

# *Tennis String Guide 2011 - Issue #1*

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This guide to string selection has been prepared to help you select a suitable tennis string.

There are far too many strings available to consider them all, so you need an alternative method of selection. This is to first select the type of string that you need.

All strings should belong to one of the following groups.

***Comfort***

***Power***

***All-Round***

***Hybrid - two string types***

***Natural Gut***

***Control***

***Durability***

It is possible that you can identify the most appropriate group by looking at the list. Most players need a combination of features, and will need to look at more than one group before deciding which one offers the most suitable features.

## **The First Stage**

The first stage is to select the type of string that is best for you. This will be influenced by the three main features of Performance, Durability, and Cost.

### **Performance**

The options should not be particularly difficult. For many players the options are All-Round, Comfort, Power, and Control. These are described in more detail later, but you should be able to identify your main requirement.

### **Durability**

This should also be fairly obvious as you should know how long your strings last. This could vary from a few days, several months, and up to a year for many players.

### **Cost**

Each player will have their own ideas about acceptable prices, which could be related to how many restrings you need per year.

Please remember that the cost should also take into account how long the strings last.

Each of these items is covered on the individual page for each type of string.

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## String Prices

What is a reasonable price to pay for tennis strings? There is unfortunately, no simple answer, as almost every player requires something different.

If you suffer from any elbow or shoulder problems, it should be worth the extra cost of a string that can provide you with improved comfort.

### *Hint*

*If you have one or two restrings per year, calculate the cost of your strings per month. You should find the cost is fairly low, and could consider moving to a better quality string. The extra performance and comfort should be worth the small increase in cost.*

Please remember that the true cost of a string should take into account how long the strings last. This can vary enormously for different types of players.

## Stringing Costs

These also need to be considered carefully, as charges (and quality) can vary widely. The price you are willing to pay will probably depend on how many restrings you have per year.

Most players want to pay the lowest price possible, which is understandable. A stringing machine can cost up to £5,000 or more, and testing equipment is additional.

This means that the lowest prices are unlikely to result in top quality stringing. You do have a choice, and if the results seem to provide improved performance, the extra cost is justified.

*Hint: if you have one or two restrings per year, pay more for the stringing. You should obtain good advice, and the extra cost should not really be important.*

## String Gauge

The main considerations related to gauge are performance and durability. A thinner string should normally provide you with better performance, while a thicker string should have improved durability.

The durability will also obviously depend on the materials used. A monofilament string for example has better durability than a traditional synthetic type. This means that with this type of string a thinner gauge can be used, and still provide you with good durability.

*Hint: most players who do not break strings frequently, should be better using a thinner string. This does depend on the size of the racquet used, and you should ask the advice of your racquet stringer.*

## Product Testing

You will find some suggested strings on each page of the various string types. These have been tested and found to have the required performance for their group. The tests also include the following

### **Tension Reduction**

*You will make errors if the tension of your strings is too low. All strings will lose some tension in use, but with some strings the amount is too large. Each of the suggested strings has been tested over several weeks use.*

### **String Movement**

*It can be annoying, if you need to keep straightening the strings in your racquet. The tested strings do not show signs of excessive movement over the test period.*

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## Tennis String Group: Comfort and Performance

Description	This type of string normally contains hundreds of individual strands, and this is the reason for the name. The result is a product that is designed to offer a combination of comfort and improved response.
Comfort	These strings have very good shock absorbing properties, which make them more suitable for players who suffer from elbow or shoulder problems
Performance	The theory is that the construction used in these strings is similar to that found in natural gut strings. This should result in the best possible performance. This seems to work quite well for most of the products, but they are no substitute for natural gut.
String Tension	One potential problem with these strings can be loss of tension. This is important, as you need to know that the tension will be maintained for the life of the string. Many current strings are good in this respect, but certainly not all of them.
Durability	This can be important as it could be expensive depending on how often you need to restring your racquet. These strings have low to medium durability, which should not be a problem to most players. Anyone who breaks strings frequently will probably be better using a different type of string.

### Selection Notes

Some of these strings may appear to be expensive, but many players who use this type of string do not break strings frequently.

As with all strings, you should consider both the cost and the life of the strings.

The weekly or monthly cost is probably the simplest to use. You may find that this is lower than you would think.



## Suggested Strings

The following table shows a selection of some typical strings. It is recommended that you ask about alternatives, as new products are regularly introduced.

Brand	String Name	Notes	Price
Tecnifibre	TGV	designed for maximum comfort	£22.00
Klip	Excellerator	Good for performance and comfort	£14.00
Pacific	Futura TXT	Mainly for comfort	£14.00
Yonex	850 Pro	good comfort	£15.00

**Prices do not include the cost of stringing**

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## Tennis String Group: Power Strings

Description:	This type of string normally contains a central core, surrounded by one, or more other elements. The result is a product that is designed to offer good power for harder hitting players wanting improved performance.
Comfort	These strings usually have good shock absorbing properties, but it is not the main feature.
Performance	These strings offer better performance for more experienced players. They can also be considered as a string offering good all-round performance.
Durability	This can be important as it could be expensive depending on how often you need to restring your racquet. Most of these strings have average durability, and a medium gauge is probably the best choice.
String Tension	There are no particular problems with tension loss in this type of string.

### String Selection

This string should be most suitable for medium to advanced players having longer and faster strokes.

They are less suitable for beginners and players with slower and shorter strokes. They could find that a string from the comfort (multifilament) group is more suitable.

### Suggested Strings

The following table shows a selection of some typical strings and prices. It is recommended that you ask about alternatives, as new products are regularly introduced.

Brand	String Name	Notes	Price
Tecnifibre	XR3	designed for comfort with power	£17.00
Klip	Venom	Good for performance and comfort	£13.00
Pacific	Power Line	for players wanting power more than comfort	£15.00
<b>Prices do not include the cost of stringing</b>			

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## Tennis String Group: Control Strings

Requirements:	Players who use power combined with spin need a string to provide extra control.
Description:	These strings are usually of a monofilament construction. These strings are usually very stiff to provide the control, and this can create potential problems with comfort.
Comfort	These strings can cause elbow and shoulder problems for many players. They should only be used after considering these possible difficulties.
Performance	These strings vary enormously. Some are considered to be good, and others are not. The opinions vary between players.
Durability:	These strings usually have the best durability.
Tension:	these strings are normally recommended to be strung at lower tensions. This is to overcome the potential arm problems. Many of them lose tension in use.

### String Selection

This type of string should only be used by experienced players, wanting the features provided by this string. There are many players who have developed tennis elbow by using this type of string.

A better option for many players could be the new Tecnifibre X-Code. This has some features of a monofilament string, combined with more comfort.

### Suggested Strings

The following table shows a selection of some typical strings. It is always best to ask about any alternatives, as new products are regularly introduced.

Brand	String Name	Notes	Price
Klip	K-Boom	a softer monofilament string	
Tecnifibre	X-Code	a combination of monofilament and multifilaments	
Luxilon	Adrenaline	a softer monofilament string	
<b>Prices do not include the cost of stringing</b>			

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## **Tennis String Group: All-Round Strings**

- Requirements:** A string for players who require good general performance at a low to medium price.
- Description:** These strings should be suitable for many players of club standard who wants a low cost restring. The strings provide reasonable all-round performance. This type of string is often described as Synthetic Gut. They are not suitable for players who break strings frequently.
- Comfort:** These strings should provide reasonable comfort, without having any special vibration absorbing properties.
- Performance:** these strings will provide average or better playing characteristics.
- Durability:** These strings are not designed to provide extra durability.
- Price Range:** strings in this category are in the low to medium price range.
- Tension:** there should be no problems with tension loss.

### **String Selection**

A string that is suitable for many players of club standard, who does not break strings frequently. They would provide good general performance, although they do not have any specific special features. Some of the strings are described as Synthetic Gut.

### **Suggested Strings**

The following table shows a selection of some typical strings. It is always best to ask about any alternatives, as new products are regularly introduced.

<b>Brand</b>	<b>String Name</b>	<b>Notes</b>	<b>Price</b>
Tecnifibre	Synthetic Gut		£4.00
Tecnifibre	Multi-Feel		£12.00
Gamma	TNT 17		£12.00
Klip	Scorcher	Titanium coating	£7.00
<b>Prices do not include the cost of stringing</b>			

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## Tennis String Group: Hybrid Strings

- Requirements:** a string for players who require good control with more comfort than is found in a monofilament string.
- Description:** this uses a combination of two different types of string. Normally, a monofilament string is used for durability, and a multifilament string provides extra comfort. The theory is that you obtain the advantages from each type of string
- Comfort:** these strings do not have a high level of comfort.
- Performance:** these strings are most suitable for players using spin to provide extra control.
- Durability:** these strings are designed to provide extra durability.
- Price Range:** strings in this category are usually in the medium price range.
- Tension:** many of these strings lose tension in use.

### String Selection

This type of string should only be used by experienced players, wanting the features provided by this combination of strings. There are many players who have developed tennis elbow by using this type of string.

A better option for many players could be the new Tecnifibre X-Code. I would expect other strings of this type to be introduced soon.

### Suggested Strings

The following table shows a selection of some typical strings. It is always best to ask about any alternatives, as new products are regularly introduced.

Brand	String Name	Notes	Price

**Prices do not include the cost of stringing**

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## Tennis String Group: Natural gut

Requirements	A string for players who want the best performance and comfort.
Description	These strings have always been considered to be the best. They provide excellent performance and do not generate any shock or vibration. They would be the ideal strings except they are expensive, have lower durability, and can be affected by damp weather.
Comfort	These strings are without any doubt the most arm friendly strings available.
Performance	Natural gut produces the most power of any string, but it is not every player who wants extra power.
Durability	These strings usually have less durability, but they are suitable for players who do not break strings frequently
Tension	these strings normally retain their tension very well.

### String Selection

This type of string is suitable for many players, if they are willing to pay for a more expensive product. Natural Gut is not recommended to be used in damp conditions. This means you really need two preferably identical racquets, one for use when it is damp, and the other in normal conditions.

### Suggested Strings

The following table shows a selection of some typical strings. It is always best to ask about any alternatives, as new products are regularly introduced.

Brand	String Name	Notes	Price
Babolat	VS Gut	usually accepted as the best natural gut	£35.00
Klip	Armour Pro	natural gut with a durable coating	£30.00
Klip	Guru	uncoated gut for maximum response	
<b>Prices do not include the cost of stringing</b>			

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## **String Brands**

There are many brands of strings, all claiming to offer you the best of something! The problem can be knowing which to select.

All the racquet companies have their own strings, and there are other companies who specialise in accessories which are mainly grips, and strings, plus a few other items. There are in addition new brands being introduced regularly.

Each company should have a website where you can view the available strings.

It is normally better for most players to use a brand that has been available for several years. Any company that has regularly produced good products has a proven reputation. New brands could be good, but they may not be around next year.

## **Summary**

It is hoped that this guide to strings has been of some assistance. It should at least have helped you to select the type of string you need.

There are some other items on this page that could help you further. The subject of string brands usually causes some discussion among players, as does the charge for stringing a racquet.

You will probably discover opinions divided, and will eventually need to decide what is best for you. This could well be different to many other players, but as with many things in life, everyone is entitled to their own opinion.

## **Document History**

This document was first issued in April 2011