

# Table Tennis Equipment

Aside from a racket, ball and table very little equipment is needed for table tennis, making it one of the world's most popular recreational sports.

**Racket** – also called bats or paddles, "racket" is the official ITTF term for the instrument used to hit the ball. Table tennis rackets are made of plywood and covered in pimples or inverted rubber with a thin layer of sponge in between. The combination of sponge, pimples rubber and plywood allows the ball to travel at maximum speed and is conducive to adding spin to the ball, although many players today prefer inverted rubber because it is resistant to spins, allowing for effective defensive shots. Most rackets have a long handle but the Japanese racket has a raised handle and the Chinese racket a much shortened handle, allowing for varying ways of gripping the racket.



**Table Tennis Ball** – international regulations require a table tennis ball to be 40 mm in diameter and made from hollow celluloid or plastic. The required diameter was changed from 38 mm in 2003 in an attempt to slow the ball down, causing controversy amongst some Chinese players who are famed for their ability to spin the ball so fast, a return is impossible. The colour of the ball used depends upon the colour of the table but is usually the colour that stands out most effectively against the table. The quality of ball is denoted by a number of stars: one, two or three. Three star balls are the most expensive but are very good quality and will last a lot longer than balls with one star.



**Table** – official table tennis tables are 2.74 m in length, 1.525 m wide and 0.7 m high. Tables are made from a manufactured timber and covered in a smooth coating to reduce friction, allowing the ball to have maximum bounce. A white line borders the table and divides it lengthwise, marking the right hand and left hand half of each side.



**Net** – the net stretches across the middle of the table and should be 15.25 cm high.

**Clothing** – there is no specific uniform required for table tennis, although in official competitions teams will wear clothes representative of their countries' colours. Loose, non-reflective clothing is recommended and footwear should allow good ankle control and quick movements, as opposed to trainers that are specifically designed for running.

