

# YOUR NATURAL TENNIS

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**STOP FOLLOWING MODELS:**  
UNLOCK THE POWER OF  
YOUR INDIVIDUAL MOVEMENT  
PREFERENCES

BENOIT FOUCHER



# Your Natural Tennis.

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# Your Natural Tennis.

Unlock The Power of Your Individual Movement Preferences.

## Are you playing against your own body?

Most tennis players reach a plateau not because they lack talent, but because they are trapped in a "one-size-fits-all" model. They spend years trying to mimic the perfect Federer forehand or the Djokovic backhand, only to find their movements feel forced, inconsistent, and mechanical.

**The truth is: your body already has a signature.**

In *Your Natural Tennis*, ATP Coach and ActionTypes practitioner Benoit Foucher reveals why the secret to elite performance isn't about copying a pro—it's about discovering your unique **motor preferences**. By understanding how your individual nervous system is wired to move, you can stop fighting your biology and start playing with effortless power.

**Inside this book, you'll discover:**

- **The Model Myth:** Why "standard" technique often blocks your progress.
- **The Power of Preferences:** How to identify the specific movement patterns that feel natural to *you*.
- **Breaking the Plateau:** Practical insights to transition from "thinking" about your strokes to "feeling" your game.
- **The ActionTypes Edge:** A professional coaching philosophy used at the highest levels of the ATP tour, now accessible to every amateur.

Stop trying to play someone else's tennis. It's time to unlock **Your Natural Tennis** and find the game you were born to play.

## About Benoit Foucher

Benoit is an ATP coach and consultant. He has helped Arthur Fery from regional to top 200ATP. He was also a decent ATP player, around top 700ATP for 5 years. From his mental struggles, he kept studying and learning, for himself and to help players finally reach their potentials.

Benoit is an ActionTypes Practitioner, which makes a big part of his coaching philosophy.

He's also Strongfirst elite instructor, life coach, NLP practitioner and yoga instructor.

More: [www.ready2perform.com](http://www.ready2perform.com)

Youtube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@benoitfoucher-ready2perform>

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# Part 1: 5 Reasons why players plateau

Hello and welcome to you for this short ebook that will give you, hopefully, enough tools so you can go on the tennis court and start improving again.

If you've been frustrated with the lack of results that you've had, first know that you're not alone.

In fact, the majority of players, soon or later, plateau. And this includes me and many tennis pros as well.

So, let's face this issue first, with the 5 reasons I most often see why you might plateau

## 1. You do what your coach tells you to do: the Model Trap

This surely sounds provocative, and remember: I did make all these mistakes, no judgement here!

Here the trap is the belief that there is a particular way to do a particular movement.

Don't ask why: it's in the book (the coach's book), therefore it must surely work for everybody!

To be faire, in my experience, I will say that it does work. For-your-coach, and a few other models.

We coaches tend to think, consciously or not: ok, my forehand is great because I do this, therefore if I teach this, they will all improve.

I remember meeting a coach in Majorca who was explaining to me: in forehand, it's essential your arm is straight at the impact, elbow locked.

Why?

"Because look at Rafa, look at Roger, best forehands in the world, they do this!"

Compelling, right?

Except it doesn't work this way.

Our body is unique. It has its own motor signature and in this ebook we're going to go through some of the parameters that make it so unique, learning from the motor preferences with ActionTypes.

With them, I have learned how to decipher the different families of "motricities".

Roger and Rafa have their elbows locked in forehand because this is the way for them to be strong in this position.

As for someone like Agassi or Tsonga, it will be quite different!

So, the goal is not to follow a model, there is no single good way to do anything.

If you hear someone saying something does work every time, it is a mirage, an illusion.

A much better question to ask yourself is: how does it work for you?

We'll discuss this a bit later.

Now let's continue on the reasons why you and many other players plateau.

## 2. You train only playing matches: the Lack of Focus Trap

Many players go on the court with their partner, warm up, do some cross court forehands and backhands, then points.

The issue here?

There is no focus on what they'd like to improve.

You might argue that playing matches is very important in order to improve, and you would be right. In fact, I would say that if you don't have much time, only doing match practice is the best you can do.

In the same vein, there is a saying in the world of kettlebells: "if you want to press a lot, press a lot."

Likewise, you want to be good in matches, do lots of matches!

To a certain extent.

Playing lots of practice matches will help you doing better with what you already have:

—> your technique won't change (might get worse actually).

—> if you analyse your matches, you might learn to be better with your strategy...and you might need a good coach to help you see what you could have done better. Not sure you or your partner will see this.

—> maybe the best improvement will be mentally: by getting used to play matches, you will be better at handling stress and remaining composed during pressure points. In theory!

## 3. You go on the court without something to improve in mind: the Volume Trap

There is this idea in tennis that if you do lots of volume, you will be fine.

After all, this is what most academies sell to the players and their parents: "he will train 2 hours in the morning, then 2 hours match practice in the afternoon, then 2 hours physical training."

This does work for players who are not used to train much. After all, if you practice once a week and suddenly you hit many balls every day, as long as you don't get injured with the sudden load increase, you will improve!...until a certain point.

And this will be your plateau.

Because if you don't have in mind a Focus on something you'd like to improve, well, you won't.

In fancy language it's called "deliberate practice".

The analogy is that if you drive 10 years your car, not sure you will be better than, let's say, once you drove it for the first year.

On the other hand, if you go on a race track, learn for instance the best moment to break before you turn, your pilot skills will improve!

Likewise, if you focus on improving your serve (and you know how to do this), you will improve your serve!

It seems obvious, and yet most players don't have a focus in mind when they step on the court. Or very vague.

So, lesson here: each time you go to train, be clear about what you'd like to improve!

## 4. You have more than 1 goal in mind: the Dissipated Mind Trap

This is the other issue. A player will say: I want to improve in everything!

Well, whether you have 0 focus or more than 1, you will not improve. You can't. I can't. Nobody can.

It's challenging to improve. It requires that you become fully aware of what you're doing, then start to train differently, assess, tweak things, reassess and so forth and so on.

If you have more than 1 goal, your brain will fry!

Moreover, even within the same shot, narrow your focus to one single thing to change. For instance, let's say you want to change your serve.

The idea is not to focus on your toss + the way you bend + how you push up + your wrist...etc.

Instead you choose to focus on one thing only, let's say your toss, and this is it.

Ask yourself:

- let's send the ball on the right of my head, above my head and on the left

Then:

- what about the trajectory: more straight, or more curvy

Then:

- how do I make it with less tensions in my shoulder?

You see? One focus at a time. And here as a bonus I gave you an example of differential learning, something will see later in this book.

## 5. A provocative one: the Repetition Trap

Many players tell themselves: "I don't have a good serve, therefore I will do 100 serves every day."

Or, "I want to improve my forehand, so I ask my coach to only doing this."

At least with this trap you have one single focus in mind. Good start!

Now the trap is that our brain is not so good improving with repetition. Yes, I know, most players around the world train like this!

A much better way is what Wolfgang Schöllhorn has taught us: differential learning.

If I had to summarize the concept in one sentence, it would be to work with contrasts.

Instead of doing the same serve, do it in many different ways.

Like the example above: you send the toss here, then you go there. Your body learns something.

He also advocates "increasing the noise", meaning that if you make a mistake, make an even bigger mistake next shot, so your body understands!

For instance, your serve goes in the net. Next serve aim to the net! Then your brain understands how to do it. Same with hitting too long, too much on the right/ left, your toss too low, too high... etc.

You start to see the idea?

**Ok, there are probably other reasons why you might plateau, and for most players you can see yourself in one of these. Can you?**

Now, let's explore how to change this with the Natural Tennis philosophy.  
Let's go.

## Part 2: The Natural Tennis Training

### You're not alone

Disclosure: all the traps above, I went head first into them.

Tons of volume training. When it didn't work, I was pushing harder, till I got injured or depressed.

Doing my best to correct "everything", which lead to the opposite of the Natural Tennis, where my ability to adapt was limited, doing my best to repeat the same movement all the time.

In short: I was a lot in my head, not in my body.

So, if you feel trapped with one of the possibilities above, just know you're far from being the only one!

### Change to the Natural Tennis Training

At 21, I did hire a new coach. I was struggling mentally and I wanted to see if changing the way I was training would lead to better results.

This coach was very different. Instead of telling me what to do, he was asking me questions all the time.

Like:

- how much pressure, on a scale of 1 to 10, you put on your grip?
- hit the next 10 balls with your favorite music in your head!
- where is your focus on right now?

Instead of applying a model, I was developing **awareness, relaxation, and the ability to adjust.**

It was brilliant, annoying at times, and eyes opening.

"I am the master of my fate, I am the captain of my soul."

Step by step, I was regaining the driver seat and, as the Invictus poem says, becoming the captain of my soul.

This coach was here to help me understand how the machine we call Benoit was working, not how Benoit "should" hit the ball or play his game.

A very different paradigm.

So, I've learned a lot, kept playing for a bit then I stopped competing, realizing that what I would rather enjoy more on a daily basis was to help others as this coach had helped me.

Fast track 20 years later.

I have developed further the approach that this coach had instilled inside of me.

By the way, his name is Ronan Lafaix and he became famous in France for mental preparation training.

I have used some of his principles, and dived deeper in areas I felt were missing. For instance, he didn't like strength training. I love it.

And more importantly for this ebook, I have integrated what I have learned from motor preferences with ActionTypes. Which is, in my book, the Rolls-Royce of personalisation training.

## The Motor Preferences ActionTypes Solution

The reason why applying a certain model of technique or even strategic patterns, (or anything really) doesn't work, is that **we are all unique**.

What the study of the motor preferences ActionTypes tells us is simple: you have a motor signature that is unique to you.

Nobody else moves like you!

So, the question indeed is not to copy anyone else—> the goal is to figuring out what is YOUR natural way of making your shots.

Getting out of the Model Trap and re-accessing how this body of yours enjoys to work.

Remember the example I gave with this coach in Majorca telling me forehands should be with elbows extended at impacts, like Roger and Rafa.?

Well, ActionTypes has shown that, depending on your profile, indeed there are 2 families of motricities that would hit their forehands with elbow extended...and the 2 other families would be much better hitting close to their bodies!

Not too bad: this coach was correct about half the time.

Not too good either...

(again, no judgement here, I've made plenty of these mistakes in my coaching career)

## 4 families of Motricity with the motor preferences ActionTypes

At ActionTypes, we learn about motricities. Also called motor signatures.

Yes, motricity is an English word (despite what native speakers say:). It describes a way of moving, with different parameters that you can profile.

What does this mean?

It means, to come back to our example, that some motricities are powerful and precise when they hit the ball close to their bodies, and others not.

Here for some details, and maybe you can start to guess which one corresponds to you the most.

Please note that I've added illustrations with players and I'm not 100% sure they use these motricities. To be sure, we would need to do their profiling.

Motricity G: close to your body on the right and on the left: seems like it corresponds to Daniil Medvedev



Motricity D: far from your body on the right and on the left: seems like it corresponds to Stefanos Tsitsipas



Motricity C: far from your body on the right, close on the left (hello Roger)



Motricity R: close to your body on the right, far on the left (vamos Rafa!)



Please note that Rafa is lefty. For a righty with the same R family, his forehand would be close to his body, backhand far away. Like it seems to be for Stan Wawrinka.



So, as you can see, as a coach, if I don't do your profile or at least make you experiment possibilities, I have no way to tell which one corresponds to you

And even then, when we observe carefully players at the top, we see things that are not exactly "perfect". Well, maybe we can put Roger in a separate category! Even then, my teacher Bertrand told us that Roger was not very good in certain conditions.

Back to you. How can *you* discover which of these motricities you seem to correspond the most?

This is where the Differential Learning approach comes in.

## Part 3: Self Assessment and Training

### Learning faster with Differential Learning

While Bertrand Théraulaz and Ralph Hippolyte were busy developing the motor preferences ActionTypes, another man, Wolfgang Shollhörn, was creating the “Differential Learning” system.

I will summarize what I understand of his approach in the following key points:

- we are **not good at learning with repetition**. Yes, despite what millions of people have done over the years, there is a better ways of training!
- instead we are learning much faster when there are **contrasts**.
- also, when we **discover by ourselves** how something does work for us (vs a teacher telling us what to do)
- there are **no mistakes, just mis-takes**.
- when we do a mis-take, it's a great idea to “**increase the noise**”, meaning purposely doing it even “worse”, so that our body understands it.

And sorry Wolfgang if you read this, for now this is what makes sense from your training system for me!

Applied to tennis, here is how it works.

Instead of doing cross court forehands and backhands mindlessly every training session, first, let's create some contrast.

For instance, while doing forehand cross courts, each shot you have to aim for a different target: long, very long, short, very short. This is an example of contrast.

Then, when you make a mistake, let's say in the net, next time you purposely send it to the net, even lower! Same if you make a mistake too long. This is an example of increasing the noise.

Wolfgang advises to play with different sizes and shapes of the fields, can also play with different hands, different kinds of movements...etc.

Yes, I know, it goes against conventional wisdom. And it's not as if conventional wisdom has been right all the time!

So, it's a bit provocative to train this way. And it does give results, so who cares!

backhand close to the body



backhand far away from the body



Applied to your motor preference example we just gave, the idea would be on the court and explore:

forehand close to the body



forehand far away from the body



- how does it feel to hit the ball close to your body with your forehand? Your backhand?
- Same question with your backhand?
- Most important: is there a position that does feel natural? Where you don't have to think about it?

When you get it, great! You've just found out gold. This is the way that works for you in this moment.

Next!

## Other motor preferences ActionTypes parameters

We've just mentioned hitting the ball close to or far from your body.

Know that there are many other parameters in your motor preferences ActionTypes, I'm going to name a few, that will illustrate how unique you are with your movements.

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## Walking from the top? Or the bottom?

New experience!

Walk for about 10 steps. Stop. Then pay attention to your balance. Do you tend to fall forward? Or backward?

In the first case, it means at this particular moment you are walking from the top. Meaning that your shoulders lead the way, as if you fall down each step.

The second case, walking from the bottom, means that you engage your hips first, the the rest of the body follows.

You can also imagine how these ways of moving relate to our personalities.

More important for us, 2 consequences:

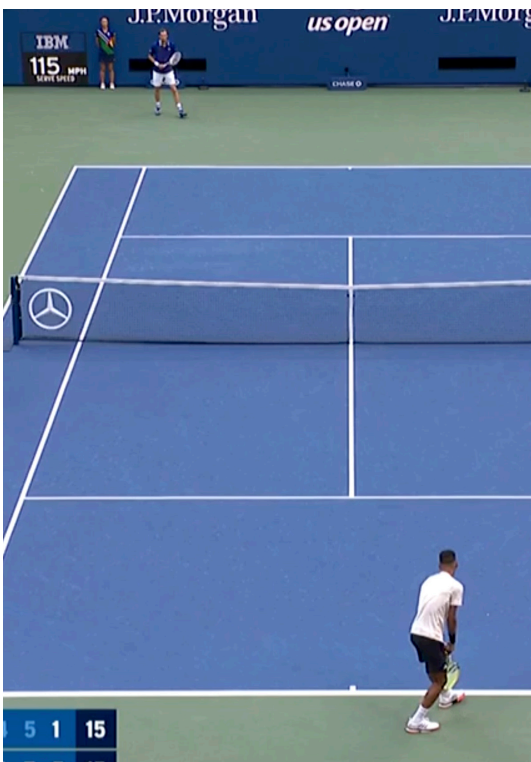
1: play with your posture, and do shadow tennis, feeling this balance on the balls of your feet, “falling forward”. Alternatively, the balance is more on your heels. And yes, it’s ok to be there if your body wants to!

Note: A posture is a way to prepare the action, so here we are, ready!

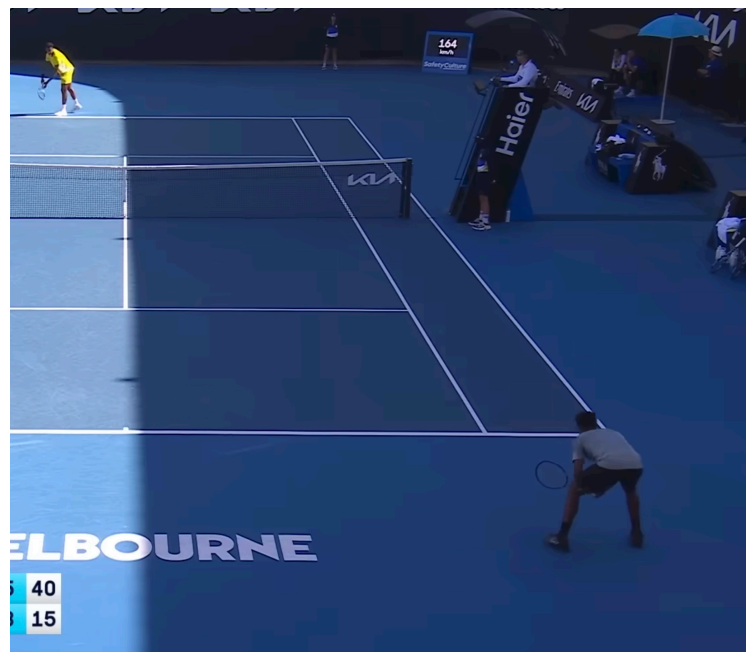
2: If you are moving from the top, it means **you will perceive better the information with the top of your eyes**. Very good to know in return of serve!

Likewise, those who prefer walking from the bottom will perceive better using the bottom of their eyes as well.

Daniil Medvedev straight up posture in return of serve



check how Gaël leans forward in return of serve



Therefore, you can see Roger Federer or Gaël Monfils leaning a lot forward.

And you can see Daniil Medvedev being completely straight.

Different motor preferences= different postures.

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## Other parameters

There are many other parameters we, ActionTypes practitioners, assess when we profile someone.

I'm going to name a few, without much explanations, so you have a sense of it.

- dominant shoulder: this will determine which side you have a bigger preparation
- motor eye: the eye that perceives better the information
- high frequency/ low frequency: the way you breathe and the way you use your vision (more central or more peripheral)
- vertical/ horizontal: the way you balance yourself
- associated/ dissociated: the way you aim at targets

## **What do we take from these parameters?**

At this point, you, the reader and tennis player, might wonder: so how do I use this information? Do I throw away everything I've learned so far?

Of course not. I'm sure you already play tennis using many of these parameters.

What I suggest is the following questions to ask yourself:

1: which shot do I struggle with the most?

2: with what I've just read, can I go on the court, do some differential exercises, and realize what would work better for me?

For instance, you might feel better hitting the ball closer to you, despite what some coaches would have told you before. Come back to the Model Trap I was talking about in the first part of this ebook.

3: remain curious.

Our body is amazing. Indeed it has its preferences, so your job is to figuring out what those are. And, a big warning here, what you find out is not the end. It is the beginning.

Here we go for the most challenging bit of this ebook.

## **WARNING: Your body does adapt to the different contexts: yes, STRESS!**

Congratulations, by now you have realized through this reading that your body likes to move this way or that way. Or at least, I hope, it has made you curious to explore how this body likes to move.

Now, a big mistake would be to think that this is the way it's supposed to be all-the-time.

Sorry to disappoint: it does not.

What you probably have found out through the different experimentations I've suggested is some preferences that you have...when there is no stress.

This is not the end point.

This is a starting point.

We call this your first motricity.

This means that most of the time, yes, hitting the ball this close or this far from your body will work. And, not all the time.

Under stress or fatigue or even bigger challenges, our body shifts and goes to another motricity.

And most of the parameters we've talked about will change. Yes, your dominant shoulder, your motor eye...etc!

The good news is that it would be only when you are under stress or fatigue that this will happen. So, if you struggle in these situations, well, this means you can assess, in these conditions, how your body likes to move then.

It's a bit more tricky, but the message remains the same: stay open and curious. Not black and white. Not "it should be like this because in training this is what I always do".

There is a training, no stress context, and there are moments during matches when your body will behave differently, adapting to a stressful or tired context.

Fortunately, there is a solution that does work all the time.

Indeed, if you don't want to go wrong, **work with your intentions** (sending the ball here or there) instead of being attached to a particular movement.

And **relax**. The more you do, the more your body will be able to adapt, naturally.

# The 3 Pillars of Your Natural Tennis

If, like many players, you've been frustrated by your level in matches or your inability to keep improving, I'd like to place a seed in your brain about the 3 pillars I believe will help you to climb your own mountain.

## 1st Pillar: Your Natural Movements

Most of this book has covered this pillar.

The idea is not to copy anyone nor any model. Instead, it's to let your body do the talking and realize how this machine does work.

In other words, your body first does the talking. Then your mind becomes aware of it, listens to it.

When choosing to follow models, your natural movements cannot be expressed. Which creates more tension, inefficiency, and potential injuries.

So, the whole idea behind your motor preferences ActionTypes is this: be yourself. Move like your body has been designed to do. Without tension.

Which leads to the second pillar.

## 2nd Pillar: Your Relaxation

Relaxation is the oil, the gateway to your best level.

Typically, amateurs players watching pros get the idea that they should hit the balls harder.

If it's also the way you think, let's be clear: you most likely don't.

What you need, first and foremost, is to remove the tensions. Then the ball will go much faster, effortlessly.

The analogy is to drive a Ferrari with a foot on the brake pedal all the time. It works, and we can agree it would work better if you only use the brake pedal at the appropriate time!

To make it simple:

- tension slows down speed
- tension makes you tired
- ultimately tension creates injuries

Instead:

- relaxation liberates speeds
- relaxation makes you last longer
- relaxation, at minimum, diminishes the risks of injuries

### How to Relax?

There are 2 access to relaxation: muscle tensions and breathing.

What would work for you?

You need to discover it!

There is a way and it's a process.

For some players, it's just to become aware of the tensions and they can let them go. For others, they start to breathe (according to their profiles) and voila!

For others, when they feel they have something to lose if they relax, the process takes more time.

My top recommendation is to do as they do in Karate: start slow. Very slow. When playing fast you won't have time to feel the tensions. Slow forces you to relax!

Then experiment. This is a big part of my coaching.

Ultimately, when you find out your key, it becomes a secret weapon. You know that when you focus on this, the whole body relaxes and your level increases.

Are you willing to look for your key? This is the question.

### **3rd Pillar: Mental Clarity**

I've helped Arthur Fery for 9 years. He was a regional 15 year old player when we started. He's now 150ATP.

We've been through a lot together and the number 1 skill he has said I have helped him the most is about the mental clarity that I give him.

I've asked him recently what he meant.

He replied: "most coaches, and players, are not clear with what they want to improve. They are reactive rather than proactive.

Change this.

And that.

And this as well.

And what about that. I

t's confusing and frustrating.

With you I know what we focus on and I'm certain we're going to improve. Something I've realized also is that I hate the feeling of not improving."

So, here you have it.

If a pro player tells us it's essential to be clear, maybe you need to be.

What kind of clarity?

Clear about your game.

Clear about your strengths.

Clear about what you'd like to improve now.

Clear about how to improve what you said you wanted to improve.

This clarity os your compass.

You go on the practice court knowing where you're heading, improving specific skills.

You go on match court knowing your strengths and how to use them.

When in trouble, you know what to refocus on, so that you have something reliable to ground yourself with.

Clarity is power.

Are you clear?

This is a simple question to ask yourself regularly.

## **The 3 Pillars Together**

Magic happens when the 3 pillars work together.

You move as your body wants to.

You're relaxed so your movements are fluid, responding with the right move at the right time.

And your mind is clear about your intentions.

Working on any of these 3 pillars and your level will increase.

Working on the 3 of them together and you will become the best version of yourself!

## Conclusion

Thank you for your attention. I hope this short ebook has helped you to imagine a new way of training. A training that does help you to reach your potential.

I need to emphasize the point I've made earlier: when you do relax your body, when you learn to trust it, then it will naturally adapt.

ActionTypes has a saying that is worth adding here: **"listen to your body. Not anybody."**

I hope you (re)start this journey of being curious with how your body likes to move/ wants to move. The same curiosity we all had when we learned to walk as toddlers.

I hope you pay attention to how relax you are and how much you can be.

And I hope you are, at least a bit, clearer with your game and what to focus on next.

## To Go Further With Me: Online Video Coaching

If you'd like to go further than this, I do **online video coaching**, going deeper than this ebook allows me to in the 3 pillars of Your Natural Tennis:

- 1: Helping your figuring out how your body wants to move and hits these balls
- 2: Helping you to relax.
- 3: Helping you being clear.

**The process of this Natural Tennis program takes** 12 weeks period.

What you can expect:

- improvement in your shots: speed, accuracy, reliability
- relaxation so you are calmer, more aware, more efficient
- clarity about yourself, whether it's a moment you are without stress, or in a moment of tension how to get out of it.

These are for general outcomes.

For specific ones related to your case, we can talk about it.

For more information, apply here and we will see whether this program is good for you:

### Online Video Coaching with Benoit:

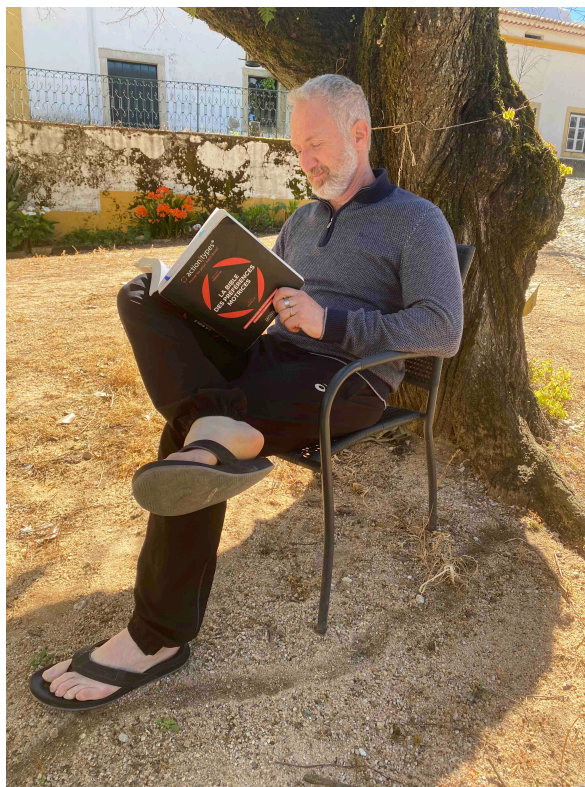
**<https://www.ready2perform.com>**

(note: this URL address might change in the future. Look for online video coaching on my site then)

## Thanks

To all my coaches and instructors, in particular:

- Jean-Luc Benoit, from whom I learned tennis and strategy
- Ronan Lafaix, for mental training and relaxation
- Bertrand Théraulaz and Philippe Houssin, for teaching me ActionTypes



And to all the players I had the pleasure and honor to coach!

If you'd like to dive into the ActionTypes approach, do like me, read the Bible!

[https://www.amazon.com/PREFERENCES-MOTRICITY-ORIGINAL-SIGNATURES-REFERENCE/dp/2970069520/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?crid=884TJ47THWYW&dib=eyJ2ljojMSJ9.nrxnE\\_u0GSiJKpn\\_D3k8ts3T5jae2vk7iDrWZvuM\\_unGjHj071QN20LucGBJIEps.HivHYqSipWsS9gJ8DmqXlb7nBXfDS3T152JBAVYLWHA&dib\\_tag=se&keywords=bertrand+theraulaz&qid=1774606990&srefix=bertrand+theraula%2Caps%2C245&sr=8-1](https://www.amazon.com/PREFERENCES-MOTRICITY-ORIGINAL-SIGNATURES-REFERENCE/dp/2970069520/ref=sr_1_1?crid=884TJ47THWYW&dib=eyJ2ljojMSJ9.nrxnE_u0GSiJKpn_D3k8ts3T5jae2vk7iDrWZvuM_unGjHj071QN20LucGBJIEps.HivHYqSipWsS9gJ8DmqXlb7nBXfDS3T152JBAVYLWHA&dib_tag=se&keywords=bertrand+theraulaz&qid=1774606990&srefix=bertrand+theraula%2Caps%2C245&sr=8-1)

## Feedbacks

If you have questions, feel free to contact me: [benoit@Ready2Perform.com](mailto:benoit@Ready2Perform.com)