

Tennis balls: Little. Yellow. Useful.

- by **Dan Chilton** on Jul 9th 2007 8:00AM

Many household items have earned a spot in the ultimate do-it-yourself toolbox: duct tape, vinegar, lemon juice, aluminum foil, wire hangers; but there's one multi-task tool that many people might overlook: the tennis ball.

Yes, that furry yellow orb of happiness is good for a myriad of tasks far beyond its typical role of sitting in the bottom of your closet as a continual reminder of your broken New Year's resolution to get more exercise. In fact, the common tennis ball might be one of the most versatile and useful tools you never knew you had!



To prove my point, here are 17 helpful tips to make a tennis ball serve you (as opposed to the other way around):

1. **Scuff-free chairs** - To protect your tile or hardwood floors from destructive chair legs, simply cut an "X" into four tennis balls with a knife or razor, stick them on the bottom of each chair leg, and voila, you've got yourself a bonafide scuff-free (and squeak-free) chair.
2. **Super screwdriver** - Can't seem to get a good grip, or enough torque on a screw? Making a small slit in a tennis ball, and sliding it over the handle of your screwdriver will give you a better grip, and more torque.
3. **Hammer lightly** - Pop the end of your hammer through an "X" in a tennis ball to create a hitting instrument that is less likely to ding up fragile or expensive wood.
4. **Bottle opener** - Cut a tennis ball in half, and use one of the sides to open those stubborn pickle jars.

5. **Walkers** - I'm sure you've seen tennis balls stuck on the bottom of walkers, but do you know what benefit they serve? For people who might be too weak to lift the walker, tennis balls enable them to scoot across most floor surfaces, while retaining enough traction to keep them upright.

6. **Trailer hitch cover** - No one wants a scratched up trailer hitch! Pop a tennis ball over that knob of chrome to keep it as shiny as the day before you hitched your first trailer to it.

7. **Garage wall proximity detector** - Hang a tennis ball from the ceiling of your garage to alert you when you're the perfect distance away from the wall. Extra bonus: when the car's gone, you can use the hanging tennis ball for batting practice.

8. **Secret storage** - Looking for a place to stash that million dollar microchip while you're at the gym? Slit a tennis ball and stick it inside! Works for anything that's valuable (or not) and small enough to stick inside a tennis ball via a tiny slit.

9. **Dog toy** - Pretty obvious.

10. **Dryer fluffers** - Next time you have something in the dryer that needs to be fluffed up (pillows, down comforters, big coats), chuck in a couple tennis balls and let them fluff your garments to high heaven! It might be loud, but your face will thank you the next time you lay your head down on your huge tennis-ball-fluffed pillow.

11. **Free weights** - Fill a tennis ball up with something heavy (sand, marbles, pennies, sad poems), lift it up and down several hundred times, and watch in amazement as your muscles rip through your old clothes.

12. **Remove cobwebs from hard-to-reach places** - This is a cool one. Wrap an old rag around a tennis ball, secure it with a couple rubber bands, and throw it at all those hard-to-reach cobwebs. Beware of falling spiders!

13. **Strengthen your grip** - Next time you find yourself sitting idly at your desk, pick up a tennis ball and give it a few squeezes. You'll be surprised at how strong your grip will become.

14. **Door jamb tricker** - If you're working on a car, and need to keep the door open without having the interior light suck all the juice out of your battery, stick a tennis ball into the door jamb to keep the interior light switch depressed.

15. **Sand curves** - Throw a piece of sand paper around a tennis ball to help you get a perfect sanded curve.

16. **Give yourself a back massage** - After a hard day's work, nothing feels better than a nice back rub. But what if no one's around to give you one? Stuff a long tube sock with a few tennis balls, tie off the end, and swing it across your back. Pull the sock back and forth like if you were drying off your back.

17. **Pool cleaners** - Have you ever noticed how swimming pools develop a shiny oily sheen over the course of the summer, especially in pools that are used frequently? That's body oil, my filthy friend, which can be easily curbed with a couple floating tennis balls. Over time, the tennis balls will absorb the oil, leaving your pool fresh and oil-free.

There you have it -- 17 terrific tips for all those rogue tennis balls bouncing around in the bottom of your closet.