



SPORT

Back to Netball: the England Netball scheme getting players bouncing back onto the court

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England Netball's nationwide Back to Netball scheme provides introductory sessions that gently introduce or reintroduce players across the country back onto the court.

Each session welcomes any players no matter their ability or experience level, with Izzy Murphy the Netball Development Officer (NDO) for the Middlesex county, saying: "It brings women from all walks of life together and creates a great sense of belonging though a shared love of the game of netball."

An hour long session begins with a game based warm up, then some different drills focusing on specific skills such as changes of direction, with all players receiving feedback throughout.

Each session includes a period of match play where all the players are encouraged to play a variety of positions and the training ends with cool down and stretches.

Anyone age 18 or above can join the programme and there's the option for players transition to an alternative 'Walking Netball' scheme if they'd like, so there's truly something for everyone.

Price-per-session varies upon location, court type and other factors, but typically West London sessions range from £4.50 to £8.00 for an hour long session.

Training largely runs in the evenings to accommodate the for the working day and it occurs outside the majority of the time, especially in the summer months.

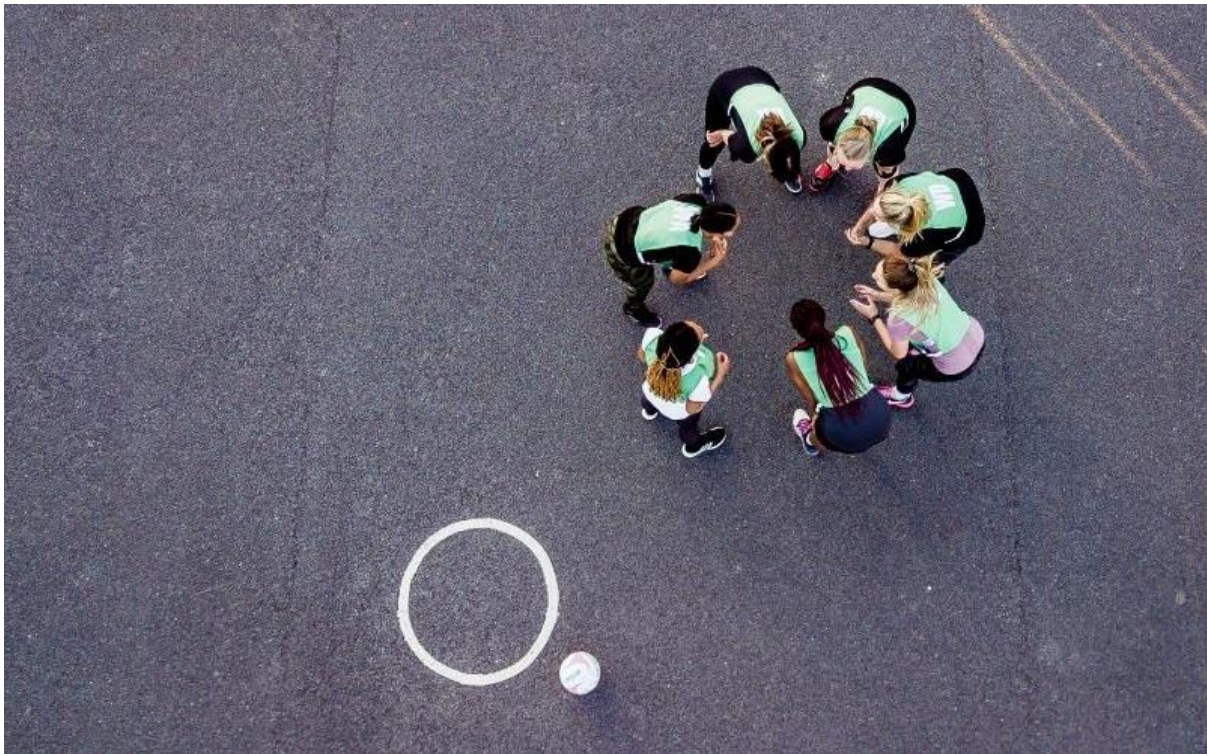


Image Credit: Ben Lumley

This programme aims to be more than a game for both the players and coaches and brings together women from all walks of life with different religions, jobs, ethnicities and ages through a shared love of netball.

It provides time for themselves alongside the opportunity to meet like-minded people, as well as the physical and mental health benefits of consistent exercise.

One player said: “Monday netball is the happiest day of my week. I am a carer and netball gives me some respite and helps me mentally. It always starts my week on a positive note.”

The netball community creates a social outlet with many players meeting up off the court building genuine relationships with others, allowing them to relieve from the pressures of day-to-day life.

While it provides a sense of belonging, the game also develops several interpersonal skills such as: teamwork, pride, confidence, resilience and confidence.

A current player said: “As busy working mum of two, Back to Netball is not only great physically but I find the social aspect great for my mental health, and it allows me to have some me time whilst staying fit at the same time. Win win!”

Naturally, like many [sports](#) the covid-19 pandemic effected this scheme with sessions coming to a halt, despite this many Back to Netball players kept it touch with each other via WhatsApp reinforcing the importance of the community created by all sports not just netball.

Another player said: “Joining Back to Netball has given me so much more than getting back to a sport I loved – it’s given me a healthier lifestyle & friendship.”



Image Credit: Ben Lumley

The Back to Netball teams are offered regular opportunities for match play against each other across the country and in local areas.

On November 30th, a Back to Netball Festival is taking place at Broomfield Park N13 4PL in North London with both a social and Back to Netball division.

The Festival is open to any Back to Netballers wishing to enter a team, providing a chance for competitive and fun match play.

England Netball first ran this scheme back in 2008 as the first of its kind and it has evolved since then engaging approximately 130,000 participants while becoming an important part England Netball's development work.

On average the scheme engages 10,000 new participants annually and continues to grow not only across London but the country too.

Fundamentally the programme aims to leave a long lasting legacy on and off the court through engaging many women to the game from all stages of life.

Izzy Murphy said: “We want all participants to have an extraordinary experience at each and every Back to Netball session and to feel like netball is a place where everyone can belong, flourish, and soar.”

Finding new locations to run the programme is vital in getting more players onto the court as the scheme continues to grow across London.

Current sessions run every Tuesday 7pm to 8pm at Kingsbury High School and every Monday 7pm to 8pm at Harrow Leisure Centre.

To sign up for a session, you can find all England Netball Back to Netball sessions on their Session Finder on their website [here](#).

If you are a coach or sports provider looking to run a Back to Netball programme, or if you are simply looking to attend a session in London contact izzy.murphy@englandnetball.co.uk.

Featured Image Credit: Ben Lumley