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QuickStart Tennis Practice Sessions

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ages 9-10 practice sessions

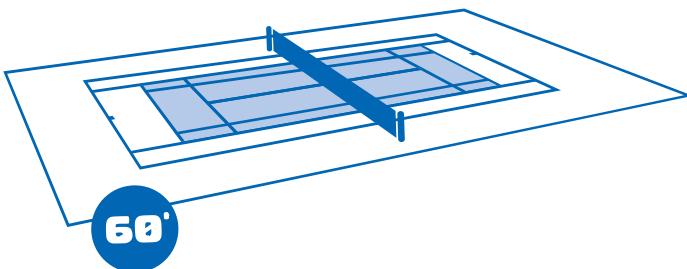
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quickstart tennis

There are eight progressive practice sessions for players ages 9–10. The goal of these practices is to help players enjoy the experience of learning to play the game of tennis. By the age of 9–10, players have the physical ability to play the game well and achieve success, especially on a 60-foot court with a low-compression ball.

These practices develop the skills needed to participate in the different playing situations in tennis. Each practice session introduces new skills or develops skills learned in previous sessions. Some players will be new to tennis and others will already have played on a 36-foot court. The practices are progressive.



- **Playing Situation 1: Both players in the backcourt.** This situation requires the player to be able to hit and control the ball consistently (the number of shots hit in sequence) and accurately (to a specific place in the backcourt) on both the forehand and backhand sides. The ability to do this will enable the players to develop good tactics to use in competition.
- **Playing Situation 2: Serving.** By this age, the players should be able to serve overhand to both sides of the court equally well. They have the physical ability to hit the ball with some pace to the receiver.
- **Playing Situation 3: Returning the serve.** Players need good and reliable forehands and backhands and the ability to judge the incoming ball quickly in order to hit the return.

- **Playing Situation 4: Moving up to the net in response to a shorter ball from the opponent.** The player can then volley with the opponent on the baseline. The skills the net player needs to learn and develop for this situation are the approach shot, the volley and the overhead.
- **Playing Situation 5: On the baseline with the opponent moving up to or already at the net.** The baseliner now needs to play ground strokes to pass the net player and lobs to hit the ball over the net player's head.
- **Doubles can be taught with success at 9 – 10 years of age.**

Each practice will develop the technical skills that will enable the player to develop the tactics for these different situations. Learning how, why and when to play the different shots and where to be on the court is important. Being able to do so means that young players can gain confidence and have fun learning and competing.

Each practice session for this age group should last no longer than 60 minutes.

Each session is structured as follows:

1. The **objective** of the practice.
2. A **warm-up** activity that helps develop the athletic skills of the age group.
3. A **review** of what was learned in the previous session.
4. A **new skill** and a series of practices to develop that skill in a playing situation.
5. A **team game** that reinforces the skills and tactics of the playing situation.
6. A **cool down** activity.
7. A **homework** assignment.

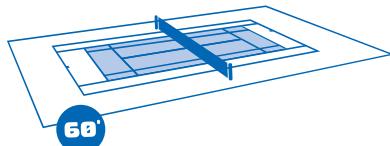


8 practice overviews

This guide outlines the eight practice sessions. It serves as a reference of what is covered in depth during each practice.

Court Size: **60-foot court**

Session Length: **60 minutes**



Practice 1 Forehands and backhands with control

Warm-up Coordination, Agility, Balance

New Skill Forehands and backhands with control

Team Game 1 Racquet Team Rally

Homework Around the Back

Practice 2 Serving

Warm-up Run and catch, Coordination and rhythm, Throwing

New Skill First and second serve

Team Game Team Serving

Homework Around the World

Practice 3 Returning the serve

Warm-up Cone Turn, Reaction speed

New Skill Returning the serve

Team Game Team Returns

Homework Fast Reactions

Practice 4 Net play

Warm-up	Around the Circle, Reaction speed
New Skill	Playing at the net or against the net player
Team Game	Game Over
Homework	Target Choice

Practice 5 Moving the opponent

Warm-up	Steps and Arms, Speed
New Skill	Moving the opponent around the court
Team Game	Short and Deep
Homework	Spinning Balls

Practice 6 The doubles game

Warm-up	Name the Player, Coordination
New Skill	The basics principles of doubles
Team Game	Doubles Champions of the Court
Homework	Marker Speed

Practice 7 Improving the doubles game

Warm-up	Stretching, Throwing, Balance
New Skill	Improving the doubles game
Team Game	CHAMPS serving
Homework	Jump Rope

Practice 8 Learning the basic patterns of serve, return and rally

Warm-up	Follow my Leader, Coordination and rhythm, Reaction speed
New Skill	Learning the basic patterns of serve, return and rally
Team Game	Win in 5
Homework	Target Ball

ages
9-10

quickstart tennis: practice 1

Forehands and Backhands with Control

Court Size: **60-foot court**

Session Length: **60 minutes**

Objective

To learn to hit forehands and backhands with control.

Warm-up

⌚ COORDINATION

Bounce and Clap. Each player with a ball. Throw the ball in the air and clap at least once, preferably two or three times, before catching the ball with one hand before it hits the ground. Try to increase the number of claps between the throw and the catch. Get players to try turning around and clapping before catching the ball.

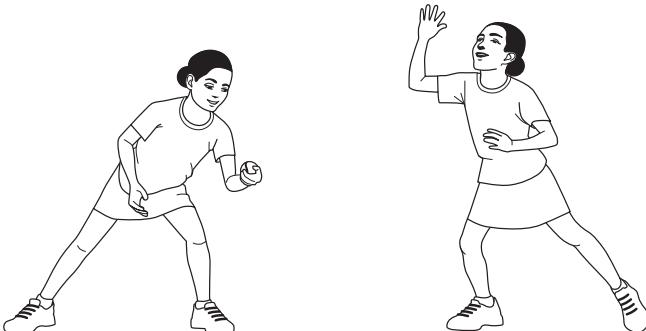
⌚ AGILITY

Cone Sprint. Players in teams of four. Place three cones 6 feet apart in a straight line along the net and about 3 feet away from the net. Players start on the baseline and, taking turns, sprint to the last cone, move around it quickly with small steps, side-step to the next cone and repeat the small steps around that cone. The player must face the net the whole time. When players have moved around all three cones, they return to the baseline and the next player starts.

BALANCE

Stretch Balance. Two players stand about 6 feet apart. One throws a ball underhand, alternately wide, low or high so partner has to stretch to catch it without moving her feet or falling over.

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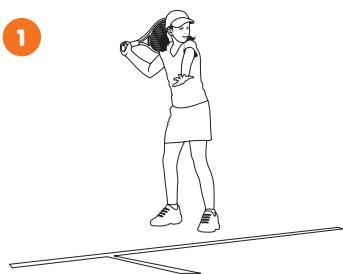
New Skill: Forehands and Backhands with Control

Show players the basic technique for the forehand and backhand ground strokes, including:

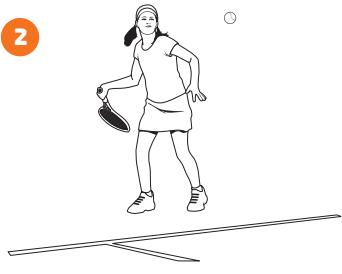
- The basic low-to-high swing of the racquet for the forehand and the backhand to get the ball higher over the net and to the backcourt.
- How to get behind and to the side of the ball on both the forehand and the backhand as it comes toward them, so they have room to swing the racquet.
- How players should turn their shoulders, using their other arm to help get the racquet back and develop a longer swing.

Forehand

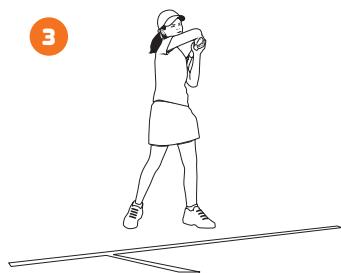
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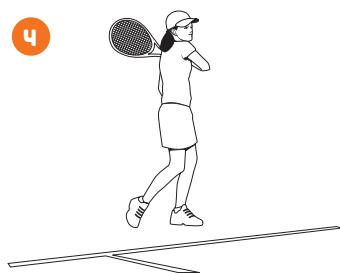
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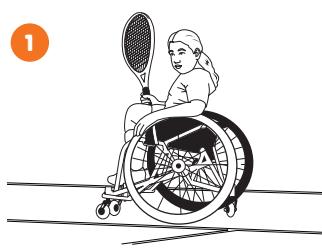


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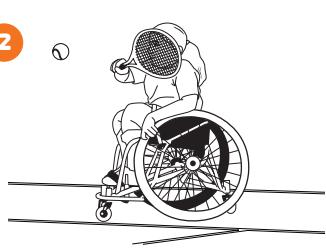


Forehand

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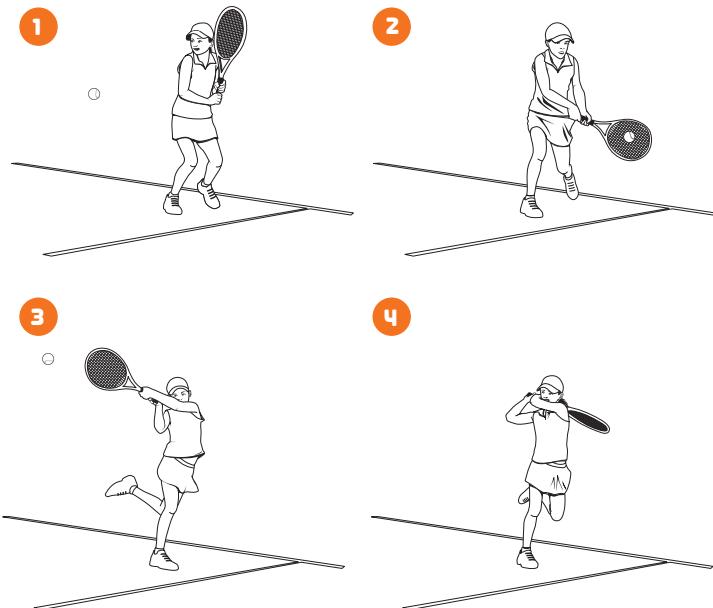
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3



Two-handed Backhand



Forehands and backhands. Players practice rallying forehands and backhands in pairs, making sure they try what they have been shown. Check that players are holding the racquet near the end of the handle for both the forehand and the backhand, and that the grips they use enable them to hit the ball at about waist height. If players hit the backhand with two hands, make sure their hands are close together on the handle.

Note: Players who have previously played on a 36-foot court will need time to adjust to the longer 60-foot court, the higher net and the low-compression ball. They will also need time to get used to hitting the ball higher and deeper when rallying from the baseline.

Developing control. The players need to understand how hard to hit the ball to keep the ball near the baseline and also to keep it in the court.

The rally. Players in pairs, trying to rally to the baseline. Begin by rallying straight ahead and then hit crosscourt. Make sure they hit both forehands and backhands.

Too hard?

Use a foam or very low-compression ball; OR one player has the racquet and the other throws or drop-feeds the ball for their partner to hit deep to the baseline.

Rally to a target. Place a spot or marker about 5 feet inside the baseline at both ends of the court. Players use the spot or marker as a target and try to get the longest rally with the ball landing close to the target.

Too hard?

1. Use a foam or very low-compression ball and a shorter court area.
2. One player has the racquet and the other throws or drop-feeds the ball for their partner to hit deep to the baseline.

Rally with scoring. Players rally for four shots cooperatively and then play the point out competitively. The player who wins the rally scores a point. Make sure the players change partners frequently.

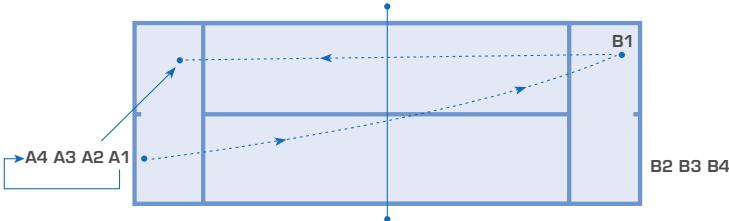
Too hard?

1. Reduce the number of shots in the rally to two before playing out the point.
2. Use a foam or very low-compression ball until the players become competent and confident.

COACHING TIPS

- Encourage players to use their other arm to help turn their shoulders—this will get the racquet back farther to produce a longer swing. Make sure the forward swing of the racquet is a long swing, from low to high. A longer swing will help get the ball to the back of the partner's court.
- Emphasize a comfortable grip on the forehand and either one or two hands on the backhand.
- Make sure the ball is hit to the side and toward the front of the body.
- Remind players to move their feet to get to the ball.

Team Game: One Racquet Team Rally



Teams of four players, numbered one to four, with one racquet per team. Players take turns rallying against another team and giving the racquet to the next player. The team that wins the last ball of each rally wins one point and starts the next rally. Teach regular scoring as play (1, 2, 3, 4) and play four-game sets.

Too hard?

Use a foam or very low-compression ball and a shorter court.

Cool Down

With a partner, sandwich as many balls as possible between two racquets and take them to the cart/hopper. How many balls can you sandwich and get to the cart/hopper?

Homework

Around the Back. Practice hitting a ball up in the air after each bounce. Between each hit, pass the racquet behind your back and to the other hand. How many can you do without losing the ball?



practice 1 summary

Session Length: **60 minutes**

Objective

To learn to hit forehands and backhands with control.

Warm-up

- Coordination: Bounce and Clap
- Agility: Cone Sprint
- Balance: Stretch Balance

New Skill: Forehands and Backhands with Control

- Show players the basic technique of the forehand and backhand, including:
 - The low-to-high swing of the racquet on the forehand and backhand sides to get the ball higher over the net and to the backcourt.
 - How to get behind and to the side of the ball as it comes toward them so that they have room to swing the racquet.
- Check that players are holding the racquet near the end of the handle for both forehand and backhand.
- Developing control: Players need to learn how hard to hit the ball to keep the ball near the baseline.
- The rally: Players in pairs, rallying straight ahead and then crosscourt.
- Rally to target: Place a marker or spot as a target about 5 feet inside the baseline. Try to get the longest rally with the ball landing close to the target.
- Rally with scoring: Players rally for four shots and then play the point out competitively.

Team Game: One Racquet Team Rally

Cool Down

With a partner, sandwich as many balls as possible between two racquets and take them to the cart/hopper.

Homework: Around the Back

ages
9-10

quickstart tennis: practice 2

Serving

Court Size: **60-foot court**

Session Length: **60 minutes**

Objective

To develop the overhand serve with consistency and accuracy.

Warm-up

Run and Catch. Players run across the court, throwing the ball straight up in the air and catching it before it hits the ground. Clap before catching the ball. How many claps while moving and still controlling the throw?



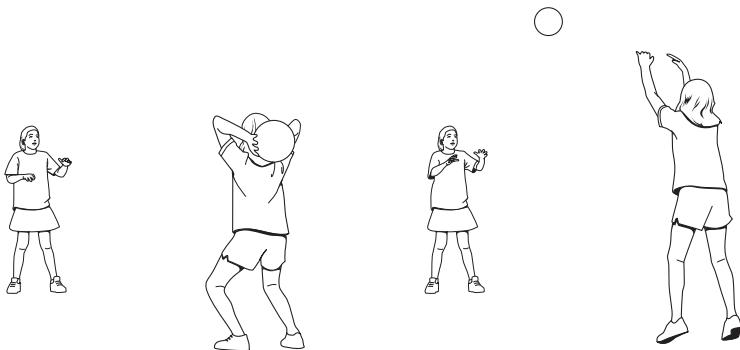
COORDINATION AND RHYTHM

Side-Step Clap. Side step while clapping hands above the head—work on claps being in slower time than feet.

In Time Together. Face a partner and side step together, keeping in time with each other. Add clap above head at the same time and keep this in time with partner.

THROWING

Passes. With partner and a large ball, practice throwing two-handed chest passes, overhead passes and backward passes to get ball straight to the partner. Make sure both knees are shoulder-width apart and bent, and are then extended to help throw the ball higher.



Overhand Throw. Practice overhand throwing from the baseline, aiming high over the net. Make sure players stay sideways to the line and keep their hips and feet sideways until the ball is released. Tip: Use NERF footballs to develop a good, overhand throwing motion.

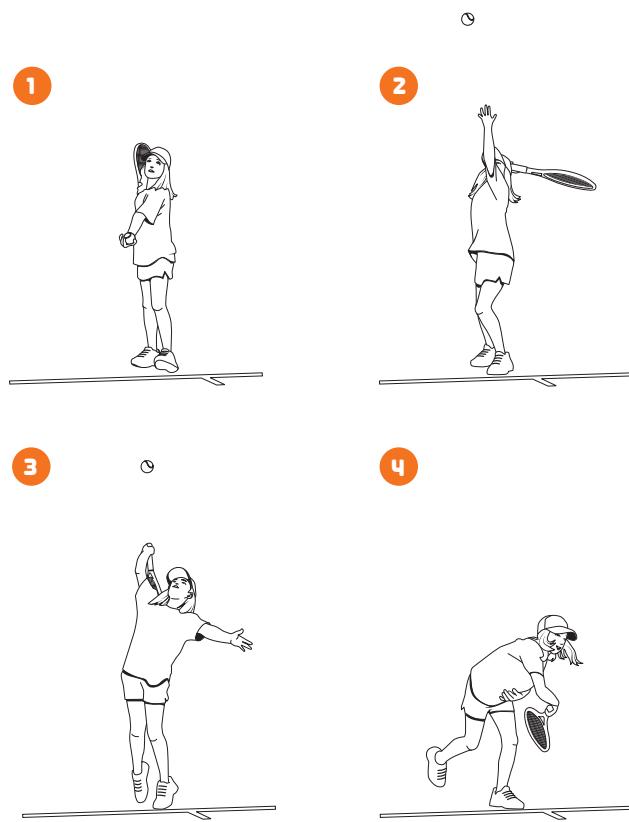


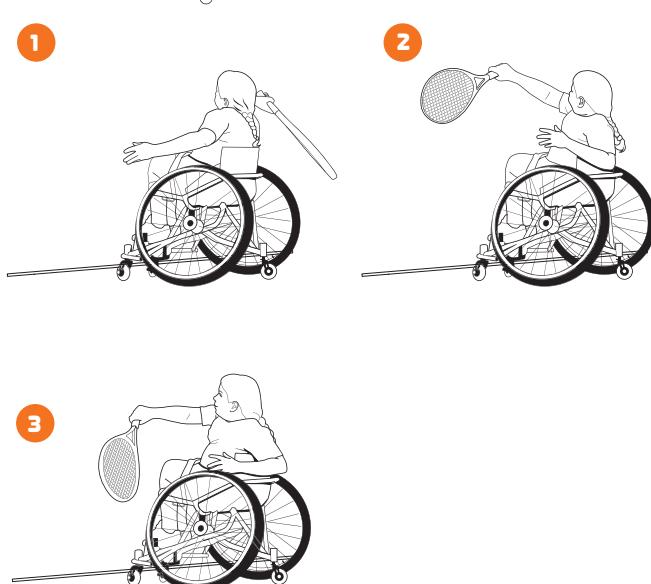
Review: Forehands and Backhands with Control

Players rally for four shots cooperatively and then try to play the point out competitively. The player who wins the rally scores a point.

New Skill: First and Second Serve

- Show the overhand serve several times and emphasize that it is like the overhand throw.
- Show players the feet, racquet and ball positions to start the serve.





Players practice and develop the basic shape of the serve (before and only if necessary), breaking it down into simple steps.

- As players develop or improve the action, make sure they serve from behind the baseline each time and keep their balance.
- Remind players to serve diagonally.

Players practice serving to both courts. Players practice first for consistency (number of serves over the net and into the correct court) and then for accuracy (hitting the ball to a specific place in the court). Place a large target in each corner of the service court and a third one in the center of the court near the service line. Get players to serve at the targets, explaining to them that the position of the targets is where they should try to aim the serve.

Too easy or too hard?

The size of the targets can be increased or decreased depending on the ability of the players.

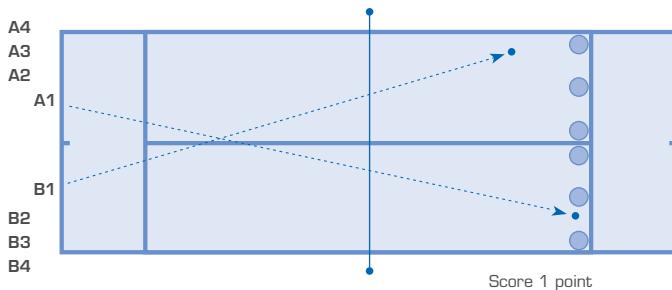
First and second serve. Teach players that they have two serves for each point. Set up the same targets and players, then practice with the first serve being harder and faster and the second serve being slower and more likely to go into the service court. Set up a scoring system that gives more points for the first serve.

COACHING TIPS

- At this age, players are able to turn their hips and shoulders so the racquet can go back a little farther.
- Explain that a consistent serve is the first objective, but that after that the serve needs to be hit to different places to make it more difficult for the receiver to return the serve.
- Show players how to be ready for the return of serve as they recover from the serve.

Team Game: Team Serving

Players in teams of four. Each player has three serves to a target (large targets in different parts of service box). Other players on the team count how many balls land in target area. Add scores together for the team. The team with the highest score in a certain time wins.



Too easy?

1. Play with first serves only.
2. Reduce size of targets.

Cool Down

Players roll all the balls along the ground to make them stop at the hopper/cart. The closest to the hopper/cart wins.

Homework

Around the World. Standing still and not moving your feet, bounce the ball so that you move it right around your body and back to the front without losing it. Make sure you can go around both ways.



practice 2 summary

Session Length: **60 minutes**

Objective

To develop the overhand serve with consistency and accuracy.

Warm-up

- Run and Catch
Coordination and rhythm
- Side Step Clap
- In Time Together
Throwing
- Passes
- Overhand Throw

Review: Forehands and Backhand with Control

- Players rally for four shots and then play the point out competitively.

New Skill: First and Second Serve

- Show players the proper technique for the overhand serve.
- Players practice serving to both courts. Players going for consistency and then accuracy.
- First and second serve: Teach players that they have two serves for each point. Let them practice with the first serve being harder and faster, and the second serve being slower and more likely to go into the service court.

Team Game: Team Serving

Cool Down

Players roll all the balls along the ground to make them stop at the hopper/cart. The closest to the hopper/cart wins.

Homework: Around the World

Notes

Returning the Serve

Court Size: **60-foot court**

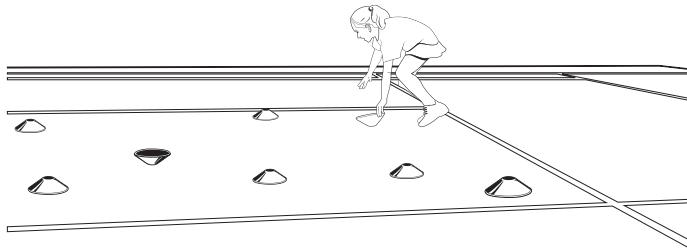
Session Length: **60 minutes**

Objective

To learn to receive and return the serve.

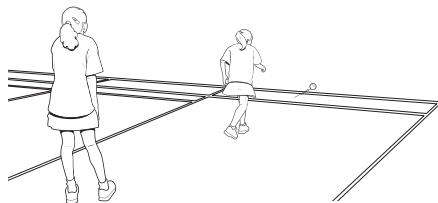
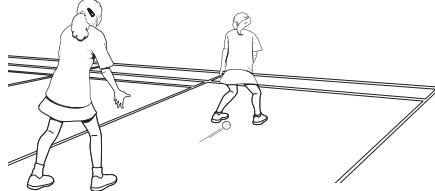
Warm-up

Cone Turn. Players in pairs with eight cones per pair. Cones are spaced out on the court. One player turns them all over and then the partner turns them all back. Set the time for the players to do this as fast as they can.



REACTION SPEED

Chase. In pairs, one player turns her back to her partner and stands with legs shoulder width apart. The partner then rolls a ball through the partner's legs and the player has to run and stop the ball as soon as possible. (The ball should be rolled so the player has to run to stop the ball.)



Ball Drop. In pairs facing each other, one player with arms extended at shoulder height and with a ball in each hand. The player drops one of the balls at random. The other player has to catch the dropped ball after one bounce.

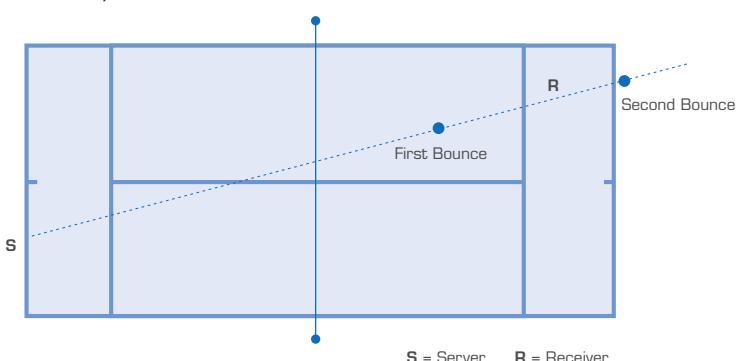


Review: First and Second Serve

Stress consistency and then accuracy. Players practice with the first serve being harder and faster, and the second serve being slower and more likely to go into the service court.

New Skill: Returning the Serve

Ready position and court position. Show players where to stand to return the serve, and show the “ready position”—racquet head up and in front, with knees bent.



Explain to players how to track the serve to judge where the ball will land in the court. Show them:

- How to move forward for the second serve because it is usually slower.
- How to move quickly if the serve comes straight at them.
- How to take a shorter swing if the serve comes fast and reduces the time to move.
- Where to return the ball across the court to make it harder for the server.

Serve and return. Players in threes—two servers alternating with a receiver so the receiver gets plenty of practice. Change around at regular intervals or after a number of serves. Receivers practice:

- Position of feet and position of body.
- Moving forward for the second serve.
- Returning on both sides of the court and with the forehand and backhand.
- Taking a shorter swing for a faster serve.
- Returning the ball across the court.

Score to four. Develop the practice from serve and return to playing points of four shots—the serve, return, third and fourth shot to encourage both the server and the receiver to prepare for, and hit, the next shot.

Too hard?

Reduce the number of shots to two—the serve and the return, giving points when players successfully complete both shots cooperatively.

COACHING TIPS

- The receiver needs to be in a good position on the court and in the ready position with the racquet held in front and the head at about shoulder height.
- Players need to practice returning on both the forehand and backhand sides.
- Players need to develop shorter swings for faster serves.
- The receiver needs to contact the ball to the side and in front, moving forward for contact.
- The racquet should move from low to high to get the return back over the net.
- Player needs to recover to a good position for next shot.
- Practice returning crosscourt and beyond the service line.
- Concentrate on consistency of return and then accuracy of return.

Team Game: Team Returns

In pairs or in fours, players make up a game that makes a good return (over the net, crosscourt and deep) more important than the serve and scores more points. Ensure that the game includes at least the serve and the return.

The intention of this game is to get the players to think for themselves and to make up a game they will enjoy.

Cool Down

In fours, put balls in pyramids of nine. Build more than other teams. The balls can then be brought back to the cart/hopper.

Homework

Fast Reactions. With a partner, practice your quick reactions. One of you has two balls and drops one of them for the other person to catch. You can catch it after one bounce, but see if you can catch it before it hits the ground. As you get better, move farther away from your partner.

Session Length: **60 minutes**

Objective

To learn to receive and return the serve.

Warm-up

- Cone turn

Reaction Speed

- Chase
- Ball Drop

Review: First and Second Serve

Players practice with the first serve being harder and faster, and the second serve being slower and more likely to go into the service court.

New Skill: Returning the Serve

- Players in threes—two servers alternating with a receiver so the receiver gets plenty of practice.
- Focus on the following:
 - Position of feet and position of body.
 - Moving forward for the second serve.
 - Returning on both sides of the court and with the forehand and backhand.
 - Taking a shorter swing for a faster serve.
 - Returning the ball across the court.

Play points of four shots—the serve, return, third and fourth shot to encourage both the server and receiver to prepare for and hit the next shot.

Team Game: Team Returns

Cool Down

In groups of four, put balls in pyramids of nine balls. Try to build more than other teams.

Homework: Fast Reactions

ages
9-10

quickstart tennis: practice 4

Net Play

Court Size: **60-foot court**

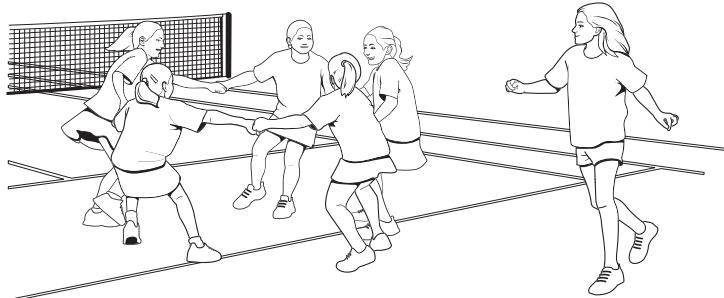
Session Length: **60 minutes**

Objective

To learn the different skills to play at the net or against the net player.

Warm-up

Around the circle. Players in circles of five players or more, linking hands. A sixth player is outside the circle and has to touch a named player in the circle. The five players move the circle around to stop the sixth player being able to reach or touch the named player.



⌚ REACTION SPEED

Ball Drop. In pairs facing each other. One player has a ball in each hand with arms extended. The player then drops one of them from shoulder height without warning. The other player has to react quickly and catch the ball after one bounce.

Wall Catch. If a wall is available, the players face the wall, one behind the other. The rear player throws the ball against the wall and the front player catches it as soon as possible. For every successful catch move closer to the wall.

Call My Name. One player turns his back toward his partner, who throws the ball up in the air and calls the player's name at the same time. The player has to turn around and react to catch the ball after one bounce.

Review: Returning the Serve

Players in threes—two servers alternating with a receiver so the receiver gets plenty of practice. Change around at regular intervals or after a number of serves. Receivers practice:

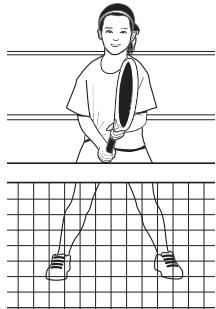
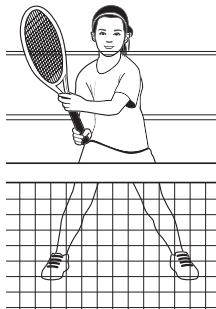
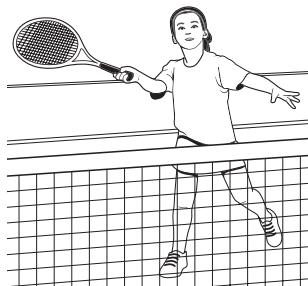
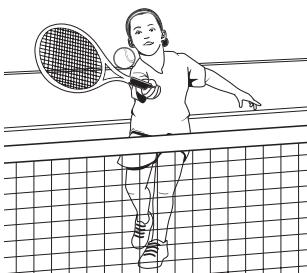
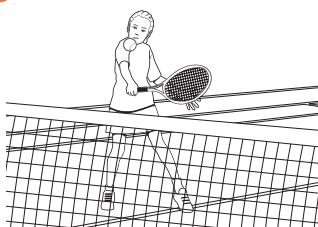
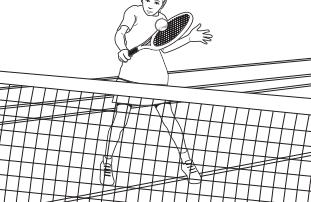
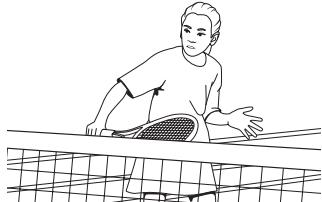
- Position of feet and position of body.
- Moving forward for the second serve.
- Returning on both sides of the court and with the forehand and backhand.
- Taking a shorter swing for a faster serve.
- Returning the ball across the court.

New Skill: Playing at the Net or Against the Net Player

The Volley (playing at the net)

Show players:

- How to volley.
- The racquet head up and moving forward so the ball is hit out of the air (i.e., before the ball bounces), over the net and into the opposing court.
- The volley position as 3 to 4 feet behind the net so the player has room to move forward.

1**2****3****4****1****2****3****4**

Volley practice. Players in pairs on either side of the net, with one feeder on the service line and the volleyer 3-4 feet behind the net. The feeder tosses the ball underhand for the volleyer to hit into the court at the feeder's feet. Repeat several times before changing positions. Make sure all the feeders are on the same side of the net.

Too easy?

As the players improve, progress to having the feeder toss the ball to a variety of heights (higher and lower than the net) on both the forehand and backhand sides for the volleyer to return.



COACHING TIPS

- Players need to be alert and ready to react to the ball as it comes toward them. This may not be at the height they anticipate.
- Keep the racquet up so the racquet can move forward to hit the ball over the net and into the court.

The Lob (with opponent at the net)

Show the players how to lob the ball over the head of an opponent who comes to the net. Explain that the lob is just like the forehand and backhand ground strokes, except that the ball is lifted high in the air as the racquet head finishes above the player's shoulder.

Lob practice. Players in pairs, one at the net who feeds the ball for the partner on the baseline. Partner at the baseline tries to hit a lob over the volleyer. (The volleyer MUST stay close to the net.)

Toss, lob and catch. Players in threes—one feeder at the net with the balls to toss to the second player on the baseline; the third player is behind the feeder on the other baseline. The feeder tosses the ball to the baseliner, who lobs it over the feeder's head for the third player to catch. Change around after several turns.



COACHING TIPS

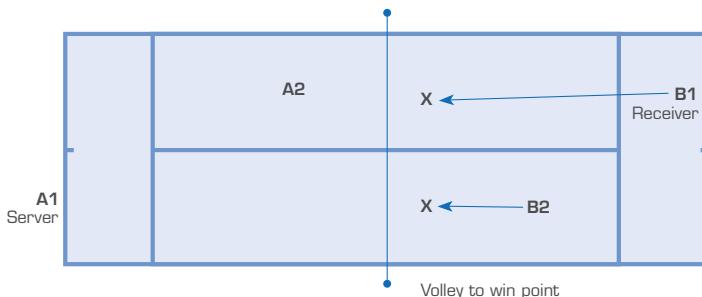
- Encourage the lobber to hit the ball up with a long swing.
- Show the players that the ball only needs to clear the volleyer's head and outstretched racquet.
- The lobber should keep the ball to the side and in front and lift it over the volleyer's head.

Team Game: Game Over

Players in pairs, playing points and games against another pair. Players start in proper doubles positions (A1 as server; A2 as server's partner; B1 as returner; B2 as returner's partner). Scoring is normal unless one pair hits a winning volley (X). Start the game with a serve and a return, and then rally as normal until one pair moves forward on a short ball AND hits a good volley that is not returned. The game is then over. First pair to four games wins the set.

Too hard?

1. Play with foam or very low-compression balls.
2. Players play as individuals, not pairs, against each other. Serve, return and play the point trying to get to the net to volley and then lob if possible.



Cool Down

Gentle Jog. Players jog slowly around the court, gently swinging their arms until they have counted 50. Then they walk for 50 until they get back to the net.

Homework

Target Choice. Put five targets in a row with at least 6 feet between them and 12 feet from you. Get someone to throw you a ball and tell you which target to aim at. You need to hit the ball with a forehand to land on the target. How many targets can you hit without missing? Can you do it with a backhand?



ages **9-10** practice 4 summary

Session Length: **60 minutes**

Objective

To learn the different skills to play at the net or against the net player.

Warm-up

- Around the Circle

Reaction Speed

- Ball Drop
- Wall Catch
- Call My Name

Review: Returning the Serve

New Skill: Playing at the Net or Against the Net Player

The Volley:

- Show players how to volley, starting with the racquet head up and moving forward so the ball is hit into the court over the net before it bounces.
- Show volleying position—6 to 8 feet behind the net so the player has room to move forward.
- Volley practice: Players in pairs on either side of the net with one feeder on the service line and the volleyer 6-8 feet behind the net. The feeder tosses ball for the volleyer to hit into the court at the feeder's feet.

The Lob:

- Show players how to lob the ball over the head of an opponent who comes to the net.
- Explain that the lob is just like the forehand and backhand ground strokes, except that the ball is lifted high in the air as the racquet head finishes above the player's shoulder.
- Lob practice: Players in pairs, one at the net who feeds the ball for the partner on the baseline. Partner at the baseline tries to hit a lob over the volleyer.

- Toss, lob and catch: Players in threes—one feeder at the net with the balls to toss to the second player on the baseline; the third player is behind the feeder on the other baseline. The feeder tosses the ball to the baseliner, who lobs it over the feeder's head for the third player to catch.

Team Game: Game Over

Cool Down: Gentle Jog

Homework: Target Choice

Notes

ages
9-10

quickstart tennis: practice 5

Moving the Opponent

Court Size: **60-foot court**

Session Length: **60 minutes**

Objective

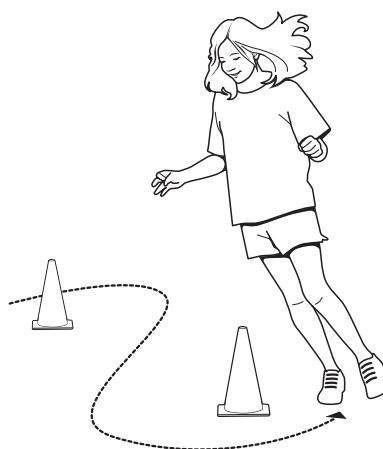
To learn how to move the opponent around the court.

Warm-up

Steps and Arms. Players practice on their own, moving sideways and forward with side shuffle, carioca steps and split steps, swinging arms forward and backward at same time.

⌚ SPEED

Around the Cones. Players in pairs behind the baseline. Place a line of three cones 4 feet back from the net in front of each pair of players. Each player, in turn, runs from the baseline and moves sideways in a figure 8 around the three cones before running back to the baseline. When all of the players in the first line have returned to the baseline, the second players can start. Repeat five times.



Review: Playing at the Net or Against the Net Player

The Volley

Players practice volleys tossed or hit at a variety of heights (higher and lower than the net) on both the forehand and backhand sides. Start the players on the service line and feed each of them three balls. Ensure they move forward with each volley.

The Lob

Players in pairs, one at the net who feeds the ball for the partner on the baseline. Partner at the baseline tries to hit a lob over the volleyer.

New Skill: Moving the Opponent Around the Court

- Show the players a rally in which the direction of the ball is changed several times (i.e., the incoming ball goes back over the net in a different direction or lands shorter or deeper in the court).
- Discuss with the players how and why you could/should change the direction of the ball, with an emphasis on good court positioning.

Short and wide. Give the players short and wide playing areas. Players in pairs, one at either end. Start with a serve or an underhand drop feed and then play a point. What sort of shots can you play on a wide court? Where is the opponent? How do you beat the opponent? What can you do to get the ball back more often?

Long and thin. Give the players a long and thin playing area. Players in pairs, one at either end. Start with a serve or an underarm drop feed and then play a point. What sort of shots can you play on a long, narrow court? Where is the opponent? How do you beat the opponent? What can you do to get the ball back more often?

Too hard?

1. *Play with a foam or very low-compression ball.*
2. *Players throw the ball instead of hitting it, trying to move their opponent around the court.*

Nothing in the middle. Players in pairs, rally to 10, ensuring the ball does not land in the middle of the court (mark out with spots, or throw-down lines). The player loses the point if the ball lands in the middle (i.e., the area marked off by the spots/lines).

Too hard?

1. Reduce the number of shots to be played.
2. Play with a foam or a very low-compression ball.
3. Players throw the ball instead of hitting it, trying to move their opponent around the court.

Playing points. Players try to win the rally. Play the first to score a game (to four points). Afterward, discuss how most points in the game were won.

COACHING TIPS

- Help players make decisions based on their position in the court and the position of the opponent. Discuss returning the ball short or long, crosscourt or down the line.
- Remind players to look for the opponent's position and try and hit the ball away from them.

Team Game: Short and Deep

Players in pairs with racquets and balls. Players design a game that gives more points for a very short ball (a ball dropped just over the net) or a lob (a ball hit over the opponent's head). Encourage the players to try both shots in the game they make up.

Cool Down

Gentle jog, picking up the balls.

Homework

Spinning Balls. With a racquet and a ball, first practice tapping the ball straight up in the air at least 20 times. Then do the same thing, but each time the ball hits the racquet, spin the ball with the strings so that the ball spins as it leaves the racquet.



practice 5 summary

Session Length: **60 minutes**

Objective

To learn how to move the opponent around the court.

Warm-up

- Steps and Arms
- Speed: Around the cones

Review: Playing at the Net or Against the Net Player

The Volley:

Players practice volleys tossed or hit at a variety of heights (higher and lower than the net) on both the forehand and backhand sides.

The Lob:

Players in pairs, one at the net who feeds the ball for the partner on the baseline. Partner at the baseline tries to hit a lob over the volleyer.

New Skill: Moving the Opponent Around the Court

- Short and wide: Give the players short and wide playing areas. Players in pairs, one at either end. Start with a serve and then play a point.
- Long and thin: Give the players long and thin playing areas. Players in pairs, one at either end. Start with a serve and then play a point.
- Nothing in the middle: Players in pairs, rally to 10, ensuring the ball does not land in the middle of the court (mark out with spots, or throw-down lines).
- Playing points: Players try to win the rally. Play the first to score a game. Discuss how most points in the game were won.

Team Game: Short and Deep

Cool Down: Gentle jog, picking up the balls.

Homework: Spinning Balls

ages

9-10

quickstart tennis: practice 6

The Doubles Game

Court Size: **60-foot court**

Session Length: **60 minutes**

Objective

To learn the basic principles of doubles.

Warm-up

Name the Player. Players jog around court and coach calls out names of different sports stars. The players have to mime the sport of the person and then move again.

COORDINATION

Various Steps. In teams of five, each player has to hop, walk, double-foot bounce, skip and side step over 20 to 30 feet. Take turns, one player at a time. The first team to finish every player with every activity wins.

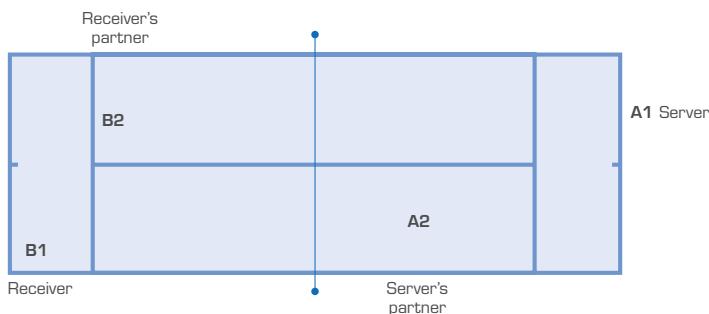
Review: Moving the Opponent Around the Court

Players in pairs, rally to 10, ensuring the ball does not land in the middle of the court (mark out with spots, or throw-down lines). Players try to score points (1, 2, 3, 4) by winning the rally—first to score enough points wins the game.

New Skill: The Basic Principles of Doubles

Show and discuss the basic principles of doubles with the players:

- Show where each player is positioned on the court (server, server's partner; returner, returner's partner).
- Have players play at least two games so they learn the different positions.
- Discuss with the players how partners communicate with each other about where to hit the ball—show them where the open spaces are on the court in doubles. The players play at least two games, helping each other with positioning and shot placement.
- On each court, have players play and score first to four games so everyone has a chance to serve at least once.



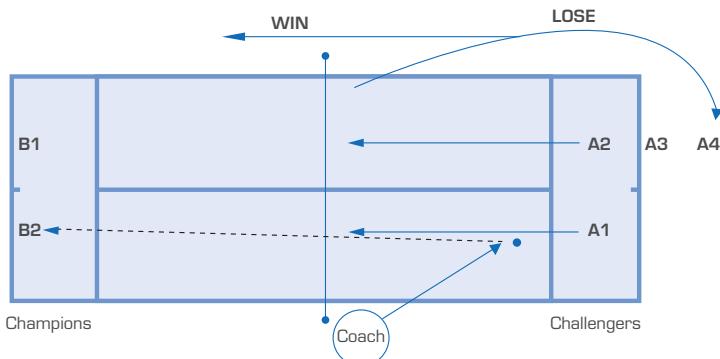
Too hard?

1. The serve can be underhand to get the ball in play.
2. A very low-compression ball can be used.
3. The players can play without racquets and learn the positions by throwing the ball.

COACHING TIPS

- Teach the players the positions and responsibilities of each player (server, server's partner, returner, returner's partner). Let them learn one position before moving them to another one.
- Show players how to use the space on the court. Show the players where the spaces are in a doubles team—down the middle, in front of or behind the two players. Emphasize trying to hit the ball into these spaces in a rally.

Team Game: Doubles Champions of the Court



The game needs six to eight players per court. Two players are “champions” on the baseline at one end of the court and the other players are “challengers” in pairs on the baseline at the other end of the court. One pair of challengers moves up to the baseline. The two challengers play three points against the champions. On the first point the coach feeds a short ball to the challengers A1 and A2. Team A hits an approach shot and plays out the point. The coach feeds the second point as a volley to the same side. The third point is fed as an overhead.

If the challengers win two out of the three points, they run down to the other end of the court to become the new “champions.” The losing champions move to the other end of the court to join the line of challengers.

Cool Down

Players in a line on one side of the court, each one of them with a ball. Roll the ball to stop on the opposite side on a line selected by the coach.

Homework

Marker Speed. Make sure you are really warm. Put 10 markers down on the ground with a space about 2 feet between them. Try to run in and out of the markers as fast as you can and come back to the start. Keep as close as you can to the markers. Try and get someone to time you. See if you can do better next time!



practice 6 summary

Session Length: **60 minutes**

Objective

To learn the basic principles of doubles.

Warm-up

Name the Player

Coordination: Various Steps

Review: Moving the Opponent Around the Court

Players in pairs, rally to 10, ensuring the ball does not land in the middle of the court (mark out with spots, throw-down lines). Players trying to score points (1, 2, 3, 4) by winning the rally—first to score enough points wins the game.

New Skill: The Basic Principles of Doubles

- Show and discuss the basic principles of doubles with the players, including positioning and rules.
- Discuss how players communicate with each other about where to hit the ball—show them where the open spaces are in doubles.
- Have players play at least two games, helping each other with positioning and shot placement.

Team Game: Doubles Champions of the Court

Cool Down

Players in a line on one side of the court, each with a ball. Roll the ball to stop on the opposite side on a line selected by the coach.

Homework: Marker Speed

ages
9-10

quickstart tennis: practice 7

Improving the Doubles Game

Court Size: **60-foot court**

Session Length: **60 minutes**

Objective

To learn additional skills to improve the doubles game.

Warm-up

Stretching. Dynamic stretching on the move. With arms circling slowly, make simple lunge movements across the court, with upper body twists.

Physical Skills

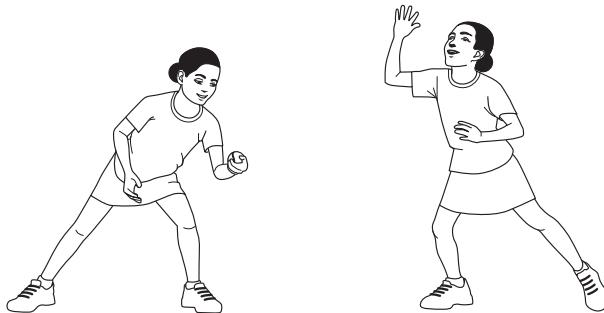
THROWING

Ball Passes. With partner and large ball, practice throwing two-handed chest passes, overhead passes and backward passes to get ball straight to partner. Ensure that both knees are bent and extended to help throw the ball. Make sure to use both hands at same time.

Ball throws. Practice single overhand throwing from the baseline high over net so the arm is fully extended. Alternative: Use foam football to develop the overhand throw.

BALANCE

Balance Stretch. Two players stand about 6 feet apart. One throws a ball underhand alternately wide, low and high so the partner has to stretch. The partner has to catch it with one hand without moving either foot off the ground. Player must maintain balance.



Review: The Basic Principles of Doubles

Players play doubles and score the first to four games. Ensure good court positioning and good communication between partners.

New Skill: Improving the Doubles Game

Build on positioning and communication skills learned in previous session. Show players:

- Where to serve—try to serve down the middle of the court.
- Where to return the serve—across the court to avoid the net player (server's partner).
- How to move together after the serve and return so the spaces between the partners are reduced.

Players should play several games to try out and practice these skills.



COACHING POINTS

- Check that the server's position is midway along the baseline (i.e., not all the way over against the sideline) to help player serve the ball down the center.
- Remind receivers about changing the direction of the return to avoid the server's partner.
- Show players how to cooperate and move with each other so they reduce the open spaces on the court.

Team Game: CHAMPS Serving

Players in teams of four against another team. Decide which team serves first. Players are numbered one through four in order of serving and receiving. The first server serves (two attempts) and point is played out against the first receiver. The team that wins the rally scores the letter C and stays as server, but with the second server serving. If the serving team loses the point, the receiving team becomes the server with the second player serving. Game continues until one team has all the letters of the word CHAMPS, gained from each time they win a point. Progress to playing winning teams together and losing teams together.

Too hard?

1. Play with players throwing the ball instead of hitting it.
2. Play with a foam ball or a very low-compression ball.

Too easy?

1. Server only gets one serve.
2. Ball must stay in play for four shots before the point can be won.

Cool Down

Gentle jog around the court with arms swinging alternately.

Homework

Jump Rope. How far can you get with different skills? Practice 10 times with alternate feet, without stopping change to 10 sideways jumps, then 10 backward jumps, then 10 with both feet together. Go back to the beginning each time you make a mistake.



practice 1 summary

Session Length: **60 minutes**

Objective

To learn additional skills to improve the doubles game.

Warm-up

- Stretching
- Throwing: Ball Passes, Ball throws
- Balance: Balance Stretch

Review: The Basic Principles of Doubles

Players play and score first to four games. Ensure good court positioning and good communication between partners.

New Skill: Improving the Doubles Game

- Build on skills learned in previous session by showing players:
 - where to serve
 - where to return the serve
 - how to move together after the serve and return
- Players play several games to try out and practice these skills

Team Game: CHAMPS Serving

Cool Down

Gentle jog around the court with arms swinging alternately.

Homework: Jump Rope

ages
9-10

quickstart tennis: practice 8

Learning the Basic Patterns of Serve, Return and Rally

Court Size: **60-foot court**

Session Length: **60 minutes**

Objective

To develop basic patterns of play—the serve, return and the rally.

Warm-up

Follow My Leader. Players warm up in pairs by circling the court, one following the other who can do any movement—jog forward, backward, skip, hop, etc.—and the player must copy the partner. Change over.

⌚ COORDINATION AND RHYTHM

Copy This. Players in pairs and always moving in time with each other. Begin with alternate arm swings. Then butt flicks (place hands behind back, move across the court kicking alternate feet up to touch hands), then sideways steps. Try to give players as many ideas as possible, but ensure that they work in time with each other.

REACTION SPEED

React Drop. Players in twos, one with a ball in each hand and arms outstretched. Player drops one ball at random and partner has to run forward and catch it after one bounce.



Review: Improving the Doubles Game

Players play several games to practice serving, returning and moving together.

New Skill: Learning the Basic Patterns of Serve, Return and Rally

- Try to get players to think ahead and plan their shots.
- Show players the sequence of serve, return, third and fourth shot so they understand that these shots are linked together.
- The server must think about preparing for the third shot and the receiver must think about the fourth shot.

Sequence of shots. Players practice in pairs to get the sequence and understand the importance of preparing and moving, after the serve, for the third ball and, after the return, for the fourth ball. Make sure players move after each shot to be ready for the next ball.

Too hard?

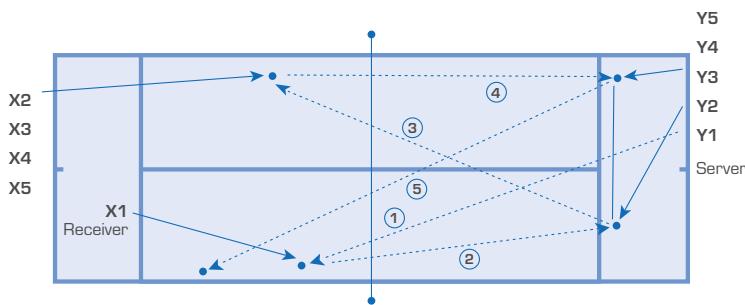
1. Play with a foam or a very low-compression ball.
2. Play the points by throwing the ball so players get used to moving.

Play it out. Play points, changing the server and the receiver. Ask players why they played a shot as they did. Rally the first four shots and then play out the point.

COACHING TIPS

- Ensure that players understand the basic principle of preparing and moving for the next shot.
- Show players several different points so they understand the basic principles of shot sequences.

Team Game: Win in 5



Players in teams of five against another team of five players. Decide which team serves first. Players are numbered one through five and must play one shot in that order. If the rally finishes before all five players have played a shot, then the game re-starts from the next player up. The object is to play the first four shots of the rally (players may not hit a winner on the first four shots, which includes the serve as the first shot) and then win the point on the fifth shot. If team does that, then they score five points. If the rally continues after the fifth shot, then the team that wins it only scores one point. The team that wins the point serves the next point. The first team to score 25 points is the winner.

Too hard?

1. Reduce the team number and the rally to three shots—serve, return and third shot.
2. Award five points to the team that wins the rally—i.e., all five players have hit the ball over the net and into the court.

Too easy?

One player must play a rally of four shots and then win the rally on the fifth shot against a player from the opposite team.

Cool Down

Ball pick-up as fast as possible. Simple stretching.

Homework

Target Ball. Practice throwing tennis ball overhand at targets that are different distances away. How far can you throw? How close can you get to the target?

Session Length: **60 minutes**

Objective

To learn basic patterns of serve, return and rally.

Warm-up

- Follow My Leader

Coordination and rhythm

- Copy This

Reaction Speed

- React Drop

Review: Improving the Doubles Game

Players play several games to practice serving, returning and moving together.

New Skill: Learning the Basic Patterns of Serve, Return and Rally

- Show players the sequence of serve, return, third and fourth shot so they understand that these shots are linked together.
- Players practice in pairs to get the sequence and understand the importance of preparing, after the serve, for the third ball and, after the return, for the fourth ball.
- Play points, changing the server and receiver. Ask players why they played a shot as they did.

Team Game: Win in 5

Cool Down

Ball pick-up as fast as possible; simple stretching.

Homework: Target Ball

Notes