players with The Yips. I've been there myself. In my case, hitting backhands always felt incredibly natural while forehands were more complicated.

Because of that, my forehand was way more volatile. I would concentrate on so many parts of my forehand because I wanted to make it stronger. Sometimes it would work, but often my forehand was all over the place.

Luckily, having access to an incredible team helped me quickly identify that the problem was mental and not technical, so I could solve the issue correctly.

Recently, I was coaching a top-tier junior player whose monster forehand was his weapon. We went to a tournament and he played the best tennis I've seen him play.

The first day back after the tournament, he looked at me and said, "I don't know how to hit my forehand anymore." **Just like that, his unstoppable forehand was gone.**

But what had happened? We didn't change his stroke or his training.

You guessed it — he had The Yips. Luckily, I was able to identify the issue for him quickly and after a few weeks of rebuilding his confidence, his forehand was back to its original form.

**What's important is to remember this is mental, not technical.**

You didn't forget how to swing your best shot. Something shook your confidence and that is the source of the problem that needs to be fixed.

Losing strokes is a natural part of tennis — all players go through good and bad times with their strokes.

The key is to not let this inevitable part of the game derail you.

**Fighting it leads to greater frustration which only makes the problem last longer.**

## **Take Some Time Off**

Our instinct is to get on the court and try to fix the problem fast. But this is the exact opposite approach you should take.

Instead, your fastest fix is to take a short break from tennis if you can. It doesn't have to be a long hiatus – just long enough to really miss playing.

This resets your mindset to where you want to be out on the court enjoying the process, rather than stressing over reclaiming your forehand. Give your mind some rest and allow your muscle memory to kick back in.

## **Come Back in a Low-Pressure Setting**

Remember, the goal is to keep things calm so you can get back into the flow of strokes without the stress that makes your mind get in the way.

When you're ready to get back on the court, don't head straight into match play. Have a coach or friend hand-feed balls. Getting fed allows you to hit a lot of shots in a low-pressure environment so you can work on your range. You (and your coach) can fine-tune your forehand without worrying about mistakes.

If you can't find someone to feed you, grab a bunch of balls and hand-feed yourself. **Your goal is to simply reset your mind and body and enjoy hitting in a low-stress setting.**

As you build your confidence back up, be sure to not rush things or you'll set yourself back. You'll want to take safer shots for a while. If you go for challenging shots, you'll miss a lot of them (because that's how it goes with tough shots) and then you'll start thinking, "I've lost my forehand again!"

By making smarter, high-percentage shots you demonstrate to yourself that you do have a good stroke. Then the feedback loop works in reverse: You believe you can hit the shot, you relax, you hit it well, you believe more, and you're back in business.

Remember, nearly everything in this guide works together. Be sure to use your other mindset secrets (like having a simple plan) to get your mind back on course and you'll be out of The Yips in no time.

# Pro Secret #6: Stop Obsessing About Technique



Nearly every player has been there: Googling, “How to Hit Federer’s Forehand.”

You burn a few tips into your brain. Then you’re onto the next video about Nadal’s forehand. Then del Potro’s.

But they each hit so differently.



So what do players do? They start combining elements. This one's grip. That one's take-back. Another one's racket-head lag.

And guess what you end up with?

### **A Frankenstein Forehand.**

I want to start by saying that I'm not dismissing the importance of learning good techniques. That's very important, especially when you're starting to play tennis.

But I see so many intermediate and advanced players attribute their lack of winning to their technique not being good enough. **And that's completely untrue.**

When you obsess about your technique and decide the solution is to imitate Nadal's exact form, you're going to struggle. And by now you know: That struggle won't result in a better forehand, but rather a quick drop in confidence and a loss of your stroke (possibly even The Yips!).

The goal is to keep **evolving** when you're working on your technique. If you obsess and make radical changes — without spending hours on the court with a coach giving you constant feedback or video of yourself to review — you're setting yourself up for failure.

**Here's the surprising truth the pros know: Once you have the basics of the tennis technique down, constantly focusing on improving can actually hurt your play.**

Here's what you should do instead to accelerate your results on the court...

## **Swing Your Swing**

In golf, they say, "swing your swing." Instead of trying to emulate someone else, you've got to learn how your brain and body work in order to get that ball flying.

The same applies to your tennis strokes. Look at the top one hundred players. No two have the exact same stroke. Many even have really unconventional techniques. But it works for them because that's what feels right to their brain and body.

I'm not saying there's no room to improve any of your shots. But you need to work with what's natural to you. You can't copy-and-paste what the pros do. It works for them, but it won't work for your brain and body, no matter how much you practice it. You'll have much greater success if you work with what is already natural to you. Swing your swing!

## Play Tennis Like You Drive a Car

Think about how you drive. In the beginning, you needed to be taught skills and practice them. But now that you've been driving for years, it's become a reflex — you drive without thinking.



Instead of thinking about the brake, the gas, the RPM levels, and how you're gripping the wheel, you focus on the road and the other drivers. You're one with the vehicle.

It's the same with tennis.

When you focus on every tiny aspect of your swing, you end up with a less natural swing path and a weaker shot.

And on top of that, because you've been so focused on your technique, you haven't been thinking at all about where you're going to hit the ball, where your opponent is, and what you'll do next.

**So you end up hitting a poor shot with no plan, which hands the advantage to your opponent.**

Just like you are with your car, be one with your racket. Trust that your body has the technique in your muscle memory and enjoy the ride.

## Focus on These 2 Things

You need to give your mind a few things to focus on in place of all those videos you Googled. Here are two simple things you can focus on that will not only keep your mind sharp but will easily translate to stronger, more consistent strokes for you.

### **1 - Footwork**

Pros know that a lot of technique deficiencies can be traced back to poor footwork. Pay attention to your footwork a little more, and you'll see how quickly that improves your game. Remember, you're a duck!

### **2 - Contact Point**

We all swing the racket differently, but we have the same goal: hitting the ball in front of us. **What we do on our take-back doesn't really matter as much.** As long as you have good contact in front of you, you'll have a good shot.

## **Pro Secret #7: Get Out of Your Head and Onto the Court**

Taken together, all of the mindset challenges we've discussed earlier have a key theme in common: **they're the result of you turning your focus deeply inward.**

And that's a big problem because there's a match taking place on the court outside your head! You have...

- An opponent (or two) doing everything they can to get you to make a mistake.
- A partner relying on you, needing you to see what they're doing so you can make a smart move to support them.
- A ball flying at you fast, slow, high, low, with topspin, with slice, or flat.
- Court surface factors.
- Your position on the court.

- Weather.
- Your body position.
- ...and of course, the shot after this one.

So, when you're spending all of your time inside your head worrying about making your racket-head lag look like Federer's, or beating yourself up for hitting the last shot into the net, you're missing the really important things on the court that have a much bigger impact on the outcome of each point and the match.

Here's how you can win a lot more by shifting your focus to what's happening in front of you...

See yourself handling tough shots using your plan. Visualize making mistakes but recovering the next point. See yourself using your routine between points to stay on your path (your Compass).

## Don't Let Your Opponent Dictate the Match

When you're thinking is internally focused and not on what is happening on the court, **you hand a major advantage to your opponent.** You're left in "reaction mode," hitting back without any strategy, just improvising and hoping to make any return.

There are plenty of good hitters in tennis who are bad players because they don't understand this part of the game.

Instead, you want to be thinking about **how you add pressure to each point.** How do you make your opponent just a little bit uncomfortable, so they can't cleanly execute their own plan?

This goes back to our earlier secret to Have a Plan when you walk on the court. In order to execute your plan, **you need to shift your focus from your technique to the match in front of you.** When you stop letting your opponent dictate the terms and start executing your plan, you get more control of the match and dramatically increase your chances of winning.

## Adapt Your Play in Real-Time

This is a secret that is rarely taught at the amateur level, but it's crucial for success in the pros. As we've discussed in many of the previous secrets, sometimes you're on the court and a shot that was a weapon for you yesterday is just not working today.

Most amateur players get frustrated and double-down on that shot trying to fix it during the match. This is a big mistake and it only makes the problem worse (negative feedback loops, The Yips).

You keep going to the shot that isn't working today, not only will you get frustrated and continue making the same mistake, but — even worse — **you'll reveal a weakness to your opponent.** And you never want to do that in a match.

If you're struggling with a shot today, the absolute best thing you can do is be honest about it and accept it. The "why" doesn't matter. It's just off today, and that's all you need to know.

Once you have that insight you can use it to **adjust your game plan.** This is how you use your mindset to your advantage to be a smarter player.



## Think Like a Boss

Another important aspect of refocusing on the match is to see yourself as a boss who's in charge. **This means two crucial things on the court:**

1. Being in charge of your emotions.
2. Being in charge of the individual points.

Your opponent is going to be ahead a lot of the time. That's just a part of tennis. When that happens, you need to manage your emotional response.

You want to avoid becoming stubborn, which leads you to try shots that you don't know how to hit yet, and go for winners when you're out of position.

**Tennis is a game of chess, not checkers. Be patient. Set yourself up for the right moment when you can strike with your weapon.**

Being in charge of the point is something amateur players really struggle with. Most get increasingly uncomfortable as a rally goes on, becoming more worried about making a mistake, and wanting to finish the point at all costs. And that ends with you making a mistake.

A lot of rallies are just about keeping the ball alive and waiting for the right moment to take your shot.

**At the amateur level, most points are lost not due to a beautiful winner, but because of simple, unforced errors.**

Once you know this, you can use it to your advantage. Keep yourself in the point and focus on hitting quality returns. Remain calm and patient in the rally and you'll see how fast you win more points!



## Your Quick Recap & Next Steps

I imagine **you're breathing a lot easier right now** compared to when you first opened this guide. Isn't it empowering to know that you'll transform your game with a few small mindset adjustments

Fortunately for you, your competitors will be stuck with their thoughts working against them as a liability they're constantly trying to overcome. But not you! You now know how to use your mental game as a powerful weapon that lets you play smarter, more effortless tennis.

You've discovered how to:

- ✓ Create a plan that plays to your strengths – giving you a massive advantage before you ever step on the court.
- ✓ Calm your physical panic before it takes over using 3 simple, go-to techniques.
- ✓ Add competitive mindsets to your practices so you have an almost unfair advantage during matches.

- ✓ Harness your strengths and weaknesses to determine your Unique Player Identity and gain massive confidence.
- ✓ Overcome The Yips with less pressure and more patience.
- ✓ Stop obsessing about technique and focus on using your natural mechanics to your advantage.
- ✓ Shift your focus from inside your head to the court to take control of the match.

Don't overwhelm yourself by trying to use every secret I've shared at once. Start small and notice how well you're doing as a result. Then add more when you're ready. Pick the problem you feel is holding you back the most right now, and start using a few of the solutions this week.

This guide is always here to protect you from the biggest challenges we all face on the court. Take comfort in knowing that anytime you're having a problem with your game, you'll find a quick solution in one of the secrets we've given you here.

Nerves are part of competitive play. Our goal is not to eliminate them; That's not possible. Instead, we want to redirect our emotions into assets that enable us to play even better.

And if you forget everything else, **just remember this:**

Every point in tennis ends with a mistake. It's part of the game.

Each time you make a mistake, follow these 3 quick steps (I recommend writing these down and putting them in your pocket when you play):

1. Tell yourself: "it's just part of the game."
2. Turn your back to the court and take 1 deep breath.
3. Reset for the next point and play your game.

Gui and I are here for you every step of the way!

Your coaches,

*Karue Gui*

Karue & Gui

My Tennis HQ



PS - We all love this sport so don't forget to smile and enjoy just being out there playing this beautiful game 😊