

PRE-RALLY / RED BALL

COACH'S CURRICULUM

Pre-Rally/Red Ball Practice And Play Plans

PRE-RALLY / RED BALL 03 / RED BALL 02 / RED BALL 01

DEAR COACH,

WELCOME TO NET GENERATION!

On behalf of the USTA, we thank you for supporting Net Generation. You are the key to growing the game, and together, we can shape the future of tennis. Net Generation isn't just a new brand—it's a comprehensive platform and development program for kids ages 5 through 18. By creating a singular platform for tennis that we all can rally behind, and through the support the USTA will offer along the way, we believe we can grow participation, instill the love of the game in future generations, and ensure that tennis remains a vibrant sport in our communities for years to come.

As U.S. Fed Cup and U.S. Davis Cup captains, former professional tennis players, and parents, we are Net Generation ambassadors because we believe this new approach will benefit the growth of youth tennis. We believe that no other sport is meeting the needs of today's discerning parents, players, coaches, and community organizations quite like we will with Net Generation.

By registering and becoming an active part of Net Generation, you will get access to the very best in coaching curriculum, digital tools and resources that make teaching, coaching, planning and playing easier, and marketing resources and support to enhance your programs' visibility. The USTA created Net Generation with you in mind and we hope to hear from you about what is working, what is not, and what materials, curriculum and tools will help you. After all, this is your brand and without your talents as a coach, teacher, and mentor, we cannot inspire kids to get in the game—and stay in it.

This coach's manual is just one item under the Net Generation brand. It's comprehensive, competency-based, collaborative, and packaged conveniently online with additional resources to help you customize your approach to teaching the sport you love.

Again, thank you for being a part of Net Generation! Together, we will shape the future of tennis!

Jim Courier

U.S. Davis Cup Captain
Net Generation Ambassador



Kathy Rinaldi

U.S. Fed Cup Captain
Net Generation Ambassador



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INTRODUCTION

Thank you for registering your to Net Generation. It is great to have you as part of the team where our focus is to have more kids playing tennis more often. Net Generation starts with all of us, and we're here to usher in a new era of tennis in the United States.

Net Generation is the United States Tennis Association (USTA) official youth brand and development program that captures the imagination of parents and children ages 5 through 18. One that taps into the adaptability and creativity children and parents seek when choosing activities.

The following practice and play plans are unique to the USTA and have been developed and designed specifically for you, the coach. In doing so they are:

COMPREHENSIVE

Covers the beginner Red Ball to the advanced Green Ball player.

COMPETENCY BASED

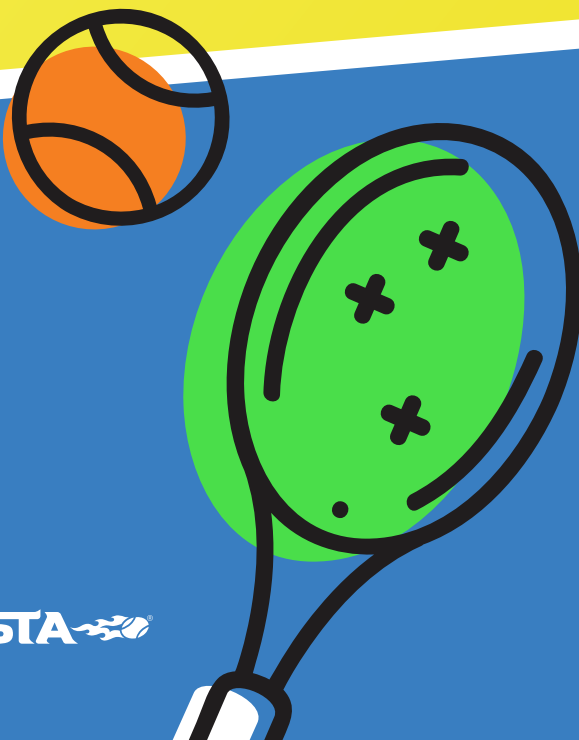
Spells out the skills and knowledge each player should have before moving to the next ball and court size.

COLLABORATIVE

Includes nine levels developed by the USTA Community Tennis and Player Development divisions, USPTA and PTR, and subject matter experts in the field from the U.S. and abroad.

CONVENIENT

Lets you select the method of delivery that works best for you—printed manual, downloadable PDFs, or coaches app.



Inside this manual you'll find four levels of Practice and Play Plans—Pre-Rally, Red Ball 3, Red Ball 2, and Red Ball 1. Each plan consists of eight chapters. We recommend you use each Practice Plan twice before moving on to the next plan. When you finish all the plans, you can start from the beginning again or move certain players to the next level.

Before you get started, take some time to review the necessary equipment, structure of the plans and descriptions of the activities.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED

PLAYGROUND BALLS

Large, lightweight balls available at most big-box stores.

RED BALLS

Low-compression red felt and red foam.

RACQUETS

23 inches and smaller.

BALL BUCKETS

40- to 60-quart plastic containers or small plastic paint buckets. The large containers can hold playground balls or red balls, and the small buckets are ideal when players work in small groups and need a limited supply of red balls.

POLY-SPOTS AND THROW-DOWN LINES (TDL)

For targets, recovery spots, court lines, group control, etc.

BEANBAGS

Can be made or purchased.

HULA HOOPS

Available at most big-box stores.

CONES

Nine-inch and half-cones.

NETS

If you don't have an 18-foot mini-net, which is designed specifically for a 36-foot court, you can attach things like tennis tape, rope or pendant banners to a standard net or to objects such as fences, teaching carts, hoppers, chairs/benches or cooler stands.



STRUCTURE OF PRACTICE AND PLAY PLANS

WARMUP

Pre-Rally and Red Ball 3 start with a simple activity that gives players a chance to become engaged and the coach time to make final adjustments for the session. As players progress into Red Ball 2 and Red Ball 1, they start with a hitting warmup, during which they start hitting to get the entire body moving, and prepare for the theme of the day.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Athletic: For Pre-Rally and Red Ball 3, these are fundamental movement skills that work on the ABCs (agility, balance and coordination), along with sending and receiving skills such as rolling, tossing (underhand), throwing (overhand) and catching. Red Ball 2 and Red Ball 1 focus on fundamental skills for the hands and feet for the ABCs, but add more tennis-specific activities.

Tennis: Skills in Pre-Rally and Red Ball 3 chapters serve as building blocks for serve, rally and score. In Red Ball 2 and Red Ball 1 chapters, skills work on tactics, technique and movement.

GAMES

Players are divided into teams to work on the skills covered in each practice.

CHARACTER (ALL LEVELS)

Practices have a character theme that can apply to both tennis and life.

PLAY AT HOME (ALL LEVELS)

After each lesson, players are assigned specific challenges to practice at home. These can be done independently or with a friend or family member.



DESCRIPTIONS OF ACTIVITIES



TYPE

Individual: Independent skill development.

Team: Two or more players.

Cooperative: Pairs or groups focused on improving skills together.

Competitive: Scoring and declaring a winner.

Hand-Feed: How the ball is introduced into the activity; can be by player or coach.

FOCUS

Specific areas to work on.

SETUP

Location of players, balls and equipment.

MISSION

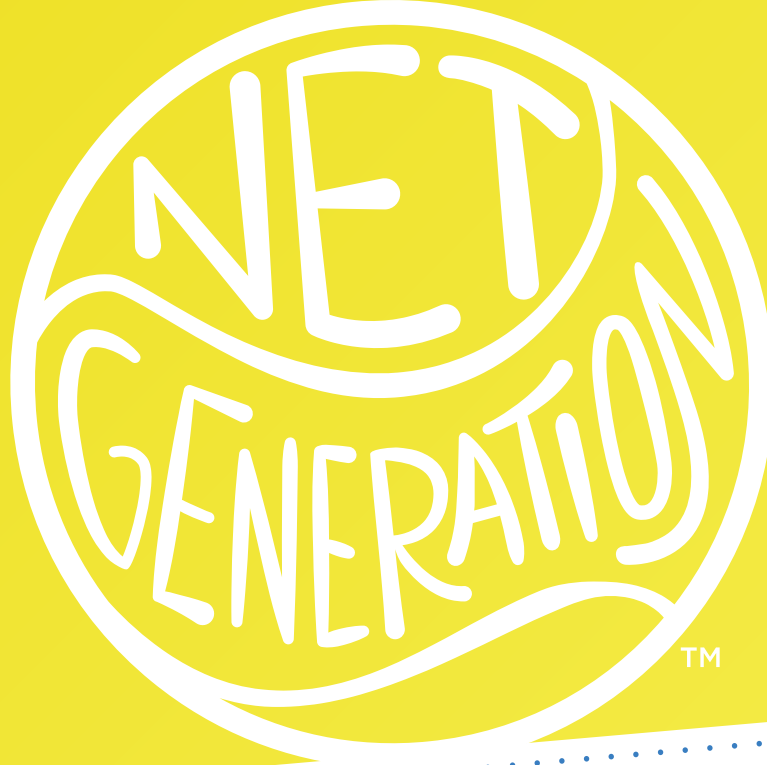
WHAT we want players to do, followed by bullets with specific instructions.

GOAL

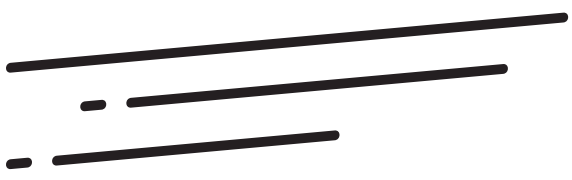
HOW we want players to execute the activity, generally related to a specific competency.

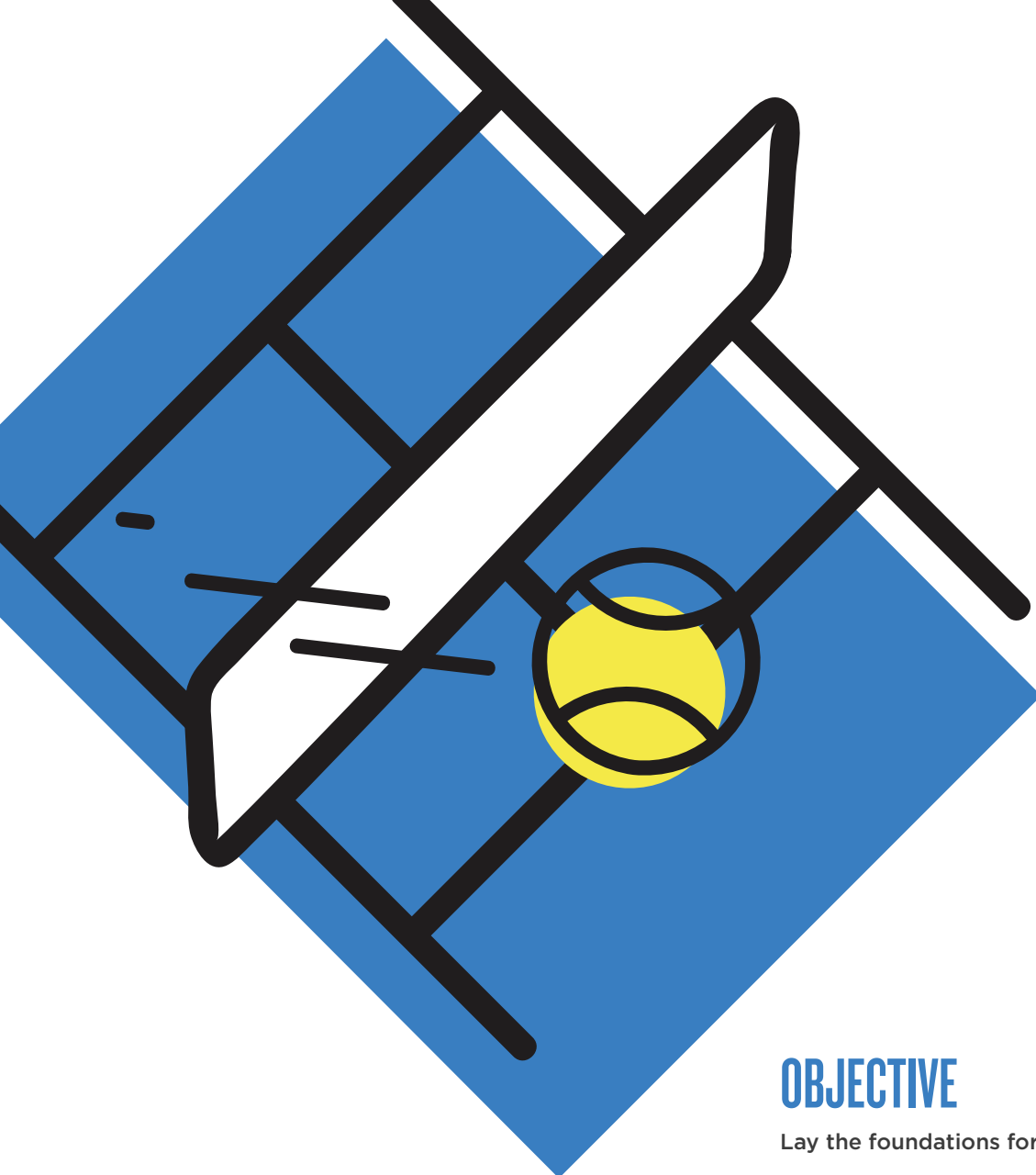
PROGRESSIONS

Specific steps to increase difficulty of the skill/activity, to be used in subsequent practices or to handle mixed abilities.



PRE-RALLY





OBJECTIVE

Lay the foundations for serve, rally and score.

SAMPLE LESSON PLAN

Total: 45 minutes

- Warmup: 8 - 10 minutes
- Character: 3 minutes or less
- Skills (athletic and tennis): 20 - 25 minutes
- Team Challenge: 10 - 12 minutes
- Play at Home: 3 minutes or less

PLANS AT A GLANCE



	Warmup	Character	Athletic Skills Development	Tennis Skills Development	Team Challenge	Play at Home
01 Meet the Ball	Tag Variations	Respect	Ice-Cream Cones Ice-Cream Cones w/Partner	Walk the Dog Walk the Dog w/Partner	Add 'Em Up Bullseye	Toss to Wall and Catch
02 Meet My Racquet	Self-Toss	Respect	Obstacle Course Pizza Delivery	Balance the Egg Balance the Egg w/Partner Bungee Jump Start Your Engines	Red Light/Green Light Tennis Sandwich	Bungees
03 Control the Ball and Racquet	Messy Bedroom	Respect	Monster Walks with Ball Big-Ball Tennis	Walk the Dog Zigzag Walk the Dog Zigzag w/Partner Jacks	Touchdown Survivor	Jacks
04 Forehands and Backhands	Tic-Tac-Toe	Respect	Get Tall/Get Small Closest to the Net	Walk the Dog Backhands Walk the Dog Backhands w/Partner Jacks with Backhand	Touchdown with Backhand Survivor with Backhand	Jacks with Backhand
05 Watch Me Rally	Tag Variations	Respect	Jump to the Line Partner Drop	Bungee Flips Jacks Flips Lobster Trap	Battle Spots	Jacks Flips
06 Rally with My Partner	Messy Bedroom	Teamwork	Rock-Paper-Scissors to a Target Hot Potato	Keep it Moving Lollipop Hoopla	Bucket Tap	Wall or Partner Rally
07 Serve and Rally	Silly Runs	Teamwork	Hopscotch Target Throws	Over/Under Color Call	Serve Pyramids	Rally with Family or Friend
08 Tennis Olympics	Tic-Tac-Toe	Teamwork	Relay Races	Tennis Olympics	Tennis Olympics	Bounce Master

CHAPTER 01

MEET THE BALL

Equipment: 18-foot mini-net, caution tape or any type of rope; 19 and 21-inch racquets; playground balls and red balls; beanbags, nine-inch cones, small buckets/containers, poly-spots and TDLs.

I. WARMUP

TAG VARIATIONS

Setup

- Players spread out in defined spaces with four to six in each area.
- Can use cones to establish playing area.

WALKING TAG

Mission

- One player is “it.” Anyone moving must walk.
- Once tagged, move outside playing area, do five repetitions of a fun exercise such as donkey kicks or “I’m a Star” jumps, then come back in.
- Rotate “it” player every minute or less.

Progressions

1. “It” player moves freely (running, etc.); others walk.
2. In a smaller area of play, “it” player walks; others move freely.

SIDE-SHUFFLE TAG

Mission—One player is “it.” Anyone moving must side-shuffle.

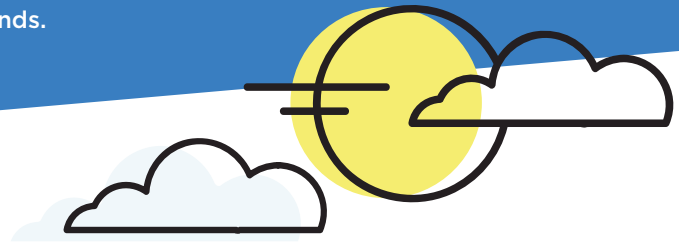
Progression

“It” player moves freely; others must side-shuffle, or vice versa.

II. CHARACTER

RESPECT

- Smile and say hello.
- Introduce yourself to your coach and new tennis friends.



III. ATHLETIC SKILLS

ICE-CREAM CONES

Setup

Players spread out around entire court, each with red ball and cone.

Mission

- Toss, bounce and catch ball in upturned cone.
- Call out different ice-cream flavor after each catch.

Progressions

1. Alternate between catching after bounce and catching in the air.
2. How many scoops can you catch in a row?

ICE-CREAM CONES WITH PARTNER

Setup

One player catches, other tosses.

Mission

- Toss ball up at least head level.
- Bounce and catch in upturned cone.

Progressions

1. Increase height and distance once successful.
2. Catch with opposite hand.
3. Toss with opposite hand.

IV. TENNIS SKILLS

WALK THE DOG

Type: Individual.

Focus: Racquet skills while rolling.

Setup

- Up to four players on one sideline (both sides of net).
- Each player has red ball, racquet and poly-spot.
- Place poly-spots on opposite sideline, aligned with each player.

Mission—Roll ball to poly-spot and return.

- Roll ball with edge of racquet to opposite sideline.
- Stop ball on poly-spot with edge of racquet, roll back to sideline and stop ball again.
- Need help? Use big ball.

Goal—Roll successfully without using other hand.

Progressions

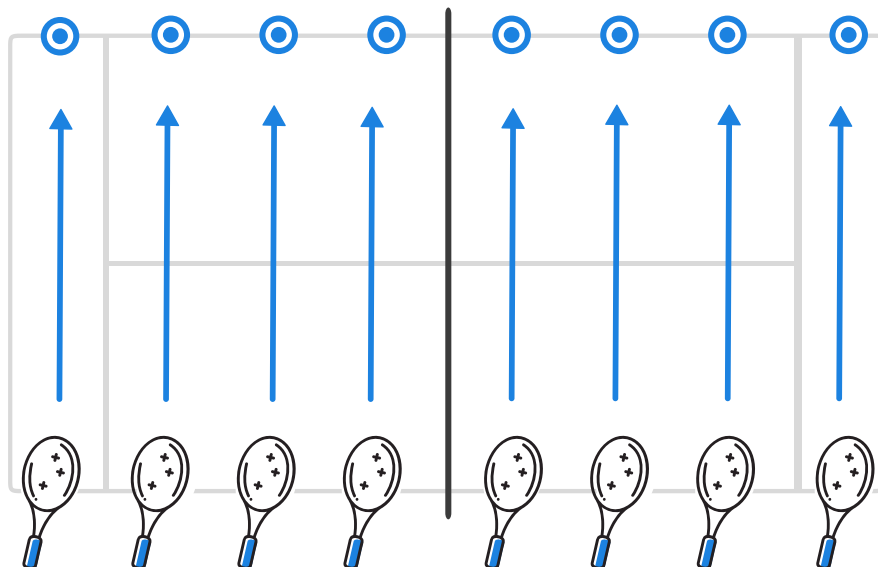
1. Use backhand.
2. Zigzag to spot and back by using both sides of racquet.
3. Let players pick.



TEACHING TIP

Foam balls tend to get “stuck” against the racquet when rolling along ground. Use a red felt ball instead to keep racquet steady.

ILLUSTRATION: WALK THE DOG



WALK THE DOG WITH PARTNER

Type: Cooperative, players in pairs.

Focus: Racquet skills and sending with direction.

Setup

- Players in pairs with racquets and one red ball.
- Pairs spread out on one sideline, two pairs on each side of court.
- Place poly-spot on both sidelines for each pair.

Mission—Roll ball to poly-spot and send back on ground.

- Start on sideline and roll ball with edge of racquet to opposite sideline.
- Stop ball on poly-spot, turn and send ball along ground back to partner, and walk back to starting sideline.
- Partner stops ball with racquet, repeats.
- Need help? Use big ball.

Goal—Send ball along ground with control and hit poly-spot.

Progressions

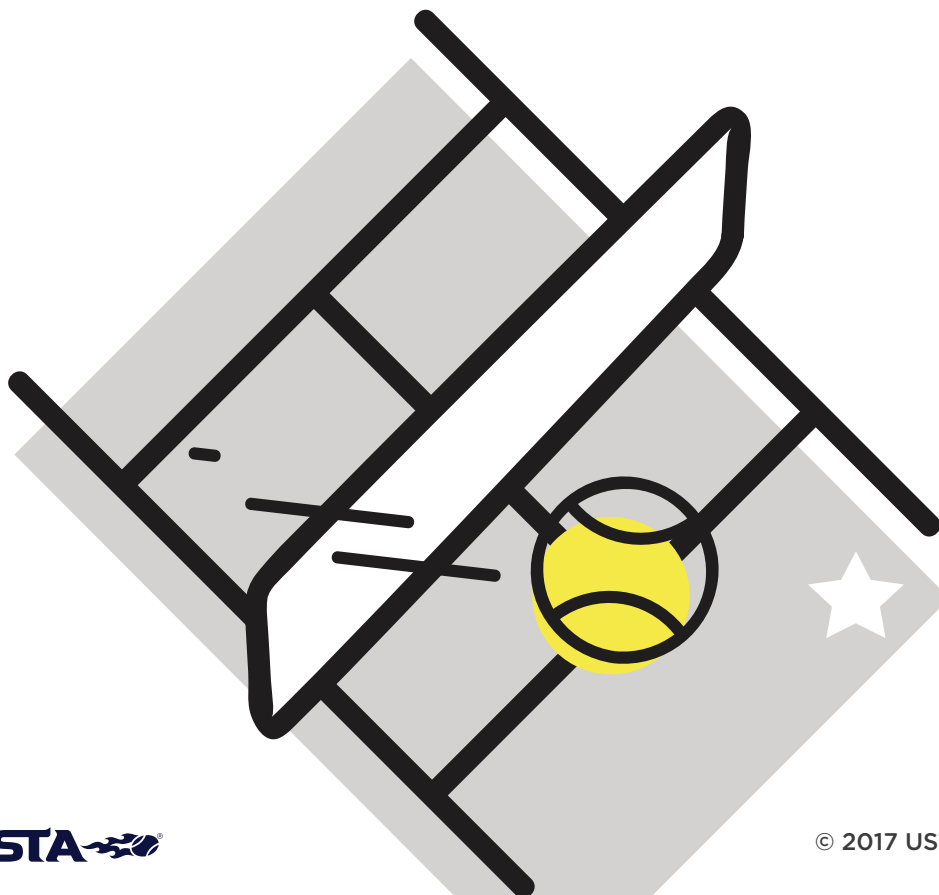
1. Use forehands and backhands.
2. Zigzag to spot using both sides of racquet.
3. Let players pick.



TEACHING TIP

When rolling the ball along the ground with the edge of the racquet, the goal is to keep the ball against the racquet the entire time. When players are “sending” the ball with the racquet, they’re gently pushing the ball to a partner/target using an abbreviated follow-through.

V. TEAM CHALLENGE



ADD 'EM UP

Type: Individual, team.

Focus: Sending with direction.

Setup

- Four to eight players per half-court.
- Align cones or poly-spots six to eight feet inside baseline. Cones should be numbered; poly-spots will have a color.
- Place TDLs on baseline to indicate players' positions, with a supply of balls for each player.

Mission—Hit cones/spots by rolling ball with racquet.

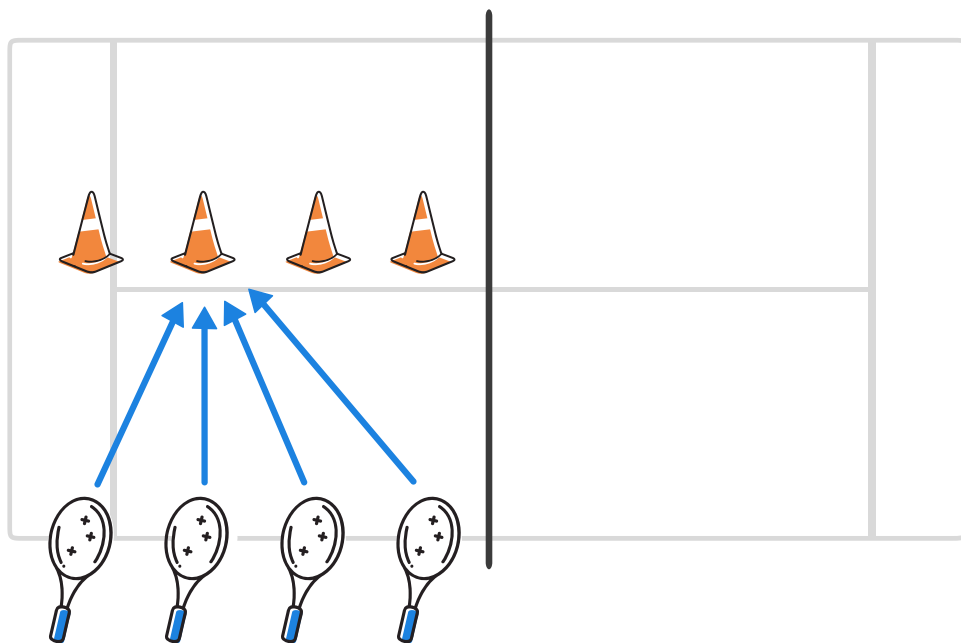
- Players aim at cones/spots in front of them and score points each time they hit one.
- Change positions after a certain number of hits.
- Add up scores as a team to see if they can get to a certain number, or play by time and go for a “team best.”
- Need help? Roll with hand.

Goal—Make adjustments with feet and racquet angle when aiming for different targets.

Progressions

1. Coach or player calls out color/number.
2. Use backhands and forehands.
3. Drop-hit to cones/spots.

ILLUSTRATION: ADD 'EM UP



BULLSEYE

Type: Individual, team activity.

Focus: Sending with direction.

Setup

- Two teams of three to four on each side of net.
- Each team has supply of red felt balls.
- Service box is “big target.” Use TDLs to create another “small target” inside service box (about half the size of box). Place a poly-spot in center of small target.

Mission—Send ball along ground and try to hit bullseye.

- Take turns tapping ball with racquet (palm forward) from baseline toward service-box target.
- Create scoring system for different target areas.
- Add up teams’ scores to see if they can get to a certain number, or play by time and go for a “team best.”
- Need help? Use hands to roll.

Goal—Control racquet with limited motion.

Progressions

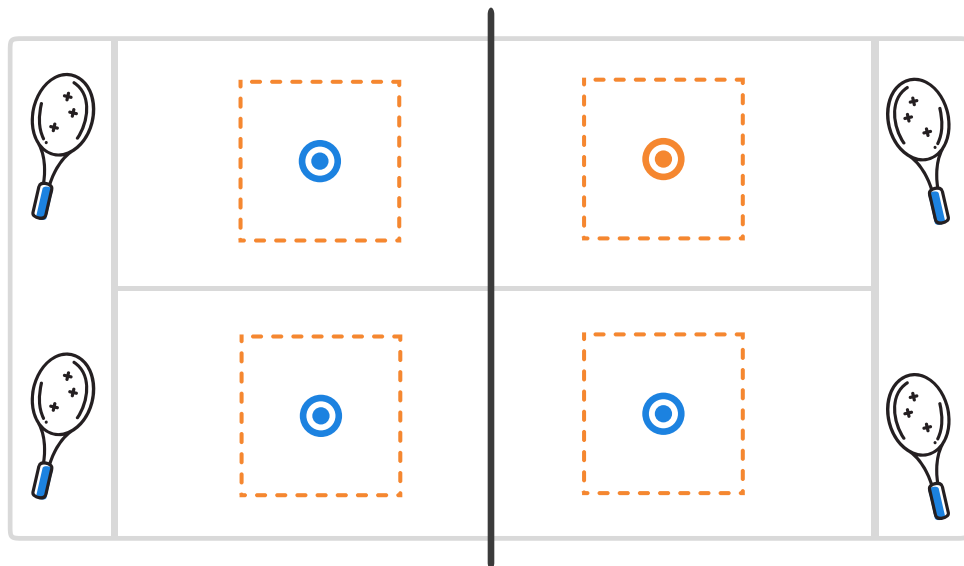
1. Start further behind baseline.
2. Use backhands and forehands.
3. Drop-hit to targets.



TEACHING TIP

To help with scoring, put seven half-cones in a line on one side of the court. For each point scored, turn cone upside down. Goal is to get to seven.

ILLUSTRATION: BULLSEYE



VI. PLAY AT HOME

TOSS TO WALL AND CATCH

Setup

Play with red ball against garage door or any solid wall.

Progressions

1. Toss ball to wall, let bounce, catch with two hands or one.
2. Start with throws, then tosses.
3. Play with a friend and alternate.



TEACHING TIP

“Play at Home” will usually be an activity that has already been covered in practice. Try to keep instructions brief, and more than anything, inspire them to want to play more!

MEET MY RACQUET

Equipment: Mini-net, caution tape or any type of rope; 19 and 21-inch racquets; playground balls, red balls and orange balls; beanbags, nine-inch cones, half-cones, poly-spots and TDLs.

I. WARMUP

SELF-TOSS

Setup

- Each player has one red ball.
- Players spread out around court.

Mission

- Toss ball with one hand (palm up) above head level.
- Let bounce and catch with both hands.

Progressions

1. Toss higher and catch with both hands.
2. Toss further away and catch with both hands.
3. Toss and catch with one hand (using orange ball).



TEACHING TIP

Use orange balls when catching one-handed, because red balls are difficult to catch with one hand.

II. CHARACTER

RESPECT

- Raise your hand to speak.
- Be safe on the court by hugging racquet when coach is talking.



III. ATHLETIC SKILLS

OBSTACLE COURSE

Setup

- Make one 12x12-foot square in center of court on each side of net, using four cones.
- Three to four players per square.

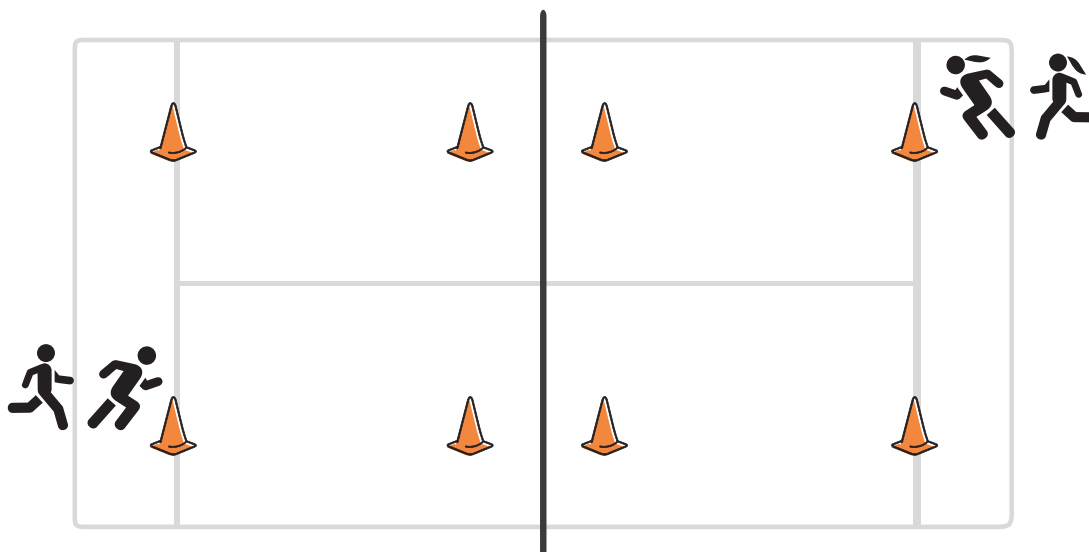
Mission

- Proceed from cone to cone using different movements. Next player goes when previous player reaches second cone.
- Change movement after each player has gone twice.

Progressions

1. Bear crawl: Crawl on hands and feet. Stay low and don't let knees touch ground.
2. Side-shuffle: Face either inside or outside of square. Beginning in an athletic stance, side-shuffle to next cone.
3. Single-leg hop: Hop to next cone, landing quietly.
4. Bottle caps: Begin with feet and knees together, arms out to side. Jump and rotate side to side in a twisting motion, keeping shoulders as still as possible, and move toward next cone.

ILLUSTRATION: OBSTACLE COURSE



PIZZA DELIVERY

Setup

Players spread out around play area holding a poly-spot (pizza) in palm of hand.

Mission

- Move around play area without dropping pizza.
- Try to knock down other players' pizza (gently!) or chase them causing pizza to drop.

Guidelines

- Walk fast without running.
- Dropped pizza? Move to sidelines to cheer on remaining players or perform five repetitions of fun exercise such as donkey kicks or "I'm a Star" jumps.
- Re-entry into game can be at coach's discretion.

IV. TENNIS SKILLS

BALANCE THE EGG

Type: Individual.

Focus: Racquet skills and balance.

Setup

- Up to four players on one sideline (both sides of net).
- Each player has racquet and red ball.

Mission—Balance ball on racquet face without using hands.

- Starting on sideline, balance ball in center of strings and walk to opposite sideline and back.
- Need help? Use free hand to help, or use big ball.

Goal—Move to sideline and back without ball touching frame.

Progressions

1. Use both sides of racquet (palm up, then knuckles up).
2. Use red light/green light format.
3. Do bungees while walking to opposite sideline and back.

BALANCE THE EGG WITH PARTNER

Type: Cooperative, players in pairs.

Focus: Racquet skills and balance.

Setup

- Players in pairs, with racquets and red ball.
- Three pairs on each side of net.

Mission—Balance ball on strings, palm up, while walking.

- Balance ball on strings while walking to opposite sideline and back.
- Pass ball to partner, who will repeat.
- Need help? Use a beanbag or big ball.

Goal—Pass ball to partner without using free hand.

Progressions

1. Balance ball knuckles up.
2. Use red light/green light format.
3. Do bungees to opposite sideline and back, pass to partner with ball on strings.



TEACHING TIP

Encourage players to hold the racquet at the bottom of the grip. If this is difficult, have them use a smaller racquet before encouraging them to “choke up” on the racquet or use two hands.



BUNGEE JUMP

Type: Individual.

Focus: Racquet skills with bounce.

Setup

Up to four players on one sideline (both sides of net), each with racquet and red ball.

Mission—Balance ball on strings after bounce.

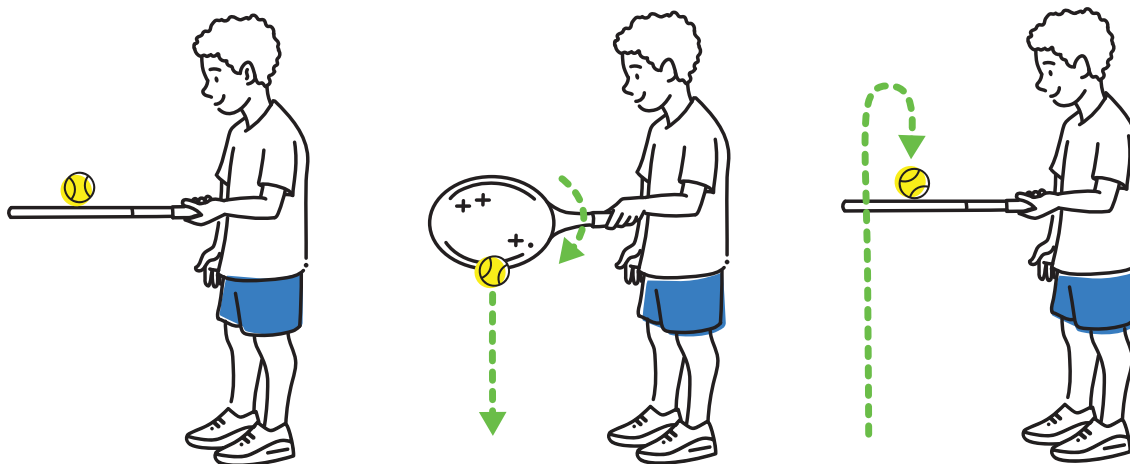
- With palm up, place ball in center of strings.
- Tilt racquet to side so ball falls off.
- Catch ball on strings after bounce.
- Reposition ball in center, using free hand if necessary.

Goal—With hand at bottom of grip, keep racquet steady and balance ball on strings.

Progressions

1. Hold ball on strings for less and less time.
2. Balance ball knuckles up.
3. Tap ball up continuously.

ILLUSTRATION: BUNGEE JUMP



START YOUR ENGINES

Type: Individual.

Focus: Racquet skills with bounce.

Setup

Up to four players on one sideline (both sides of net), each with racquet and red ball.

Mission—Mix bungee jumps, balance on strings, and movement.

- Perform two successful bungee jumps from sideline.
- Walk to opposite sideline and back with ball balanced on strings.

Goal—Complete entire activity without using free hand.

Progressions

1. Do three bungees, then four, and walk to opposite sideline and back.
2. Perform bungees continuously sideline to sideline.
3. Zigzag bungees.

V. TEAM CHALLENGE

RED LIGHT/GREEN LIGHT

Type: Individual.

Focus: Racquet skills and balance.

Setup

Players with racquets and red ball (or a beanbag if they struggle) spread out on sideline facing coach, who is a distance away.

Mission—Keep ball in center of strings while moving and stopping.

- Balance ball on strings palm up. Coach calls out either “green light” or “red light.” On green light, move toward coach; on red light, stop.
- Players go back to starting line if they’re moving when coach calls red light, ball falls off racquet or they touch ball.

Goal—Tilt racquet down when moving forward, back when stopping.

Progressions

1. Balance ball knuckles up.
2. Walk backward.
3. On red light, do a bungee.

TENNIS SANDWICH

Type: Team activity.

Focus: Racquet skills and balance.

Setup

- Each player has racquet and red ball.
- Teams of three to five.
- Players start on sideline.

Mission—Make it to sideline and back without dropping sandwich.

- First player holds racquet palm up and places ball on strings.
- Second player holds racquet palm down and places racquet on top of same ball, and then places another ball on strings.
- Players continue adding to sandwich in this manner.
- If teams drop sandwich, rebuild from same spot and continue.

Goal—Work together as a team and communicate.



TEACHING TIP

Let players describe what's in their sandwich. The ball could be a meatball and the racquet the bread.

VI. PLAY AT HOME

BUNGEEES

Setup

- Play with foam ball on driveway or any flat surface.
- Can do with partner by alternating each bungee.

Progressions

1. Hold ball on strings for less and less time.
2. Use both sides of racquet (palm up, then knuckles up).
3. Tap ball up continuously.

CONTROL THE BALL & RACQUET

Equipment: Mini-net, caution tape or any type of rope; 19 and 21-inch racquets; playground balls and red balls; cones, poly-spots and TDLs.

I. WARMUP

MESSY BEDROOM

Setup

- Teams of six to eight, one team per court.
- Players on one side of net (preferably side opposite fence) with bucket of red balls.

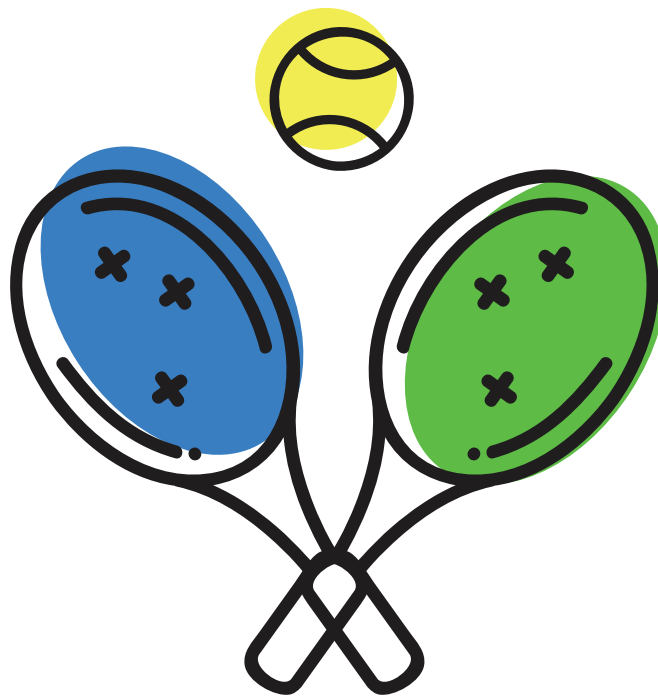
Mission

- Coach tips over bucket of balls.
- Players throw balls one at a time over net.
- Throw as many as possible in one minute.

- Players pick up balls from other side and count how many they threw.
- Do it again and try to beat team record.

Progressions

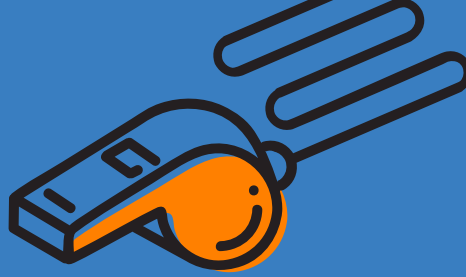
1. Throw with non-dominant hand.
2. Throw into service box.
3. Play on 78-foot court.



II. CHARACTER

RESPECT

- Listen to your coach.
- Keep your eyes and ears open when coach is talking.



III. ATHLETIC SKILLS

MONSTER WALKS WITH BALL

Setup

- Players in pairs with one big ball.
- Two or three pairs, starting on sideline (both sides of net).

Mission

- Carry ball at chest with both hands and lunge-walk (monster walk) to opposite sideline. Turn around and roll ball back to partner.
- Partner catches ball, repeats.

Progressions

1. Carry ball in both hands above head.
2. After each lunge, rotate ball left and right.
3. After each lunge, bounce ball off ground and catch.

BIG-BALL TENNIS

Setup

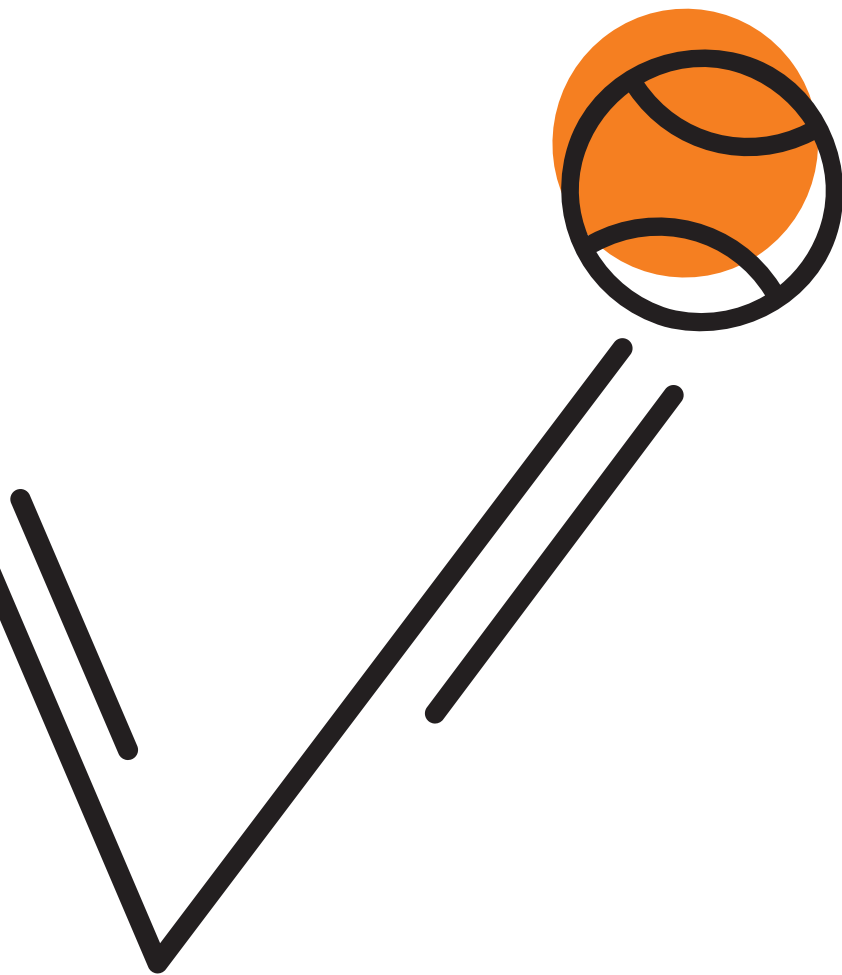
- Two pairs on each side of net, each with one big ball.
- Set up four squares on each side of net using existing lines and TDLs.
- Position player in each square.

Mission

- Toss ball with both hands to partner's box straight ahead.
- Partner lets ball bounce, catches with two hands, then tosses back to partner.

Progressions

1. Toss from one side of body, then the other.
2. Toss straight ahead, then crosscourt.
3. Catch ball in front, then to side of body.



IV. TENNIS SKILLS

WALK THE DOG ZIGZAG

Type: Individual.

Focus: Racquet skills and changing direction.

Setup

- Each player has racquet and red ball. Maximum four players on each side of net.
- On each side of net, set up one or two zigzag patterns using four poly-spots for each pattern.

Mission—Roll ball to each spot, using feet to turn body and racquet.

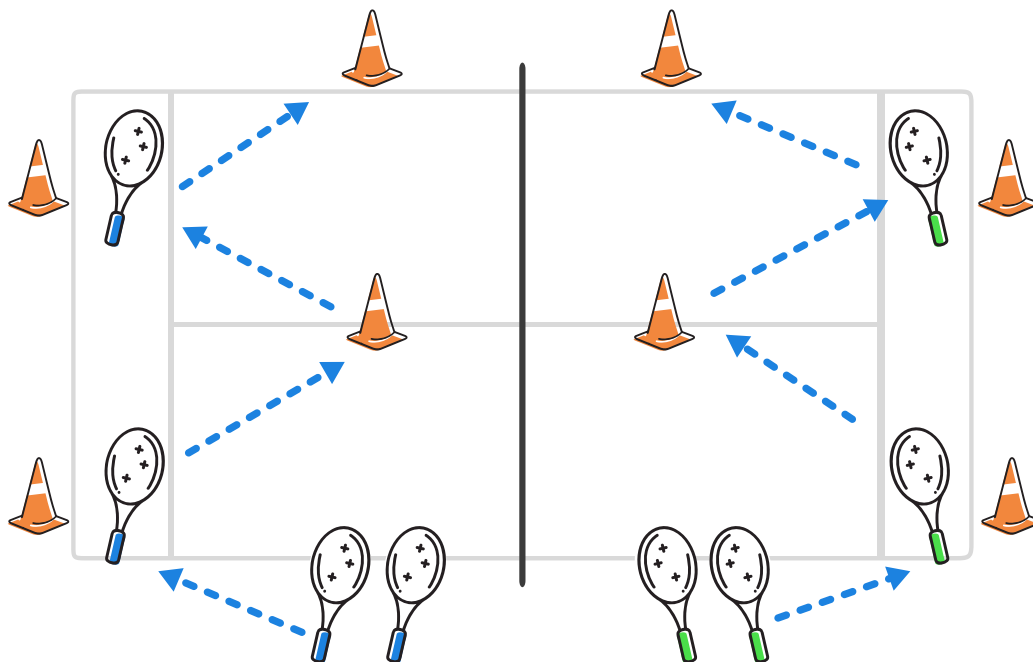
- Roll ball to first poly-spot with forehand (palm forward), stop ball on spot with racquet, and head to next poly-spot. Get to all four spots.
- Next player goes when first player reaches second spot.

Goal—Make it through all four spots without free hand or feet touching ball.

Progressions

1. Use backhand.
2. Do bungees on each spot.

ILLUSTRATION: WALK THE DOG ZIGZAG



WALK THE DOG ZIGZAG WITH PARTNER

Type: Cooperative, players in pairs.

Focus: Racquet skills and changing direction.

Setup

- Same as individual skill.
- Players in pairs (two pairs per half-court) with one red ball between them.

Mission—Roll ball to all four spots and send back to partner.

- First player rolls ball to all four poly-spots with forehand.
- After fourth poly-spot, player turns around and sends ball back to partner along ground.
- Partner stops ball with racquet and repeats sequence.

Goal—Keep ball against racquet entire time through four spots and send back accurately to partner.

Progressions

1. Use backhand.
2. Do bungees on each spot.
3. Drop and hit back to partner.

JACKS

Type: Individual.

Focus: Directing ball after bounce.

Setup

Players spread out around court, each with racquet and red ball.

Mission—Keep rally going after bounce.

- Toss ball up and let bounce, tap up with racquet (palm up) once, and catch with free hand; call “Onesies.”
- Toss, bounce, tap up twice, and call “Twosies.” Continue until you reach “Fivesies,” or five in a row.

Goal—Control ball while staying in a small area.

Progressions

1. Rally ball until you miss.
2. Use backhand.
3. Alternate forehands and backhands.

V. TEAM CHALLENGE

TOUCHDOWN

Type: Cooperative, players in pairs.

Focus: Sending with direction.

Setup

- Three pairs on each side of net—one on each sideline and one on baseline.
- Each player has racquet; each pair has one red ball and two cones. Position cones four feet apart, with court line in center of two cones.
- Position sideline cones halfway between baseline and net.
- Position baseline cones halfway between sidelines.
- Start about four feet from cones, opposite a partner.

Mission—Roll ball between cones under control.

- Roll ball between cones using forehand.
- Partner stops ball with racquet and rolls back.

Scoring

- When ball rolls through cones, it's a field goal, which counts as one point.
- Players yell "Touchdown" when they get to seven.
- Need help? Move closer and widen goal.

Goal—Keep racquet on edge throughout motion.

Progressions

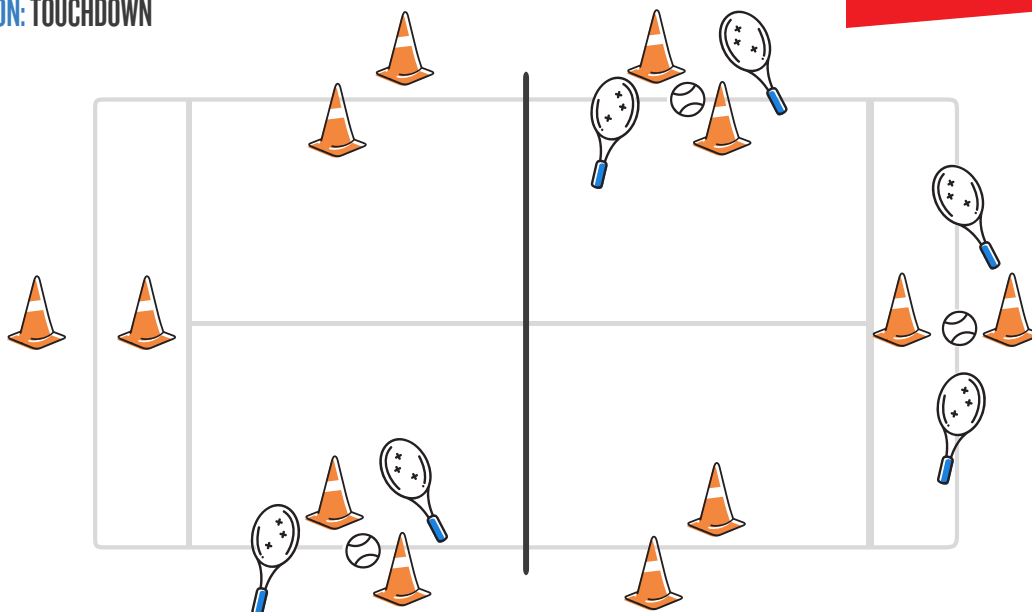
1. Move further back and narrow goal.
2. Continue rally without stopping ball until players reach seven.
3. Use backhand.



TEACHING TIP

At this stage, tennis is about developing skills and having fun. Kids love a challenge and that should be the emphasis, as opposed to setting up games where there are winners and losers.

ILLUSTRATION: TOUCHDOWN



SURVIVOR

Type: Individual.

Focus: Controlling ball over net.

Setup

- Two teams of three or four per court.
- Use one large container of red balls per team.
- Teams line up behind service line on same side of net.

Mission—Hit forehands over net into court.

- A player or helper for each line is “ball machine,” who gently tosses two forehands to each player.
- Get at least one out of two over net in court to stay on “island.”

Guidelines:

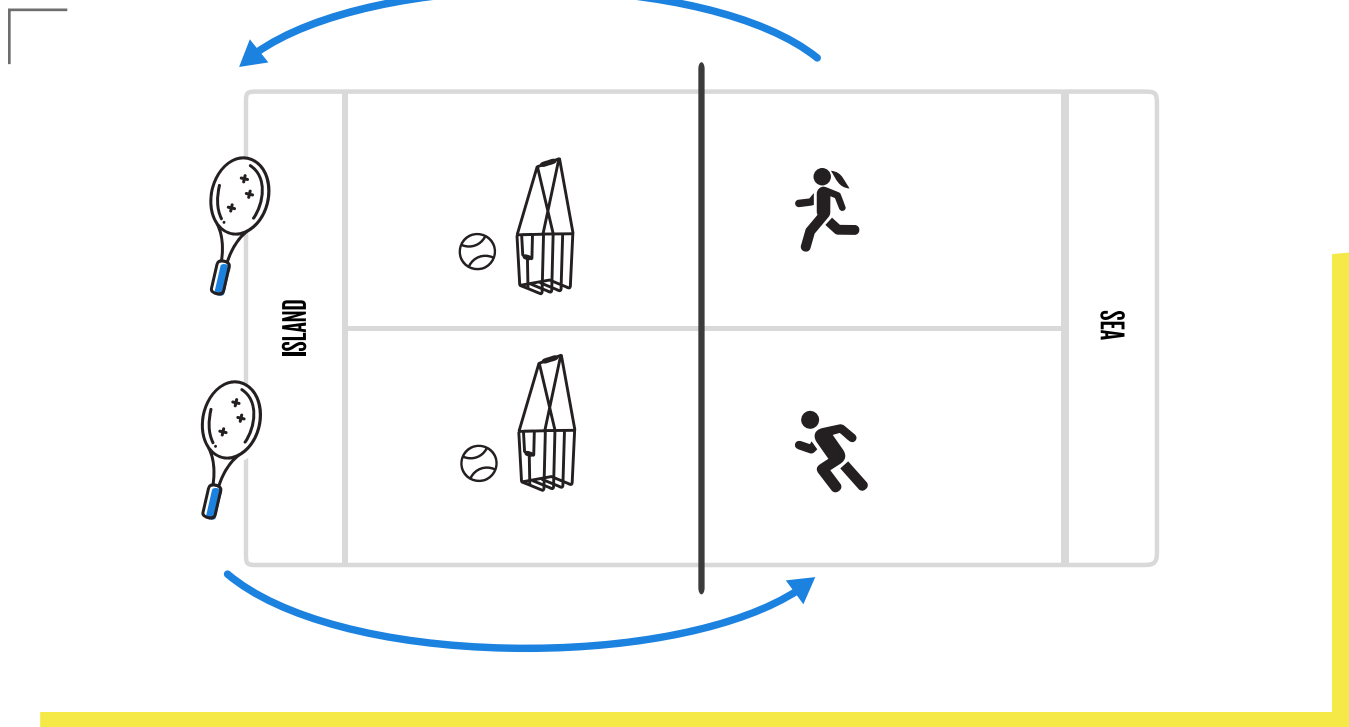
- Miss two and go “out to sea” (other side of net).
- Catch ball on one bounce to get back onto island.
- Catching ball in the air gets everyone back onto island.
- Hitter whose ball was caught goes out to sea.

Goal—Control ball over net with a simple lifting motion.

Progressions

1. Must make both shots.
2. Hit to specific area of court.
3. Add movement.

ILLUSTRATION: SURVIVOR



VI. PLAY AT HOME

JACKS

Setup

- Same as Tennis Skills activity but can play with foam ball on driveway or any flat surface.
- Can play with partner by alternating each jack.

Progressions

1. Rally until you miss.
2. Use backhand.
3. Alternate forehands and backhands.

FOREHANDS & BACKHANDS

Equipment: Mini-net, caution tape or any type of rope; 19 and 21-inch racquets; playground balls and red balls; cones, poly-spots and TDLs.

I. WARMUP

TIC-TAC-TOE

Setup

- Create large tic-tac-toe grid on each side of court with existing lines and TDLs.
- Use cones, beanbags, etc., as X's and O's.
- Divide into teams of three to five, two teams per grid.

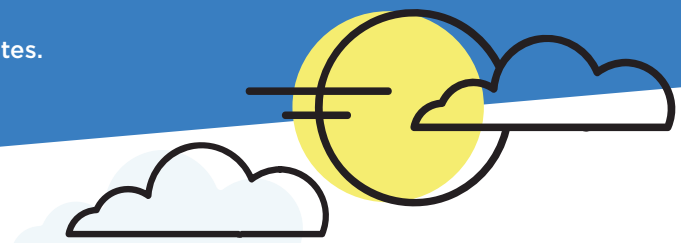
Mission

- Relay race to grid, place object in spot, and tag next player on team.
- First team to complete three in a row of same object wins.

II. CHARACTER

RESPECT

Say “thank you” to your coaches, parents and teammates.



III. ATHLETIC SKILLS

GET TALL/GET SMALL

Setup

Players spread out around court.

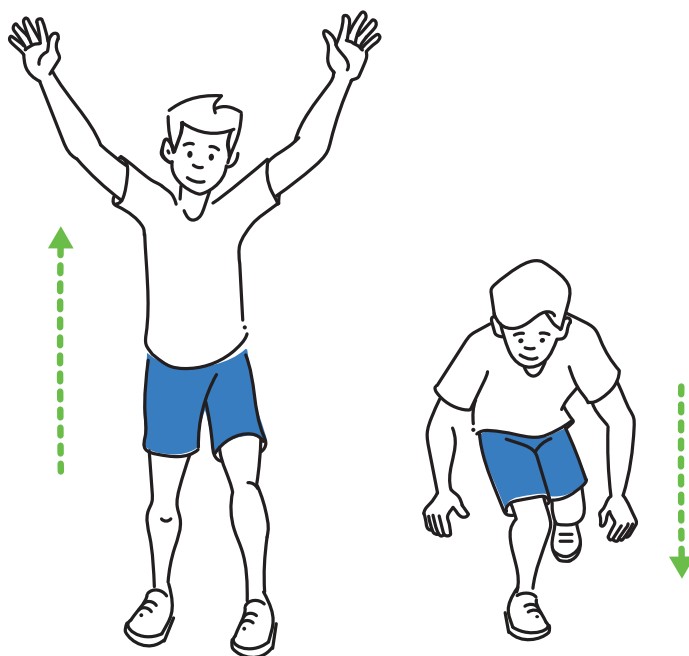
Mission

- Stand on tiptoes with arms above head attempting to get as tall as possible.
- On coach's command, drop into athletic stance.
- During drop, hands move aggressively from over head to past hips.

Progressions

1. From "small" position, leap into the air, reaching as high as possible, then land in "tall" position.
2. Perform activity on one leg, then switch legs.

ILLUSTRATION: GET TALL/GET SMALL



CLOSEST TO THE NET

Setup

Players, each with red ball, spread out across net, facing baseline.

Mission

- Run to baseline on coach's command, turn around, and roll ball toward net.
- Player whose ball comes closest to net without touching it wins.

Progressions

1. Move to baseline in different ways—run, skip, jump, hop, lunge.
2. Change how ball is rolled toward net—one hand or two, between legs.
3. Set up targets (cones, poly-spots) and see who can get closest.

IV. TENNIS SKILLS

WALK THE DOG ZIGZAG BACKHANDS

Type: Individual.

Focus: Racquet skills and changing direction.

Setup

- Maximum four players on each side of net, each with racquet and red ball.
- On each side of net, set up one or two zigzag patterns using four poly-spots for each pattern.

Mission—Roll ball to each spot, using feet to turn body and racquet.

- Roll ball to first poly-spot with backhand (knuckles forward), stop ball on spot with racquet, and head to next poly-spot. Get to all four spots.
- Next player goes when first player reaches second spot.

Goal—Make it through all four spots without free hand or feet touching ball.

Progressions

1. Alternate forehand to one spot, backhand to next.
2. Do bungees on each spot.

WALK THE DOG BACKHANDS WITH PARTNER

Type: Cooperative, players in pairs.

Focus: Racquet skills and changing directions.

Setup

- Same as individual activity.
- Players in pairs (two pairs per half-court) with one ball between them.

Mission—Roll ball to all four spots and send back to partner.

- Roll ball to all four poly-spots with backhand.
- After fourth poly-spot, turn and send ball back to partner along ground and walk back to sideline.
- Partner stops ball with racquet, then repeats sequence.

Goal—Keep ball against racquet entire time through four spots and send back accurately to partner.

Progressions

1. Alternate forehands and backhands.
2. Do bungees on each spot.
3. Drop-hit back to partner.

JACKS WITH BACKHAND

Type: Individual.

Focus: Directing ball after bounce.

Setup

Players spread out around court, each with red ball and racquet.

Mission—Keep rally going after bounce.

- Toss ball up and let bounce, tap up with racquet (knuckles up) once and catch with free hand; call “Onesies.”
- Tap it up twice; call “Twosies,” and so on until you reach “Fivesies,” or five in a row.

Goal—Control ball while staying in small area.

Progressions

1. Rally ball until you miss.
2. Alternate forehands and backhands.

V. TEAM CHALLENGE

TOUCHDOWN WITH BACKHAND

Type: Cooperative, players in pairs.

Focus: Sending with direction.

Setup

- Three pairs on each side of net—one on each sideline and one on baseline.
- Each player has racquet; pairs have one red ball and two cones.
- Position cones four feet apart, with court line in center of two cones.
- Position sideline cones halfway between baseline and net.
- Position baseline cones halfway between sidelines.
- Start about four feet from cones, opposite a partner.

Mission—Roll ball between cones under control.

- Roll ball between cones using backhand.
- Partner stops ball with racquet and rolls back using backhand.

Scoring

- When ball rolls through cones, it’s a field goal, which counts as one point.
- Players yell “Touchdown” when they get to seven.
- Need help? Move closer and widen goal.

Goal—Keep racquet on edge throughout motion.

Progressions

1. Move further back and narrow goal.
2. Pairs continue rally without stopping ball until they reach seven.
3. Use forehands, then backhands.



COACHING TIP

Try to incorporate tennis scoring (first to four or seven) and the concepts of two out of three into your games.

SURVIVOR WITH BACKHAND

Type: Individual.

Focus: Controlling ball over net.

Setup

- Two teams of three or four per court.
- Use one large container of red balls per team.
- Teams line up behind service line on same side of net.

Mission—Hit backhands over net into court.

- A player or helper for each line is “ball machine,” who gently tosses two forehands to each player.
- Get at least one out of two over net in court to stay on “island.”

Guidelines:

- Miss two and go “out to sea” (other side of net).
- Catch ball on one bounce to get back onto island.
- Catching ball in the air gets everyone back onto island.
- Hitter whose ball was caught goes out to sea.

Goal—Control ball over net with a simple lifting motion.

Progressions

1. Must make both shots.
2. Hit to specific area of court.
3. Use forehand or backhand.

VI. PLAY AT HOME

JACKS WITH BACKHAND

Setup

- Play with foam ball on driveway or any flat surface.
- Can play with partner by alternating each jack.

Progressions

1. Rally ball until you miss.
2. Use backhands, then forehands.
3. Alternate forehands and backhands.

WATCH ME RALLY

Equipment: Mini-net, caution tape or any type of rope; 19 and 21-inch racquets, playground balls and red balls; cones, poly-spots and TDLs.

I. WARMUP

TAG VARIATIONS

Setup

- Players spread out in defined spaces with four to six in each area.
- Can use cones to establish playing area.

SKIP TAG

Mission

- One player is “it.” Anyone moving must skip.
- Once tagged, move outside boundaries, do five repetitions of a fun exercise (such as donkey kicks or “I’m a Star” jumps), then come back in.
- Rotate “it” player every minute or less.

Progressions

1. Allow “it” player to move freely.
2. In a smaller area of play, “it” player walks; others move freely.

SIDE-SHUFFLE TAG

Mission—One player is “it.” Anyone moving must side-shuffle.

Progression

“It” player moves freely, others must side-shuffle, or vice versa.

II. CHARACTER

RESPECT

Be nice to your teammates.



III. ATHLETIC SKILLS

JUMP TO THE LINE

Setup

Players stand two to three steps behind baseline or sideline.

Mission

- Jump as close to line as possible on coach's command, without going over or touching line with toes.

Progressions

1. Jump over line with heels as close as possible.
2. Jump sideways close to line.
3. Jump sideways over line.

PARTNER DROP

Setup

- Players in pairs spread out around court.
- One player has two balls; partner catches.
- Start about four feet apart.

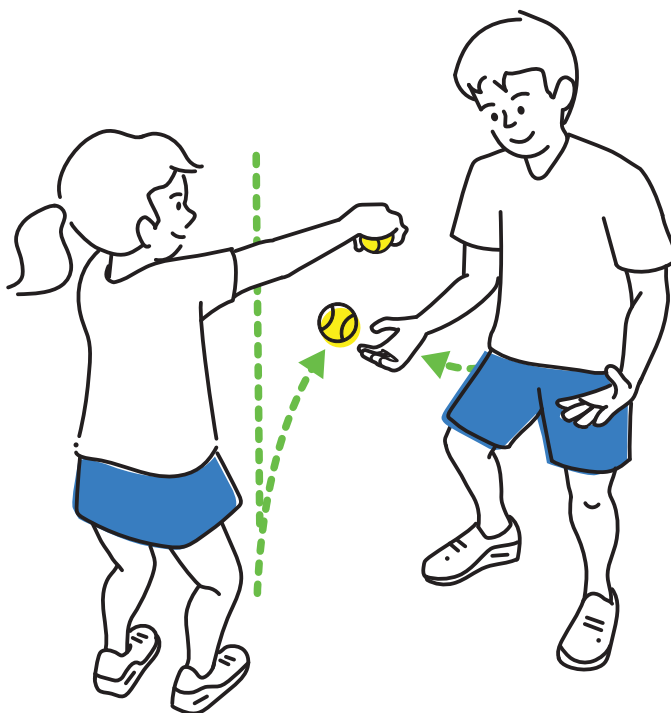
Mission

- Hold both balls straight out at shoulder level in a "V" position, with palms down.
- Drop one ball; partner catches after bounce.
- After four successful catches on each side, switch roles.

Progressions

1. Hold arms straight out to side.
2. Take another step back.
3. Catch with one hand using orange ball.

ILLUSTRATION: PARTNER DROP



IV. TENNIS SKILLS

BUNGEE FLIPS

Type: Individual.

Focus: Racquet skills with bounce.

Setup

Up to four players on one sideline (both sides of net), each with racquet and red ball.

Mission—Balance ball on strings after bounce.

- With palm up, place ball in center of strings, tilt racquet to side to let it fall off.
- Let ball bounce and then catch and balance on strings with knuckles up (backhand).
- Continue to alternate sides of racquet after each bounce.
- At first, can use free hand for help.

Goal—Keep same grip for palm up and knuckles up (close to continental).

Progressions

1. Hold ball on strings for less and less time.
2. Tap ball up continuously, alternating between forehand and backhand.
3. Add movement.

JACKS FLIPS

Type: Individual.

Focus: Directing ball after bounce.

Setup

Players spread out around court, each with red ball and racquet.

Mission—Keep rally going after bounce.

- Toss ball up and let bounce, tap up with racquet on forehand side, let bounce, tap up on backhand side, catch with free hand, and call “Onesies.”
- For “Twosies,” tap up forehand, backhand, forehand, backhand, then catch. Goal is to get to “Fivesies.”
- Need help? Stick with “Onesies.”

Goal—Control ball while staying in small area.

Progressions

1. Rally ball until you miss, alternating forehands and backhands.
2. Create smaller space with boundaries, and count only if ball lands within space.
3. Play with a partner, alternating hits.

LOBSTER TRAP

Type: Cooperative, players in pairs.

Focus: Sending and receiving in different directions.

Setup

- Players in pairs with two racquets and red ball.
- Partners stand six to eight feet apart; one (feeder) has red ball and other (“lobster”) has a racquet in each hand.

Mission—Catch ball between both racquets after bounce.

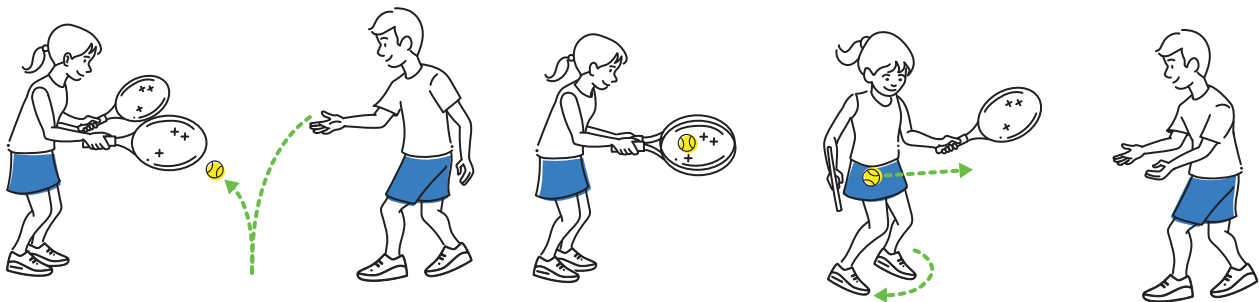
- Feeder tosses ball; lobster traps it between racquets after bounce.
- Lobster sets ball on ground with racquets and rolls it back to feeder using forehand.
- Complete four and switch roles.

Goal—Trap ball at side of body just like a groundstroke.

Progressions

1. Feeder tosses and lobster receives ball on both sides of body.
2. Lobster sends ball back with a drop-hit.
3. Make lobster move.

ILLUSTRATION: LOBSTER TRAP



V. TEAM CHALLENGE

BATTLE SPOTS

Type: Competitive, team.

Focus: Drop-hit with direction.

Setup

- Players in pairs, no more than two pairs per court.
- Each player has racquet; one red ball per pair. Multiple poly-spots hula hoops and cones serve as targets.
- Players start across net from each other using service box as boundary.
- Position poly-spots hula hoops and half-cones (upside down) on each side of net in a cluster.

Mission—Hit as many targets as possible.

- Start on service line and attempt to hit partner's targets by drop-hitting a forehand over net.
- Partner traps ball and drop-hits back, attempting to hit targets.
- Score a point each time team hits target.
- See how many points pairs can get in two minutes or play to seven points (with visual scoring).
- Start a new game and try for new record.
- Need help? Shorten distance, add bigger/more targets, allow ball to go over or under net (when using tape/rope).

Goal—Extend up and out in proper direction.

Progressions

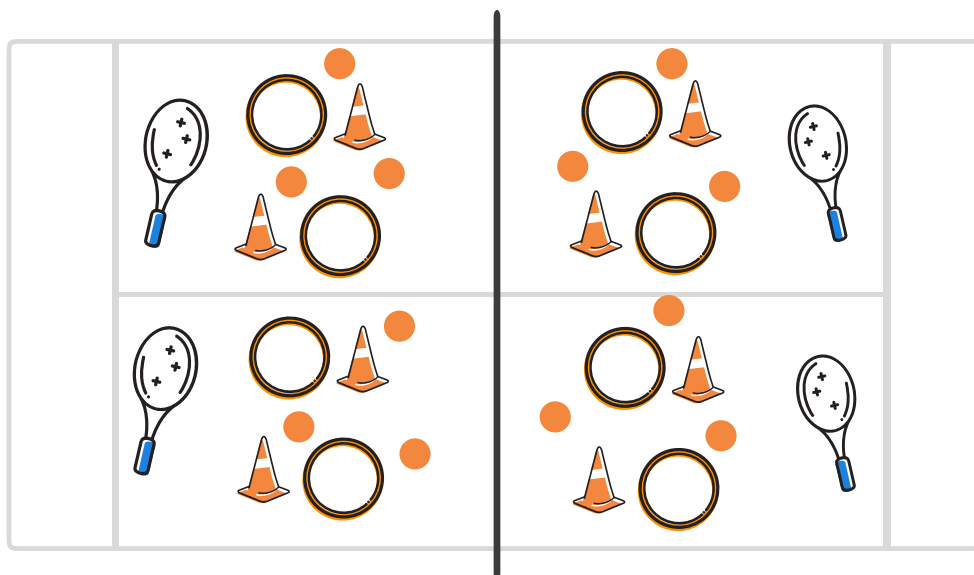
1. Move further back.
2. Use fewer targets.
3. Rally back and forth.



TEACHING TIP

For this level of play, using some type of rope or caution tape for a net is preferable. Many kids will struggle to hit the ball over the net, and using tape/rope will allow them to be more successful.

ILLUSTRATION: BATTLE SPOTS



VI. PLAY AT HOME

JACKS FLIPS

Setup

- Play with foam ball on driveway or any flat surface.
- Can play with partner by alternating each jack.

Progression

Rally ball until you miss, alternating forehands and backhands.

RALLY WITH MY PARTNER

Equipment: Mini-net, caution tape or any type of rope; 19 and 21-inch racquets; playground balls, red balls and orange balls; cones, poly-spots and TDLs.

I. WARMUP

MESSY BEDROOM

Setup

- Teams of six to eight, one team per court.
- Players on one side of net (preferably side opposite fence) with bucket of red balls.

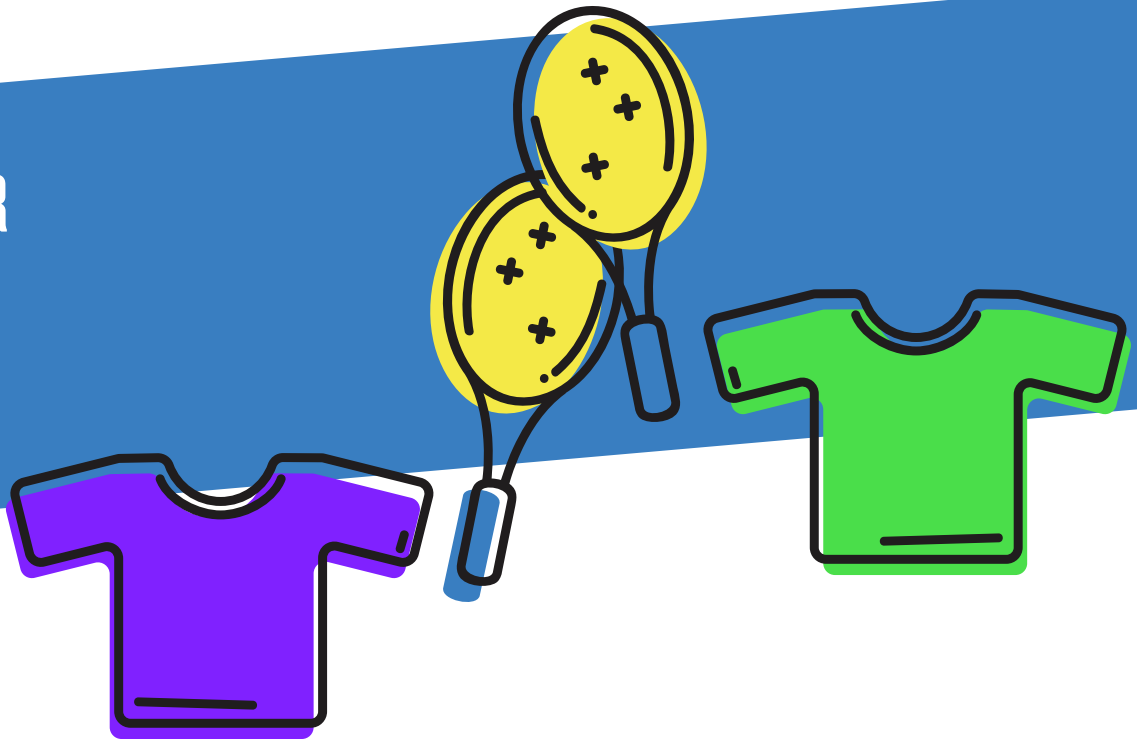
Mission

- Coach tips over bucket of balls.
- Players throw balls one at a time over net.
- Throw as many as possible in one minute.
- Players pick up balls from other side and count how many they threw.
- Do it again and try to beat team record.

II. CHARACTER

TEAMWORK

- Be a team player.
- Help your partner.



III. ATHLETIC SKILLS

OBSTACLE COURSE

Setup

- Using four cones, create one 12x12-foot square in center of court on each side of net.
- Three or four players per square.

Mission

- Proceed from cone to cone using different movements. Next player goes when previous player reaches second cone.
- After each player has gone twice, change movement.

Progressions

1. Skip forward.
2. Walk backward.
3. Side-shuffle—alternate facing inside and outside of square.
4. Circle the cone—starting from the outside, circle cone and run to next one.

HOT POTATO

Setup

- Pairs with orange ball, spread out around court.
- Stand about four feet apart facing each other.

Mission

- Toss orange ball gently back and forth, letting it bounce before catching.
- Goal is to keep ball on one side of body, so one player tosses and catches with right hand and other tosses and catches with left hand.
- Act as if ball is “hot potato” you must get rid of quickly without tossing far.
- Switch sides and hands at intervals.

Progressions

1. After four successful catches each, switch sides and hands.
2. Take a step back after four catches each.

Note: Use orange ball, because red ball is difficult to catch with one hand.



TEACHING TIP

When players are working on a new skill, it's not always advisable to have a number goal. Let them experiment a little, and once they're successful, start adding specific number goals.

IV. TENNIS SKILLS

KEEP IT MOVING

Type: Cooperative, players in pairs.

Focus: Rally for consistency.

Setup

- Two or three pairs on each side of net.
- Position partners opposite each other with service line acting as net.
- Players mark court boundaries using TDLs.

Mission—Rally on ground with partner.

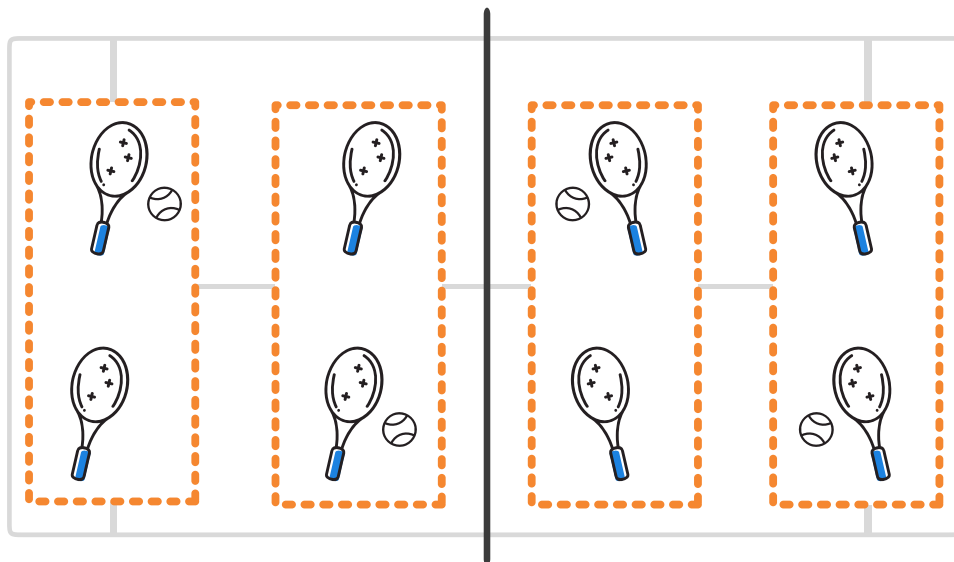
- Commence a cooperative rolling rally.
- Move ball without over-hitting.
- Let players set goal for number of rallies.

Goal—Move ball within boundaries using a simple motion.

Progressions

1. Players change size and shape of court each time they change partners.
2. Coach rotates partners following a designated time period.
3. Forehands only or backhands only.

ILLUSTRATION: KEEP IT MOVING



LOLLIPOPS

Type: Cooperative, players in pairs.

Focus: Change of direction.

Setup

- Pairs spread around court, three or four per side.
- Partners stand five to six feet apart with two spots of different colors in front of each of them.

Mission—Roll ball in different directions.

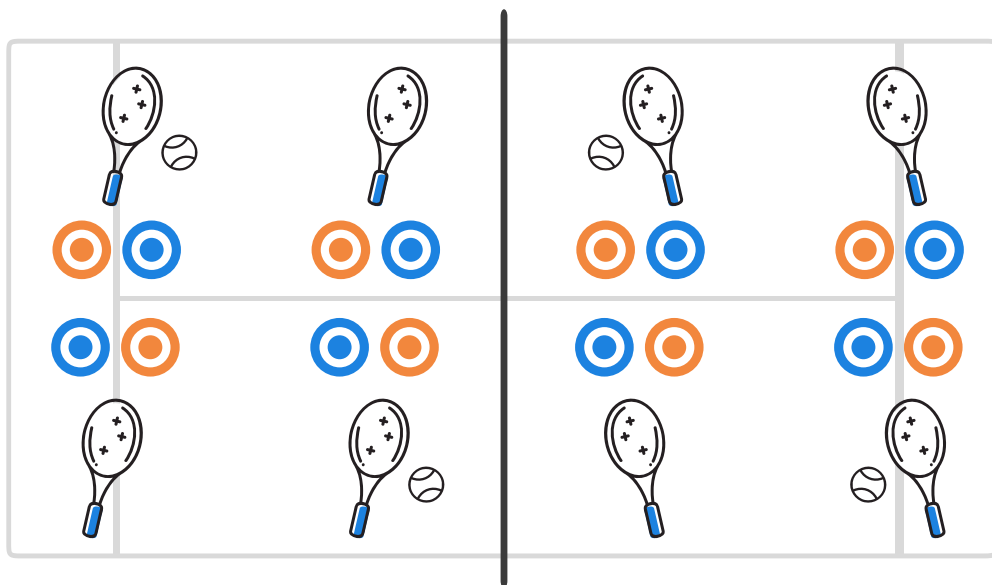
- One player calls out color of partner’s spot and rolls ball to that spot.
- Partner moves to that spot, stops ball with racquet, calls out a color of partner’s spot and rolls ball to that spot.
- Need help? Roll with hand.

Goal—Be accurate by extending hand toward target.

Progressions

1. Start with forehands, then switch to backhands.
2. Drop-hit to targets and trap.
3. Rally to targets.

ILLUSTRATION: LOLLIPOPS



HOOPLA

Type: Cooperative, players in pairs.

Focus: Forehand direction.

Setup

- Position pairs around court, next to fence.
- One player is drop-hitter, other holds hula hoop.
- Hitters start six to eight feet from fence, spread out for safety.
- Partner stands against fence holding hoop with both hands, out to side.

Mission—Drop-hit ball into hoop.

- Turn sideways, hold ball in non-dominant hand with palm down.
- Gently drop-hit ball into hoop.
- Need help? Toss ball into hoop.

Goal—Hit four balls into hoop and switch roles.

Progressions

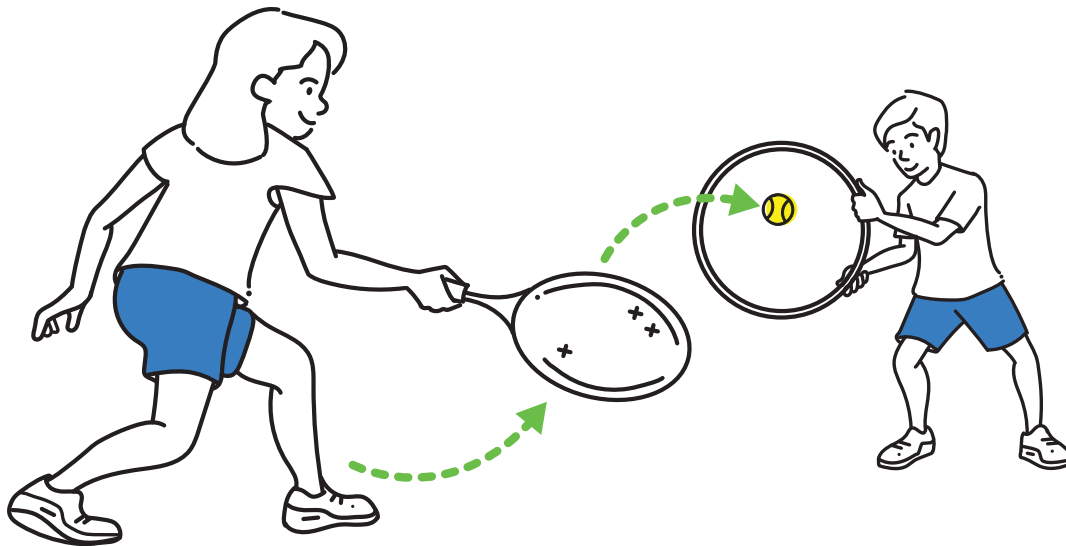
1. Start six feet away and increase distance every four successful hits.
2. Alternate forehands and backhands.
3. Hold hoop above head.



TEACHING TIP

Non-dominant arm is straight out from the shoulder to the side and slightly in front of the body in same position as a forehand.

ILLUSTRATION: HOOPLA



V. TEAM CHALLENGE

BUCKET TAP

Type: Cooperative, teams.

Focus: Drop-hit for height and depth.

Setup

- Place a large bucket/cart midcourt with a towel, a few balls or beanbags at the bottom to keep balls from bouncing out.
- Surround large container with smaller buckets, each containing eight to 10 balls. Place poly-spots about three feet from buckets. This is where players will stand.

Mission—Drop-hit balls into big bucket.

- Pair players up to see which team can sink the most balls.
- After all balls are gone, have a 30-second scramble with each player picking up four balls.
- Need help? Toss into container.

Goal—Create appropriate arc by using an open racquet face and lifting motion.

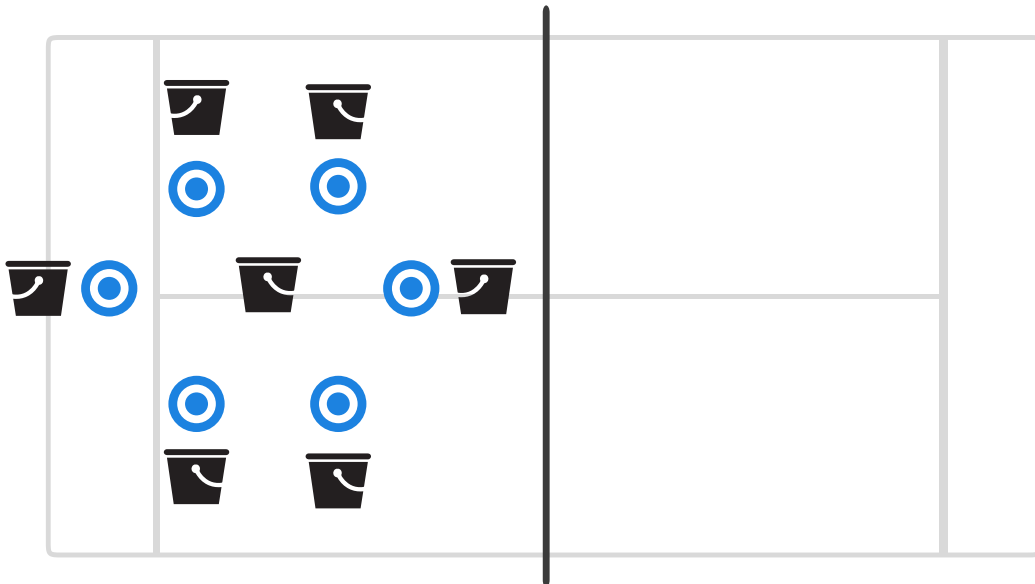
Progressions

1. Place center bucket on a can or box so players work on more height and control.
2. Alternate forehand and backhand drop-hits.

Variation with Competition

With larger groups, have one team at one “bucket station” and another at a second. Give each player five balls. Team that sinks most baskets wins.

ILLUSTRATION: BUCKET TAP



VI. PLAY AT HOME

WALL OR PARTNER RALLY

Setup

- Can play with partner or against wall or any flat surface.
- Drop-hit to wall or partner, then rally back and forth.

Progressions

1. See how many consecutive balls you can rally by yourself or with partner.
2. Hit forehands and backhands, then alternate.

SERVE & RALLY

Equipment: Mini-net, caution tape or any type of rope; 19 and 21-inch racquets, playground balls and red balls; cones, poly-spots and TDLs.

I. WARMUP

SILLY RUNS

Setup

Set up an area approximately 60 feet long where players can run in a straight line.

Mission

- Have players run in different manners.
- For first round, have players run in place for each progression.
- For second round, run full distance of designated area.

Progressions

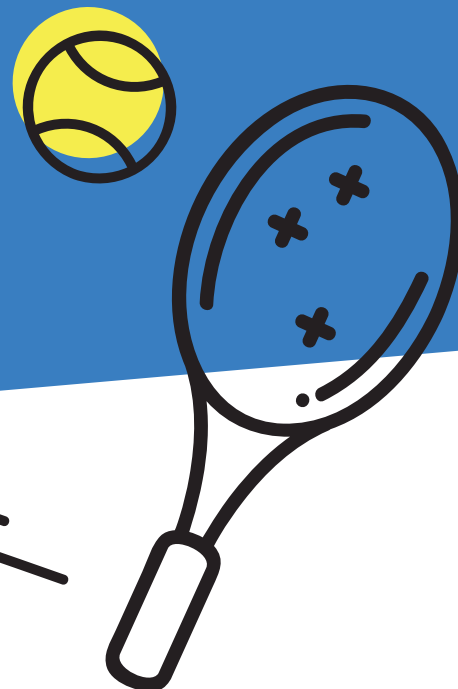
1. “Crazy” arms and slow legs.
2. Fast arms (good arms) and slow legs.
3. Fast legs and slow arms.
4. Fast arms and fast legs (arms moving side to side).

Note: Over time, players will feel what it’s like to run with better coordination of arms and legs.

II. CHARACTER

TEAMWORK

- Take turns.
- Share equipment.



III. ATHLETIC SKILLS

HOPSCOTCH

Setup

- Use an agility ladder, cones or chalk to create traditional or non-traditional hopscotch playing area.
- Use beanbag or cone as marker.
- Create a hopscotch area for every four to six players.

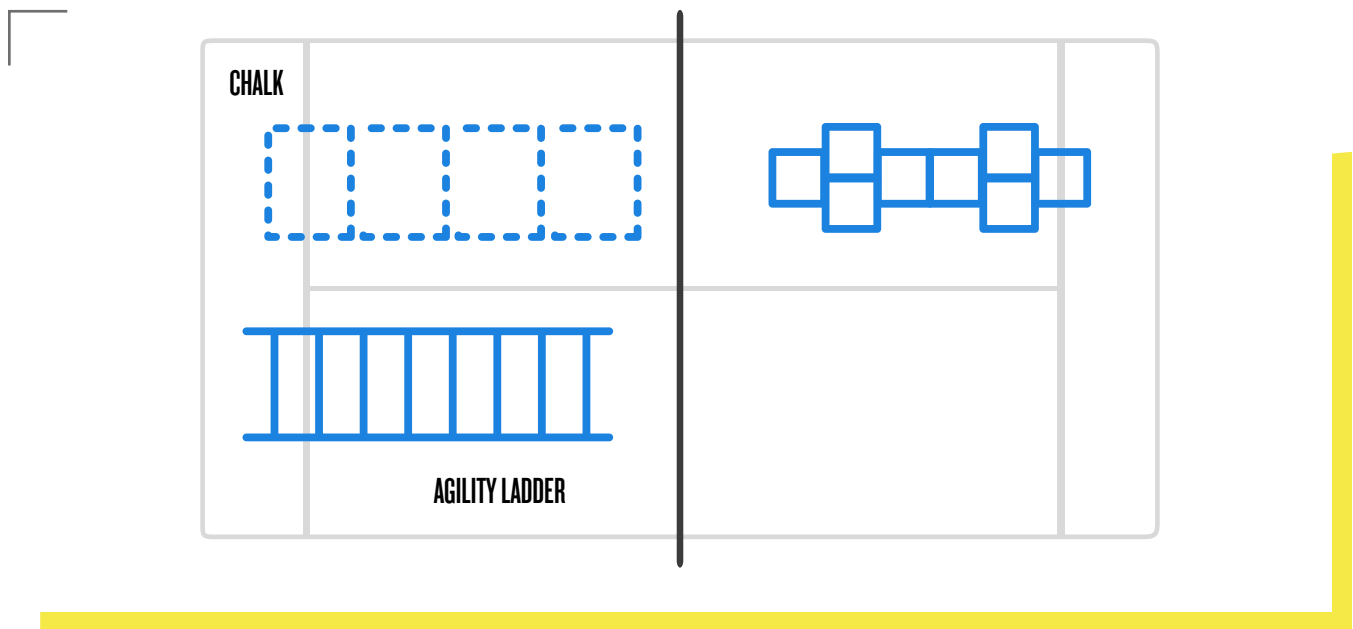
Mission

- Place a marker in a square for each player.
- Player hops through squares and over marked square.
- Upon return, pick up marker balancing on one leg, hop back, and give marker to coach.

Progressions

1. Place marker in square one. As each player is successful, move to square two, and so on.
2. Let players place marker.
3. Change shapes of squares (circles, for example), add islands players have to jump over.

ILLUSTRATION: HOPSCOTCH



TARGET THROWS

Setup

- Up to four players on each side of net playing as a team.
- Players stand on baseline with one red ball each.
- Place cones, poly-spots hula hoops and various targets inside service boxes.
- Try to have an equal number of targets in every service box.

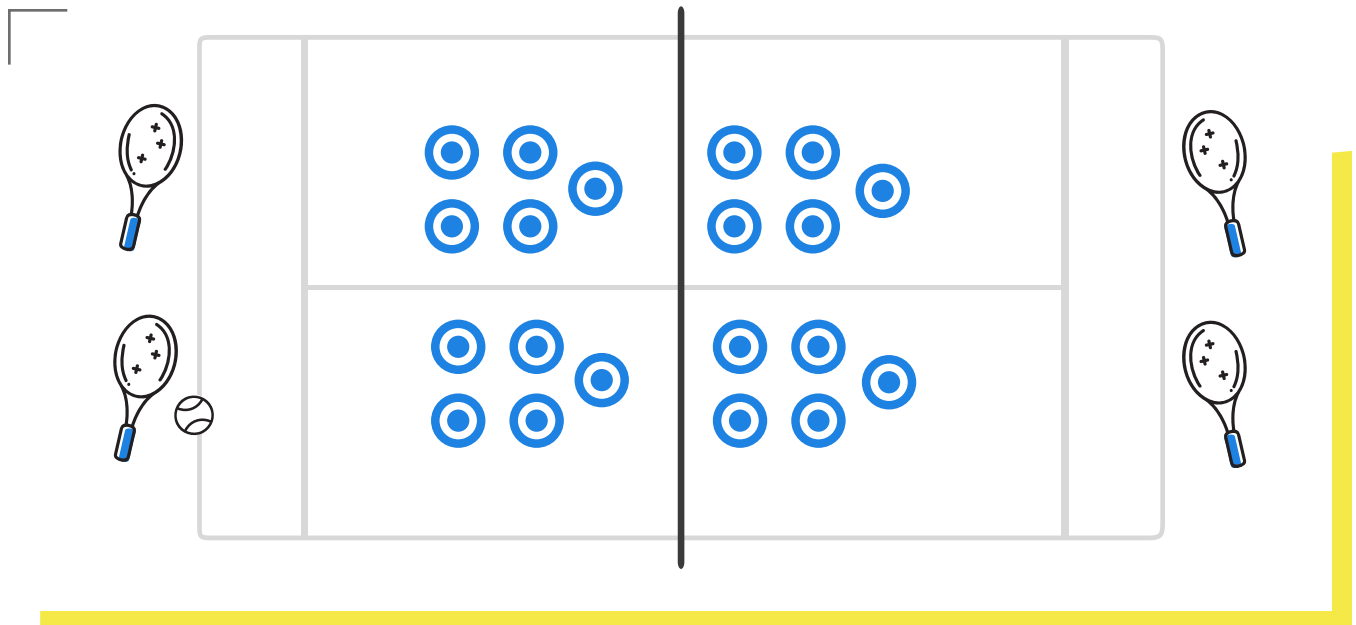
Mission

- One player from deuce court and one from ad throw diagonally over net at targets.
- Next players come up and throw.
- Once everyone has thrown, each player retrieves ball and throws from other side (deuce/ad).
- Players who hit a target run and grab it, and add it to a designated scoring area for their team.
- See how many targets players can hit in one minute, or how long it takes to get to a certain number of points.

Progressions

1. Instead of grabbing a target after it's hit, count it as a point and add to team total.
2. Place targets in front half of service box.
3. Move players further behind baseline.

ILLUSTRATION: TARGET THROWS



IV. TENNIS SKILLS



OVER/UNDER

Type: Cooperative, players in pairs.

Focus: Changing height of ball.

Setup

- Up to three pairs per court with one big ball per pair.
- Use caution tape or any type of rope for net.
- Pairs start across net from each other about eight feet apart.

Mission—Roll ball under net and return over net.

- Player rolls big ball under net with both hands. Partner bends down to catch and tosses back over net with both hands.
- After four successful exchanges, switch roles, then move on to next progression.

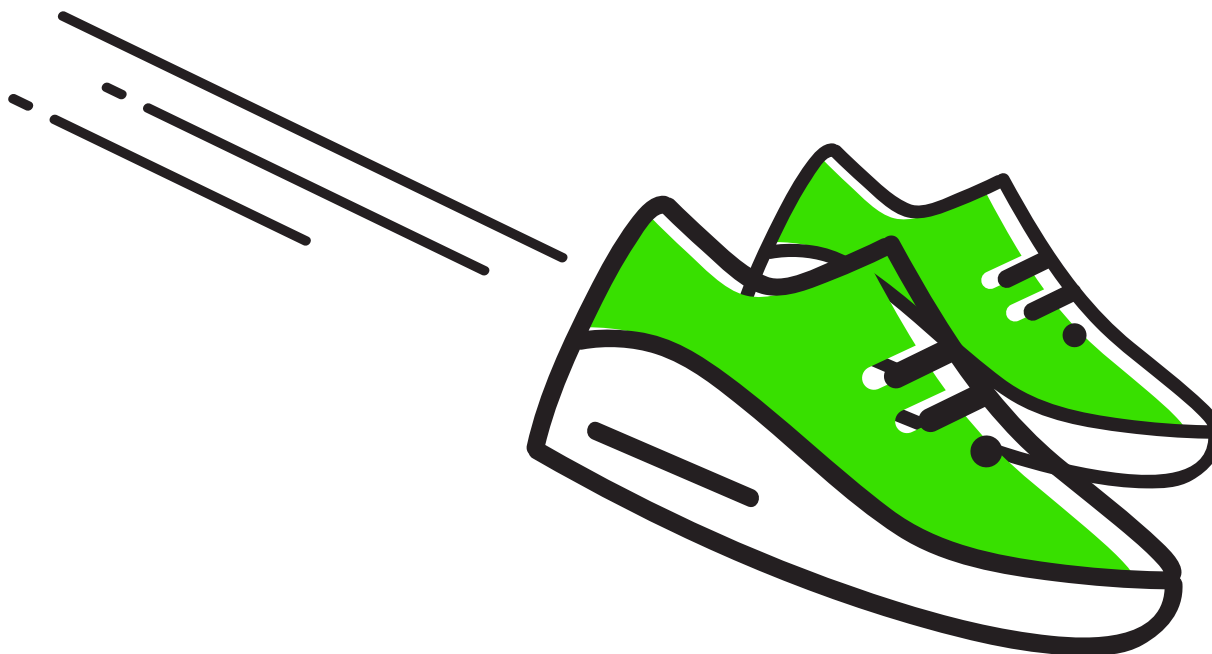
Goal—Rotate body from turned to open position when throwing big ball.

Progressions

1. Roll/toss straight ahead, then diagonally.
2. Use red ball.
3. One player rolls, partner picks up and drop-hits over net.

TEACHING TIP

Rolling under and tossing over the net teach basic tactics to young players. Later on, this will become a groundstroke drive/topspin lob combination.



COLOR CALL

Type: Cooperative, players in pairs.

Focus: Serve and return direction.

Setup

- Players set up in standard serve and return positions. For success, server will be at service line or closer, not baseline.
- Put a different-colored spot in each service box on both server's and returner's sides (i.e., red spot on deuce side, green on ad side).

Mission—Return ball to designated side.

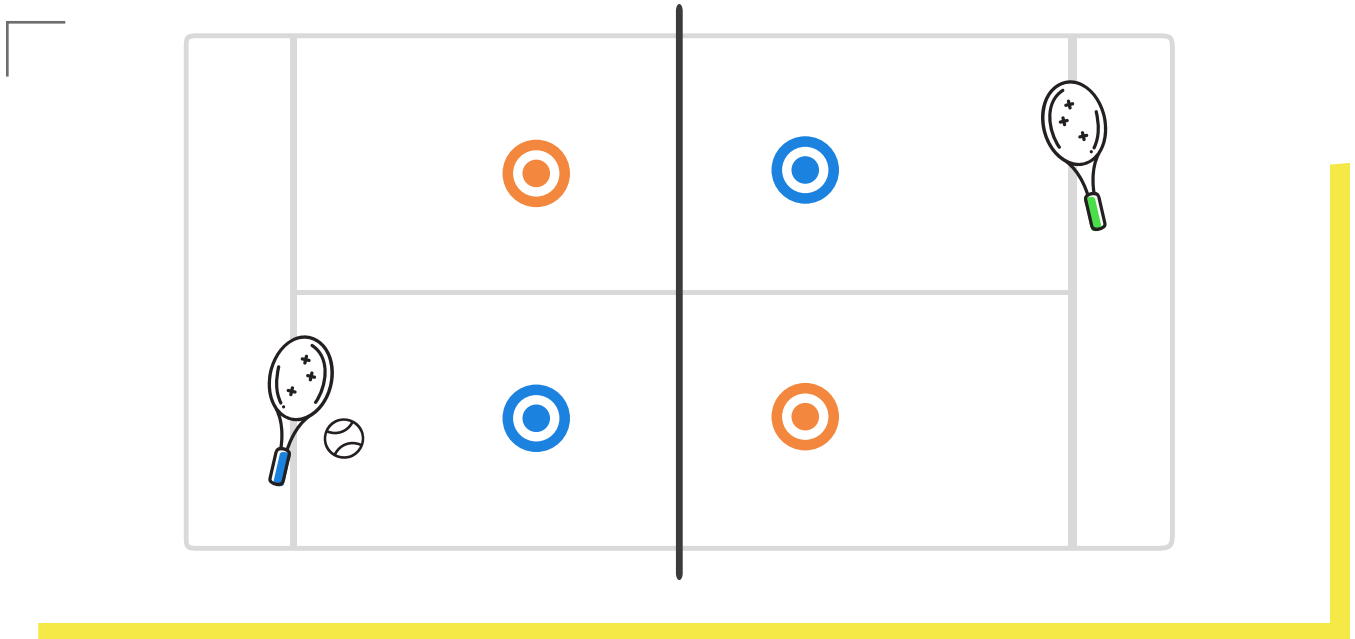
- Server tosses into service box; returner tosses back.
- Server calls out color of box returner should toss to.

Goal—Toss by extending arm and opening up hand in proper direction.

Progressions

1. Throw for serve and toss for return.
2. Drop-hit for serve.
3. Returner traps and drop-hits back.

ILLUSTRATION: COLOR CALL



V. TEAM CHALLENGE

SERVE PYRAMIDS

Type: Cooperative, players in pairs.

Focus: Throw with direction.

Setup

- Two pairs per court, one server and one returner.
- Players have a designated spot (hula hoop, etc.) a safe distance off to side of court where they will build a pyramid.

Mission—Complete serve-and-return sequences.

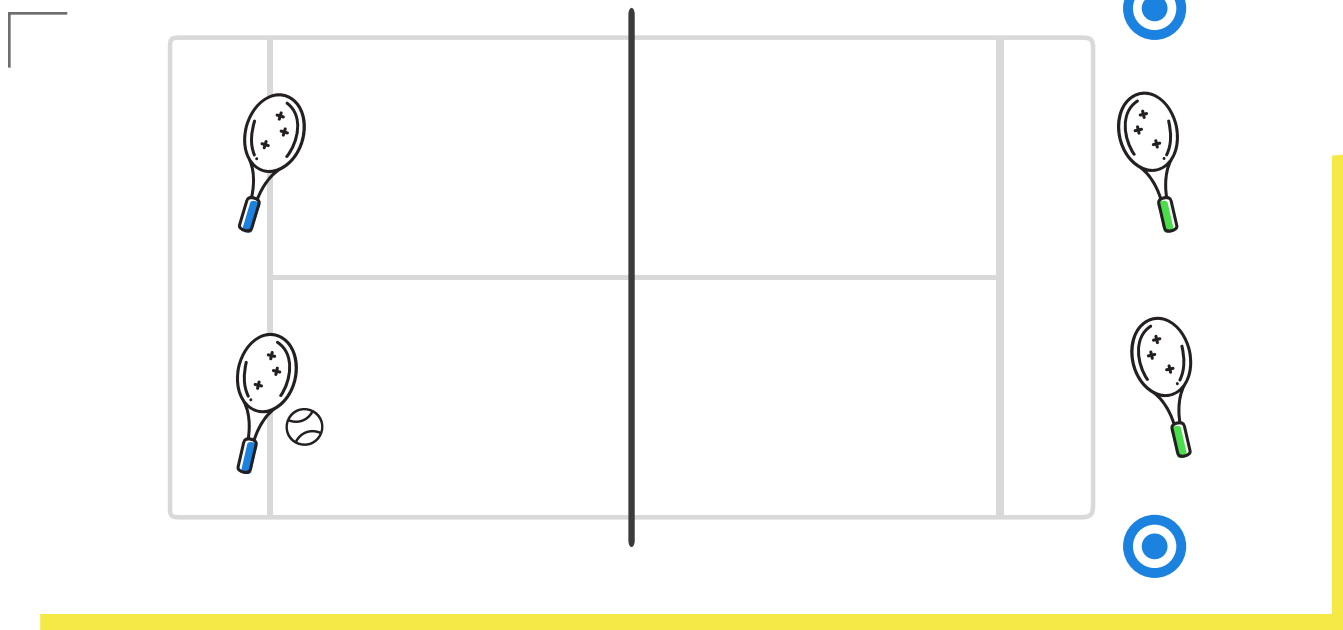
- Server throws red ball into box; returner catches and tosses back.
- For every successful serve and return, add a ball to pyramid.
- Switch roles after completing pyramid. After complete rotation switch sides of court.
- Need help? Have server toss.

Goal—Complete four sequences and switch sides.

Progressions

1. Server drop-hits; returner traps and drop-hits back.
2. Throw serve and return after bounce.

ILLUSTRATION: SERVE PYRAMIDS



VI. PLAY AT HOME

RALLY WITH FAMILY OR FRIEND

Setup

A driveway or any flat surface.

Progressions

1. Rally on ground.
2. Drop-hit and trap.
3. Hit after bounce.

TENNIS OLYMPICS

Equipment: Mini-net, caution tape or any type of rope; 19 and 21-inch racquets, playground balls and red balls; cones, poly-spots and TDLs.

I. WARMUP

TIC-TAC-TOE

Setup

- Coach creates large tic-tac-toe grid inside each court using existing lines and TDLs.
- Use cones, beanbags, etc., as X's and O's.
- Divide into teams of three to five with two teams for each tic-tac-toe grid.

Mission

- Two teams compete to be first to complete tic-tac-toe grid.
- Relay race to grid, place object down, and return to tag next player on team.
- First team to complete three in a row wins.

II. CHARACTER

TEAMWORK

- Encourage teammates during games.
- Give high fives!



III. ATHLETIC SKILLS

RELAY RACES

Setup

- Two teams of four to six on each side of net.
- Each team lines up behind sideline.

Mission

- When coach says, “Go,” first player runs to opposite sideline and back.
- Next player goes when tagged; must start behind sideline.

Progressions

1. Require specific movement to sideline and back (run, skip, shuffle, etc.).
2. Add a ball and require an additional task (run to opposite sideline and roll ball back to next player, toss and catch ball while moving, etc.).
3. Change starting position (back turned, sitting down, etc.).

IV. & V. TENNIS SKILLS & TEAM CHALLENGE

TENNIS OLYMPICS

Setup

Teams of four to six with players of all levels on each team. Work with players to select a team name.

Mission

- Teams perform individual and cooperative skills with a partner. Each activity will last no more than two to three minutes.
- Have a volunteer work with less-skilled players.
- With three teams or fewer, have each team/player perform same activity.
- With four teams or more, have players rotate to multiple “stations” with different activities.

Rules and Scoring

- Assign points to each activity. For example, a team scores a point after a player completes four bungees.
- During each round, players use visual scoring method to track points—balls in a container, cones, clothespins, stickers or existing scoring device on nets.
- Make sure each team has its own area for registering scores.

EXAMPLES OF ACTIVITIES WITH POINTS:

Individual Activities

- Bungee jumps (four successful = one point)
- Bullseye (one point in service box, two points in small box, 10 points for bullseye)
- Jacks (make it to “Threesies” = one point)

Partner Activities

- Lobster Trap (four successful = one point, then switch roles)
- Touchdown—forehands or backhands (four goals = one point)

Team Activities (save for last)

- Tennis Sandwich—four kids per sandwich (to one sideline = one point; sideline and back = two points)
- Balance-the-Egg Relays—four players per team (each player to sideline and back = two points)

Additional Tips

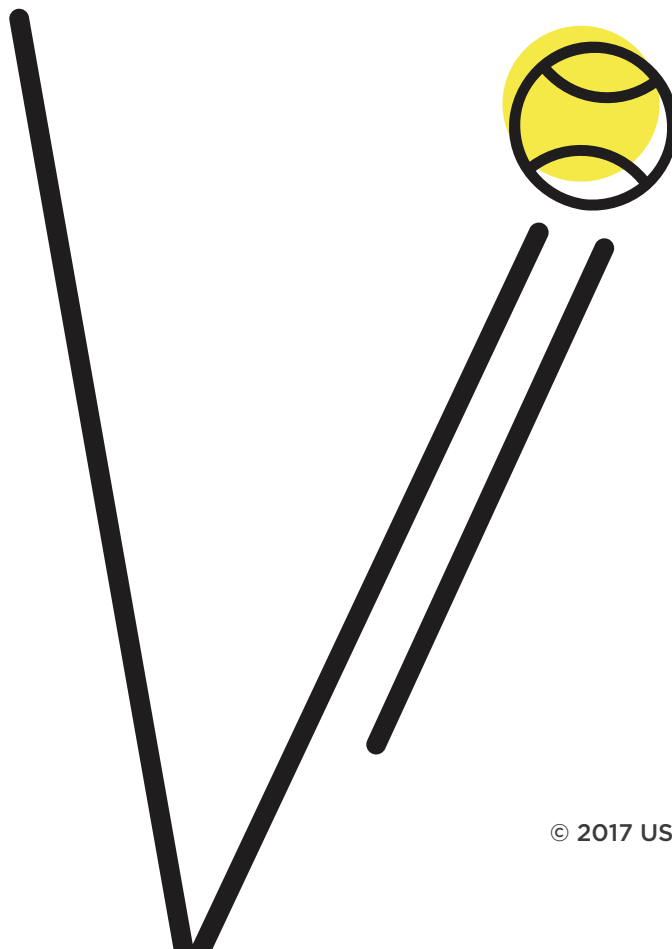
- Have a “coach” for each team, along with assistant coaches.
- Assistant coaches can be parents or adult/junior volunteers.
- Increase difficulty when necessary for more-skilled players (such as seven to score a point instead of four).
- Every 12 to 15 minutes, take a break and announce team scores. Try to create excitement and a team atmosphere. Remember that some kids have never played sports on a team before.
- At the end, have all players shake hands with opposing team.

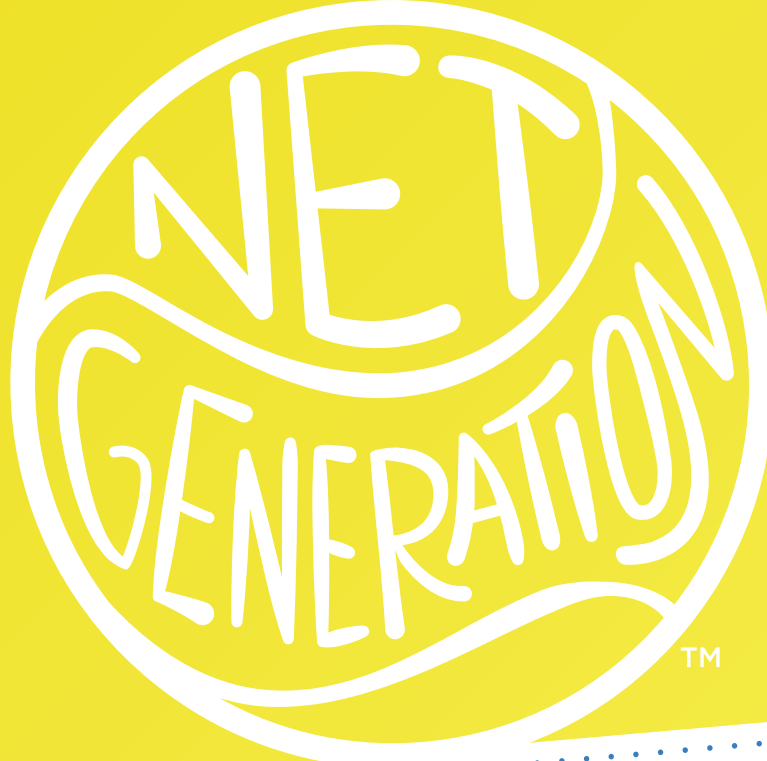
AWARDS/CLOSING CEREMONY

Line up both teams, announce scores and have all players shake hands. Give individual recognition for best hustle, most improved, sportsmanship, etc. Remember to recognize effort over ability. Take-home awards are not necessary.

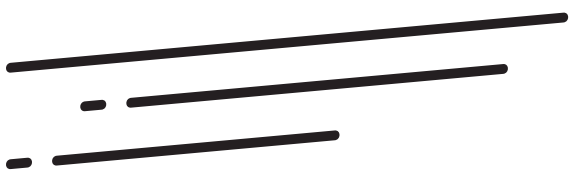
VI. PLAY AT HOME**BOUNCE MASTER**

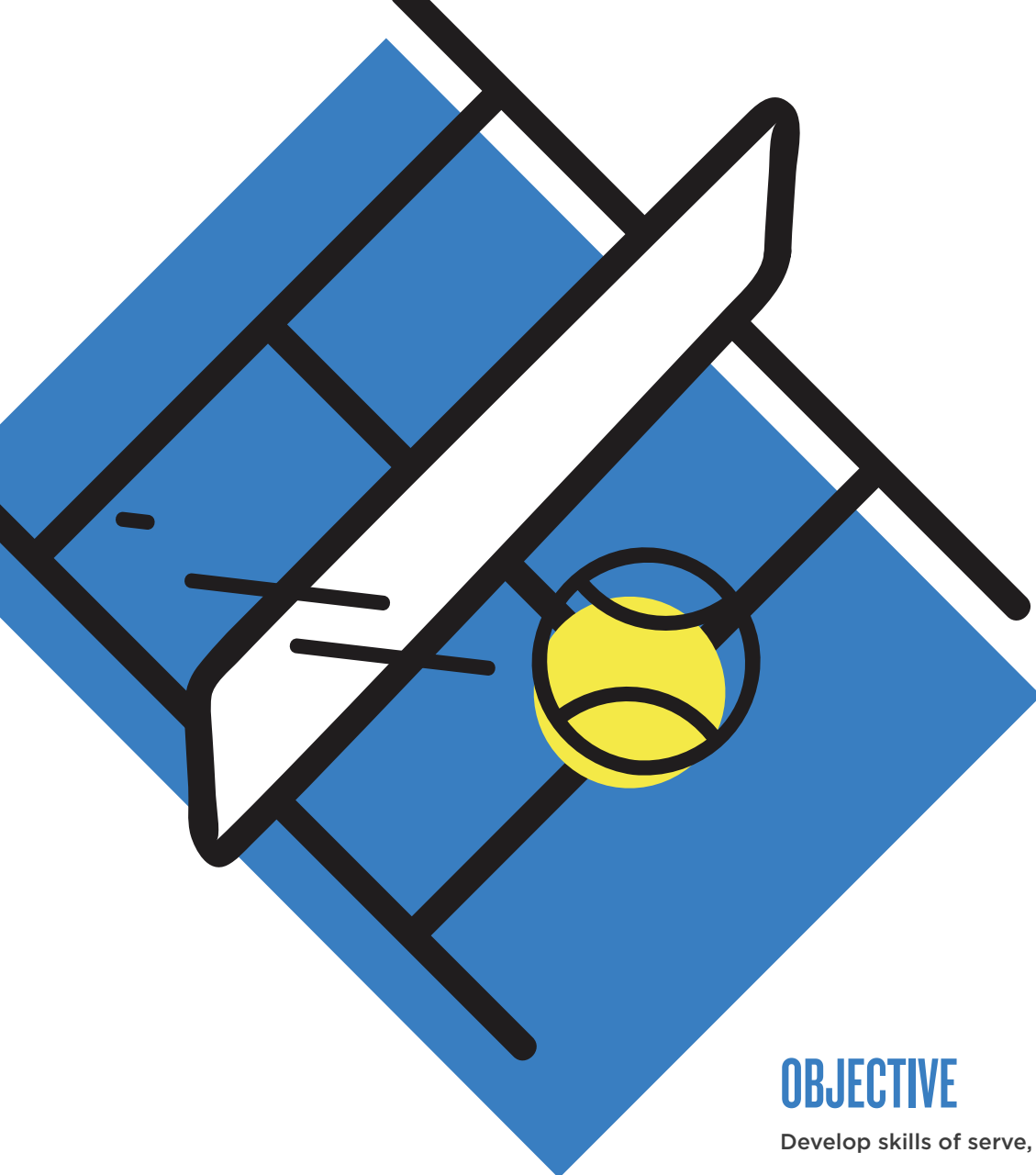
- Work on various skills learned that involve a bounce and a hit.
- Ask players for examples of what they’ve done this session, and have them work on those skills before the next session.





RED BALL 03





OBJECTIVE

Develop skills of serve, rally, and score.

SAMPLE LESSON PLAN

Total: 60 minutes

- Warmup: 8 - 10 minutes
- Character: 3 minutes or less
- Skills: 25 - 30 minutes total (athletic and tennis)
- Team Challenge: 15 - 20 minutes
- Play at Home: 3 minutes or less

PLANS AT A GLANCE



Warmup	Character	Athletic Skills	Tennis Skills	Team Challenge	Play at Home
01 Rally My Forehand	Respect	Red Light/Green Light Runs Big-Ball Tennis	Lobster Trap Half-Pound Lobster Trap Instant Rally—Forehand	Forehand Scramble	Self-Rally Forehands
02 Rally My Backhand	Respect	Get Tall/Get Small Rhythm Machine	Bungee Spots—Backhand Instant Rally—Backhand	Splat Backhands Backhand Scramble	Self-Rally Backhands
03 Rally My Forehand and Backhand	Teamwork	Frogger Partner Drops	Roll the Dice Grade School	Rally Pyramids	Rally Me Flips
04 I Can Serve	Effort	Vertical Jump Target Throws	Target Me Serve/Return Progression	Serve Pyramids	Throw and Rally
05 Rally with Partner	Teamwork	Tightrope Shake-Hands Toss	Roll the Dice Roll the Dice w/Partner Triangles	Underhand Anywhere	Edgies
06 Move It!	Teamwork	Hopscotch Make 'Em Move	Hoopla Triangles	Short-Ball Scramble Tag-Team Singles	Pick a Spot
07 Watch Me Volley	Responsibility	Around the World Hi-Lo Toss	Volley Progression Close the Net	Team Serve/Return Challenge Solar System	Play Catch
08 Game On!	Responsibility	Big-Ball Tennis	Edgies Rally Pyramids Grade School	Solar System Underhand Anywhere	Attend a Play Day

RALLY MY FOREHAND

Equipment: Mini-net, caution tape or any type of rope; 19 to 23-inch racquets, playground balls and red balls; cones, poly-spots and TDLS.

I. WARMUP

OBSTACLE COURSE

Setup

- Make one 12x12-foot square in center of court on each side of net, using four cones.
- Three for four players per square.

Mission

- Move from cone to cone using different movements. Next player goes when previous player reaches second cone.
- Change movement after each player has gone twice.

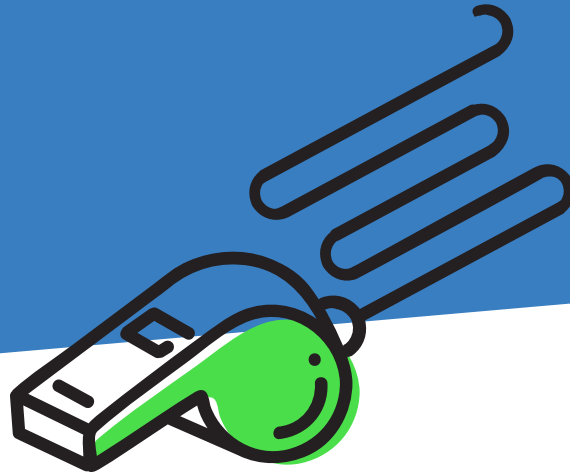
Progressions

1. Gallop, changing lead foot at each cone.
2. Side-shuffle, alternating between facing inside and outside of square at each cone.
3. Walk, then jog backward.

II. CHARACTER

RESPECT

Listen and follow instructions.



III. ATHLETIC SKILLS

RED LIGHT/GREEN LIGHT RUNS

Setup

Set up an area approximately 60 feet long where players can move in a straight line.

Mission

- Start with traditional red light/green light—run fast when coach calls out green light, slow down for yellow, stop for red.
- Once majority of players get to end, turn around and start again in other direction.

Progressions

1. Slowly introduce new moves and colors. Blue light—bring your best dance move; pink light—hop like a bunny; black light—move super-fast.
2. Let players create their own lights.
3. Name a specific movement—skip, lunge-walk, bear-walk, shuffle, etc.—then use red light/green light commands.

BIG-BALL TENNIS

Setup

- Two pairs per court, using half-court. Each pair with one big ball.
- Players are on opposite sides of net in front half of service box.

Mission

- Begin by tossing with both hands from side, straight ahead to partner.
- Let ball bounce, catch with both hands, and toss back.
- After four successful catches each, move to progressions.

Progressions

1. Toss from one side of body, then other (forehands and backhands).
2. Toss ball up high, then low.
3. Do figure eight patterns (one side tosses crosscourt, other tosses down the line).

IV. TENNIS SKILLS

LOBSTER TRAP

Type: Cooperative, players in pairs.

Focus: Sending and receiving in different directions.

Setup

- Players in pairs with racquets and red ball.
- Feeder stands eight to 10 feet from “lobster,” who has a racquet in each hand.

Mission—Catch ball between racquets after bounce while moving.

- Feeder tosses ball to side, lobster traps it between racquets after bounce.
- Lobster drop-hits ball back to feeder.
- Complete four from both sides of the body and switch roles.

Goal—From ready position, move and trap ball to side of body at waist level, just like a groundstroke.

Progressions

1. Lobster sends ball back in the air with both racquets.
2. Feeder makes lobster move to side, back and forward.
3. Perform activity over net.

HALF-POUND LOBSTER TRAP

Type: Cooperative, players in pairs.

Focus: Sending and receiving in different directions.

Setup

- Players in pairs with red ball.
- Feeder stands eight to 10 feet from “lobster,” who has one racquet.

Mission—Trap ball against racquet after bounce while moving.

- Feeder tosses ball to side, lobster traps against racquet with free hand after bounce.
- Lobster drop-hits ball back to feeder.
- For backhand, hold racquet with non-dominant hand at top of grip and trap with dominant hand.
- When drop-hitting ball back with backhand, can drop with dominant hand and put both hands on grip to hit back.
- Complete four from both sides of the body and switch roles.

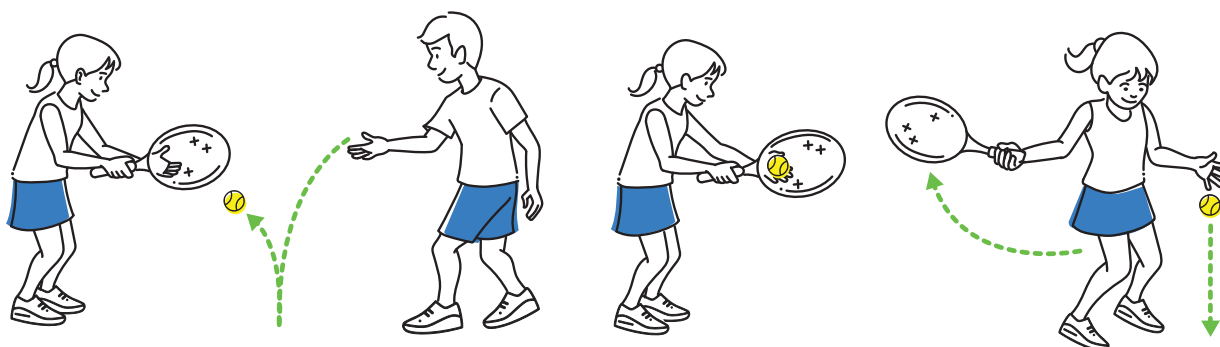
Goal—From ready position, move and trap ball to side of body at waist level, just like a groundstroke.

Progressions

1. Make lobster move to side, back and forward.
2. Perform activity over net.

**TEACHING TIP**

With all activities, have players start off in a good ready position. If movement is involved, they should always recover back to center and return to ready position.

ILLUSTRATION: HALF-POUND LOBSTER TRAP

INSTANT RALLY—FOREHAND

Type: Individual and cooperative with partner.

Focus: Control direction of groundstroke.

Setup

Players spread out around court, no more than six per side.

Mission—Rally by yourself and with partner.

Goal—Hit every ball from side of body.

Progressions

1. With palm up, tap ball up about head level, bounce it and catch it.
2. Self-rally: Instead of catching ball after first bounce, continue to tap it up after each bounce.
3. Rally with partner to same target: Find a partner and alternate tapping ball up after bounce to about head level. How many consecutive tap-ups can each pair hit? Use a poly-spot, donut or chalk circle as a target to encourage hitting ball up instead of out.
4. Rally over line with partner: Pair faces each other, each about three feet from line. Rally over line, making sure ball comes up off racquet. How many can they hit in a row?
5. Rally over net: Use net or low barrier instead of line and rally for numbers. To assist with control and direction, add a target about three feet from net (poly-spot, donut or chalk circle).



TEACHING TIP

Avoid the temptation to move entire group through progressions at the same time. Not all players will progress at the same rate. If a player or pair is struggling, either stay on that task longer or try to make it easier.

V. TEAM CHALLENGE

FOREHAND SCRAMBLE

Type: Hand-feed, players in pairs.

Focus: Forehand direction.

Setup

- Two pairs on each court, all about four feet from net.
- Feeders on one side of net—off to side with bucket of balls—hitters on other.
- Create a large target in middle of opposite service boxes with hula-hoop, cones, etc.

Mission—Hit ball over net to target from hand-feed.

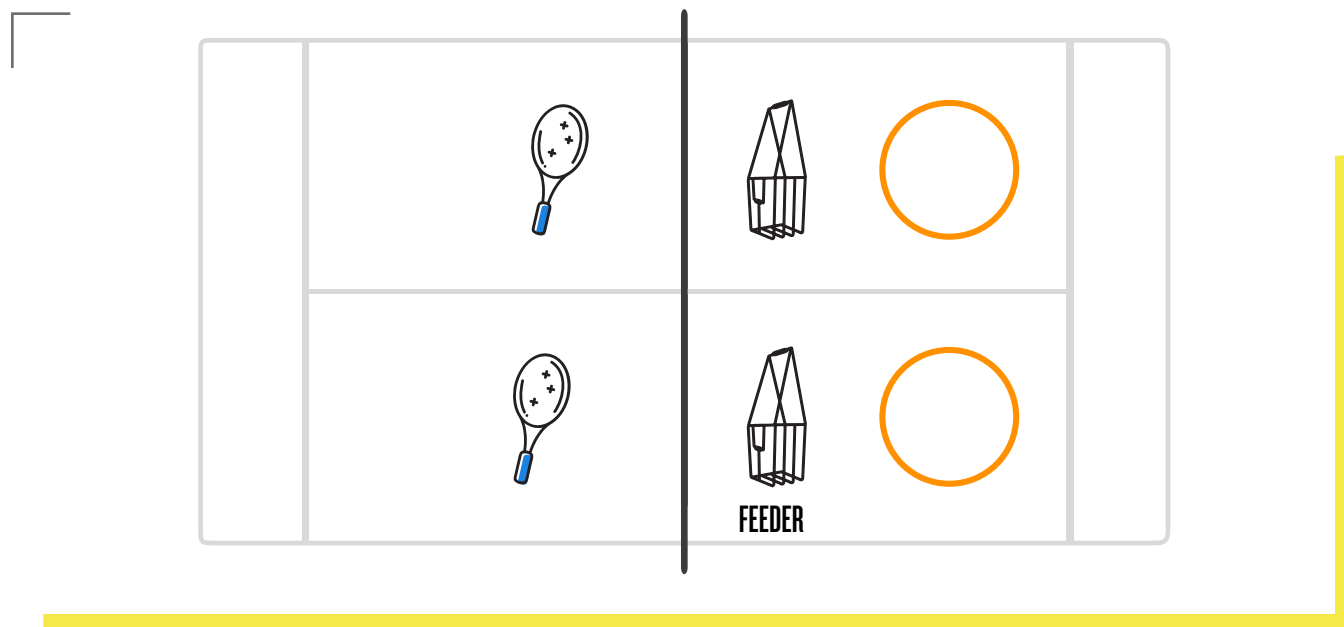
- Toss to forehand. Hit over net into opposite service box, aiming for target. After six attempts, switch sides.
- Create a scoring system that rewards getting ball over net, with most points for hitting target.
- Play team versus team.

Goal—Simple take-back and follow-through.

Progressions

1. Hit straight ahead.
2. Alternate hitting straight ahead and crosscourt.
3. Make hitter move to ball and recover.

ILLUSTRATION: FOREHAND SCRAMBLE



VI. PLAY AT HOME

SELF-RALLY FOREHANDS

Setup

- Play with foam ball on driveway or any flat surface.
- Alternate hits with partner.

Progression

1. Self-rally high and low.
2. Rally with partner over line in concrete or low barrier.

RALLY MY BACKHAND

Equipment: Mini-net, caution tape or any type of rope, 19 to 23-inch racquets, playground balls and red balls, cones, poly-spots and TDLs.

I. WARMUP

MESSY BEDROOM

Setup

- Teams of six to eight; one team per court.
- Players on one side of net (preferably side opposite fence), with bucket of red balls.

Mission

- Coach tips over bucket of balls.
- Players throw balls one at a time over net.
- Throw as many as possible in one minute.
- Players pick up balls from other side and count how many they threw.
- Do it again and try to beat team record.

Progressions

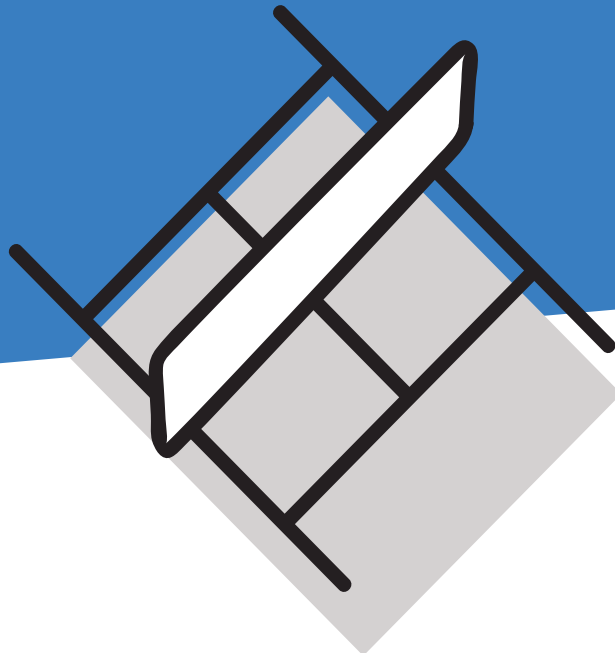
1. Throw into service box.
2. Play on 78-foot court.

II. CHARACTER

RESPECT

- Take care of equipment.
- Leave court ready for others.

III. ATHLETIC SKILLS



GET TALL/GET SMALL

Setup

Players spread out around court.

Mission

- Stand on tiptoes with arms above head attempting to get as tall as possible.
- On coach's command, drop into athletic stance.
- During drop, hands move aggressively from over head to past hips.

Progressions

1. From "small" position, leap into the air, reaching as high as possible, then land in "tall" position.
2. Perform activity on one leg, then switch legs.

RHYTHM MACHINE

Setup

- Three or four pairs on each side of court.
- Pairs start on sideline, facing each other.

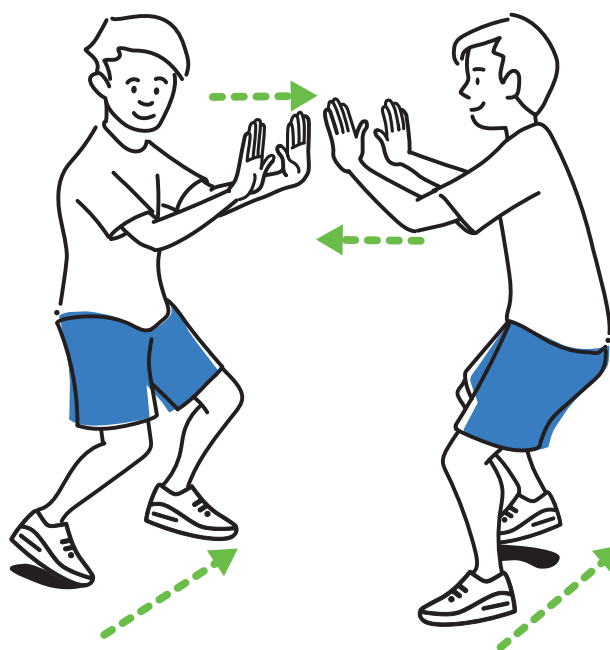
Mission

- Start with basic "patty-cake."
- Once you get rhythm, continue patty-caking while side-shuffling to opposite sideline and back.

Progressions

1. Create different clapping sequences while standing still. Once players get rhythm, they do same while shuffling to opposite sideline and back.
2. Shorten distance and go back and forth.

ILLUSTRATION: RHYTHM MACHINE



IV. TENNIS SKILLS

BUNGEE SPOTS—BACKHAND

Type: Individual.

Focus: Racquet skills.

Setup

- Maximum four players on each side of net, each player with racquet and red ball.
- Place two sets of four poly-spots from sideline to sideline on each side of net in a zigzag pattern.

Mission—Drop ball on poly-spots with backhand (knuckles up).

- Move to first spot, drop ball on spot with bungee jump, catch ball on racquet, then head to next spot.
- Next player goes when previous player reaches next spot.
- When finished, go back to end of line while balancing ball on racquet.
- Need help? Use free hand to reposition ball on strings.

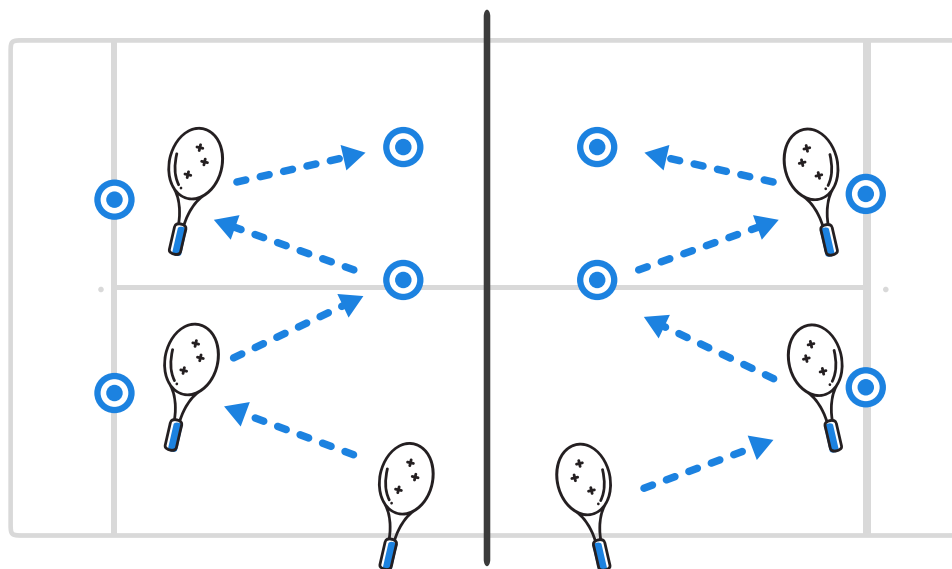
Goal—How many spots can you hit with one attempt?

Progressions

1. Double bungee jump on spot.
2. Continuous bungee jump as you move to next spot.

Note: Use one or two hands for backhand.

ILLUSTRATION: BUNGEE SPOTS—BACKHAND



INSTANT RALLY—BACKHAND

Type: Individual and cooperative with partner.

Focus: Control direction of groundstroke.

Setup

Players spread out around court, maximum six per side.

Mission—Rally by yourself and with a partner.

Goal—Hit every ball from side of body.

Progressions

1. With knuckles up, tap ball up about head level, let bounce and catch it.
2. Self-rally: Instead of catching ball after first bounce, continue to tap ball up after each bounce.
3. Rally with partner to target: Find a partner and alternate tapping ball up after bounce to about head level. See how many consecutive tap-ups each pair can get. Use a poly-spot, donut or chalk circle as a target to focus on hitting up instead of out.
4. Rally over line with partner: With each player about four feet from a line, rally over line. Ball should come up off racquet. How many can they hit in a row?
5. Rally over a net: Replace line with net or low barrier and rally for numbers. To assist with control and direction, add target about three feet from net (poly-spot, donut or chalk circle).



TEACHING TIP

For self-rally, a one-handed backhand may be more natural for some kids. Once they rally with a partner and hit over a barrier, they may want to add other hand to grip.

V. TEAM CHALLENGE

SPLAT BACKHANDS

Type: Cooperative, players in pairs.

Focus: Racquet skills with bounce.

Setup

- Up to three pairs on each side of net.
- Each pair with upturned half-cone as target, or use ball pyramid (one ball on top of three).

Mission—Rally upward with partner, attempting to hit target.

- One player tosses ball up, bounces it and taps it up with racquet using backhand (at least head level), trying to hit target.
- Partner lets it bounce, taps it up again and continues to alternate with partner; both players attempt to hit target each time.
- How many times can they hit target in two minutes?
- Put pairs together into larger teams and see how many targets they can hit in two minutes.

Goal—Maintain rally in small space.

Progressions

1. Alternate forehands and backhands.
2. Use two targets and hit over net.

BACKHAND SCRAMBLE

Type: Hand-feed, players in pairs.

Focus: Directing backhand off of hand-feed.

Setup

- Two pairs on each court, all about four feet from net.
- Feeders on one side of net, off to sides with bucket of balls; hitters on other.
- Create a large target in middle of opposite service box using hula-hoop, cones, etc.

Mission—Hit ball over net to target from hand-feed.

- Toss is to backhand. Hit over net into opposite service box aiming for target.
- After six attempts switch sides.
- Create a scoring system that rewards getting ball over net, with most points for hitting target.
- Play team versus team.

Goal—Simple take-back and follow-through.

Progressions

1. Alternate hitting straight ahead and crosscourt.
2. Make hitter move to ball and recover.

VI. PLAY AT HOME

SELF-RALLY BACKHANDS

Setup

- Play with foam ball on driveway or any flat surface.
- Alternate hits with partner.

Progressions

1. Self-rally high and low.
2. Find a partner and rally over line in concrete or low barrier.

RALLY MY FOREHAND & BACKHAND

Equipment: Mini-net, caution tape or any type of rope; 19 to 23-inch racquets, playground balls, red balls and orange balls; cones, poly-spots and TDLs.

I. WARMUP

TUNNEL BALL

Setup

- Players in pairs, starting on sideline.
- Two or three pairs on each side of net.
- One player with ball and both feet on sideline. Facing partner stands about five feet away with feet apart.

Mission

- Roll ball between partner's legs at medium speed.
- Partner turns and chases ball down before it reaches opposite sideline, and tosses back.
- Complete four successful rolls and catches, then switch roles.

Progressions

1. Face player, then turn back to player.
2. Toss ball above partner's shoulder/head. Partner attempts to catch before it reaches opposite sideline.

Note: This may take several bounces.

II. CHARACTER

TEAMWORK

- Work together with teammates to set up games and activities.
- Be helpful to coach and teammates.



III. ATHLETIC SKILLS

FROGGER

Setup

- Place obstacles such as cones, poly-spots tennis bags, etc., randomly inside playing area.
- Line players up across sideline, no more than four per side of net.

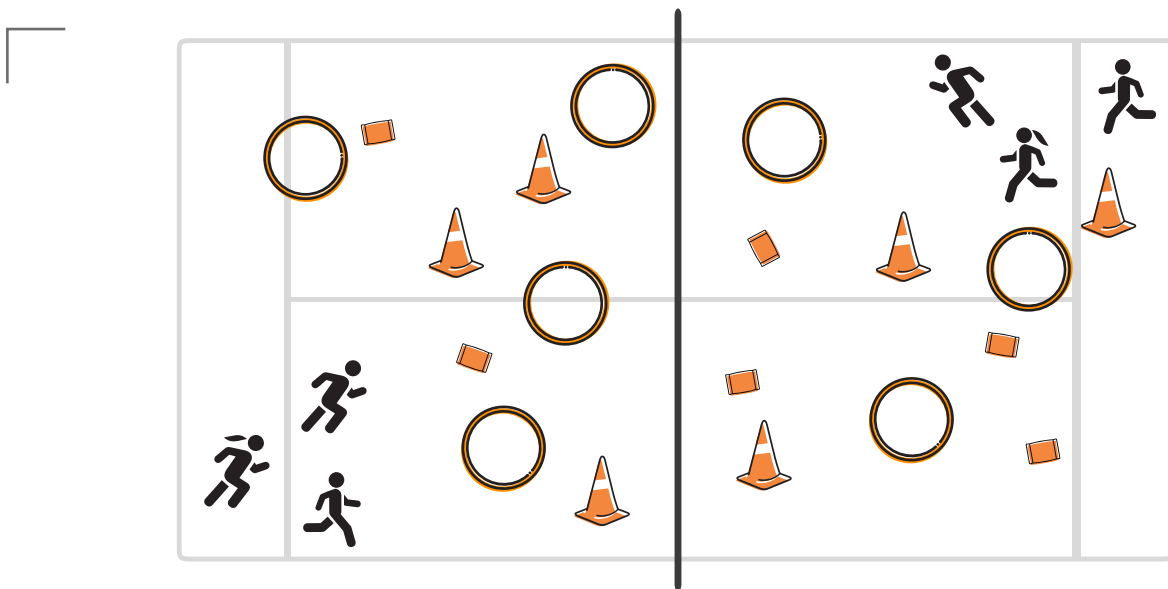
Mission

- Jump like frogs, one jump at a time, and navigate to opposite sideline without touching obstacles.
- Jump forward, left, right or backward, not diagonally.
- Each jump must start and end in an athletic stance.

Progressions

1. Start with single jumps only, then allow multi-jumps.
2. Jump over obstacles to get to opposite sideline. Allow only three “free jumps,” where they don’t have to jump over an obstacle.

ILLUSTRATION: FROGGER



PARTNER DROPS

Setup

- Players in pairs spread out around court.
- One player has two orange balls; partner catches.
- Pairs start about four feet apart.

Mission

- With a ball in each hand, hold arms straight out at shoulder level in a “V” position with palms down.
- Drop a ball. Partner catches with one hand after bounce.
- Catch with right hand on right side of body, left hand on left.
- After four successful catches on each side, switch roles.

Progressions

1. Hold arms straight out to side.
2. Take another step back.
3. Catch with two hands, then one.

**TEACHING TIP**

A red ball can be difficult to catch with one hand because of its size. Whenever performing activities that involve tossing and catching with one hand, an orange ball is preferable.

IV. TENNIS SKILLS

ROLL THE DICE

Type: Cooperative, players in pairs.

Focus: Rally with partner in small space.

Setup

- Up to four pairs spread out on both sides of net, each pair hitting over a line.
- One dice for each pair of players. Keep dice off court near net.

Mission—Rally same number as on dice.

- Coach says “Go” and one player from each pair runs over, rolls dice, and runs back.
- Players must rally same number of balls as number on dice.
- Start with forehands, then switch to backhands.

Goal—Use open racquet face and make ball come up off racquet.

Progressions

1. Add sidelines and baselines with TDLs.
2. With two pairs per side, rally over net.

GRADE SCHOOL

Type: Cooperative, players in pairs.

Focus: Rally with partner in small space.

Setup

- Up to four pairs on each side of net, each hitting over a line with boundaries.
- Use TDLs and existing lines to create mini-courts.

Mission—Control ball in space with limited backswing.

- Rally forehands back and forth. Hit one each and move to “first grade.”
- Rally four (two each) and move to “second grade.”
- Need help? Drop-hit and trap back and forth.

Goal—Work your way to “middle school.”

Progressions

1. Rally backhands.
2. On a bigger court, move back a step/racquet length when moving to a new “grade.”

**TEACHING TIP**

Instead of hitting balls fed from a cart and using a full stroke, players need to learn how to rally with a partner using a simple motion. Initially, the rally won't look great, but that's ok.

V. TEAM CHALLENGE

RALLY PYRAMIDS

Type: Cooperative, players in pairs.

Focus: Rally skills.

Setup

- Two pairs per court. Use caution tape as net for less-skilled players.
- Pairs have a designated spot on side of court (hula-hoop, etc.) to build a four-ball pyramid (three on bottom, one on top).

Mission—Rally forehands and backhands.

- Rally on half-court, standing in middle of service box.
- Player 1, with racquet under arm or on ground, tosses to player 2 and assumes ready position.
- Player 2 hits ball over net with either stroke, and player 1 hits back.
- For every successful rally of one each, add a ball to pyramid.
- Need help? Drop-hit or toss; bounce, trap or catch one-handed.

Goal—Return to ready position with both hands on racquet after each stroke.

Progressions

1. Two each, then three each, etc., to score a point.
2. Increase distance.

VI. PLAY AT HOME

RALLY ME FLIPS

Setup

- Play with foam ball on driveway or any flat surface.
- Rally in small space, alternating forehands and backhands.

Progressions

1. Self-rally high and low, alternating strokes.
2. Rally with partner over line in concrete or low barrier, alternating strokes.

I CAN SERVE

Equipment: Mini-net, caution tape or any type of rope; 19 to 23-inch racquets; playground balls and red balls; cones, poly-spots and TDs.

I. WARMUP

TAG VARIATIONS

Setup

- Players spread out in defined space, using cones, if desired, to establish playing area.
- Four to six players in each space.

BACKWARD TAG

Mission

- One player is “it.” Anyone moving must be walking backward.
- Once tagged, players move outside boundaries, do five repetitions of a fun exercise, then come back in.
- Rotate “it” player every minute or less.

Progressions

1. Allow “it” player to move freely (running, etc.).
2. In a smaller area, “it” player walks backward; others move freely.

SKIP TAG

Mission—Same as backward tag except all players skip.

II. CHARACTER

EFFORT

- Try your hardest.
- Tell yourself, “I can do it!”



III. ATHLETIC SKILLS

VERTICAL JUMP

Setup

Players spread out along fence.

Mission

- Jump vertically as high as possible, as if attempting to grab a rebound in basketball.
- Land in an athletic stance, as quietly as possible.

Progressions

1. Stand facing fence and touch as high as possible. Try to beat record each time.
2. Players in pairs, facing each other with one big ball. One player jumps up with ball fully extended above head. After landing in an athletic position, chest-passes ball to partner, who repeats.

TARGET THROWS

Setup

- Up to four players on each side of net playing as a team.
- Each player stands on baseline with red ball.
- Place cones, poly-spots hula hoops and various targets inside front half of service boxes.
- Aim for an equal number of targets in service boxes.

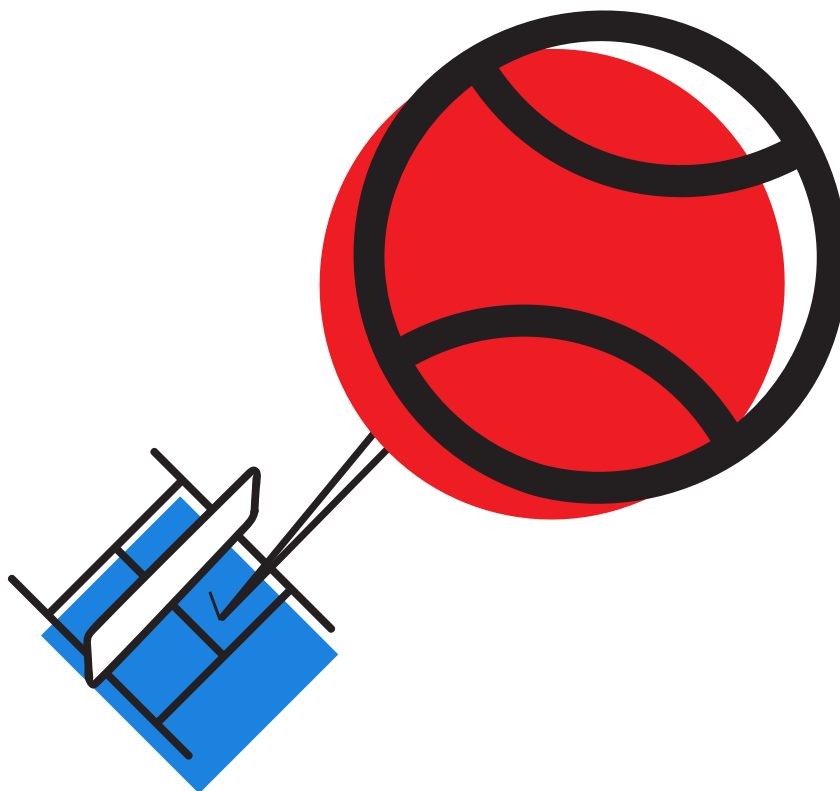
Mission

- One player from deuce and one from ad throw diagonally at targets on their side of net.
- Next players come up and throw. Once everyone has thrown, players run and retrieve balls and start again.

- Be sure to rotate side of court players throw from.
- Hit a target, run and grab it, and add it to a designated scoring area for team.
- See how many targets players can hit in one minute, or how long it takes to get X amount of points.

Progressions

1. Instead of removing targets after they're hit, count each one hit as point for team.
2. Move players further behind baseline.
3. Throw at targets on other side of net.



IV. TENNIS SKILLS

TARGET ME

Type: Individual.

Focus: Rally skills.

Setup

Players create their own courts with existing lines, TDs and other objects.

Mission—Self-rally in your space.

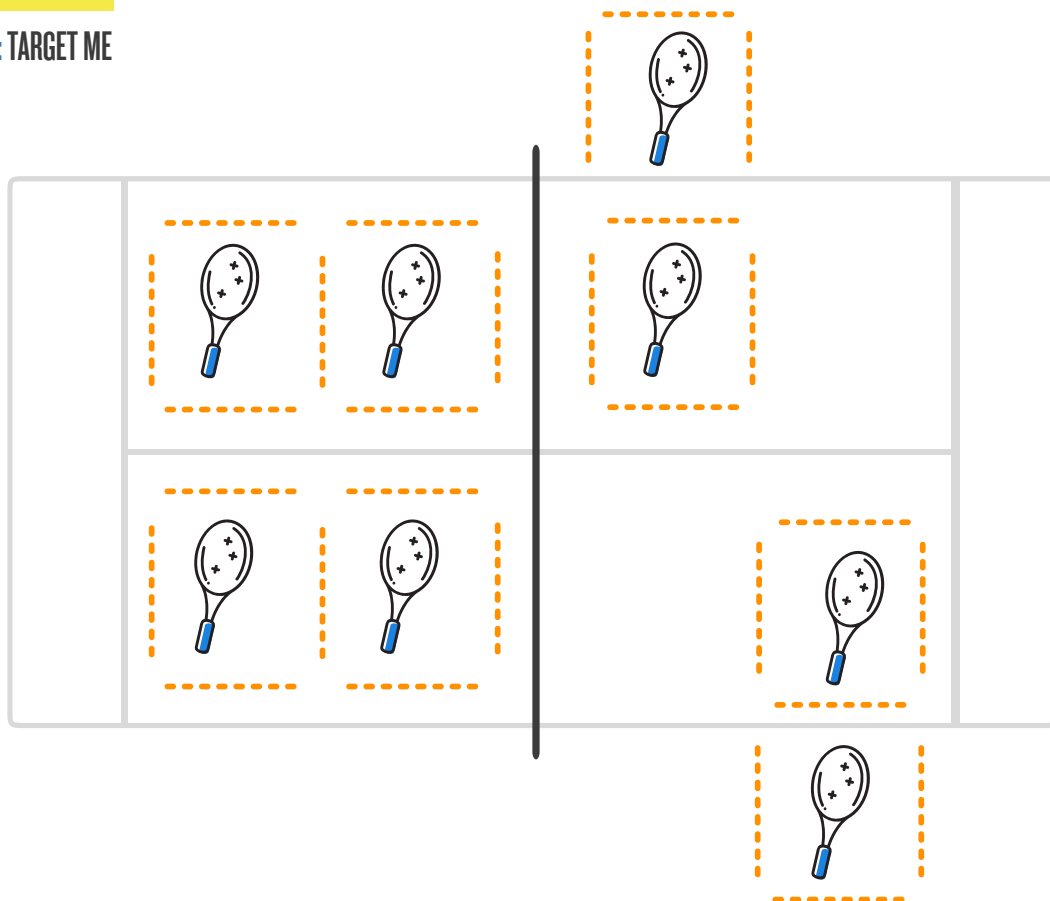
- Start with forehands (palm up), hitting as many balls as possible in a row up to eye level.
- Switch to backhands (knuckles up).

Goal—Keep ball going in as small a space as possible.

Progressions

1. Single stroke, then alternate.
2. Make a creative court and net out of anything you can find, and alternate hits with partner.

ILLUSTRATION: TARGET ME



SERVE/RETURN PROGRESSION

Type: Cooperative, players in pairs.

Focus: Serve and return direction.

Setup

- Two pairs per court, diagonally across net from each other in middle of service box.
- Use TDLs as a “baseline” for players to stand behind.

Mission—Serve and return cooperatively with partner.

Goal—Serve overhand into service box.

Progressions

1. Throw from a turned position to partner, who bounces, catches and throws back.
2. Using an abbreviated motion, player overhand-serves to partner, who traps ball on strings with hand and serves back. Feet should be at 45-degree angle to baseline when serving.
3. Receiver returns serve, server traps it on strings. After four serve-and-return sequences, receiver serves.
4. Need help? Move forward, toss or drop-hit serve.



TEACHING TIP

Players who throw better serve better. Keep encouraging players to throw when they're not at practice.

V. TEAM CHALLENGE

SERVE PYRAMIDS

Type: Cooperative, players in pairs.

Focus: Serve direction.

Setup

- Two pairs per court—one serves, other returns.
- Partners are diagonally across net from each other in middle of service box.
- Designate a spot on side of court (hula-hoop, etc.) to build a pyramid.

Mission—Complete serve-and-return sequences.

- Server throw-serves into box, returner traps and drop-hits back to server.
- Add a ball to pyramid for each successful serve and return.
- Switch roles after each pyramid, then switch sides of court.

Goal—Server and returner in good ready positions after hitting.

Progressions

1. Serve and return in order to score point.
2. Serve from service line.



COURT CENTS: SIX 36-FOOT COURTS ON ONE 78-FOOT COURT

- First court is from 78-foot baseline to back fence.
- Next is 78-foot baseline to service line.
- Last is service line to net.
- The fence and 78-foot-court net can be sidelines, or just add a few TDLs.
- Remember, at this stage, tape or rope is more effective than a regular net because players can continue to rally if balls go under.

VI. PLAY AT HOME

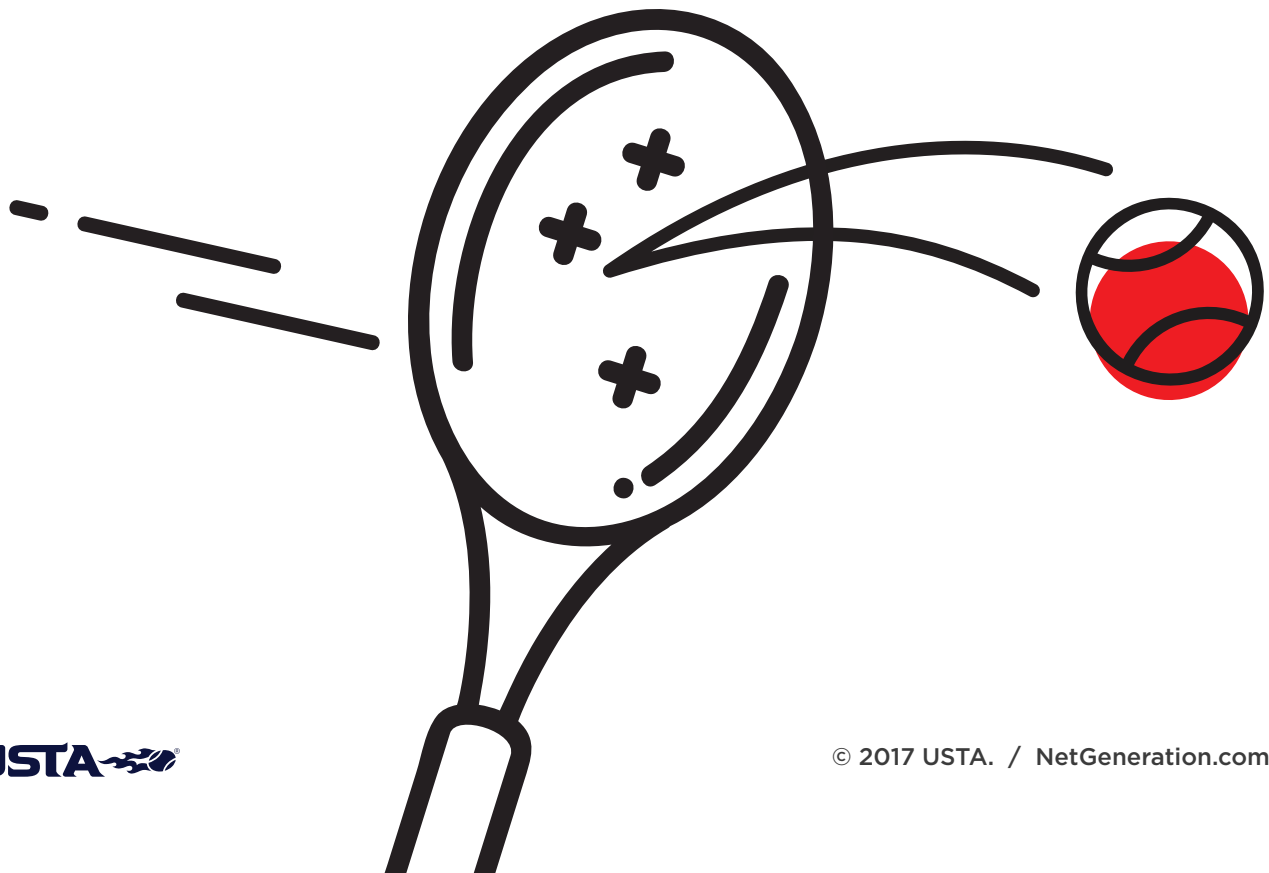
THROW AND RALLY

Setup

Play with foam ball against garage door or solid wall.

Progressions

1. Serve overhand to wall, hit one groundstroke (return), and catch.
2. Serve to left then right side of wall.
3. Serve and rally until you miss.



RALLY WITH PARTNER

Equipment: Mini-net, caution tape or any type of rope; 19 to 23-inch racquets; playground balls, red balls and orange balls; cones, poly-spots and TDLs.

I. WARMUP

OBSTACLE COURSE

Setup

- Create one 12x12-foot square in center of court on each side of net, using four cones.
- Three to four players per square.

Mission

- Go from cone to cone using different movements. Next player goes when previous player reaches second cone.
- After each player has gone twice, change movement.

Progressions

1. Gallop, changing lead foot at each cone.
2. Jog backward.
3. Skip sideways.

II. CHARACTER

TEAMWORK

- Use encouraging words when speaking with partners and teammates.
- Tell others, "You can do it!"

III. ATHLETIC SKILLS

TIGHTROPE

Setup

- Four players on each side of net.
- One on each sideline, one on service line, and one on baseline.

Mission

- Tightrope-walk along line, with one foot directly in front of other.
- Go forward first, then try backward.

Progressions

1. Walk forward all the way to end of line, then backward.
2. Walk along line while tossing and catching ball with two hands.

SHAKE-HANDS TOSS

Setup

- Players in pairs spread out around court.
- Each pair has one orange ball.

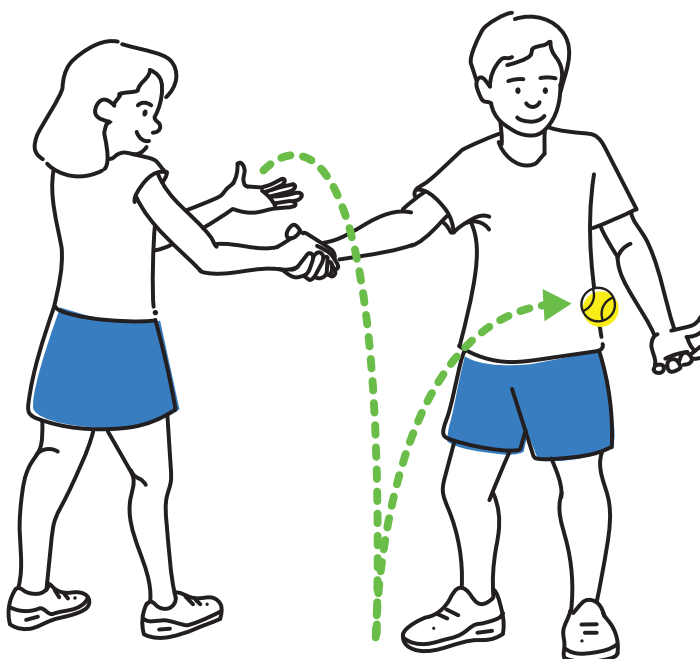
Mission

- Shake hands and hold onto shake so arms form a net.
- With free hand, gently toss ball over “arm net,” let it bounce, and catch with one hand, then repeat.
- Players may need to move their feet together in same direction to adjust for bad tosses.
- After four successful catches each, switch hands.

Progressions

1. Toss ball higher and wider so both players have to move more.
2. Catch ball in the air.

ILLUSTRATION: SHAKE-HANDS TOSS



IV. TENNIS SKILLS

ROLL THE DICE

Type: Individual.

Focus: Self-rally in small space.

Setup

Four to six players on each side of net.

Mission—Self-rally same number as on dice.

- Coach designates a player to roll dice.
- Players must rally same number of balls as number on dice.
- Self-rally forehands, then backhands.
- Need help? Do bungees.

Goal—Challenge each player with how they should self-rally.

Progressions

1. Self-rally flips (alternate backhands and forehands).
2. Add a target.

ROLL THE DICE WITH PARTNER

Type: Cooperative with partner.

Focus: Rally in small space with partner.

Setup

Players in pairs, maximum four pairs per side.

Mission—Rally same number as on dice.

- Coach designates a player to roll dice.
- Players must rally same number of balls as number on dice.
- Rally forehands, then backhands.

Progressions

1. Rolling rally with partner.
2. Rally with partner to target.
3. With two pairs, per side, rally over net with partner.

TRIANGLES

Type: Cooperative, groups of three.

Focus: Direct groundstrokes side to side.

Setup

- Three players per court. If necessary, two groups of three on one court.
- Two feeders on one side of net, one hitter on the other. All are about five feet from net.

Mission—Alternate shots left and right.

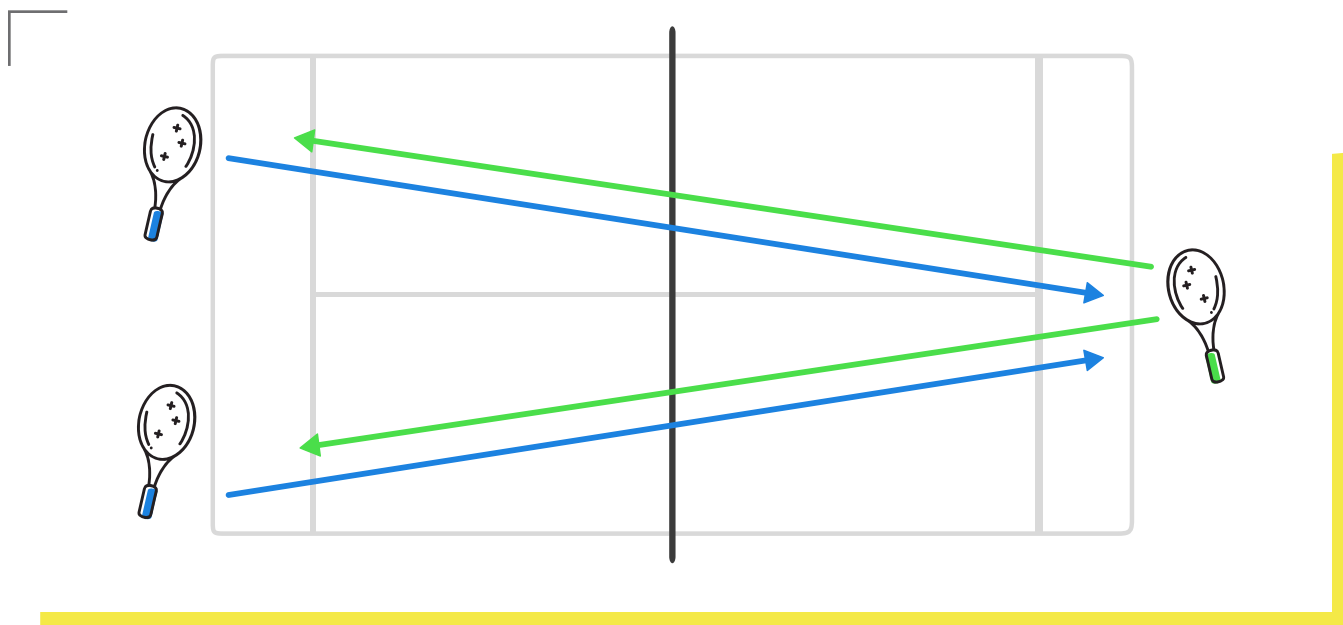
- One feeder tosses ball to hitter, who hits to other feeder.
- Feeder catches ball and tosses back to hitter, who continues to change direction each time.
- After two successful sequences, change positions. After complete rotation, hitter switches to backhands.
- Need help? Catch and hand-toss back to feeder, trap and hand-toss, or trap and drop-hit.

Goal—Hitter works on using feet to turn shoulder on every ball.

Progressions

1. Toss and hit.
2. Feeders trap and drop-hit to hitter.
3. All three rally.

ILLUSTRATION: TRIANGLES



V. TEAM CHALLENGE

UNDERHAND ANYWHERE

Type: Competitive, team.

Focus: Moving opponent.

Setup

- Two teams of two or three per court.
- One side serves, other returns.
- Boundaries are 36-foot-court sidelines, and service line is baseline.
- Play a team-versus-team singles format.

Mission—Toss and hit ball to open court.

- Server puts racquet down, tosses ball to any part of court, picks up racquet and plays out point.
- Rotate players after each point. Switch servers and returners after a team scores seven points.
- Need help? Trap ball instead of hitting it.

Goal—Both players recover to center in good ready position after each shot.

Progressions

1. Must toss/serve in diagonal box.
2. Returners hit only forehands or backhands.
3. Play to only one-half of opponent's court.



COACHING TIP

Watch for players who understand basic tactics such as moving the opponent on the first ball. For those who don't, encourage them to toss away from the opponent on the first serve/toss.

VI. PLAY AT HOME

EDGIES

Setup

Play on driveway or any flat surface.

Mission—Keep ball going with edge of racquet.

Hold racquet with continental grip and try to keep rally going by hitting ball to ground with edge of racquet.

Goal—See how many you can hit in a row, then beat your personal best.

Progressions

1. Start with edgies down, then try ups.
2. Do one edgie down, then one up.

MOVE IT!

Equipment: Mini-net, caution tape or any type of rope; 19 to 23-inch racquets; playground balls and red balls; cones, poly-spots and TDLs.

I. WARMUP

MESSY BEDROOM

Setup

- Teams of six to eight; one team per court.
- Players on one side of net (preferably side opposite fence), with bucket of red balls.

Mission

- Coach tips over bucket of balls.
- Players throw balls one at a time over net into service boxes. Coach counts out loud how many land in services boxes.
- Throw as many as possible in one minute.
- Players pick up balls from other side.
- Do it again and try to beat team record.

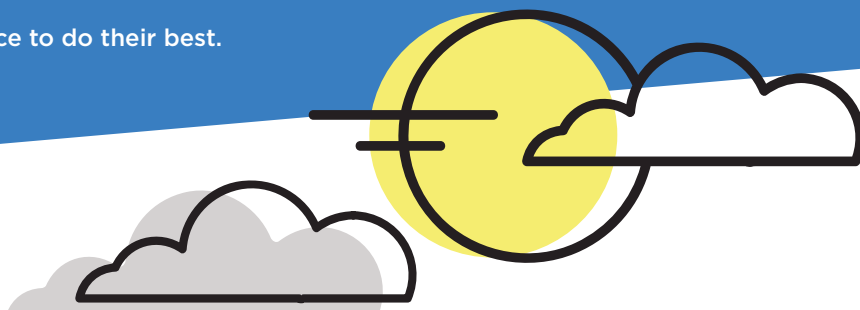
Progressions

1. Throw diagonally into correct service box.
2. Play on 78-foot court and have teams compete with each other.

II. CHARACTER

TEAMWORK

Be cooperative so all players have a chance to do their best.



III. ATHLETIC SKILLS

HOPSCOTCH

Setup

- Use an agility ladder, cones or chalk to create a traditional or non-traditional hopscotch playing area.
- Use a beanbag or cone as a marker.
- Create one hopscotch area for every four to six players.

Mission

- Place a marker for each player in one square.
- Hop through squares and over marked square.
- Upon return, pick up marker balancing on one leg, hop back and give marker to coach.

Progressions

1. Place marker in square 1. As each player is successful, move it to square 2, and so on.
2. Let players place marker.
3. Change shapes of squares (circles, for example), add islands players have to jump over.



TEACHING TIP

Hopping from one foot to two is the basis for the split-step. Hopscotch is a form of incidental learning that will make kids faster in the future.

MAKE 'EM MOVE

Setup

- Players in pairs, with red ball and TDL.
- No more than three pairs spread out on each side of net.
- Pairs face each other, five to six feet apart.
- One player feeds, other catches.
- Catcher uses TDL as “home base.”

Mission

- Toss ball to one side of catcher, who catches with one hand, tosses back and recovers to home base.
- Make catcher move left and right, using enough height for catcher to successfully track ball.
- After four successful catches, switch roles.
- If feeder struggles with toss, place poly-spots on either side of catcher.

Progressions

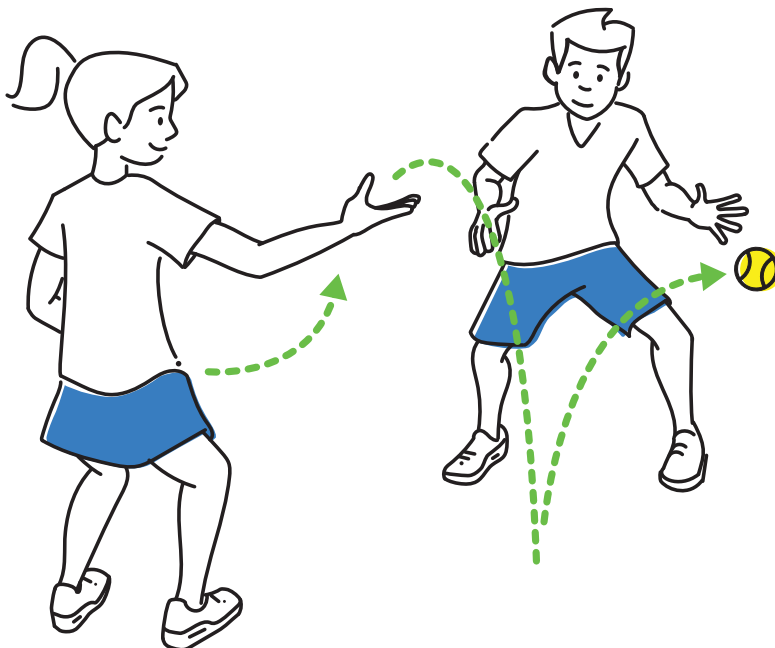
1. Toss ball higher, lower.
2. Use an orange ball and catch with one hand.



TEACHING TIP

Tossing under control is one of the most important skills young players can learn. It's the beginning stage of a forehand and serve, and allows them to work together as they gain more confidence and skill. Be sure to demonstrate a simple toss.

ILLUSTRATION: MAKE 'EM MOVE





DEMO: UNDERHAND TOSS

- Start by facing forward with arm out in front of body, palm up.
- Use a simple motion lifting up and out toward target. Palm is open at end of toss.
- As players become more successful and the distance increases, have them turn to the side with staggered feet to toss.
- When turning sideways, players should begin with arm straight down, in front of back leg, limiting backswing.

IV. TENNIS SKILLS

HOOPLA

Type: Cooperative, players in pairs.

Focus: Forehand direction.

Setup

- Players in pairs: one drop-hits, other holds hula-hoop.
- Start six to eight feet from fence, spread out for safety.
- Partner stands just in front of fence holding hoop to side with both hands.

Mission—Drop-hit ball through hoop.

- Hitter turns sideways (forehand side).
- Hold ball in non-dominant hand, palm down.
- Gently drop-hit ball into hoop, emphasizing control.
- After a few successful hits, raise hoop above head.
- Need help? Toss to hoop.

Goal—Adjust racquet face and motion for each shot.

Progressions

1. Increase distance every four successful hits.
2. Add a second hitter and rally over net. With hoop held high, other two hit back and forth over net aiming for hoop.

TRIANGLES

Type: Cooperative, groups of three.

Focus: Directing side to side.

Setup

- Three players per court. If necessary, two groups of three on one court.
- Two drop-hitters on one side of net, one hitter on other. All players about five feet from net.

Mission—Alternate shots left and right.

- One player gently drop-hits to hitter, who hits back to other drop-hitter.
- Trap ball and drop-hit back to hitter, who continues to change direction each time.
- After two successful sequences, rotate positions. After complete round, hitter switches to backhands.
- Need help? Toss ball to hitter.

Goal—Hitter works on using feet to turn shoulder on every ball.

Progressions

1. Increase distance.
2. All three rally.

V. TEAM CHALLENGE

SHORT-BALL SCRAMBLE

Type: Cooperative, players in pairs.

Focus: Court coverage.

Setup

- Two pairs per court, using half-court.
- Feeders are close to net; hitters are on service line.

Mission—Return short ball to feeder.

- Toss ball short over net to forehand side (similar to drop shot).
- Hitter runs forward and dinks ball back short for feeder to catch.
- After five successful hits and catches, change roles.

Goal—Keep racquet in front of body for short ball.

Progressions

1. Dink backhands.
2. Feeder can drop-hit instead.
3. After hitter plays short ball, play out point.

TAG-TEAM SINGLES

Type: Cooperative team, competitive team.

Focus: Directing groundstrokes.

Setup

- Two teams of four to six per court.
- Each team forms a line behind middle of baseline.
- Play points inside service line.

Mission—Keep rally going.

- First player from one side drop-hits ball over net and moves to back of line.
- First player on other side returns ball down center and goes to back of line.
- Each subsequent player hits one ball and moves to back of line, keeping point going until someone misses.
- Try to set a team record.

Goal—Control ball down center of court.

Progressions

1. Courts compete for longest rally.
2. Play competitively where ball is hit anywhere in court.

VI. PLAY AT HOME

PICK A SPOT

Setup

Play with foam ball against garage door or solid wall.

Mission—Hit to targets on wall.

- Use stickers or existing marks.
- Start with serve and rally toward target. Once you miss, start again with serve.

Progression

Move to side and hit crosscourt to target with forehand and backhand.

WATCH ME VOLLEY

Equipment: Mini-net, caution tape or any type of rope; 19 to 23-inch racquets; playground balls, red balls and orange balls; cones, poly-spots and TDLs.

I. WARMUP

TUNNEL BALL

Setup

- Two or three pairs on each side of net, starting on sideline and facing each other.
- Pairs stand about five feet apart. One player has a ball and both feet on sideline, other stands with feet apart.

Mission

- Player rolls ball between partner's legs at medium speed.
- Partner turns and chases ball down before it gets to opposite sideline, and tosses back.
- Complete four successful rolls and catches, then switch roles.

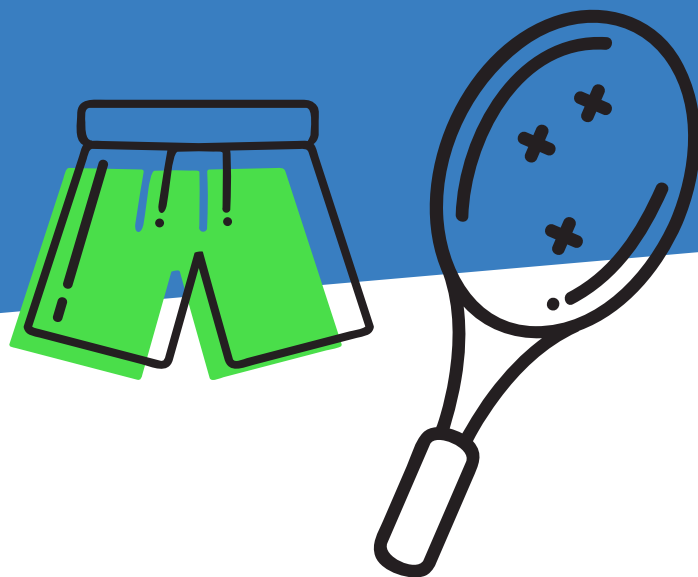
Progressions

1. Catcher faces partner, then turns back to partner.
2. Increase speed of roll/toss.
3. Toss ball over partner's shoulder/head. Partner runs and catches on bounce before it reaches opposite sideline. Challenge players to catch after fewer bounces.

II. CHARACTER

RESPONSIBILITY

- Look after your equipment.
- Carry your own racquet.



III. ATHLETIC SKILLS

AROUND THE WORLD

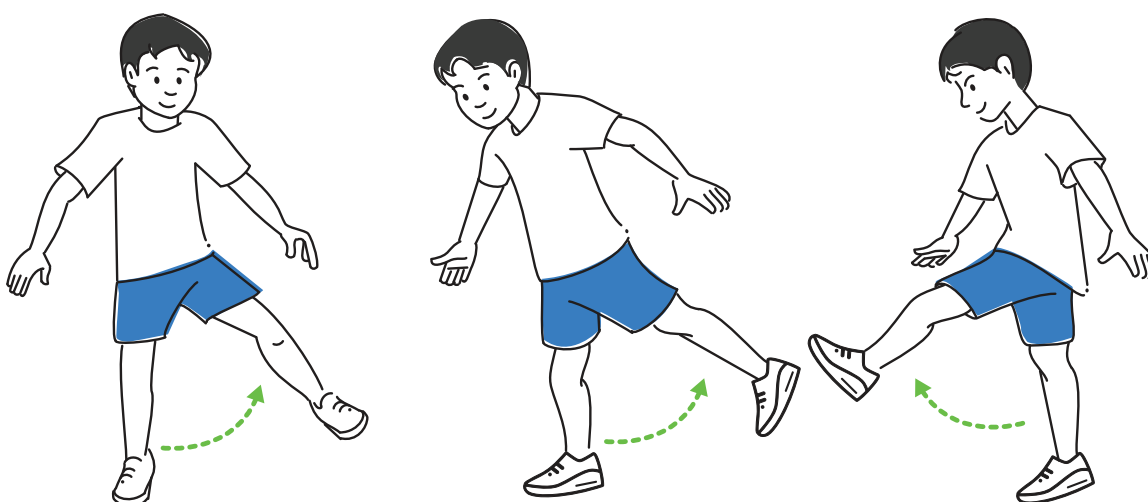
Setup

Players spread out around court.

Mission

- Standing on one foot with soft knee (slightly bent), lift opposite leg forward and up as high as possible while maintaining balance.
- Move raised leg out to side without leaning excessively in opposite direction as a counterbalance.
- Move same leg up and back while maintaining balance, trying not to lean forward excessively.
- Repeat for three trips “around the world” on each leg.

ILLUSTRATION: AROUND THE WORLD



HI-LO TOSS

Setup

- Players in pairs, with one red or orange ball.
- Maximum four pairs spread out on each side of net.
- Players face each other, four to five feet apart.

Mission

- One player feeds, other catches.
- Toss to catcher, who catches after one bounce and tosses back.
- Toss second ball high. Catch in the air above waist level and toss back.
- After two successful hi-lo catches, switch roles.

Progressions

1. Catch red ball with both hands. Once successful, catch orange ball with one hand.
2. Move player on both tosses.
3. Increase distance between players.

Note: Start off with very easy tosses that have enough height for catcher to easily track ball. Feeder should start with arm in front of body, palm up.

IV. TENNIS SKILLS

VOLLEY PROGRESSION

Type: Cooperative, players in pairs.

Focus: Learn to volley.

Setup

- Three pairs per court on opposite sides of net, about three feet from net.
- One feeds, other volleys.

Mission—Volley cooperatively with partner.

Goal—Return to ready position after each volley and step with correct foot.

Progressions

1. Toss ball to volleyer, who dinks it back. Feeder catches ball after bounce.
2. Complete four successful volleys and catches, then switch roles. Once successful, have volleyer go back to ready position each time.
3. Players move two steps back. With racquet under arm, feeder tosses ball and traps partner's volley after bounce. Do four tosses, volleys and traps before switching roles.
4. Players take another step back. Drop-hit ball to volleyer, who volleys it so it bounces. Feeder hits it back to volleyer and volleyer hits it back to feeder, who traps it. Switch roles after four drop-hit/volley/rally/volley/trap sequences.

Do Same Sequence Using Backhand Side

1. Toss, volley, catch.
2. Toss, volley, trap.
3. Drop-hit, volley, rally, volley, trap.
4. Players can perform first two steps. Final step might be best executed with coach or helper aiding in groundstroke position in order to keep ball in play.

Additional Progressions

1. Alternate forehands and backhands.
2. Direct volley to left and right side of feeder.

**TEACHING TIP**

Observe players who can catch easily with one hand. These are the ones who will be candidates for a continental grip and one-handed backhand on the volley.

CLOSE THE NET

Type: Cooperative, players in pairs.

Focus: Approach and volley with direction.

Setup

- Two pairs per court, using half-court. One player feeds, other volleys.
- Volleyer starts on service line; feeder is at net.

Mission—Perform approach, split-step and volley.

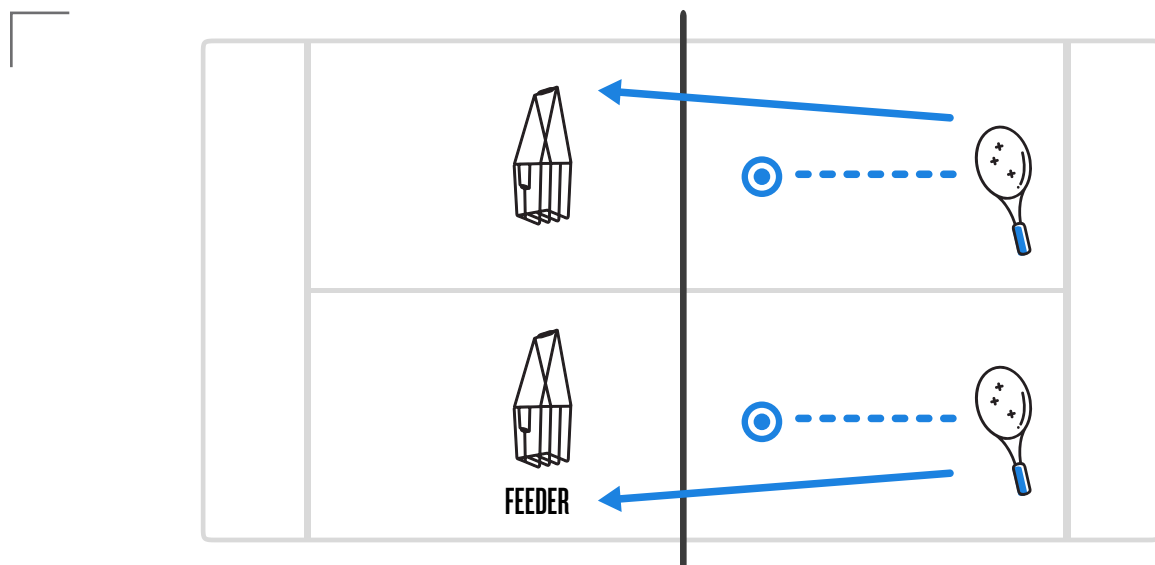
- Volleyer drop-hits ball down the line, moves toward net and does a split-step, ready to hit a volley.
- Feeder tosses to volleyer, who volleys back to feeder.
- After six attempts, players change roles.

Goal—Arrive at net on balance in ready position, and control volley.

Progressions

1. Volleyer hits both a forehand and backhand.
2. Feeder catches approach and tosses back.
3. Feeder has a racquet and traps approach, drop-hits and traps again.

ILLUSTRATION: CLOSE THE NET



V. TEAM CHALLENGE

TEAM SERVE/RETURN CHALLENGE

Type: Cooperative, team.

Focus: Serve direction and consistency.

Setup

- Two teams, each with multiple servers (two or more) and one returner.
- One team serves to deuce court, other to ad court, from middle of service box.
- Place seven half-cones and one ball outside playing area for visual scoring.

Mission—Overhand serve into correct box and catch for return.

- Teams score points when server successfully hits overhand serve into correct box and returner catches on one bounce.
- Returner places ball on next cone then returns to ready position.
- Rotate returners after every two successful one-bounce catches.
- First team to seven wins.

Goal—Turn shoulder with feet at 45 degrees for serve.

Progressions

1. Trap for return and drop-hit back to server.
2. Hit return back to server off of bounce.
3. Serve from service line, then baseline.

SOLAR SYSTEM

Type: Competitive, team.

Focus: Tossing and volleying with direction.

Setup

- Teams of three or four on opposite sides of net; one team starts on service line, other at net.
- Place hula-hoops in each service box on side of net with net players, and bucket of balls on baseline of other side.
- Line up seven half-cones and a ball behind each baseline for scoring.

Mission—Toss to hoop, hit volley to defend

- Two players from each team go at same time.
- Tosser grabs a ball (“meteorite”) from bucket, runs to service line and attempts to toss ball past volleyer and into a hoop (“planet”).
- Volleyer attempts to save planets by volleying meteorites in the air.
- After toss, grab a ball from bucket at back of court and wait for next turn. Volleyers wait behind service line for next turn.
- For every point scored (in hoop or successful volley), player runs to scoring cones and moves ball to next cone. First team to seven wins, then switch sides.

Goal—Toss with accuracy and use a good ready position as volleyer.

Progressions

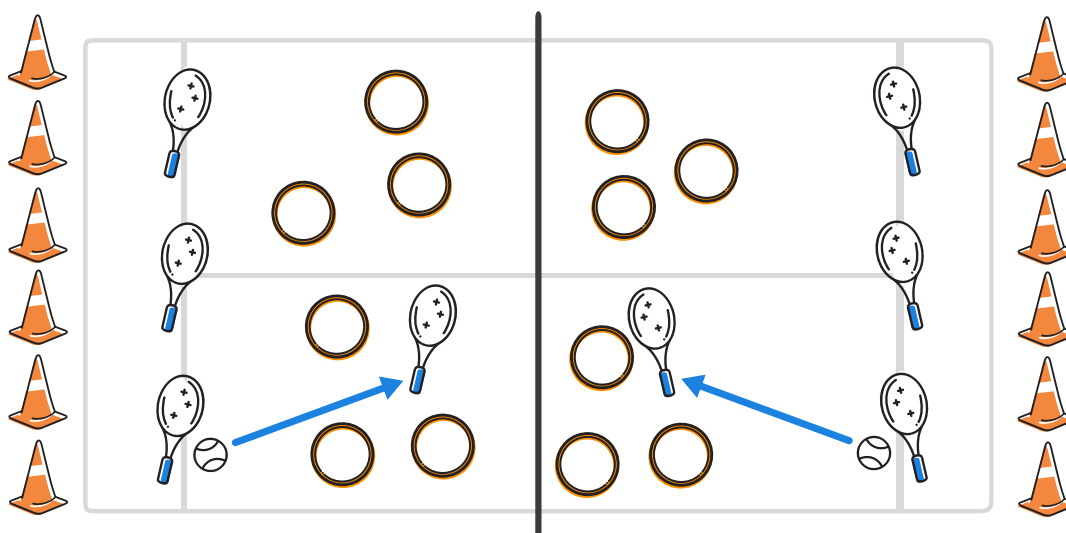
1. Players catch ball instead of volleying.
2. Start point with drop-hit from service line.



COACHING TIP

First to seven is tiebreak scoring for Red Ball tennis. Use this whenever possible.

ILLUSTRATION: SOLAR SYSTEM



VI. PLAY AT HOME

PLAY CATCH

Mission—Find a friend and play catch.

- Use a tennis ball. Alternate between tossing and catching, and throwing and catching.
- Use a baseball and gloves. Throw regular balls and grounders.
- Play Frisbee.
- Throw to a wall and catch.

GAME ON!

Equipment: Mini-net, caution tape or any type of rope; 19 to 23-inch racquets, playground balls and red balls; cones, poly-spots and TDs.

I. WARMUP

RED LIGHT/GREEN LIGHT RUNS

Setup

Set up an area approximately 60 feet long where players can move in a straight line.

Mission

- Start with traditional red light/green light—players run fast when coach calls out green light, slow down for yellow, stop for red.
- Once majority of players get to end, turn around and start again in other direction.

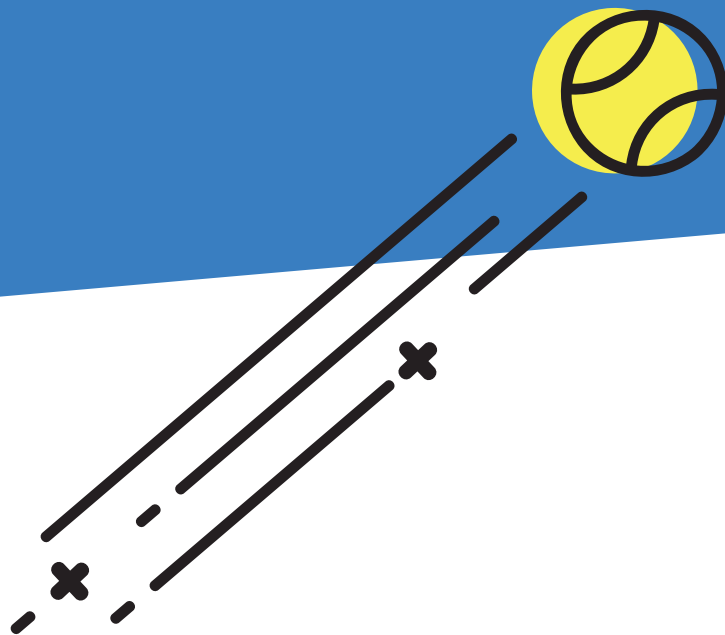
Progressions

1. Divide players into teams and let them create their own lights and moves.
2. Have a contest for most creative moves by a team.

II. CHARACTER

RESPONSIBILITY

- Arrive to practice on time.
- Come to practice ready to play.



III. ATHLETIC SKILLS

BIG-BALL TENNIS

Setup

- Split players into two big teams.
- Within each team, divide into smaller teams of two or three players.
- Set up “matches” with two or three players from each team playing against one another.
- Use 36-foot-court sidelines and service line as baseline.
- Play matches using big ball.
- Give each big team a name, or let players choose.

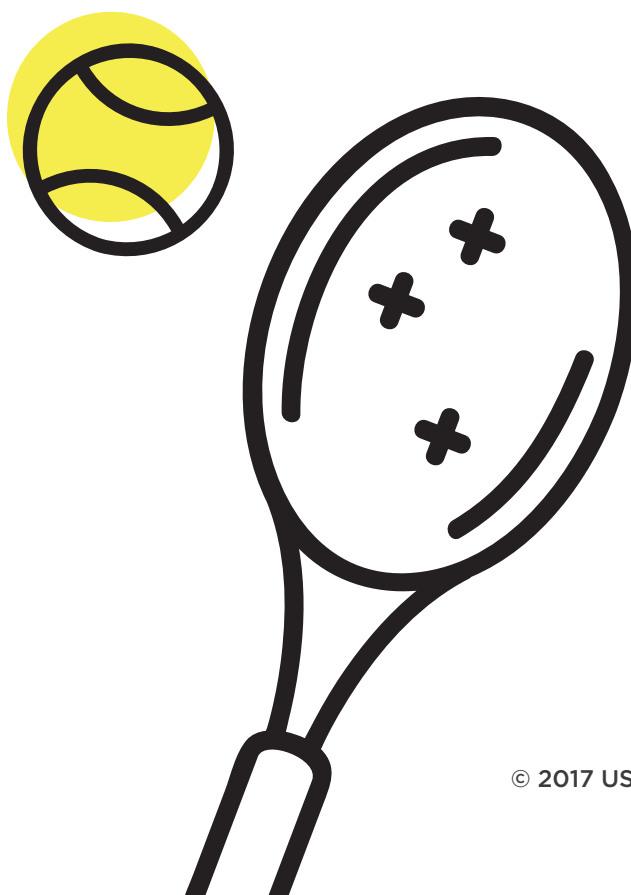
Mission

- Points begin with a toss, which can land anywhere in court.
- Toss all balls over net from side of body. First bounce must be within court boundaries.
- Rules can vary for level of players—only one bounce, endless bounces, one side serves two straight points then switch.
- For teams of three, rotate positions every few points.
- Have teams play to a certain number of points, then switch opponents. Focus on play, not which team wins.

Progressions

1. Must toss serve diagonally to proper box.
2. Can catch ball on bounce or in the air.
3. Use baseline as boundary.

IV. TENNIS SKILLS



EDGIES

Type: Individual.

Focus: Racquet skills.

Setup

Players spread out on court and find their own space.

Mission—Keep ball going with edge of racquet.

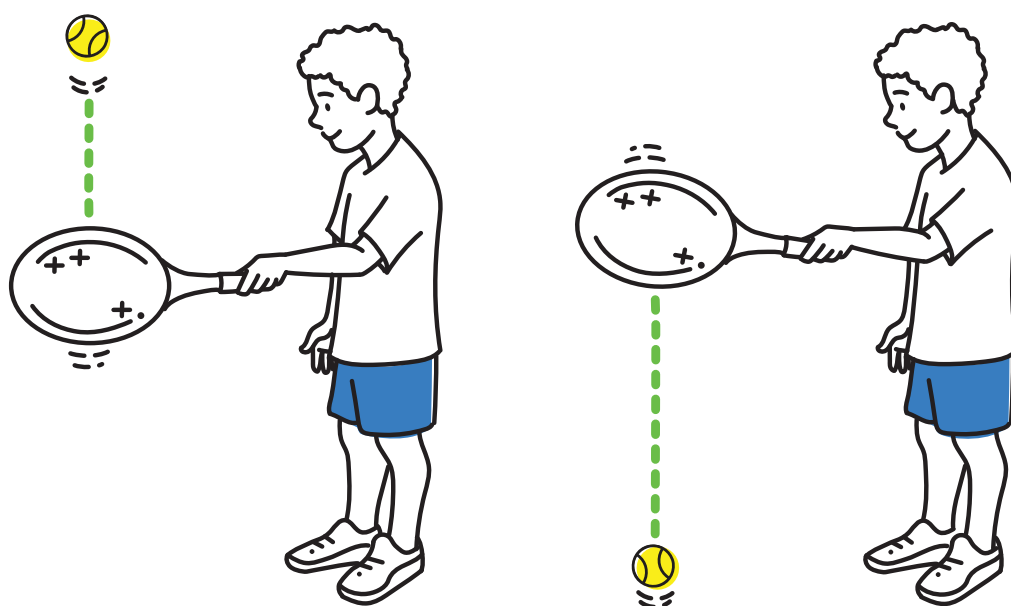
- Hold racquet with continental grip and keep rally going by hitting ball to ground with edge of racquet.

Goal—See how many you can hit in a row, then beat your personal best.

Progressions

1. Start with edgies down, then try ups.
2. Alternate between one edgie down and one up.

ILLUSTRATION: EDGIES



RALLY PYRAMIDS

Type: Cooperative, players in pairs.

Focus: Rally skills.

Setup

- Two pairs per court. Use caution tape as net for less-skilled players.
- Players have a designated spot on side of court (hula-hoop, etc.) to build a pyramid.

Mission—Rally forehands and backhands.

- Rally on half-court, standing in middle of service box.
- Player 1, with racquet under arm or on ground, tosses to player 2 and assumes ready position.
- Player 2 hits ball over net with either stroke, and player 1 hits back.
- For every successful rally of one each, add a ball to pyramid.

Goal—Return to ready position with both hands on racquet after each stroke.

Progressions

1. Two each, then three each, etc., to score a point.
2. Increase distance.

GRADE SCHOOL

Type: Cooperative, players in pairs.

Focus: Rally with partner in small space.

Setup

- Up to four pairs on each side of net, each pair hitting over a line with boundaries.
- Use TDLs and existing lines to create mini-courts.

Mission—Control ball in space with limited backswing.

- Rally forehands back and forth. Hit one each and move to “first grade.”
- Rally four (two each) and move to “second grade.”
- Need help? Drop-hit and trap back and forth.

Goal—Work your way to “middle school.”

Progressions

1. Rally backhands.
2. On a bigger court, move back a step/racquet length when advancing to a new “grade.”

V. TEAM CHALLENGE

SOLAR SYSTEM

Type: Competitive, team.

Focus: Tossing and volleying with direction.

Setup

- Teams of three or four on opposite sides of net; one team starts on service line, other at net.
- Place hula-hoops in each service box on side of net with net players, and bucket of balls on baseline of other side.
- Line up seven half-cones and a ball behind each baseline for scoring.

Mission—Toss to hoop, hit volley to defend.

- Two players from each team go at same time.
- Tossers grab a ball (“meteorite”) from bucket, runs to service line, and attempts to toss ball past volleyer and into a hoop (“planet”).
- Volleyer attempts to save planets by volleying meteorites in the air.
- After toss, grab a ball from bucket at back of court and wait for next turn. Volleyers wait behind service line for next turn.
- For every point scored (in hoop or successful volley), player runs to scoring cones and moves ball to next cone. First team to seven wins, then switch sides.

Goal—Toss with accuracy and use a good ready position as volleyer.

Progressions

1. Players catch ball instead of volleying.
2. Start point with drop-hit from service line.

UNDERHAND ANYWHERE

Type: Competitive, team.

Focus: Moving opponent, consistency.

Setup

- Four to six players per court.
- One side serves, other returns.
- Boundaries are 36-foot-court sidelines and service line for baseline.
- Play a team-versus-team singles format.

Mission—Toss and hit ball to open court.

- Server puts racquet down, tosses ball to any part of court, picks up racquet and plays out point.
- Rotate players after each point. Switch servers and returners after a team scores seven points.
- Need help? Trap ball instead of hitting it.

Goal—Both players recover to center in good ready position after each shot.

Progressions

1. Must toss/serve in diagonal box.
2. Returners hit only forehands or backhands.
3. Play to only one-half of opponent’s court.



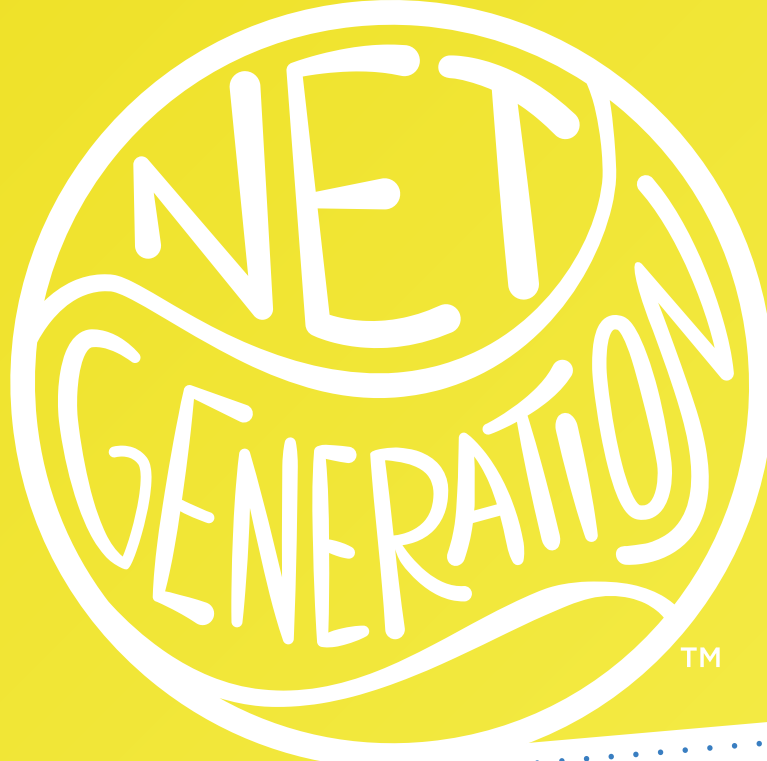
COACHING TIP: PLAYING OTHER SPORTS

Everyone wants kids to keep coming back to their programs. At the same time, we want our kids to improve and realize that playing other sports will only make them better tennis players. Be sure to encourage multi-sport play. Parents will appreciate it and be more likely to support your program.

VI. PLAY AT HOME

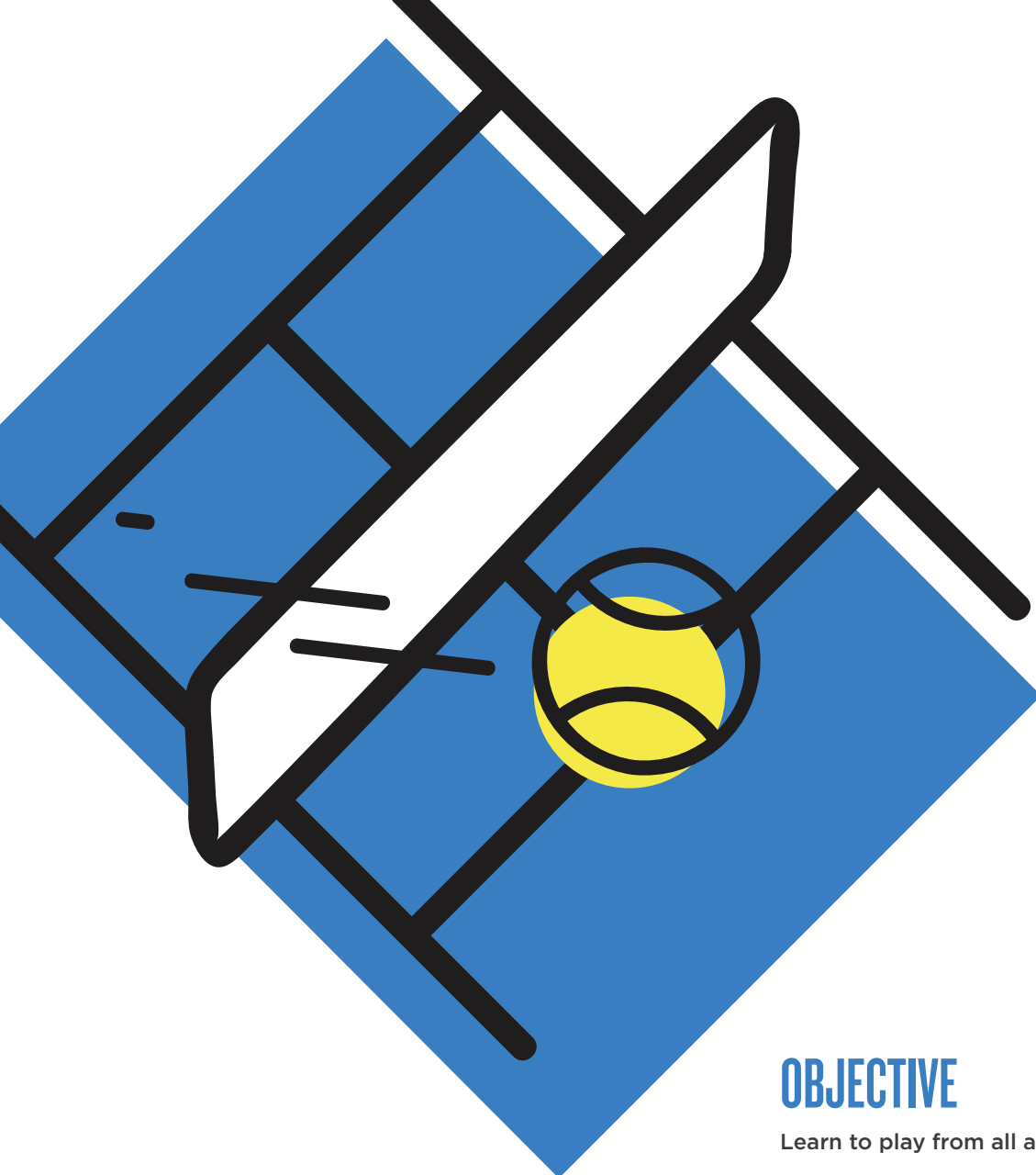
ATTEND A PLAY DAY

Your players should be ready to attend a Play Day at your facility. They may not be able to serve and rally from baseline, but they can put the ball in play and rally, and that’s good enough!



RED BALL 02





NOTES:

When there are three athletic skills, keep each shorter than five minutes or reduce to two activities.

Players are now able to rally, so each practice starts with a hitting warmup.

OBJECTIVE

Learn to play from all areas of 36-foot court.

SAMPLE LESSON PLAN

Total: 60 minutes

- Warmup: 6 - 8 minutes
- Character: 3 minutes or less
- Skills (athletic and tennis): 25 - 30 minutes
- Games: 15 - 20 minutes
- Play at Home: 3 minutes or less

PLANS AT A GLANCE



Warmup	Character	Athletic Skills	Tennis Skills	Games	Play at Home
01 Rally with My Partner	Effort	Hopscotch Balance Wars Shake-Hands Toss	Card Shark	Tag-Team Singles Capture the Cone	Alternate Shots to the Wall
02 Watch Me Control the Ball	Effort	Ball Exchange Three-Cone Touch Make 'Em Move	Triangles	See the Space	Trick Shots Jump Rope
03 I Can Serve; Show Me Your Return!	Respect	Positional Starts Target Throws	Serve/Return Progression	Start It Out In the Freezer	Jump Rope Serve and Return Against Wall
04 Let's Go To Net!	Responsibility	Net Moves Hi-Lo Toss	Volley Progression	Pass Me	Self-Volley
05 I Can Serve Where I Want	Play Fair	Copy Cat Vertical Jump Box Throws	In the Zone	Backhand Attack	Serve Plus One
06 Let's Go To Net ... Again!	Play Fair	Skipping (Multidirectional) Rhythm Machine Shuffle Toss	Close the Net	Pass Me	Jump Rope Volley to Wall
07 Playing from the Baseline	Teamwork	Make 'Em Move Balance Wars	Self-Toss Hi-Lo Partner Toss Hi-Lo	Keep Away	Rally with a Friend
08 Let's Play!	Respect	Relay Races	Card Shark	Keep Away Tag-Team Singles	Play Junior Team Tennis

RALLY WITH MY PARTNER

Equipment: Mini-net, caution tape or any type of rope; 21 to 23-inch racquets; red balls; cones, poly-spots and TDLs.

I. WARMUP

ACCORDION RALLY

Type: Cooperative, players in pairs.

Focus: Groundstroke direction and consistency.

Setup

Two pairs per court, using half-court.

Mission—Keep rally going from different positions on court.

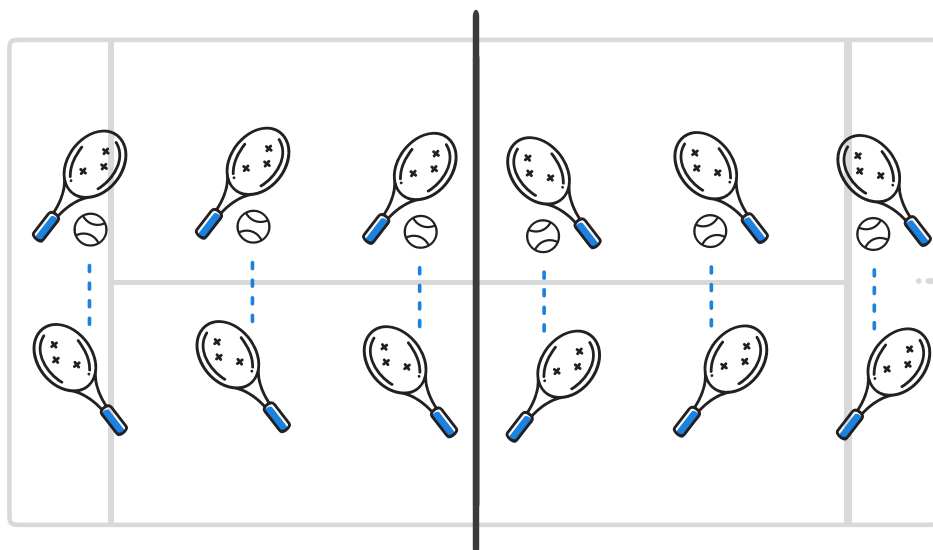
- Rally cooperatively using any stroke, starting from middle of service box.
- After five successful rallies each, move to service line (without stopping rally), then progress to baseline.
- After five successful rallies each from baseline, move back into court—to service line, then to middle of box.

Goal—Lengthen backswing and follow-through as you move back to baseline.

Progressions

1. Hit crosscourt.
2. One stroke only.
3. More than five rallies.

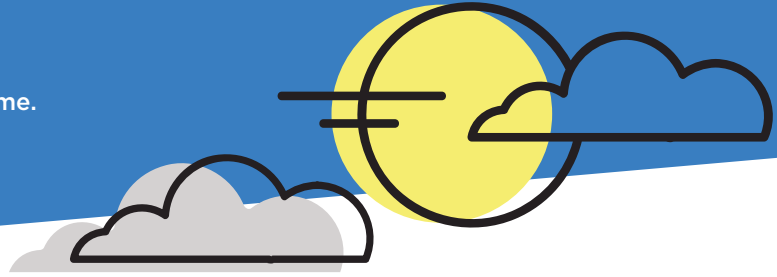
ILLUSTRATION: ACCORDION RALLY



II. CHARACTER

EFFORT

- Give your best effort at practice and at home.
- Ask yourself, “Am I doing my best today?”



III. ATHLETIC SKILLS

HOPSCOTCH

Setup

- Use an agility ladder, cones or chalk to create a traditional or non-traditional hopscotch playing area.
- Create a hopscotch area for every four to six players.
- Coach stands near end of hopscotch area with supply of orange balls.

Mission

- Hop through squares.
- Split-step after last square.
- Coach tosses ball. Run it down, let it bounce and catch with one hand.
- Place ball in coach’s basket/container and get back in line.
- Next player goes when previous player reaches fourth square.

Progressions

1. Change shapes of squares (ex.: circles), add islands players must jump over.
2. Catch ball with right hand on right side, left hand on left.
3. Catch ball in the air with one hand.

BALANCE WARS

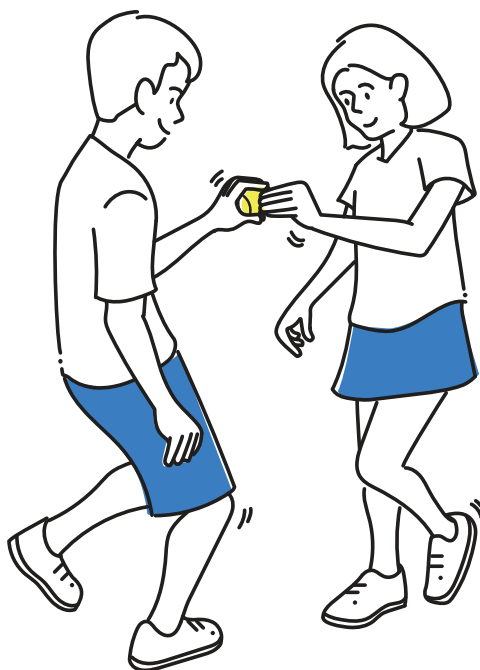
Setup

- Up to four pairs on each side of net.
- One red ball per pair.

Mission

- Pairs stand on right foot facing each other and holding onto same red ball with left hand.
- Linked via tennis ball, battle each other for balance without hopping.
- First player to lose balance or touch other foot to ground loses.
- Once player loses, switch to left foot and right hand and resume play.
- Play for set number of rounds. Keep score and switch partners at intervals.

ILLUSTRATION: BALANCE WARS



SHAKE-HANDS TOSS

Setup

- Players in pairs spread out around court.
- Each pair has one orange ball.

Mission

- Shake hands and hold onto shake so arms form a net.
- With free hand, gently toss ball over "arm net," let it bounce, and catch with one hand, then repeat.
- Players may need to move their feet together in same direction to adjust for bad tosses.
- After four successful catches each, switch hands.

Progressions

1. Toss ball higher and wider so both players have to move more.
2. Catch ball in the air.

IV. TENNIS SKILLS

CARD SHARK

Type: Competitive team with cooperative skills, players in pairs.

Focus: Groundstroke consistency.

Setup

- Two pairs per court; start in middle of service box.
- Coach has a deck of cards and assigns each stroke a color (example: red card is forehand). Number on card dictates length of rally.
- Use only card numbers players can achieve; goal is for them to work hard but have success.
- Keep joker in and make it a wildcard—players get to pick.

Mission—Rally number of balls on card.

- One player from each pair picks a card and runs back to spot.
- Rally over net number of times indicated by card with correct stroke. Hold onto card and pick another.
- Create scoring where players can compete as an entire group (play until all cards are gone) or separate teams and play for designated time.
- Need help? Drop-hit and trap or use any stroke.

Goal—Keep rally going with good footwork (one stroke only).

Progressions

1. Complete a round, then move players back.
2. Rally crosscourt with outside stroke.



TEACHING TIP

Using cards or dice is a great way to engage the kids. It also helps them work on coping skills.

V. GAMES

TAG-TEAM SINGLES

Type: Cooperative team, competitive team.

Focus: Directing groundstrokes.

Setup

- Minimum four players.
- Divide players into two groups, with each group forming a line behind middle of each baseline.
- Boundaries are court lines.

Mission—Keep rally going.

- First player from one side drop-hits ball over net and moves to end of line.
- First player on other side returns ball down center and goes to end of line.
- Each subsequent player hits one ball and moves to end of line, keeping point going until someone misses.
- Try to set a team record.
- Need help? Use service line as baseline, give players two tries.

Goal—Control ball down center of court.

Progressions

1. Courts compete for longest rally.
2. Play competitively, where ball is hit anywhere in court.
3. Only one stroke.

CAPTURE THE CONE

Type: Competitive, team.

Focus: Point play.

Setup

- Two teams of two or three per court, playing one-on-one on full court.
- Each team has five to seven cones lined up on their side, outside of court near net.

Mission—Serve, rally and score.

- Play out points with serve. Winner runs to opponent's side and claims a cone.
- Play games by time; team with most cones wins, or team with all cones wins.
- Switch serving teams after each game.
- Need help? Play points inside service boxes.

Goal—Recover to center after each shot with good ready position.

Progressions

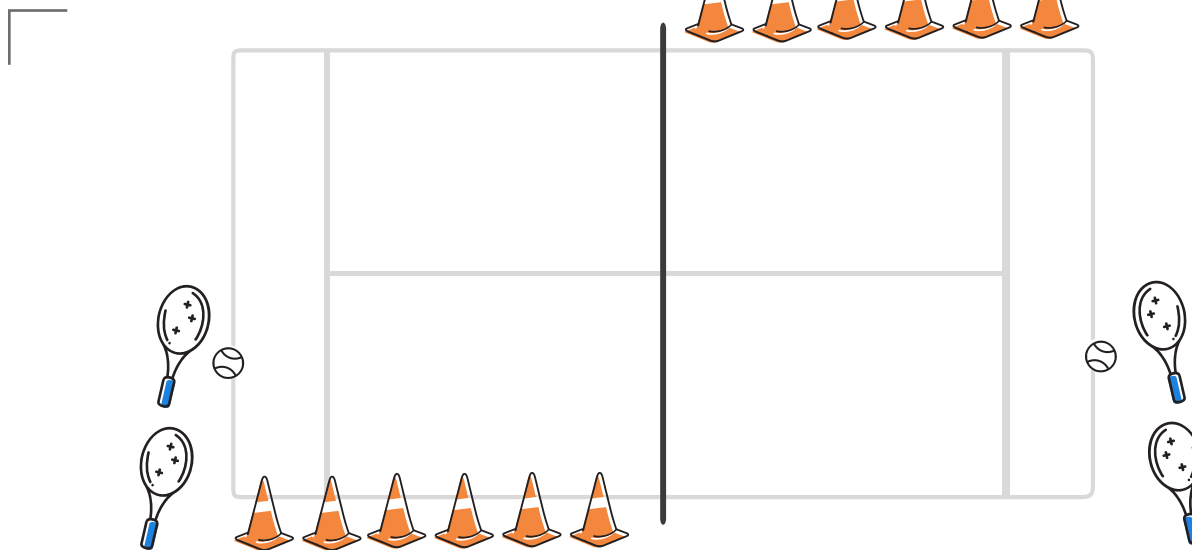
1. Serve and return must be good in order to play point.
2. Must serve to designated half of box.



COACHING TIP

At this level, players are able to serve/rally/score and play against an opponent. Try to incorporate team competition into all your games to create an environment where players feel free to experiment with new skills learned at practice.

ILLUSTRATION: CAPTURE THE CONE



VI. PLAY AT HOME

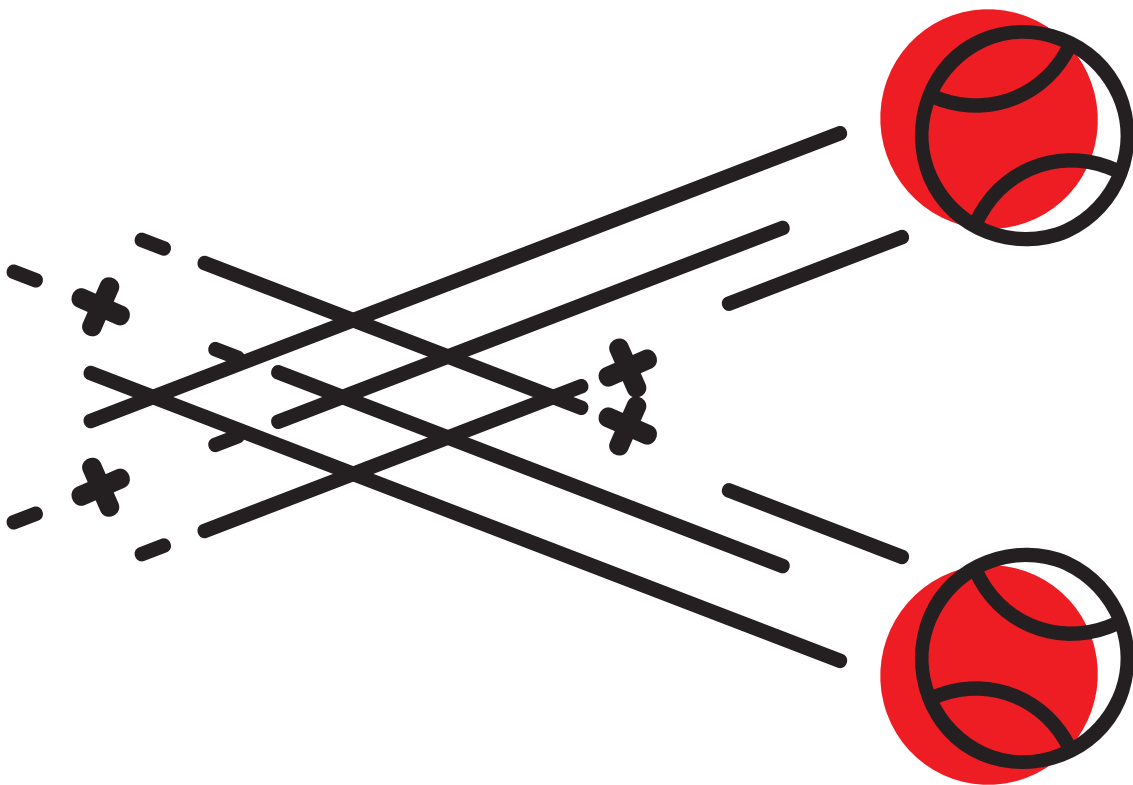
ALTERNATE SHOTS TO WALL

Setup

Play with red foam ball against garage door or solid wall.

Progressions

1. Serve overhand to wall and alternate hitting forehand and backhand groundstrokes.
2. Serve to left side of wall and alternate groundstrokes, then serve to right and alternate groundstrokes.
3. Serve to wall and rally with a friend.



WATCH ME CONTROL THE BALL

Equipment: Mini-net, caution tape or any type of rope; 21 to 23-inch racquets; red balls and orange balls; cones, poly-spots and TDs.

I. WARMUP

COURT SHAPES

Type: Cooperative, players in pairs.

Focus: Direction on groundstrokes.

Setup

- Two pairs per court, using half-court.
- Divide court according to existing lines and add TDs to split service boxes in half horizontally and vertically (see diagram).

Mission—Rally consistently to same area.

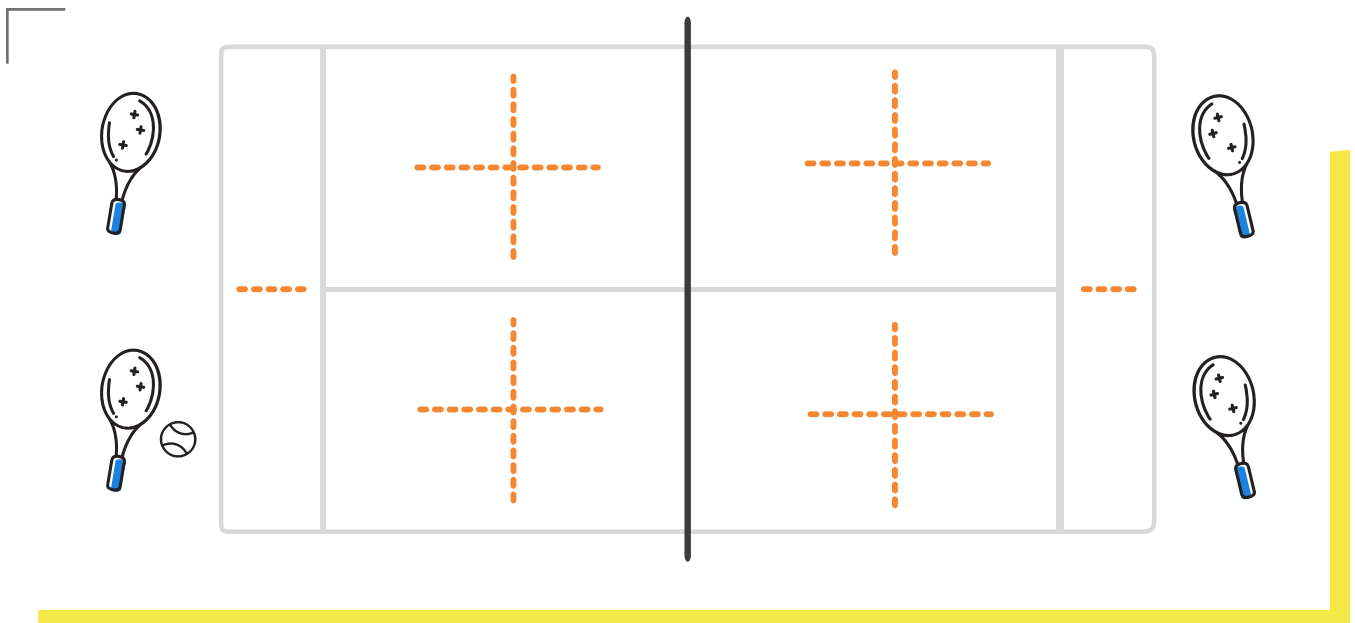
- Rally in a designated area determined by coach. Could be a different area on each side of net.
- Need help? Use shorter spaces and/or drop-hit and trap.

Goal—Adjust length of stroke according to space selected.

Progressions

1. One stroke, alternating strokes.
2. Hit crosscourt.

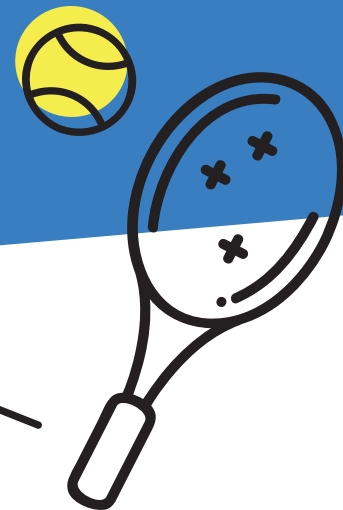
ILLUSTRATION: COURT SHAPES



II. CHARACTER

EFFORT

Practice on your own with a friend or family member.



III. ATHLETIC SKILLS

BALL EXCHANGE

Setup

- Place two lines of three half-cones on a diagonal from sideline to sideline on each side of net.
- Alley between cones should be about six feet wide.
- Place a ball on all three cones on one row; leave other row empty.
- Up to three players per set of cones.

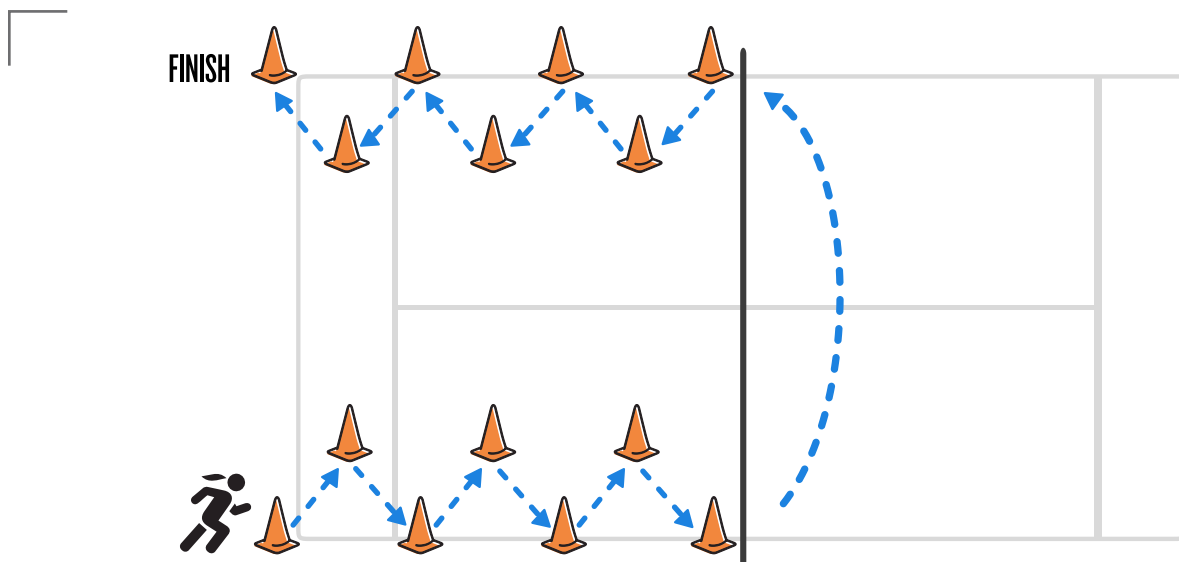
Mission

- Move to cone, pick up ball and place it on opposite row, one ball at a time, until all three balls are on other row. Turn around and put balls back where they were, one at a time.
- Shuffle back and forth to each cone.

Progressions

1. Use same hand to pick up and set down ball. Stay lateral and don't step across.
2. Pick up and set down ball with left hand on left side, right hand on right side (this requires changing hands with ball while moving from cone to cone).
3. Pivot from cone to cone. This requires some creativity from players.

ILLUSTRATION: BALL EXCHANGE



THREE-CONE TOUCH

Setup

- Players in pairs.
- Place two cones on a line and a third between and in front of them to form a "V." Cones should be no more than two feet apart.

Mission

- Stand between two cones facing third, squat on one leg and touch each cone with opposite hand.
- Perform sequence twice, repeat with opposite foot and hand, then switch with partner.

Progressions

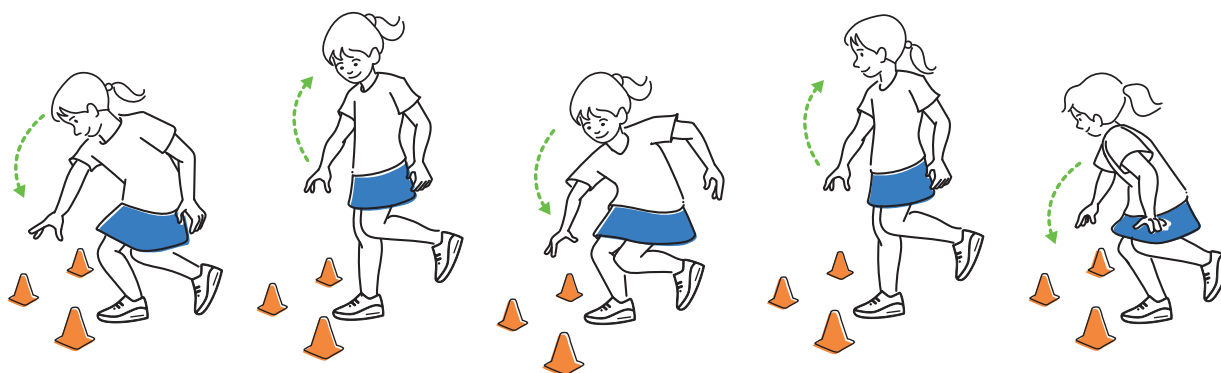
1. Stand up straight after each touch.
2. Right leg/right hand.
3. Left leg/left hand.



TEACHING TIP

The midline is an imaginary line down the center of the body that divides the body into left and right. Tennis requires both feet and hands to cross the midline to be successful. Touching cones or grabbing/catching balls across the body are excellent activities to develop this skill.

ILLUSTRATION: THREE-CONE TOUCH



MAKE 'EM MOVE

Setup

- Players in pairs, with one orange ball and TDL.
- No more than three pairs spread out on each side of court.
- Pairs face each other, five to six feet apart.
- One player feeds, other catches.
- Catcher uses TDL as “home base.”

Mission

- Toss ball to one side of catcher, who catches with one hand, tosses back and recovers to home base.
- Catcher uses right hand on right side, left hand on left.
- Make catcher move to left and right, using enough height for catcher to successfully track ball.
- After four successful catches on each side, switch roles.

Progressions

1. Toss ball higher, then lower.
2. Require a specific stance (open or square).



TEACHING TIP

Don't be concerned at first about which stance players use when catching. The main thing to focus on is moving and catching with one hand. Once successful, work on both open and square stances.

IV. TENNIS SKILLS

TRIANGLES

Type: Cooperative, groups of three.

Focus: Side to side, high/low.

Setup

- Players in groups of three. If necessary, can have two groups of three on one court.
- Two players on one side of net both feed and catch; player on other side hits. All players stand about five feet from net.

Mission One—Alternate shots left and right.

- Feeder tosses ball to hitter, who hits to other feeder.
- Feeder catches ball and tosses back to hitter, who continues to change direction each time.
- After three successful sequences, rotate positions.

Goal—Extend hand and racquet in direction of shot.

Progressions

1. Feeders drop-hit and trap.
2. All three players rally cooperatively.

Mission Two—Alternate shots high and low.

- One feeder, one hitter five feet from net; catcher on baseline.
- Hit first toss back to feeder, who catches in the air.
- Hit second toss over feeder's head, to land inside court. Catcher catches on one bounce and puts ball in bucket.
- Complete two successful sequences, then rotate one spot.

Goal—Adjust racquet face and follow-through for high/low sequence.

Progressions

1. Make hitter move wide and deep.
2. Hitter moves from middle of service box to service line to baseline.
3. Feeder drop-hits to hitter.

V. GAMES

SEE THE SPACE

Type: Cooperative to competitive, team.

Focus: Move ball.

Setup

- Up to five players per court.
- Champs/challengers format—one player feeds, other is “champ.” Remaining players are “challengers.”
- Feeder is off to side, close to net with supply of balls.
- Champ starts on side of baseline behind feeder.
- Challenger starts in center of baseline.

Mission—Hit ball to open space.

- Toss a wide ball to challenger, who hits an open-court groundstroke and recovers back to center.

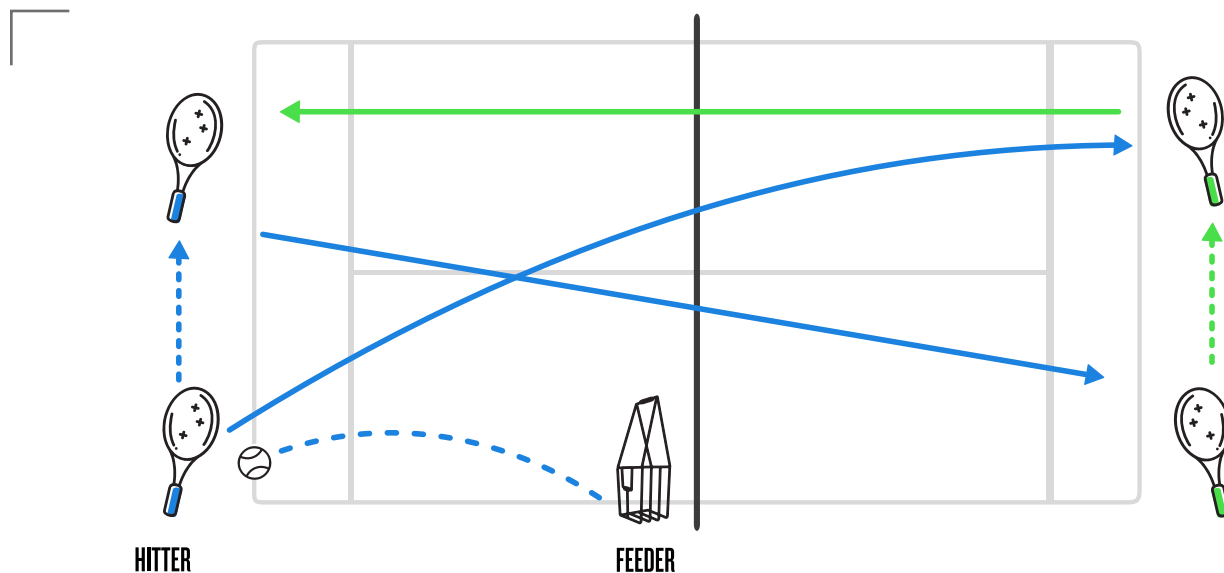
- Champ hits all balls back to center.
- Continue to rally in this manner until someone misses. Use TDLs to mark off center of court, if necessary.
- After a certain number of points or time, rotate new player to champ spot, and shift champ to feeder and feeder to challenger.
- If feeder struggles, put a poly-spot where feed should go.

Goal—Recover from wide ball by shuffling back to center or running when necessary.

Progressions

1. Feed crosscourt.
2. Play out points competitively.
3. Champ can hit anywhere.

ILLUSTRATION: SEE THE SPACE



VI. PLAY AT HOME

TRICK SHOTS

Setup

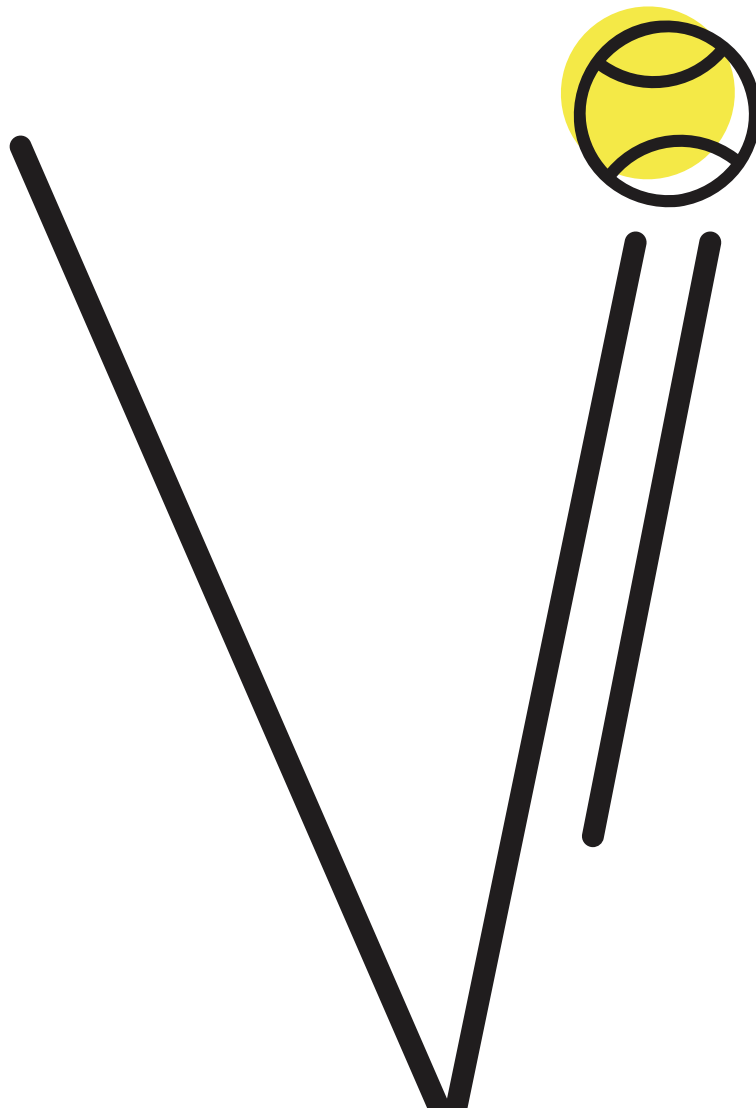
Play on driveway or any flat surface.

Mission—Create cool shots on bounce and in the air.

- Use any part of racquet to hit ball.
- Practice shots after bounce and in the air.
- Change grips to create different effects.

JUMP ROPE

Encourage kids to get a jump rope and start working on basics.



I CAN SERVE; SHOW ME YOUR RETURN!

Equipment: Mini-net, caution tape or any type of rope; 21 to 23-inch racquets; red balls; cones, poly-spots and TDLs.

I. WARMUP

ACCORDION RALLY

Type: Cooperative, players in pairs.

Focus: Groundstroke direction and consistency.

Setup

Two pairs per court, using half-court.

Mission—Keep rally going from different positions on court.

- Rally cooperatively beginning from middle of service box, any stroke.
- After five successful rallies, move to service line (without stopping rally), then baseline.
- After five successful rallies from baseline, move back into court—service line, then middle of box.

Goal—Keep rally going as players move from one spot to next.

Progressions

1. Rally crosscourt.
2. One stroke only.
3. More than five rallies.

II. CHARACTER

RESPECT

- Recognize effort in others.
- Support teammates when they try their hardest.



III. ATHLETIC SKILLS

POSITIONAL STARTS

Setup

- Players spread out on sideline. No more than four on each side of net.
- Players begin on their stomachs.

Mission

- On coach's command, get up and run to far sideline (slow down after crossing line).
- Emphasis is on big, strong strides and driving arms.
- Walk backward to starting point.
- After three rounds from starting position, move on to progressions.

Progressions

1. Face backward or sideways to start.
2. Start from sitting position.
3. Sprint and stop on opposite sideline in athletic position.



TARGET THROWS

Setup

- Two teams of three or four per court.
- Teams on opposite baselines; players on one side all have balls.
- Place an equal number of cones, poly-spots hula hoops and various targets inside every service box.

Mission

- Team with balls goes first. One player from deuce and one from ad throw diagonally over net at targets.
- Other team catches balls. Once everyone from first team has thrown, other team throws.
- Switch sides of court after each throw.
- Assign a value for throwing into appropriate box and a value for each target.
- See how many points players can score in one minute, or how long it takes to get to a set amount of points.
- Need help? Players move inside baseline to throw.

Progressions

1. Throw into a designated half of court.
2. Score points only for hitting targets.
3. Move targets to back half of service box.

Note: The throw should look more like an overhead motion than a serve. Avoid having players use sweeping arms, jumping up, etc.

TEACHING TIP

Throwing Progression (continue to next progression only if player is able to execute the prior movement)

- Turn sideways to throw.
- Throwing arm is in 90-degree position.
- Non-dominant arm is in balance position—bent, not straight ahead or up.
- Back toe stays on ground during throw.
- Throw is up and out, with arm extended after release.
- Palm of throwing hand and ball are facing backward (this will be the most difficult).

IV. TENNIS SKILLS

SERVE/RETURN PROGRESSION

Type: Cooperative, players in pairs.

Focus: Direct serve and return.

Setup

- Two pairs per court, diagonally across net from each other at service line.
- Use TDLs as “baseline” for players to stand behind.

Mission—Serve and return cooperatively with partner.

Goal—Server returns to ready position when partner hits return.

Progressions

1. Warm up by throwing to partner, who catches and throws back.
2. Serve to partner, who returns back to server. Change roles after four successful sequences. After both partners have served, switch sides of court.
3. Move players back to baseline and repeat.



TEACHING TIP

Introduce a continental grip to players who throw well.

V. GAMES

START IT OUT

Type: Cooperative, players in pairs; competitive.

Focus: Serve and return direction and consistency.

Setup

- Two pairs per court, diagonally across net from each other at service line.
- Split each service box in half vertically.

Mission—Serve to specific half of box and return to server.

- Serve to a specific spot in box, determined by coach.
- Returner hits back to server and they commence a crosscourt rally.
- Pair scores a point for serving and returning to specified zone.
- Play for a certain amount of time and try to beat your record.

Goal—Serve with direction and recover back to ready position after each shot.

Progressions

1. Pairs play entire court and return must go to a specific side.
2. Play out points competitively with servers versus returners.

IN THE FREEZER

Type: Competitive, team.

Focus: Directing serve.

Setup

- Two teams of two or three per court. One side serves, other returns.
- Serve from service line.

Mission—Direct serve away from opponent.

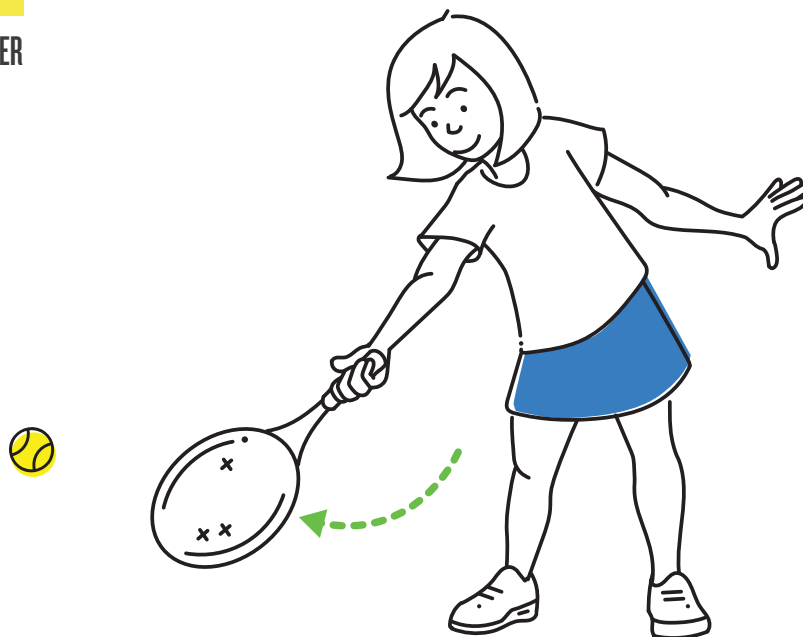
- Two play a point from deuce side, then other two from ad side.
- Returner is in “freezer,” so can’t move feet.
- Server aims away from returner.
- If returner misses, serving team wins point. If return is in court, returners win point.
- Play first team to seven, then switch sides.

Goal—Server uses speed with control, returner sets up in good ready position with wide base.

Progressions

1. Serve from baseline.
2. Play out points. If server wins point, serving team scores one point. If returner wins point, returners score two points.

ILLUSTRATION: IN THE FREEZER



VI. PLAY AT HOME

JUMP ROPE

Jump rope, working on cool tricks. Coach will ask for volunteers to demonstrate at next lesson.

SERVE AND RETURN AGAINST WALL

Setup

Play with red foam ball against garage door or solid wall.

Progressions

1. Serve overhand to wall, hit one groundstroke (return) and catch.
2. Serve to left then right side of wall.
3. Serve and rally until you miss.

LET'S GO TO NET!

Equipment: Mini-net, caution tape or any type of rope; 21 to 23-inch racquets; red balls; cones, poly-spots and TDLs.

I. WARMUP

SELF-VOLLEY

Type: Individual.

Focus: Volley consistency.

Setup

Players spread out around court.

Mission—Keep volley going on both sides.

- Hit continuous volleys up in the air.
- Encourage a continental grip and one-handed backhand for those who are successful.
- Have players set individual goals and try for “personal best.”

Goal—Keep ball in the air with very little foot movement (controlled space).

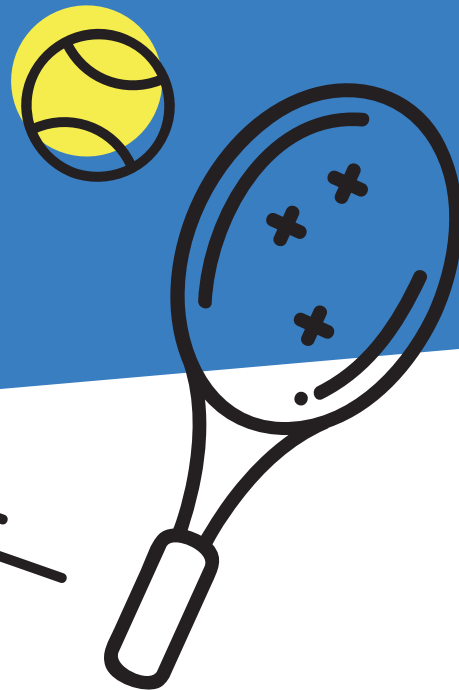
Progressions

1. Alternate forehand and backhand volleys.
2. With continental grip, use a little underspin on each volley.

II. CHARACTER

RESPONSIBILITY

- Be responsible for your equipment at practice.
- Collect your equipment when leaving practice.



III. ATHLETIC SKILLS

NET MOVES

Setup

Players spread out on sideline, no more than four on each side of net.

Mission

- Coach demonstrates a move and players perform move to opposite sideline and back.
- For more difficult moves, like carioca, start slowly.
- Perform each move there and back twice before progressing.

Progressions

1. Side skips, backwards skips
2. Carioca
3. Pivots
4. Broad jumps

HI-LO TOSS

Setup

- Players in pairs with orange ball.
- Maximum four pairs spread out on each side of net.
- Players face each other, four to five feet apart.

Mission

- One player feeds, other catches.
- Toss to catcher, who catches with one hand after bounce and tosses back.
- Toss second ball high. Catch in the air above waist level and toss back.
- After four successful hi-lo catches, switch roles.

Progressions

1. Catch with right hand on right side, left hand on left.
2. Move player on both tosses.
3. Increase distance between players.



TEACHING TIP

Catch in the air should be above waist, with fingers pointing upward.

IV. TENNIS SKILLS

VOLLEY PROGRESSION

Type: Cooperative, players in pairs.

Focus: Volley direction.

Setup:

- Pairs on opposite sides about four feet from net.
- One feeds, other volleys.

Mission—Build a volley-to-groundstroke rally.

Goal—Step with proper foot on each volley and return back to ready position.

Progressions

1. Volleyer holds racquet at top of handle. Feeder tosses ball to volleyer, who bumps ball back to feeder out of the air. Feeder catches after bounce and tosses back. Switch roles after five bumps back.
2. Volleyer moves hand to bottom of handle and volleys back to feeder. Switch after five volleys.
3. Volleyer turns to repeat sequence with backhand. Switch roles after five volleys.

Note: If players are successful, encourage a continental grip and one-handed backhand volley.

4. Now have one player on service line, other on opposite side four feet from net.
5. Player on service line drop-hits a forehand groundstroke to net player.
6. Net player volleys back to partner, who traps ball and repeats groundstroke-volley-trap sequence.

Additional Progressions

1. Rally groundstroke to volley.
2. Rally to just one side of volleyer.
3. Volleyer hits to a specific side of hitter.
4. Rally from baseline to net.

V. GAMES

PASS ME

Type: Competitive, team.

Focus: Volleys and passing shots.

Setup

- Two teams of two or three on opposite ends of court.
- One side volleys from middle of service box, other side passes from baseline. Play points one on one; other players are off court at a safe distance.

Mission—Approach and volley.

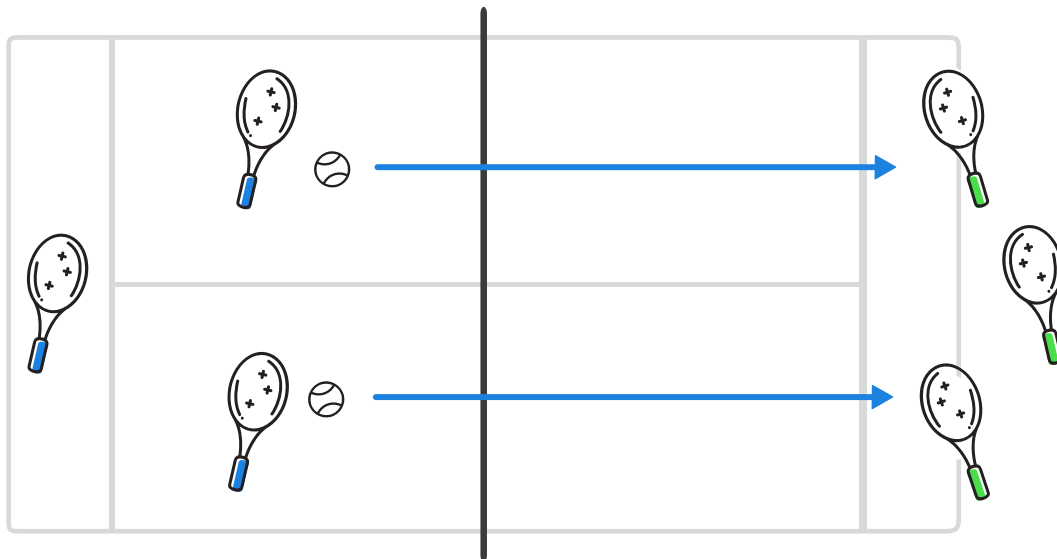
- Voleyer drop-hits to passer, who attempts a groundstroke passing shot.
- Voleyer scores a point for volleying ball over net and in court. Passer scores a point by hitting ball past volleyer without volleyer touching it.
- Play to seven and switch roles.

Goal—After approach, volleyer split-steps on contact of passing shot.

Progressions

1. Drop-hitters start on service line or baseline.
2. Passers can lob.

ILLUSTRATION: PASS ME



VI. PLAY AT HOME

SELF-VOLLEY

Setup

Play on driveway or any flat surface.

Mission—Keep volley going on both sides.

Progressions

1. Alternate forehand and backhand volleys.
2. With continental grip, use a little underspin on each volley.

I CAN SERVE WHERE I WANT

Equipment: Mini-net, caution tape or any type of rope; 21 to 23-inch racquets; red balls; cones, poly-spots and TDLs.

I. WARMUP

NO-NET TENNIS

Type: Cooperative, players in pairs.

Focus: Groundstroke and volley consistency.

Setup

- Up to three pairs on each side of net.
- Pairs are on opposite sides of service line and baseline (the alley of the 78-foot court), with a poly-spot between them.

Mission—Perform different types of rallies.

- Have a dink rally, making ball go slightly up off racquet and aiming for poly-spot.
- Once you can rally ball back and forth 10 times, try volleying back and forth in the air.

- Next, one side dink-volleys, other lets it bounce and taps back at shoulder level.
- Need help? One player tosses, other volleys back softly.

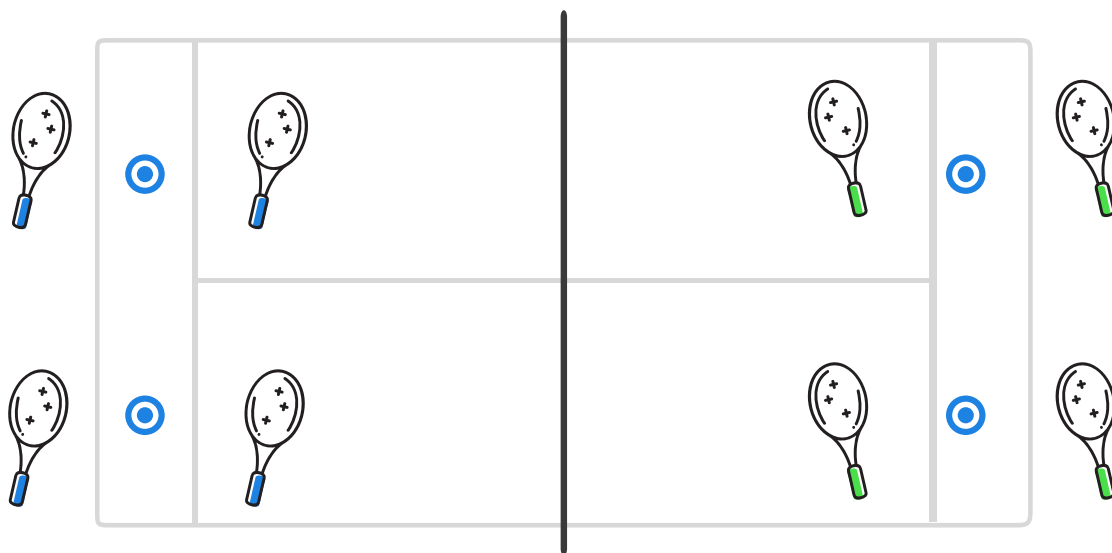
Note: This is a great time to use a deck of cards or dice to determine how many balls to hit.

Goal—Rally in small space with limited backswing and follow-through.

Progressions

1. Use continental grip for dink volley and groundstroke.
2. Use patterns such as forehand-to-forehand or crosscourt and down the line.

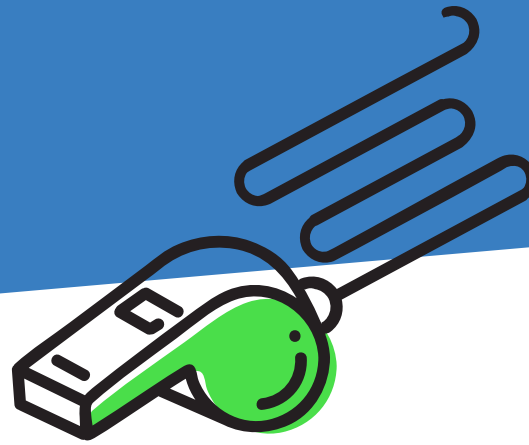
ILLUSTRATION: NO-NET TENNIS



II. CHARACTER

PLAY FAIR

Follow rules of the games and activities at practice.



III. ATHLETIC SKILLS

COPY CAT

Setup

Players spread out on court, no more than four on each side of net.

Mission

- Coach demonstrates a specific movement.
- Players copy, using shadow strokes.

Progressions

1. Crossover recovery. Line up from net to behind baseline. Coach runs to sideline, shadow-strokes, performs a crossover and shuffles back to middle. Complementary skill: carioca.
2. Hop-move approach (left-left or right-right). Line up across baseline. Coach demonstrates an approach shot off of front foot. Complementary skill: side skips.
3. Drop-step, crossover and run for overhead. Complementary skill: pivots and carioca.



TEACHING TIP

These are all important tennis-specific movements. Players will struggle with them at first, so make sure to go slowly and remain patient!

VERTICAL JUMP

Setup

Players spread out along fence.

Mission

- Jump vertically as high as possible as if attempting to grab a rebound in basketball.
- Land in an athletic stance, as quietly as possible.

Progressions

1. Stand facing fence, trying to touch as high as you can. Try to beat your record each time.
2. Players in pairs, facing each other with one big ball. One jumps up with ball fully extended above head. After landing in an athletic position, keeps feet on ground and chest passes to partner, who repeats.

BOX THROWS

Setup

- Players in teams of three or four.
- Each team has two or three servers—each with one red ball—and one returner on other side of net.

Mission

- From baseline, servers throw ball over net diagonally into appropriate service box.
- Returner catches, and after everyone has served/thrown, tosses balls back.
- After two rounds of throwing, rotate returners. After a complete rotation, serve/throw from other side of court.
- Use a scoring system that rewards players for throwing in correct box and catching ball after one bounce.
- Need help? Move inside baseline to throw, allow catcher multiple bounces.

Progressions

1. Split service box in half with TDLs and throw to a specific side of box.
2. Divide returners and servers evenly on both sides and perform a throw-catch-throw back sequence to score a point.

IV. TENNIS SKILLS

IN THE ZONE

Type: Cooperative, players in pairs.

Focus: Direction on serve and return.

Setup

- Two pairs per court, partners on opposite baselines.
- Service boxes split in half vertically with TDLs.

Mission—Serve and return in specific patterns.

- Two players at a time, one shot each. Serve out wide from deuce court, return crosscourt, then stop. Next two players come up and repeat.
- Switch roles after four sequences.
- Next pattern is serve down the T and return down the line.
- Serve from ad side after players complete both patterns.
- Score a point for each completed sequence.

Goal—Stay consistent with serve and return setup (routine), and go back to ready position after hitting.

Progressions

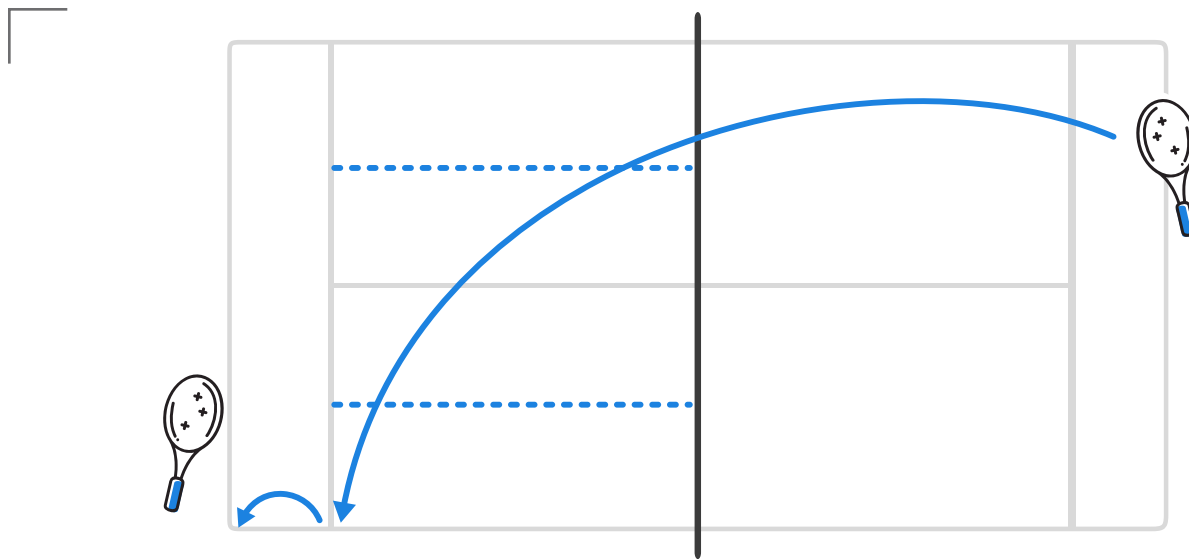
1. Serve, return and hit next two balls in a pattern.
2. Serve and return pattern, then play out point.



TEACHING TIP

Avoid the temptation to break the serve down in parts and give a lengthy explanation. Most kids will learn the overhand serve through demonstration, repetition and working on their throwing motion.

ILLUSTRATION: IN THE ZONE



V. GAMES

BACKHAND ATTACK

Type: Competitive, team.

Focus: Serve direction.

Setup

- Two teams of two or three.
- One side serves, other returns.

Mission—Serve to backhand.

- Play out point, starting with serve.
- Returner must stand behind a poly-spot or TDL positioned behind baseline and halfway between singles line and center mark. Server aims for opponent's backhand.
- If player returns serve with backhand, serving team receives a bonus point. Player who wins rally also receives a point.
- Change roles after seven points. Use visual scoring with half-cones on side of court.
- Need help? Start point with drop-hit, underhand serve, or throw.

Goal—Make returner stretch for serve, look to take advantage on next shot.

Progressions

1. Aim for opponent's forehand.
2. Must play server's second ball to a designated side.

VI. PLAY AT HOME

SERVE PLUS ONE

Setup

- Play with red foam ball against garage door or solid wall.
- Put a mark on door/wall or use existing mark.

Progressions

1. Serve overhand to target, hit one groundstroke to same target.
2. Stand to right or left of mark, serve to target, move and hit groundstroke.
3. Serve and rally until you miss.

LET'S GO TO NET ... AGAIN!

Equipment: Mini-net, caution tape or any type of rope; 21 to 23-inch racquets; red balls; cones, poly-spots and TDLs.

I. WARMUP

SELF-VOLLEY

Type: Individual.

Focus: Volley consistency.

Setup

Players spread out around court.

Mission—Keep volley going on both sides.

- Hit continuous volleys up in the air, both forehands and backhands.
- Encourage a continental grip and one-handed backhand for those who are successful.
- Set a goal and try for a “personal best.”

Goal—Use spin on ball with continental grip.

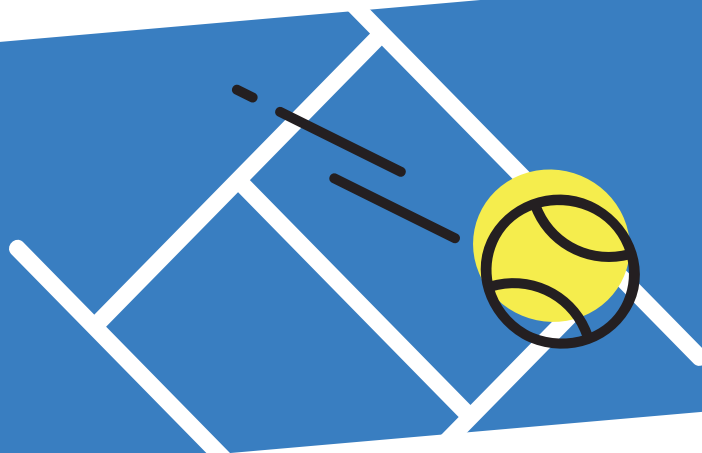
Progressions

1. One stroke only (all forehands or all backhands).
2. Alternate forehand and backhand volleys.

II. CHARACTER

PLAY FAIR

- Keep track of score during game.
- Call shots in/out honestly.



III. ATHLETIC SKILLS

SKIPPING (MULTIDIRECTIONAL)

Setup

Players spread out on sideline, no more than four on each side of net.

Mission

- Skip to opposite sideline and back.
- Do two rounds and move to next progression.

Progressions

1. High-knee skip.
2. Low skip.
3. Sideways skip.
4. Backward skip.

RHYTHM MACHINE

Setup

- Three or four pairs on each side of net.
- Pairs start on sideline, facing each other.

Mission

- Start with basic “patty-cake.”
- Once you get rhythm, continue patty-caking while shuffling to opposite sideline and back.

Progressions

1. Create different clapping sequences while standing still. Once you get your rhythm, do same while shuffling to opposite sideline and back.
2. Shorten distance and go back and forth.

SHUFFLE TOSS

Setup

- Three or four pairs on each side of net.
- Start on sideline, facing each other with one red ball.

Mission

- Shuffle from sideline to sideline while bouncing ball downward (palm down) to partner, who catches and bounces it back.
- Can use two hands at first to get rhythm.
- Need help? Start by bouncing ball back and forth.

Progressions

1. Bounce with one hand, using an orange ball.
2. Left hand only, right hand only.
3. Partners use opposite hands.

IV. TENNIS SKILLS

CLOSE THE NET

Type: Cooperative, players in pairs.

Focus: Approach and volley with direction.

Setup

- Players in pairs on half-court. One volleys, other feeds.
- Volleyer starts on service line, feeder in middle of service box.

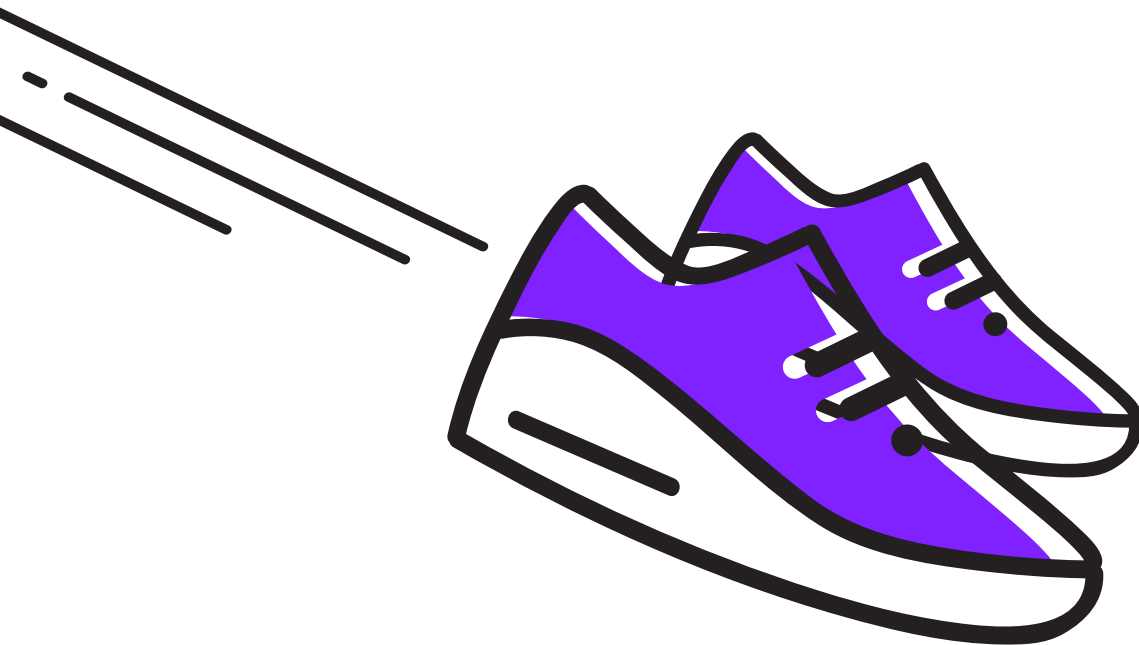
Mission—Perform approach, split-step and two volleys.

- Volleyer drop-hits ball down the line, moves to net and does a split-step, ready to volley.
- Feeder tosses two balls to volleyer's forehand side. Volleyer hits first back to feeder, who catches after bounce. Volleyer angles second ball short and away from feeder.
- After six attempts, players change roles. After a complete rotation, switch to backhand side.

Goal—Adjust motion on two volleys: Extend outward for first volley, then angle racquet with soft hand on second.

Progressions

1. Feeder catches approach shot and tosses back to volleyer, who volleys it back to feeder. Feeder tosses same ball back for one more volley.
2. Feeder traps approach with racquet, drop-hits and traps again.
3. Rally all balls after drop-hit.





COURT CENTS: SETTING UP COURTS

Whenever possible, set up your 36-foot courts with a fence on one side. For feeding drills, put the tosser on the same side as the fence so balls being hit will roll into the fence instead of onto an adjacent court.

V. GAMES

PASS ME

Type: Competitive, team.

Focus: Volleys and passing shots.

Setup

- Two teams of two to three; volleyers on service line on one side of net, passers on baseline on other.
- Play points one on one, with other players off court at a safe distance.

Mission—Control direction of passing shot.

- Volleyer drop-hits crosscourt to passer and comes to net. Passer attempts a down-the-line passing shot.
- Net player scores for volleying passing shot over net or simply touching ball with racquet. Passer scores by getting ball past net player.
- Play to seven and switch roles.

Goal—Volleyer plays crosscourt approach and covers line; passer sets up with good shoulder turn for passing shot.

Progressions

1. Start with drop-hit from baseline and come to net.
2. Passers can play down the line or crosscourt on first ball.

VI. PLAY AT HOME

JUMP ROPE

Have someone show you some jump-rope tricks. By now, everyone should be able to do single jumps (jump once, making a complete loop with rope).

VOLLEY TO WALL

Setup

Play with red foam ball against garage door or solid wall.

Progressions

1. Volley against wall in the air.
2. One stroke, then alternate.
3. Play with a friend and alternate hits, or volley back and forth in the air without a wall.

PLAYING FROM THE BASELINE

Equipment: Mini-net, caution tape or any type of rope; 21 to 23-inch racquets; red balls and orange balls; cones, poly-spots and TDLS.

I. WARMUP

NO-NET TENNIS

Type: Cooperative, players in pairs.

Focus: Groundstroke and volley consistency.

Setup

- Up to three pairs on each side of net.
- Pairs face each other on opposite sides of service line and baseline with a poly-spot between them.

Mission—Perform different types of rallies.

- Have a dink rally, making ball go slightly up off racquet and aiming for poly-spot.
- Once you can rally ball back and forth 10 times, try volleying back and forth in the air.
- Next, one side dink-volleys, other lets it bounce and taps back at shoulder level.
- Need help? One player tosses, other volleys back softly.

Note: This is a great time to use a deck of cards or dice to determine how many balls to hit.

Goal—Rally in small space with limited backswing and follow-through.

Progressions

1. Use continental grip for dink-volley and groundstroke.
2. Use patterns such as forehand-to-forehand or crosscourt and down the line.

II. CHARACTER

TEAMWORK

- Be a caring teammate.
- Help others to improve.



III. ATHLETIC SKILLS

MAKE 'EM MOVE

Setup

- Players in pairs, with orange ball and TDL.
- No more than three pairs spread out on each side of net.
- Players face each other, five to six feet apart.
- One player feeds, other catches.
- Catcher uses TDL as “home base.”

Mission

- Feeder tosses ball to one side of catcher, who catches with one hand, tosses back to feeder and recovers to home base.
- Catcher uses right hand on right side, left hand on left.
- Feeder makes catcher move by tossing balls side to side, high/low and deep/short.
- Switch roles every minute.

Progressions

1. Require a specific stance (open or square) and catching hand.
2. Increase distance between feeder and catcher.

BALANCE WARS

Setup

- Up to four pairs on each side of net.
- One red ball per pair.

Mission

- Pairs stand on right foot facing each other and holding onto same red ball with left hand.
- Linked via tennis ball, battle each other for balance without hopping.
- First player to lose balance or touch other foot to ground loses.
- Once a player wins, switch to left foot and right hand and resume play.
- Play for set number of rounds. Keep score and switch partners at intervals.

IV. TENNIS SKILLS

SELF-TOSS AND PARTNER TOSS HI/LO

Type: Cooperative, players in pairs.

Focus: High-low forehand and backhand groundstrokes.

SELF-TOSS HI-LO

Setup

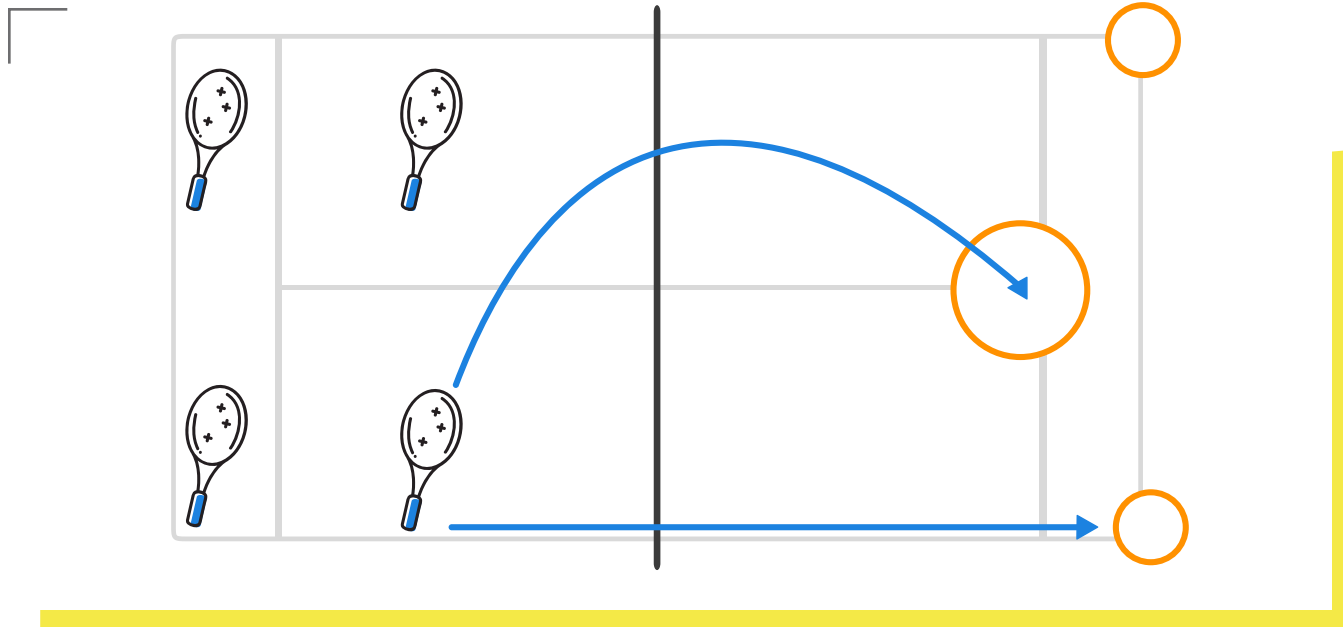
- Two pairs per court—two hitters in service boxes on one side of net, two waiting on deck.
- Place one big target in middle of court, two more in each corner.

Mission—Control ball high and low.

- Set up same way as drop-hit, except tossing arm is palm up.
- First toss is high and slightly backward. Lob ball over net to center target.
- Second toss is up and in front. Drive ball straight ahead to corner target.
- After four successful sequences with forehand, switch to backhand.
- For backhand, self-toss with dominant hand and place hand back on racquet after toss.
- Need help? Coach helps with toss.

Goal—Adjust swing according to location and height of shot.

ILLUSTRATION: SELF TOSS HI/LO



PARTNER TOSS HI-LO

Setup

Same as above.

Mission

- Feeder at net on same side as hitter; hitter in middle of service box.
- Toss first feed slightly above hitter's head, second ball high and short.
- Hitter plays lob/drive combination to targets.
- Complete four successful sequences each and switch to backhand.
- Need help? Feeder stands to side of player.

Goal—Adjust swing according to location and height of shot, recover back to center after each ball.

Progressions

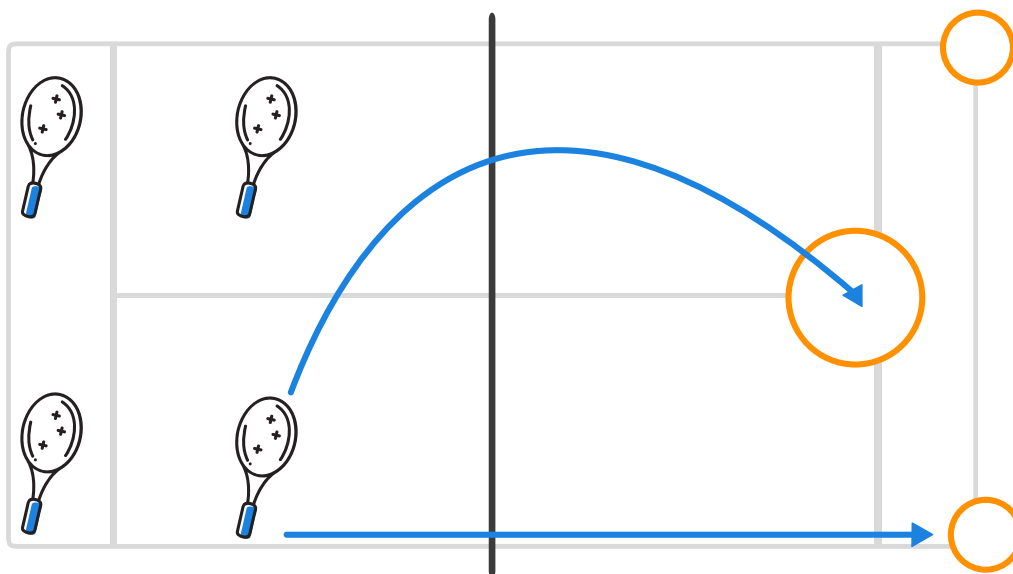
1. Toss/self-toss higher and further back on deep ball.
2. Move players closer to baseline.
3. Feed with racquet from opposite side of net.



TEACHING TIP

At times, the coach may want to step in and feed to make the hitter work harder, demonstrate a proper feed or introduce a new skill.

ILLUSTRATION: PARTNER TOSS HI/LO



V. GAMES

KEEP AWAY

Type: Competitive, team.

Focus: Using width on groundstrokes.

Setup

- Two teams of two or three on opposite sides of net.
- Use TDLs to make a big square around center mark of baseline in each back court. This area will be known as “the middle.”

Mission—Keep ball out of the middle.

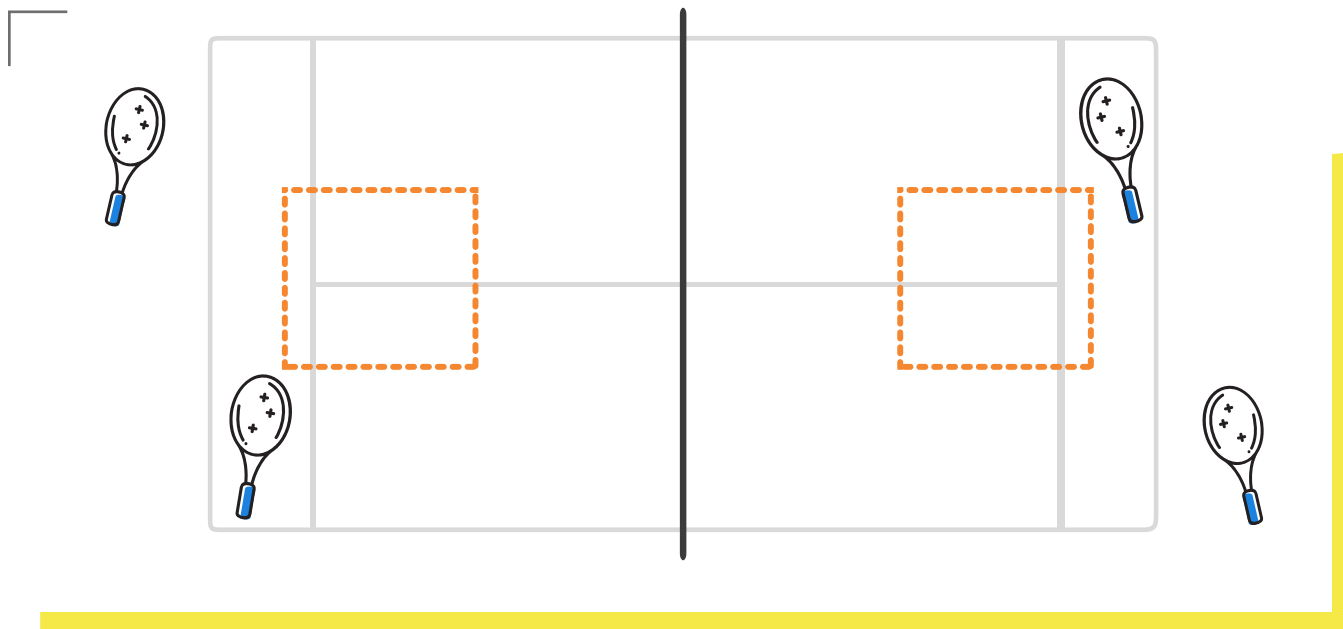
- Play points starting with a serve. Lose a point if you hit twice in the middle.
- Play first to seven (use visual score) and switch players after game, if necessary.

Goal—After serve and return, step into court and drive ball to corners or use shorter angles.

Progressions

1. Can't hit any balls in the middle.
2. Just one serve.
3. Bonus point if opponent moves outside sideline.

ILLUSTRATION: KEEP AWAY



VI. PLAY AT HOME

RALLY WITH A FRIEND

Setup

Play on driveway or any flat surface.

Progressions

1. Hit with any stroke, one stroke, alternating strokes.
2. Create a court, then change size.

LET'S PLAY!

Equipment: Mini-net, caution tape or any type of rope; 21 to 23-inch racquets; red balls; cones, poly-spots and TDLs.

I. WARMUP

TRICK SHOTS

Type: Individual.

Focus: Be creative!

Setup

Players spread out around court.

Mission—Show coach what you can do.

- Use any part of racquet to hit ball.
- Can hit after bounce or in the air.
- Use different grips to create different effects.

Progression

Trick shots with partner.



TEACHING TIP

Challenge kids to keep working on their tricks and creating new ones. These activities develop better racquet skills and will translate to a more creative game.

II. CHARACTER

RESPECT

- Introduce yourself to opponent before play.
- Look your opponent in the eye when shaking hands.



III. ATHLETIC SKILLS

RELAY RACES

Setup

- Two teams of four to six on each side of net.
- Teams start on sidelines in a straight line.

Mission

- When coach says “Go,” first player runs to opposite sideline and back.
- Next player goes when tagged; must start behind sideline.

Progressions

1. Players pick which movement to use.
2. Add a ball and require an additional task (players pick).
3. Change starting position (back turned, sitting down, etc.).

IV. TENNIS SKILLS

CARD SHARK

Type: Team, competition with cooperative skills, players in pairs.

Focus: Groundstroke consistency.

Setup

- Two pairs per court, using half-court and hitting from service line.
- Coach has a deck of cards and will establish a color for each stroke (e.g., red card is forehand).
- Use all cards; joker is wild.

Mission—Rally same number of balls as number on card.

- One player from each pair picks a card and runs back to spot.
- Players rally number of times indicated by card, with correct stroke, then hold onto card and pick another.
- Create scoring that lets players compete as a group (play until all cards are gone), or separate teams and play for designated time.
- Need help? Drop-hit and trap or any stroke is fine.

Goal—Keep rally going with good footwork (one stroke only).

Progressions

1. Move players back.
2. Rally crosscourt with outside stroke.

KEEP AWAY

Type: Competitive, team.

Focus: Using width on groundstrokes.

Setup

- Two teams of two or three on opposite sides of net.
- Use TDLs to make a big square around center mark of baseline in each back court. This area will be known as “the middle.”

Mission—Keep ball out of the middle.

- Play points starting with a serve. Lose a point if you hit twice in the middle.
- Play first to seven (use visual score) and switch players after game, if necessary.

Goal—After serve and return, step into court and drive ball to corners or use shorter angles.

Progressions

1. Can't hit any balls in the middle.
2. Just one serve.
3. Bonus point if opponent moves outside sideline.

TAG-TEAM SINGLES

Type: Cooperative team, competitive team.

Focus: Directing groundstrokes.

Setup

- Minimum four players.
- Split players into two groups, with each group forming a line behind middle of each baseline.
- Boundaries are court lines.

Mission—Keep rally going!

- First player from one side drop-hits ball over net and moves to end of line.
- First player on other side returns ball down center and goes to end of line.
- Each subsequent player hits one ball and moves to end of line, keeping point going until someone misses.
- Try to set a team record.
- Need help? Use service line as baseline, give players two tries.

Goal—Control ball down center of court.

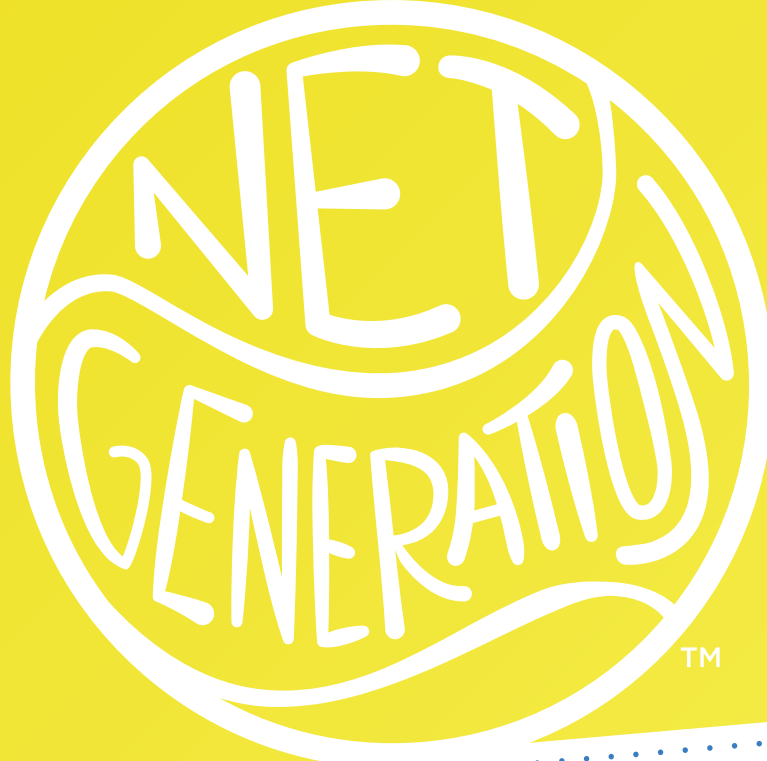
Progressions

1. Courts compete for longest rally.
2. Play competitively, where ball is hit anywhere in court.
3. Only one stroke.

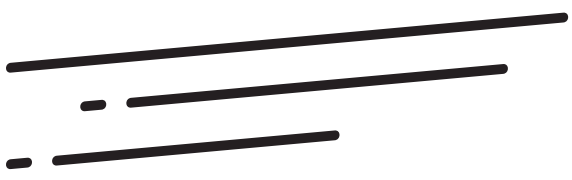
VI. PLAY AT HOME

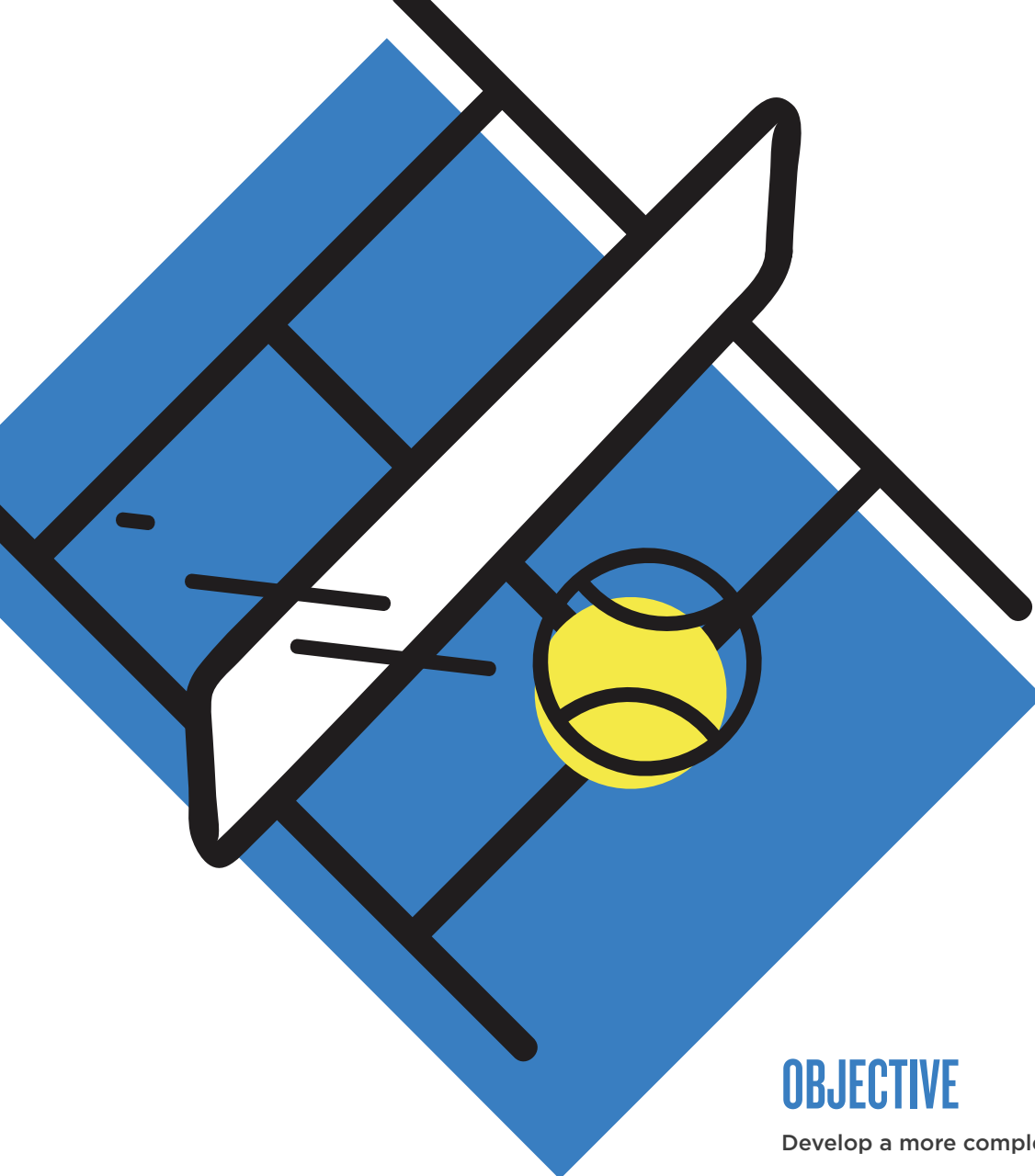
PLAY JUNIOR TEAM TENNIS

By now, players are ready to join a team, especially if they've been to a Play Day. Contact your district or section office if you don't have a league in your area.



RED BALL 01





NOTES:

If practice is 60 minutes, add a short dynamic warmup to the lesson plan or have players come early.

If practice is longer than 60 minutes, add a dynamic warmup at the beginning and more point play at the end.

OBJECTIVE

Develop a more complete game on the 36-foot court.

SAMPLE LESSON PLAN

Total: 60 minutes

- Warmup: 6 - 8 minutes
- Character: 3 minutes or less
- Skills (athletic and tennis): 25 - 30 minutes
- Games: 15 - 20 minutes
- Play at Home: 3 minutes or less

PLANS AT A GLANCE



Warmup	Character	Athletic Skills	Tennis Skills Development	Games	Play at Home
01 Rally with My Partner	Respect	Jump Rope to Skip Loops Shuffle Toss Make 'em Move	Triangles	Capture the Cone Point Play	Best Rally
02 How Do You Hit Topspin?	Effort	Obstacle Course Compass Jumps Four-Corner Toss	Angle/Down-the-Line Combo Self-Toss, Partner Toss	Sideliner	Make It Jump
03 I Can Slice	Positivity	Positional Starts Line Jumps Grab and Throw	Slice and Dice	7 Up Four-Square	Slice Rally
04 Rally Games	Positivity	Let's March Prone Extensions Quarterback	Squeeze Rally	Capture the Cone: First Four	Over and Under
05 Spin My Serve	Independence	Serpentine Shuffle Agility Ladder Two-Ball Throw	Slice and Dice Serve	Serve Pyramids Point Play	Slice Serve and Rally to Wall
06 Up in the Air	Independence	Figure 8 Cone Weaves Vertical Jumps Hi-Lo Toss	Figure 8 Volleys Close the Net	Pass Me	Trick Shots
07 Groundstrokes, Volleys, Overheads, & Serves, Oh My!	Independence	Jump Rope to Skip Loops Shuffle Toss Three-Ball Throw	Hi-Lo	Island Tennis	Mini-Tennis
08 Check Out My Skills	Respect	Mini-Tennis Hi-Lo	Squeeze Rally	Sideliner Four-Square Black Hole	Play a Tournament

RALLY WITH MY PARTNER

Equipment: Mini-net, caution tape or any type of rope; 21 to 23-inch racquets, red balls and orange balls; cones, poly-spots and TDs.

I. WARMUP

FIGURE 8

Type: Cooperative, players in pairs.

Focus: Change of direction on groundstrokes.

Setup

- Two pairs per court, using half-court. Players start on service lines.

Mission—Change direction on every ball.

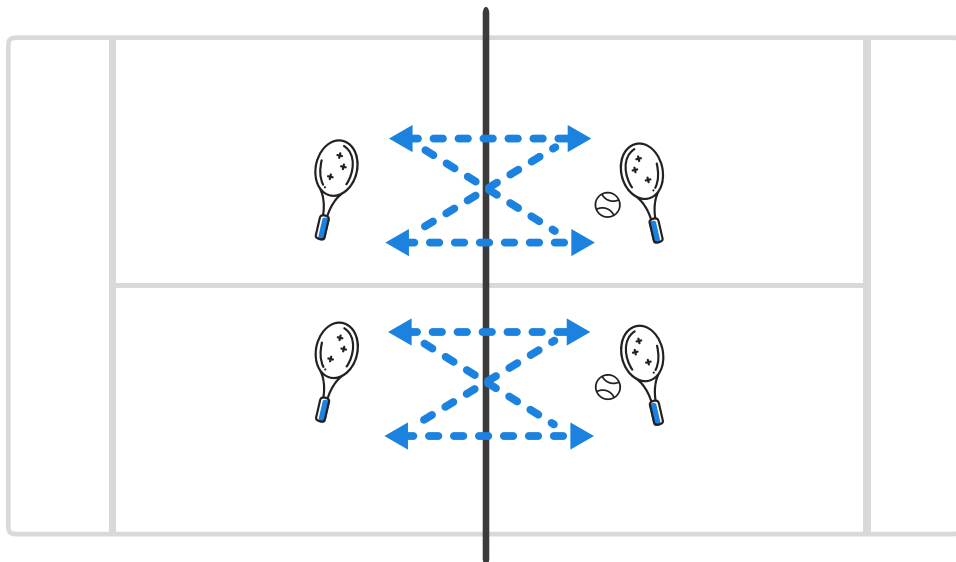
- Rally cooperatively; one side hits down the line, other hits crosscourt.
- Move partner only a few feet to right and left using outside stroke.
- Two minutes in each pattern, then same from baseline.

Goal—Find rally pace you can control with appropriate speed and spin.

Progressions

1. Slice and topspin from service line.
2. One side hits all forehands.

ILLUSTRATION: FIGURE 8



II. CHARACTER

RESPECT

Respect teammates and opponents by treating everyone equally.



III. ATHLETIC SKILLS

JUMP ROPE TO SKIP LOOPS

Note: Have each player bring a jump rope to practice, or provide one.

Setup

- Each player with jump rope.
- Set up a simple path for players to follow, such as lines of court or cones and markers.

Mission

- Once players have established a baseline of jumping rope in place (single jumps), they can begin to move along designated path.
- Make sure path involves moving forward, sideways and even backward.

Progressions

1. Move forward by jumping.
2. Move forward by jogging.

SHUFFLE TOSS

Setup

- Three to four pairs on each side of net.
- Pairs on sideline facing each other, with one orange ball.

Mission

- While shuffling from sideline to sideline, bounce ball downward (palm down) back and forth with partner, catching between bounces. Use only one hand to bounce and catch—either hand.
- After two successful times to sideline and back, toss and catch in the air.
- Need help? Use both hands.

Progressions

1. Left hand only, right hand only.
2. Different hand than partner.
3. Alternate two straight on bounce, two straight in the air.

MAKE 'EM MOVE

Setup

- Players in pairs, with orange ball and TDL.
- Maximum three pairs spread out on each side of net.
- Pairs face each other, four to six feet apart.
- One feeds, other catches.
- Catcher uses TDL as “home base.”

Mission

- Make catcher move by tossing balls side to side, high/low and deep/short. Catch on one bounce and recover to home base.
- Catch with right hand on right side, left hand on left.
- Once successful, toss balls slightly above catcher’s head. Catch one-handed in the air.
- Switch roles every minute.
- Need help? Move closer together.

Progressions

1. For high ball, catch with opposite foot and hand.
2. Move farther apart.

IV. TENNIS SKILLS

TRIANGLES

Type: Cooperative, groups of three.

Focus: Change of direction and off-center recovery.

Setup

- Players in groups of three. If necessary, can have two groups of three on one court.
- Two players on one side of net, one on other. All players on baseline.

Mission—Alternate shots left and right.

- Any player starts rally with drop-hit.
- Single player alternates shots to two players.
- Two players hit right back to single player.
- After four successful sequences, rotate positions.

Goal—Recover according to direction of shot.

Progressions

1. Single player hits all forehands, then all backhands.
2. Two players hit only their outside stroke.



TEACHING TIP

The purpose of this activity is to teach off-center recovery to single player. Use poly-spots or TDLs to indicate where they should recover. If necessary, have players drop-hit and trap to give single player time to recover properly.

CAPTURE THE CONE

Type: Competitive, team.

Focus: Changing direction on return of serve.

Setup

- Two teams of two or three on full court.
- Both teams have five to seven cones lined up on their side, off court by net.

Mission—Move opponent with return.

- Play out points with one serve.
- Returner picks side before point starts.
- Returner scores by executing return to designated side. Winner of point also scores.
- Winner of point runs to other side of court and “captures a cone” for team, then next players on teams go.
- Play games by time, team with most cones wins, or team with all cones wins.
- Switch serving teams after each game.

Goal—Take return early to put pressure on server.

Progressions

1. Must serve to designated half of box.
2. Players pick pattern.

POINT PLAY

Note: Whenever there’s time left, or practice lasts 90 minutes, add point play.

Setup

- Two teams of two or three, using full court.
- One team serves, other returns.

Mission—Play points with serve and return.

- Play out games as a team.
- Play one point and rotate if three players per team, two points and rotate if two per team.
- Switch servers after game ends.

Goal—Apply day’s theme to point play (change of direction).

VI. PLAY AT HOME

BEST RALLY

Setup

Play with red foam ball against garage door or solid wall.

Progressions

- Serve to wall, then rally for numbers. Try to set a personal best.
- Do same with a friend and hit until you miss.

HOW DO YOU HIT TOPSPIN?

Equipment: Mini-net, caution tape or any type of rope; 21 to 23-inch racquets, red balls and orange balls; cones, poly-spots and TDLs.

I. WARMUP

QUICKSAND

Type: Cooperative, players in pairs.

Focus: Depth on groundstrokes.

Setup

- Two pairs per court, using half-court. All players behind baseline.
- Each pair has designated area at net for scoring.

Mission—Keep ball deep.

- Start with two-minute warmup on service line, then move back to baseline.
- Pairs rally for a specific number of shots. Must stay behind baseline; inside court is quicksand.
- Once pairs complete specified number of shots, they place a ball in their scoring area.
- First pair to place four balls wins.

Goal—Hit high with spin so ball stays deep.

Progressions

1. Start with rally of four shots, then five, etc.
2. Same activity with three players (triangles). Single player must change direction and keep ball deep.

II. CHARACTER

EFFORT

- Try hard.
- Never give up; new skills take time and patience.



III. ATHLETIC SKILLS

OBSTACLE COURSE

Setup

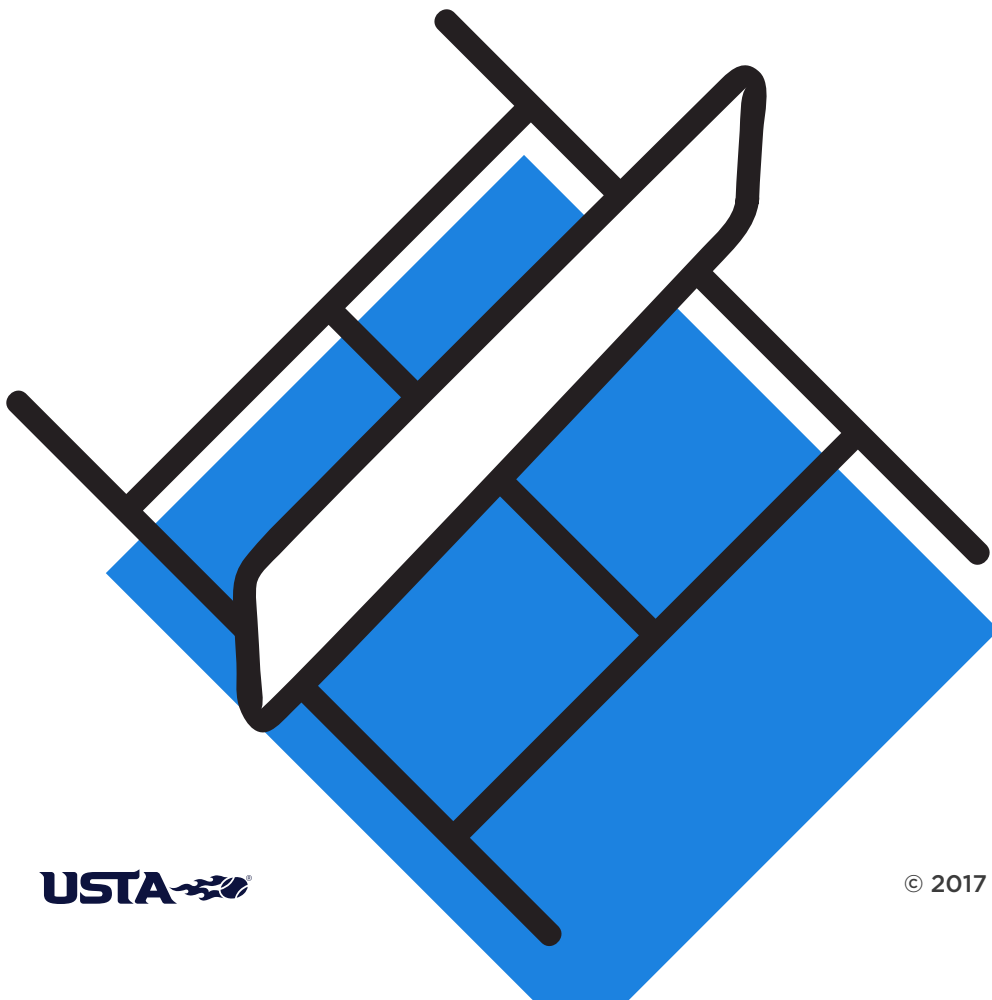
- Use four cones to create one 12x12-foot square in center of court on each side of net.
- Three or four players per square.

Mission

- Proceed from cone to cone using different movements. Next player goes when previous player reaches second cone.
- After each player has gone twice, change movement.

Progressions

1. Carioca. Alternate facing in and facing out at each cone.
2. Skip. Change direction at each cone—forward, sideways, backward, sideways.
3. Sprint. Run to cone and stop, balancing on one leg; run to next cone and stop, balancing on other leg.



COMPASS JUMPS

Setup

- Place four cones in a square to represent north, south, east and west. Cones should be about two feet from center.
- Players in groups of two or three per “compass.”

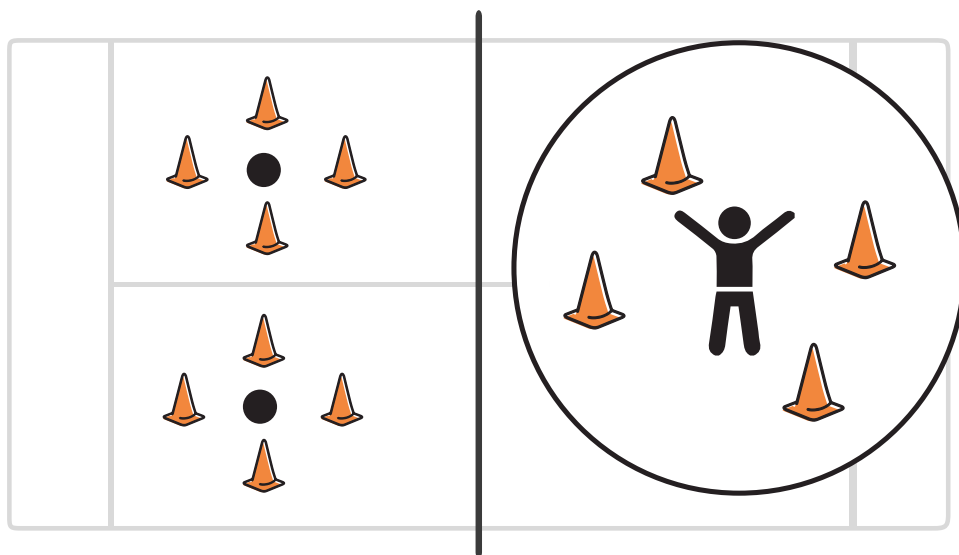
Mission

- Stand in center of cones and jump to each cone, jumping back to center each time.
- Jump around compass three times in same direction.

Progressions

1. Change directions.
2. Jump on one leg, pausing after each jump.
3. Jump on one leg continuously.

ILLUSTRATION: COMPASS JUMPS



FOUR-CORNER TOSS

Setup

- Maximum four pairs on each side of net.
- Pairs face each other about four feet apart, with four orange balls.

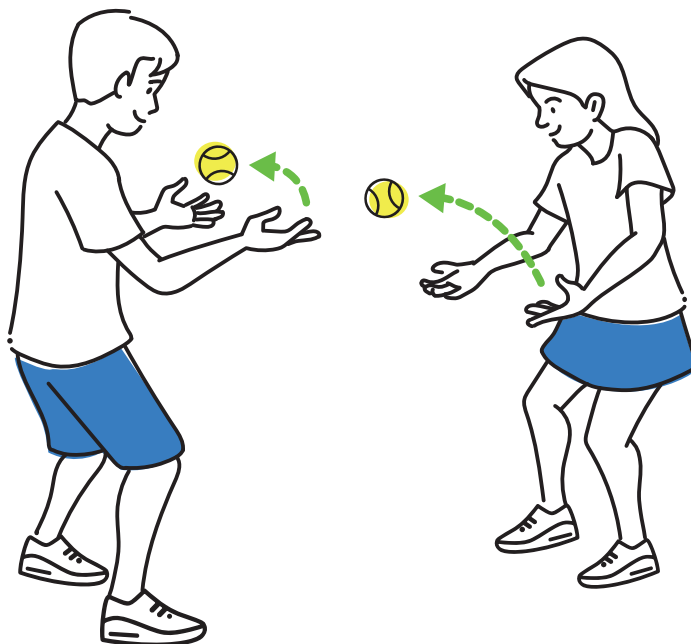
Mission

- Player bounces a ball downward (palm down) with right hand to partner, who catches after bounce with left hand.
- Partner passes ball from left hand to right, and bounces it downward back to player's left hand. Repeat.
- Toss and catch ball to side of body.
- Once successful, add a second ball, continuing to bounce ball to partner with right hand and transfer ball from left to right hand.

Progressions

1. Add a third ball, then a fourth.
2. Introduce lateral movement while bouncing balls.

ILLUSTRATION: FOUR-CORNER TOSS



IV. TENNIS SKILLS

ANGLE/DOWN-THE-LINE COMBO (SELF-TOSS AND PARTNER TOSS)

Type: Hand-feed, players in pairs.

Focus: Creating width on groundstrokes.

ANGLE/DOWN-THE-LINE SELF-TOSS

Setup

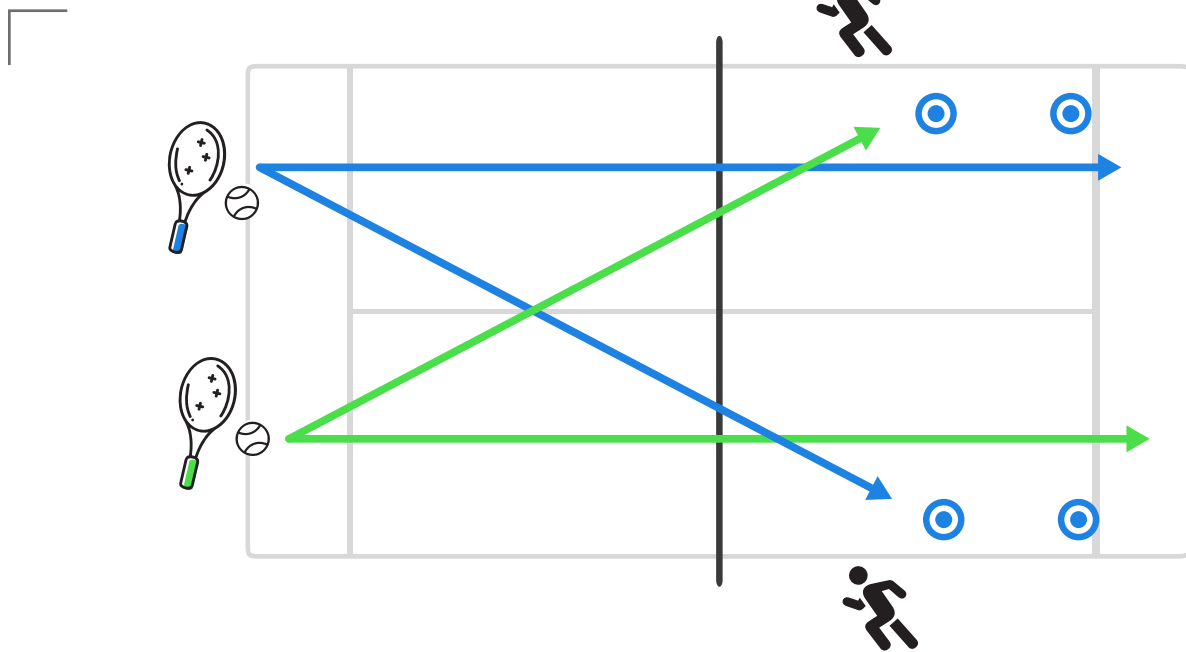
- Two pairs on same side of net at baseline. One pair on deuce side, other on ad.
- Place targets in service box corners and deep corners.
- One hitter from each pair on either side of center mark, with two balls each.
- Hitters' partners are safe distance behind them.
- One side hits forehands, other hits backhands.

Mission—Hit short angle and down-the-line combination.

- First self-toss is up and in front of baseline. Hit short crosscourt angle and recover behind baseline.
- Second self-toss in same spot. Drive ball down the line to corner target, then partner hits.
- For backhand, self-toss with dominant hand, then place hand back on racquet.
- Score a point for each target hit. Play two-minute games, pick up balls and change partners.
- Need help? Start inside baseline with easier self-toss.

Goal—Use spin on angle shot to make ball drop quickly over net.

ILLUSTRATION: ANGLE/DOWN-THE-LINE COMBO (SELF-TOSS)



ANGLE/DOWN-THE-LINE PARTNER TOSS

- Feeder at net on opposite side, hitter on baseline.
- Toss first ball wide in midcourt; hitter plays topspin angle and recovers.
- Toss second ball to same spot; hitter plays deep down the line.
- Complete four successful sequences each and switch sides.
- Score a point for each target hit. Play two-minute games, pick up balls and change partners.
- Need help? Feeder stands to side of player.

Goal—Use same shoulder turn for each shot to help with disguise.

Progressions

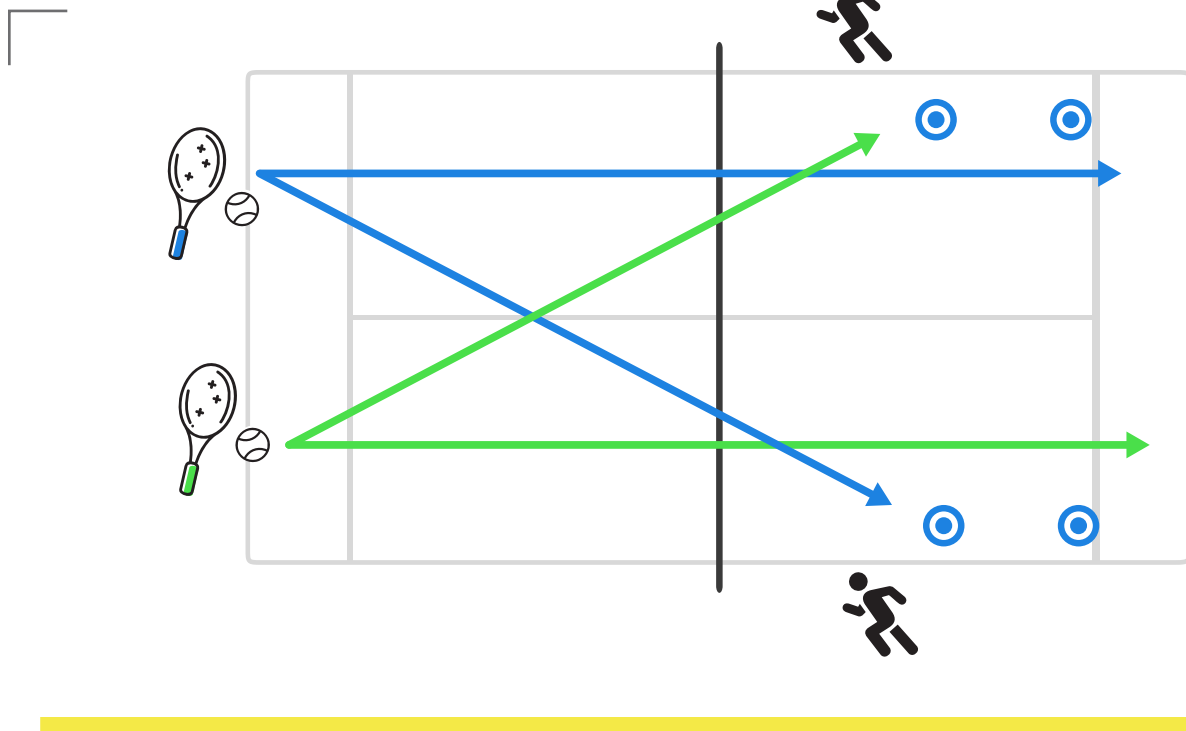
1. Racquet-feed to hitter.
2. Coach feeds.
3. Must hit target for sequence to count.



TEACHING TIP

In order to reach this level of skill, players need extra repetitions. Either private lessons or a small-group environment (2:1 or 3:1 ratio) is necessary.

ILLUSTRATION: ANGLE/DOWN-THE-LINE COMBO (PARTNER TOSS)



SIDELINER

Type: Competitive, team.

Focus: Move opponent using width.

Setup

- Two teams of three or four on opposite sides of net.
- Use extra TDLs to split court in half.

Mission—Move opponent beyond sideline.

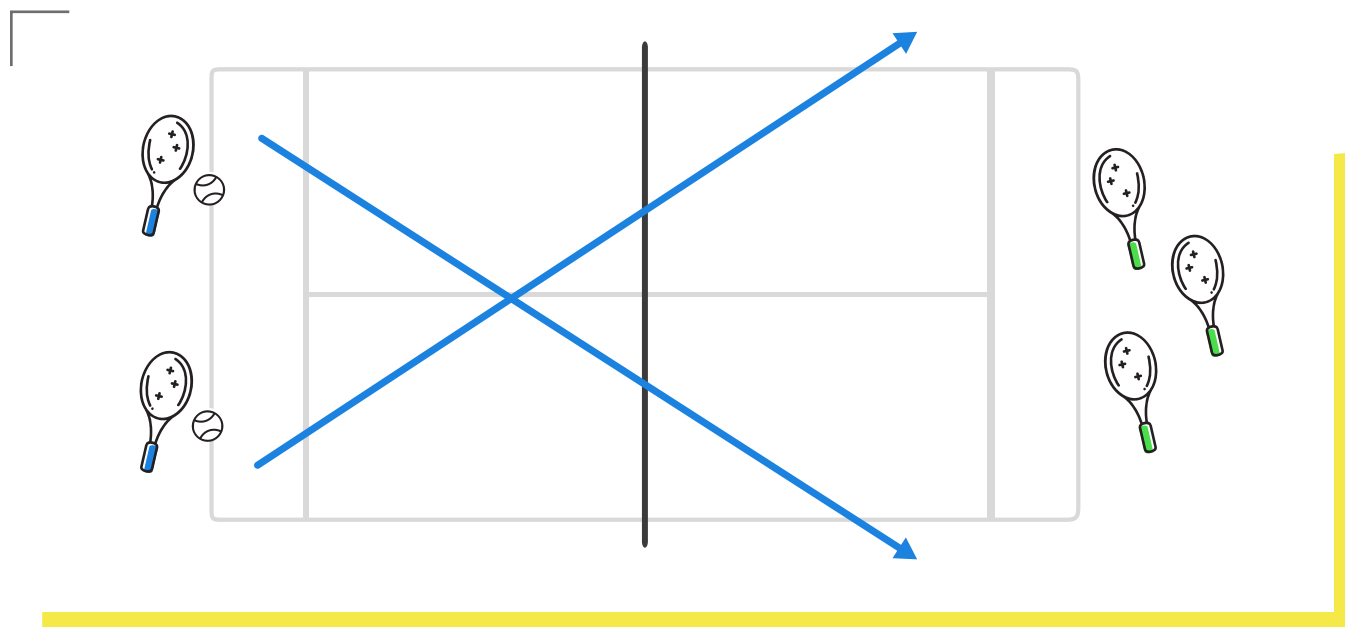
- Play all points crosscourt. Can play two points at same time.
- Start points with a serve. Players must use their outside strokes.
- Score one point for winning the point and one each time you force opponent outside sideline. Rotate players after each point.
- First team to seven wins.

Goal—Use spin to move ball off court.

Progressions

1. Use inside stroke only.
2. Play full court.

ILLUSTRATION: SIDELINER



VI. PLAY AT HOME

MAKE IT JUMP

Setup

Play with red foam ball against garage door or solid wall.

Mission—Use topspin to make ball “jump” off wall.

- Start with topspin feed to wall.
- Keep ball going, trying to make it “jump” by hitting excessive topspin.
- Focus on forehand side, then backhand.

I CAN SLICE

Equipment: Mini-net, caution tape or any type of rope; 21 to 23-inch racquets; red balls and orange balls; cones, poly-spots and TDLs.

I. WARMUP

BOUNCE VOLLEY

Type: Hand-feed, players in pairs.

Focus: Introduce slice.

Setup

- Two pairs per court, using half-court.
- Two hitters in middle of service box, feeders at net on same side with one ball each.

Mission—Hit easy slice to partner.

- Feed first ball as volley. Using continental grip, hitter dinks volley back to feeder.
- Feeder catches ball and feeds second ball low. Hitter “volleys” back after bounce.
- First backhands, then forehands.

Goal—For slice, make ball “stop” when it bounces.

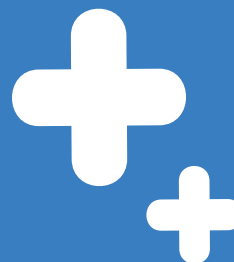
Progressions

1. Hit all balls after bounce.
2. Feeder moves to other side of net.
3. Rally slice to slice.

II. CHARACTER

POSITIVITY

- Practice positive self-talk such as “I will get this” or “I can do this.”
- Come up with your own positive self-talk.



III. ATHLETIC SKILLS

POSITIONAL STARTS

Setup

- Players spread out on sideline
- Up to four on each side of net.

Mission

- Players start in various positions of coach's choosing, and on coach's command, sprint and stop on opposite sideline in athletic stance.
- Emphasis is on big, strong strides and driving arms.
- Backpedal to starting point.

Progressions

1. Start sideways in athletic position. Face a different direction each time.
2. Start backward in athletic position.
3. Stop on opposite baseline, balancing on one leg.

LINE JUMPS

Setup

Players in pairs, spread out around court, next to a line.

Mission

- Jump over line laterally, on one foot.
- Players should jump, pause and jump back again.
- Do four jumps and switch with partner.
- Switch legs after each round.

Progressions

1. Jump front and back.
2. Jump continuously two, then four times straight in a row.



TEACHING TIP

When going for wide balls, players need to lead with outside foot. When running backward (as they would for overhands and deep groundstrokes), players use a drop-step (pivot) and crossover.

GRAB AND THROW

Setup

- Three players on each side of net, spread out along service lines.
- Each player on starting side has two orange balls.
- Start sideways to net with both balls close to back foot.

Mission

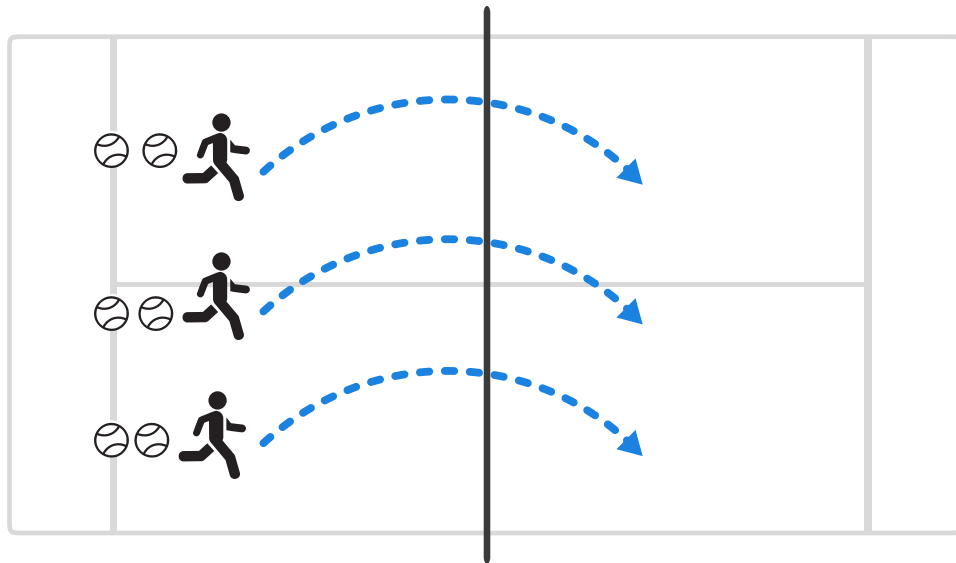
- Grab ball off ground and throw up and out over net in one motion.
- Players on opposite side catch after bounce.
- After both balls are caught, other side grabs and throws.



TEACHING TIP

“Grab and Throw” is a great simulation for a serve. Players have to bend down to pick up the ball (with tilt), and then naturally use a leg drive to throw the ball up and over the net.

ILLUSTRATION: GRAB AND THROW



IV. TENNIS SKILLS

SLICE AND DICE

Type: Individual, cooperative in pairs.

Focus: Forehand and backhand slice.

Setup

Players spread out around court with enough space.

Mission—Self-rally with underspin.

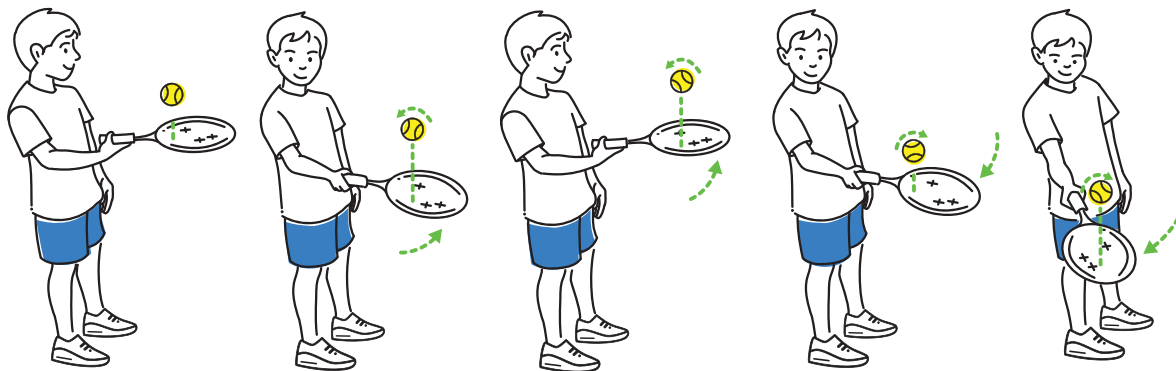
- Using continental grip, work on self-rally on forehand side.
- Let ball bounce and “bypass” ball with racquet face parallel to ground, creating underspin. Ball should come up off racquet.
- Start with one bypass; after a few successes, do two.

Goal—Achieve multiple bypasses (four, five or more).

Progressions

1. All backhands.
2. Alternate forehands and backhands.
3. Rally with partner in small space.

ILLUSTRATION: SLICE AND DICE



7 UP

Type: Cooperative to competitive.

Focus: Forehand and backhand slice.

Setup

- Two pairs per court, using half-court.
- Players start on opposite service lines.

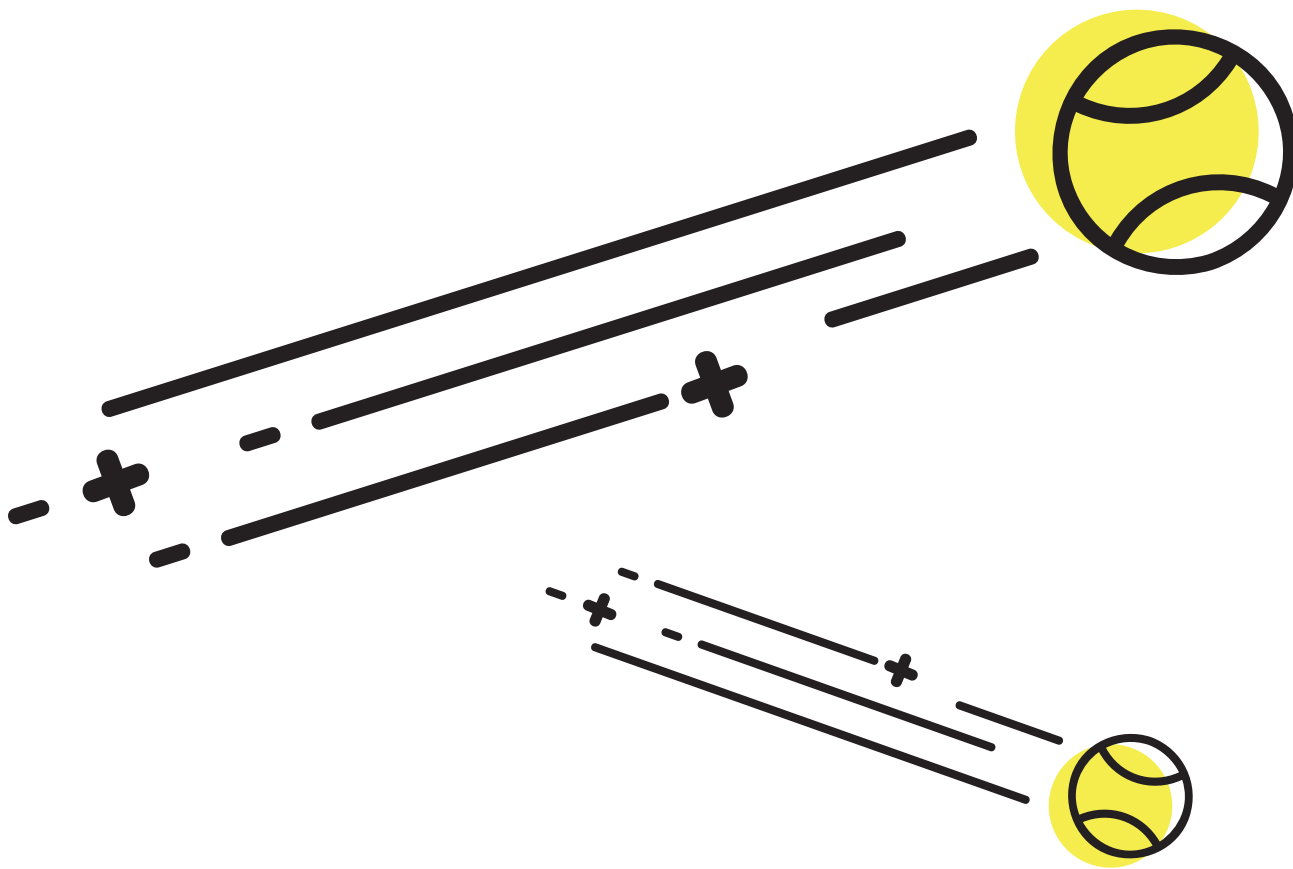
Mission—Rally slices.

- Alternate starting rally with drop-hit.
- Must let ball bounce and use continental grip. Non-dominant hand should be on throat.
- Attempt to rally seven straight balls.

Goal—Keep non-dominant hand on racquet throat.

Progressions

1. Get competitive. Ball must come off racquet to encourage touch. First to seven points wins, then switch partners.
2. All backhands, then all forehands.



FOUR-SQUARE

Type: Cooperative or competitive, partner or team.

Focus: Deep/short and side to side.

Setup

- Four players per court for cooperative; up to five or six for competitive.
- Divide court into four equal squares using TDLs or poly-spots.

Mission—Move opponent side to side and deep/short.

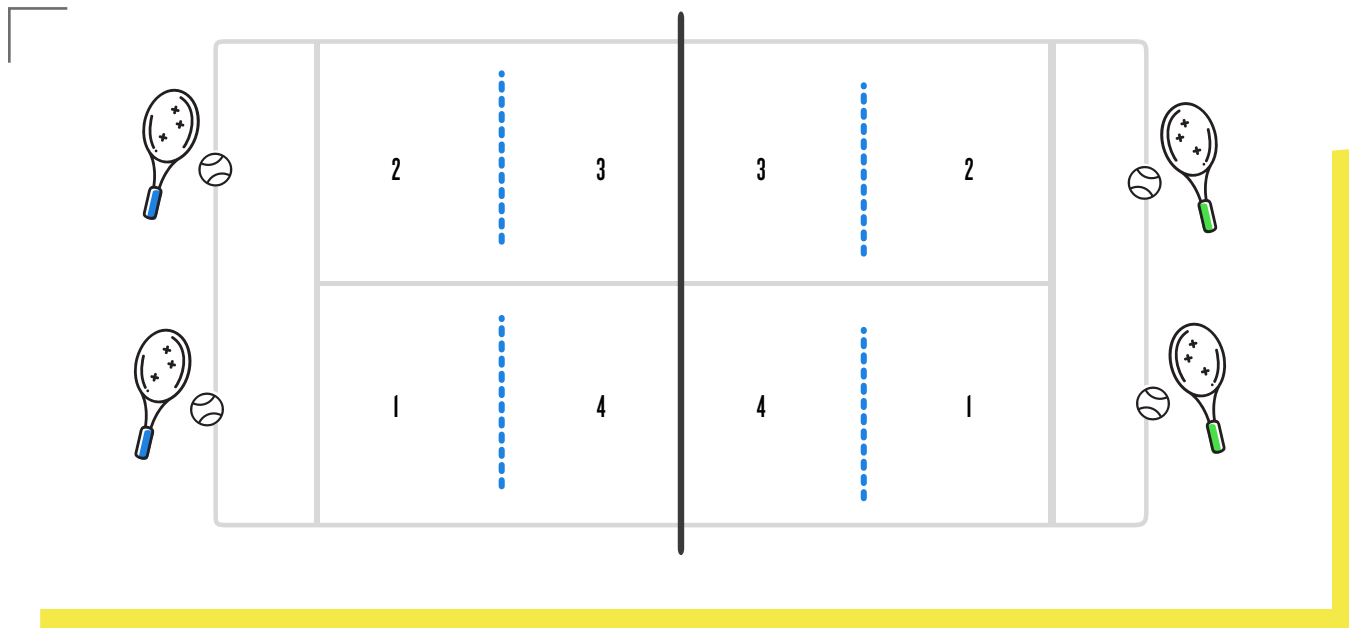
- Play points starting with serve. After serve, can't hit into same square two times in a row.

Goal—Use deep/short combinations.

Progressions

1. Start with cooperative, keeping rally going without hitting to same square two times in a row. Move to competitive, attempting to win point.
2. Require slice for short boxes.

ILLUSTRATION: FOUR-SQUARE



VI. PLAY AT HOME

SLICE RALLY

Setup

Play on driveway or any flat surface.

Progressions

1. Hit any stroke, one stroke, alternating strokes.
2. Mix in volleys and slice.
3. Play out points with boundaries.

RALLY GAMES

Equipment: Mini-net, caution tape or any type of rope; 21 to 23-inch racquets; red balls, orange balls and small footballs; cones, poly-spots and TDLs.

I. WARMUP

MINI-TENNIS

Type: Cooperative, players in pairs.

Focus: Direction, spin.

Setup

Two pairs per court, using half-court. Players in service boxes.

Mission—Keep ball going with continental grip.

- Pairs rally over net from middle of service box using dink slice with continental grip.
- Next, one player at net, other in middle of service box. Dink slice to volley, then switch.
- Next, volley to volley.
- Need help? Hand-feed volley and slice with partner.

Goal—Keep non-dominant hand on throat for ready position after slices and volleys.

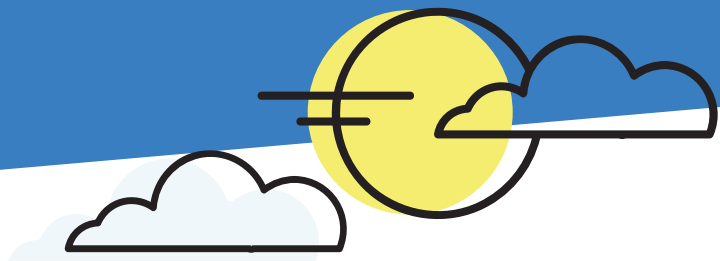
Progressions

1. Crosscourt.
2. One stroke only.
3. Alternate strokes.

II. CHARACTER

POSITIVITY

Smile and show you enjoy playing tennis.



III. ATHLETIC SKILLS

LET'S MARCH!

Setup

Players spread out on sideline, up to four on each side of net.

Mission

- Demonstrate each movement to players.
- Have players practice movement while in place. If they're successful, have them perform movement to opposite sideline and back.
- If players struggle, move back to earlier progression.
- Do each movement at least twice before progressing.

Progressions

1. Bent-knee march, two-hand touch. March with bent knee and alternate touching rising knee with both hands (palms down).
2. Bent knees/arms march. March with bent knee and alternate touching with opposite fist. Arms stay bent entire time.
3. Straight-leg march with one-hand touch. Players march with straight legs and touch with opposite hand to rising leg. Let arms fall to side after each touch.

PRONE EXTENSIONS

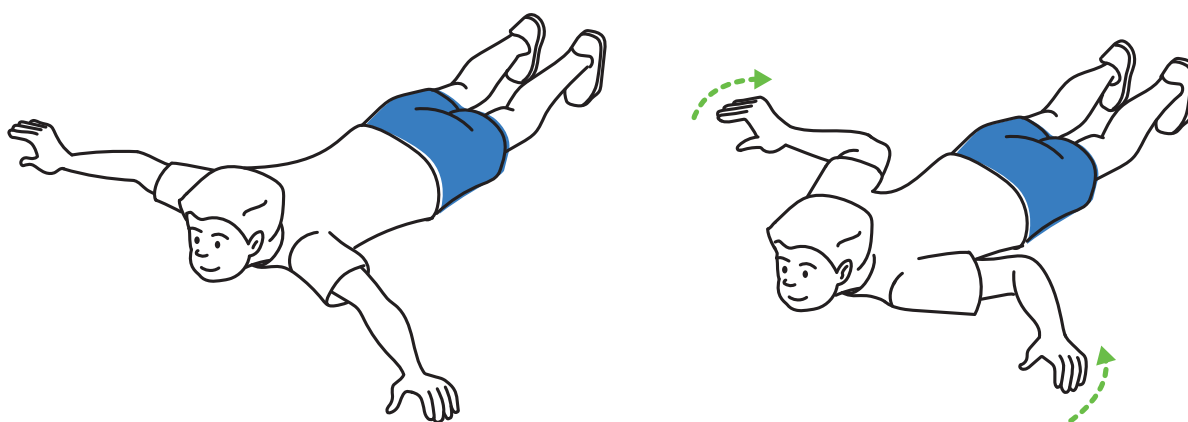
Setup

Players spread out around court, up to six on each side of net.

Mission

- Lie on ground in prone position (on stomach) with arms extended, to form a "Y" with your body.
- Toes touch and heels rotate outward. If foot positioning is an issue, point toes straight to ground.
- Raise arms and upper body upward as far as possible without straining or lifting legs off ground.
- Hold for three seconds up, three seconds down.

ILLUSTRATION: PRONE EXTENSIONS



QUARTERBACK

Setup

- Up to three pairs on each side of net.
- Pairs are on opposite sidelines with one football.

Note: If there aren't enough footballs, use tennis balls or have players do station work.

Mission

Play catch with partner. When throwing, work on spirals.

Progressions

1. Add distance.
2. Add movement like a quarterback—face forward, turn and run back, set and throw.

Note: Continue to next progression only if player is able to execute prior movement.

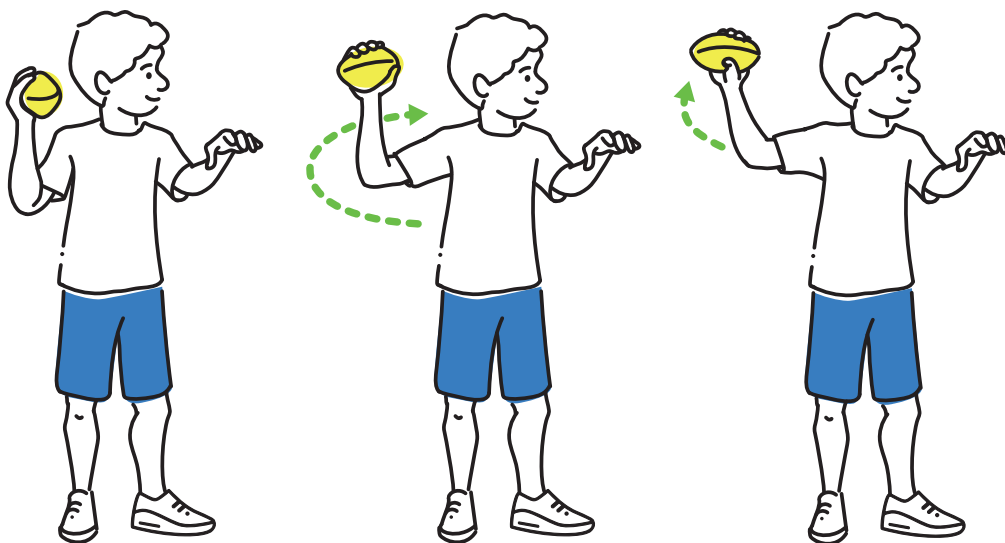
1. Start facing forward with both hands on ball. Turn sideways with throwing arm up and to side, arm bent at 90 degrees.
2. Turn to side with both hands on ball, then separate hands/arms. Front arm is bent, parallel to ground, with hand to side. Back arm is at 90 degrees with ball behind head.
3. Same preparation, but this time, point front tip of ball backward when behind head.



TEACHING TIP

Many players will never have thrown a football before. Stay patient with the beginners and encourage them to throw on their own with friends or family. These are basic progressions, so make sure you challenge each player appropriately.

ILLUSTRATION: QUARTERBACK



IV. TENNIS SKILLS

SQUEEZE RALLY

Type: Cooperative, players in pairs.

Focus: Direction on groundstrokes.

Setup

- Two pairs per court, using half-court. Players on opposite baselines with two TDLs each.
- Start with sideline as one boundary and TDLs as other.
- Place TDLs parallel to each other to create two rectangular courts. Depending on level of players, each court can begin as wide as eight feet.

Mission—Control rally within court boundaries.

- Start a rally with a straight-ahead serve and return.
- Rally four balls (two each) in boundary and yell “Squeeze!” Then move TDLs in one racquet length.
- Players continue until boundary is too narrow.

Goal—Extend follow-through to help direct ball into boundaries.

Progressions

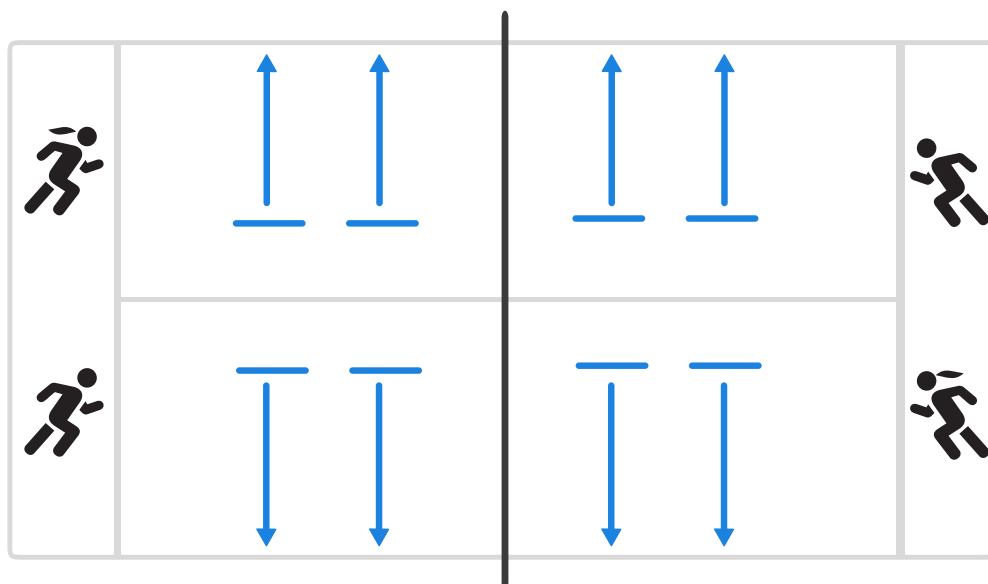
1. Increase number of shots required.
2. Hit specific strokes such as slice or topspin only.
3. Use dice or cards to determine number of shots.



TEACHING TIP

Kids like a challenge. After they’ve reached the edge of their capability, tell them the next distance is “impossible” and see how they respond.

ILLUSTRATION: SQUEEZE RALLY



CAPTURE THE CONE: FIRST FOUR

Type: Competitive, team.

Focus: Serve and return patterns.

Setup

- Two teams of two or three per court.
- Both teams have five to seven cones lined up on their side, outside of court by net.

Mission—Move opponent with combinations of shots.

- Play out full-court points with serve. On first serve, server must hit return to open court, then play out point. Encourage server to take return on the rise.
- For second serve, returner hits to opposite side of server, and then to other side. Play out point.

Scoring

- On first serve, only server can score—one for executing first two shots and one for winning point.
- On second serve, only returner can score—one for executing first two shots and one for winning point.
- Once point ends, player runs to other side to capture proper number of cones.
- Play games by time, team with most cones wins, or team with all cones wins.
- Switch serving teams after each game.

Goal—Take ball on the rise to apply pressure.

Progressions

1. Must serve to designated half of box.
2. Players pick pattern.

VI. PLAY AT HOME

OVER AND UNDER

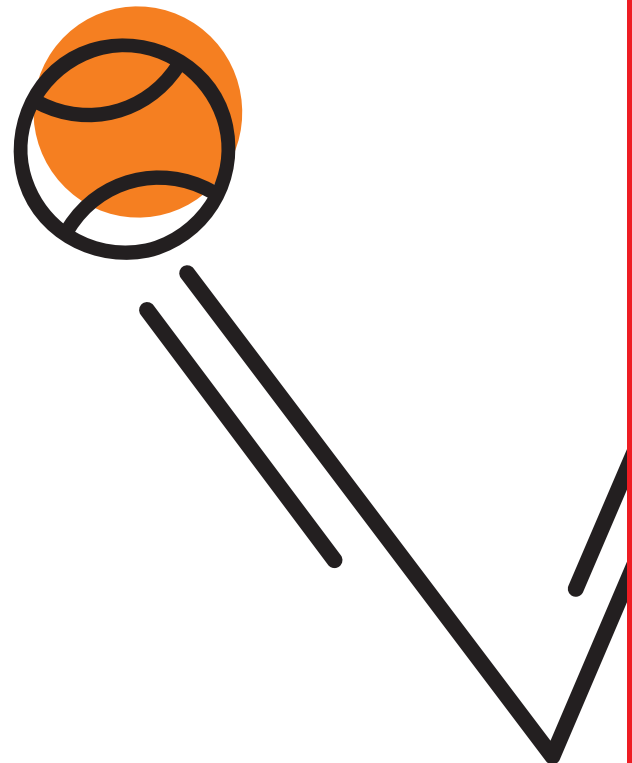
Setup

- Play with red foam ball against garage door or solid wall.
- Can play with partner on driveway or any flat surface.

Mission—Use topspin and slice.

Progressions

1. Rally, mixing in slice and topspin.
2. Alternate slice and topspin.



SPIN MY SERVE

Equipment: Mini-net, caution tape or any type of rope; 21 to 23-inch racquets; red balls and orange balls; cones, poly-spots and TDLS.

I. WARMUP

OPPOSITES

Type: Cooperative, players in pairs.

Focus: Changing spins.

Setup

- Two pairs per court, using half-court.
- All activities inside service box.

Mission—Hit opposite shot from your partner.

- One partner is leader, other is follower.
- Players rally hitting opposite spins (if leader slices, partner hits topspin).
- After one minute, switch roles.

Goal—Change grip and/or hand position for different spins.

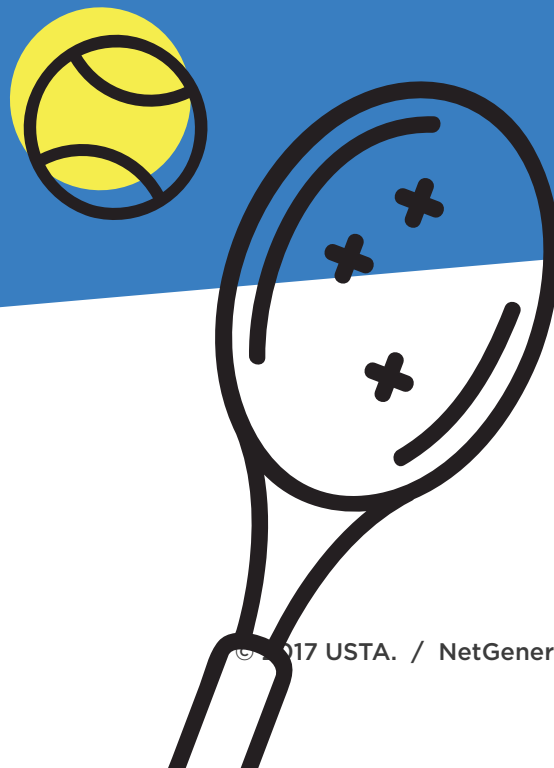
Progressions

1. One stroke only, then alternate.
2. Play two straight similar shots then change spins.

II. CHARACTER

INDEPENDENCE

Prepare your own equipment for practice.



III. ATHLETIC SKILLS



SERPENTINE SHUFFLE

Setup

- Up to four players on each side of net.
- Players spread out six to eight feet behind baseline.
- Place some cones or TDs in front of net so players know when to stop.

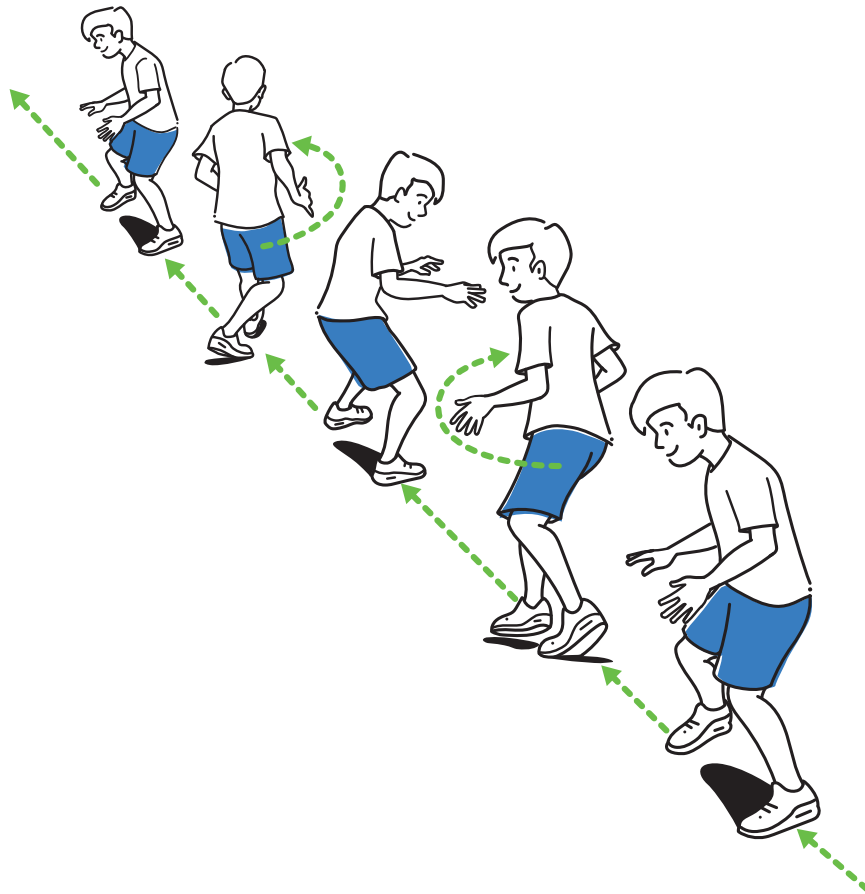
Mission

- Shuffle toward net, two steps facing one direction, then two steps facing other.
- Make turn from one side to the other facing net.
- On return to baseline, continue facing net when turning. This backward serpentine shuffle helps players develop proper movement for deep groundstrokes and overheads.

TEACHING TIP

Whenever players pivot backward, they're moving to their blind side. Whether riding a skateboard or going back for an overhead, moving this way is very difficult at first. Be sure to take time to break this down for the players who struggle.

ILLUSTRATION: SERPENTINE SHUFFLE



AGILITY LADDER

Setup

- Set up one agility ladder for every four players; up to two ladders on each side of net.
- If ladders aren't available, use chalk or TDLs.

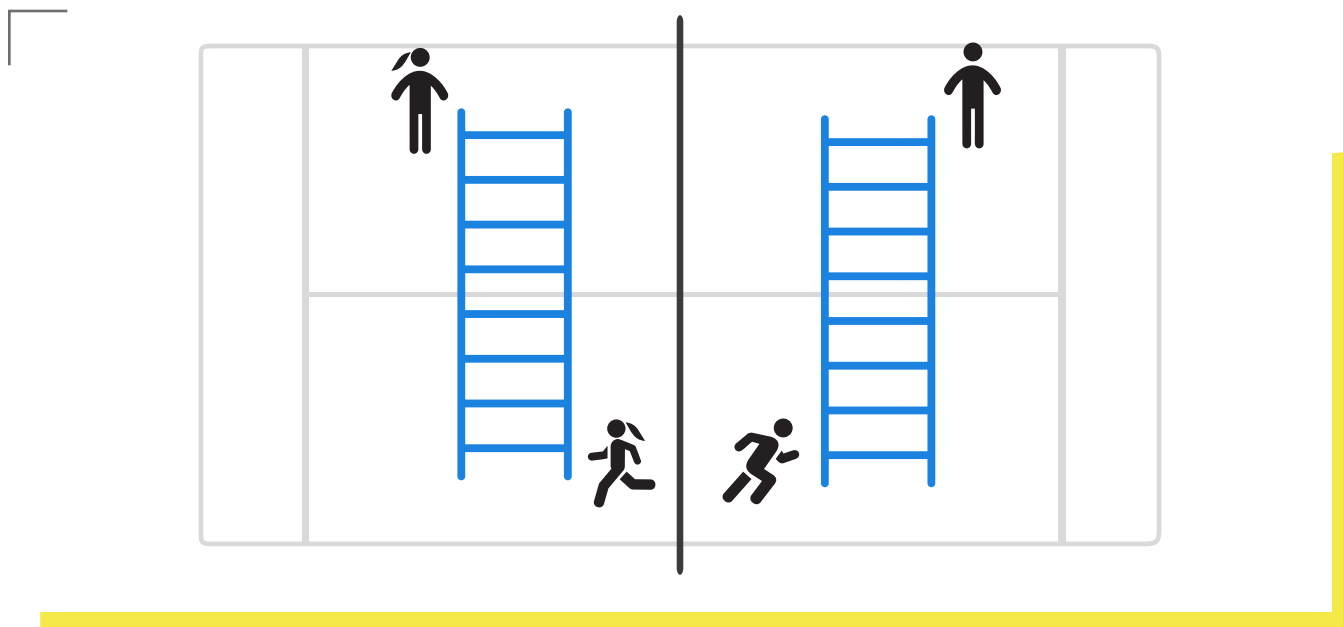
Mission

- Players form a line and coach demonstrates a specific movement. Have players perform each movement twice before you demonstrate a new one.
- Next player goes when previous one is halfway through.

Suggested Movements

- Move through ladder one foot in at a time.
- Two feet in (1-2, 1-2 rhythm).
- Sideways 1-2, 1-2 (both directions).
- Hops.
- Jumps.
- Let player pick movement.

ILLUSTRATION: AGILITY LADDER



TWO-BALL THROW

Setup

Players spread out along baseline—up to four players on each side of net, each with two red balls.

Mission

- Stand in serve position with one ball in each hand.
- Imitating a serve motion, toss ball up with non-dominant hand. At top of toss, throw second ball upward, trying to hit first ball.
- For safety purposes, have all players go at same time on each side.
- If successful, let players use two orange balls.

ILLUSTRATION: TWO-BALL THROW



IV. TENNIS SKILLS

SLICE AND DICE SERVE

Type: Cooperative, players in pairs.

Focus: Directing slice serve.

Setup

- Two pairs per court—one server and one returner.
- Pairs diagonally across net from each other.

Mission—Slice serve out wide and to “T.”

- Using a continental grip with racquet on edge, server performs one “edgie” (bounce ball using edge of racquet) and then hits slice serve.
- For deuce side, slice out wide; for ad side, slice down “T” (righty).
- Returner plays ball back to server, who catches it and serves again.
- Complete four sequences on each side, then switch servers.

Goal—Lead with edge of racquet on slice serve.

Progressions

1. Play serve plus one (one pair at a time), then play out points.
2. Serve to body.

V. GAMES

SERVE PYRAMIDS

Type: Cooperative and competitive, compete as pairs or as a team.

Focus: Spin and direction on serve plus one.

Setup

- Two pairs per court, one server and one returner.
- Righties serve from deuce side, lefties from ad side.
- Each pair has a designated area behind baseline to build four-ball pyramid.

Mission—Slice serve out wide to open court.

- One pair at a time. Server slices out wide and returner plays ball back down middle.
- Server hits next ball to open court.
- If successful, pair scores a point and starts building pyramid.
- First pair to complete pyramid wins, then start new game with new server.

Goal—Serve wide and recover back into ready position with both hands on racquet.

Progressions

1. Play out points team versus team. Point doesn’t count until first three shots are made.
2. Players pick patterns with slice serve.

POINT PLAY

Setup

- Two teams of two or three, using full court.
- One team serves, other returns.

Mission—Play points with serve and return.

- Play out games as a team. After each game, switch servers and returners.
- Play one point and rotate if three on a team, two points and rotate if two on a team.

Goal—Apply day’s theme into point play (spin serve).

VI. PLAY AT HOME

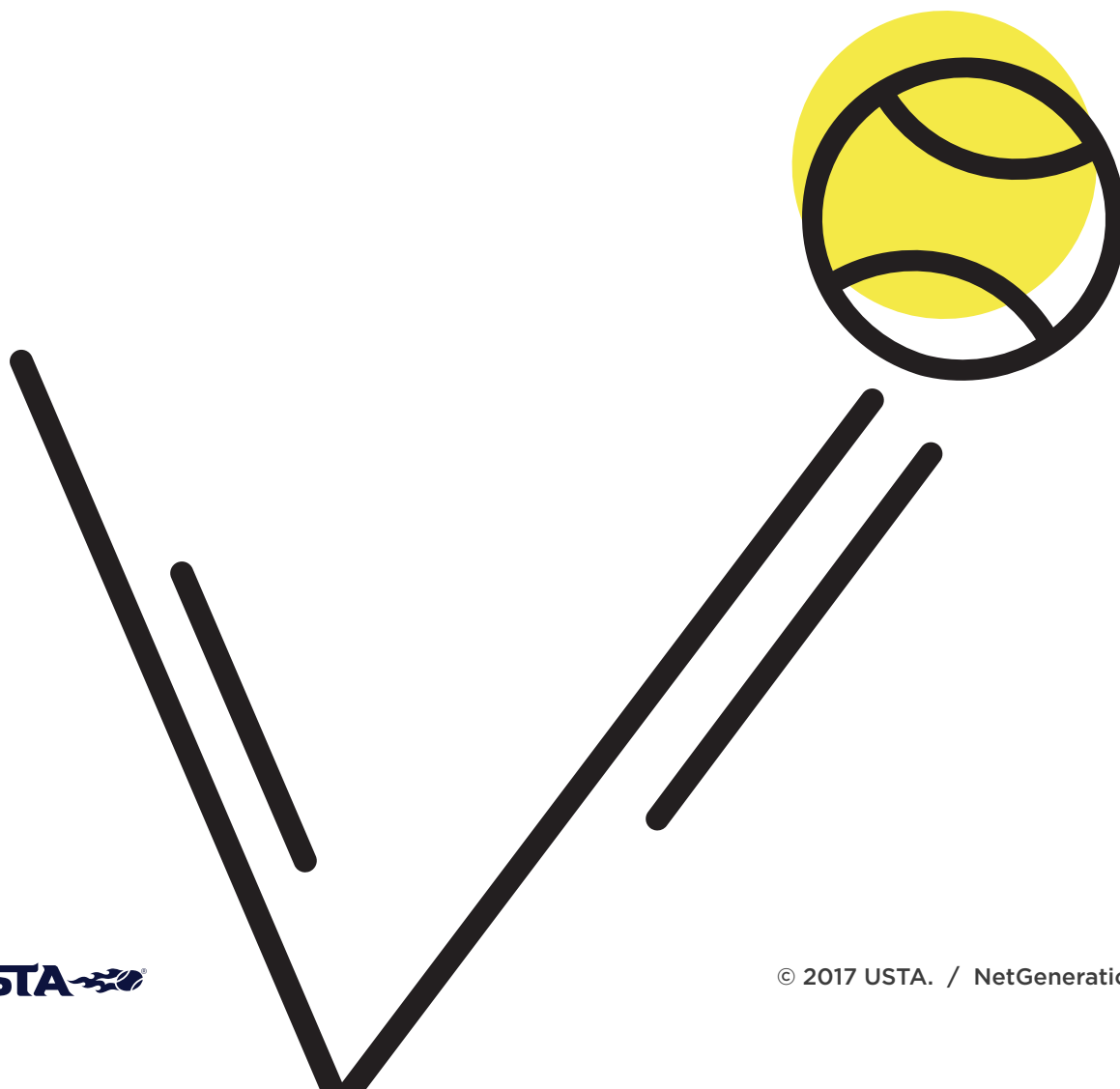
SLICE SERVE AND RALLY TO WALL

Setup

Play with red foam ball against garage door or solid wall.

Progressions

1. Slice serve to wall, then rally.
2. Play with partner, alternating shots.
3. Slice serve, then slice all groundstrokes.



UP IN THE AIR

Equipment: Mini-net; caution tape or any type of rope; 21 to 23-inch racquets, red balls and orange balls; cones, poly-spots and TDLS.

I. WARMUP

FIGURE 8

Type: Cooperative, players in pairs.

Focus: Change of direction on groundstrokes with spin.

Setup

Two pairs per court, using half-court. Players start on service lines.

Mission—Change direction on every ball.

- Players rally cooperatively. Players on one side of net hit down the line; other side hits crosscourt.
- Begin with all slices.
- Move partner only a few feet to right and left using outside stroke.
- After two minutes in each pattern, switch to all topspin from service line.

Goal—Find a rally pace you can control with appropriate speed and spin.

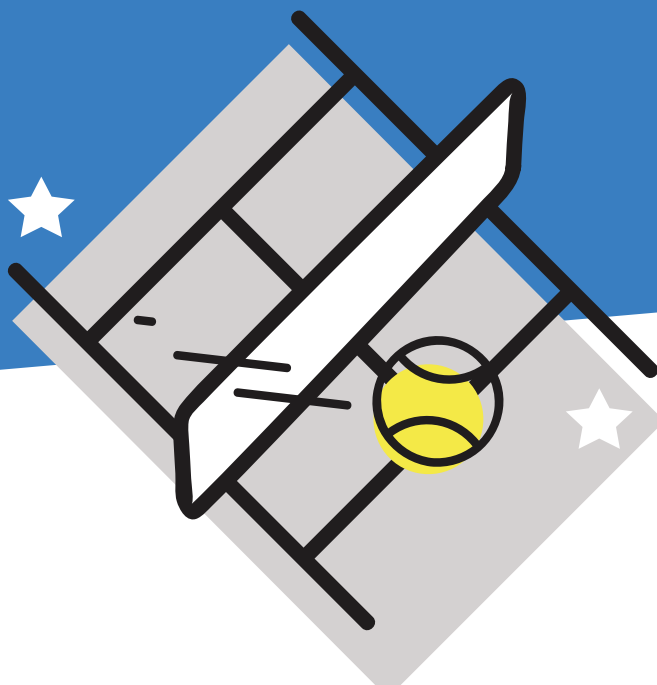
Progressions

1. Alternate slice and topspin.
2. One side hits all forehands.

II. CHARACTER

INDEPENDENCE

- Learn the rules of tennis.
- Correct your own mistakes.



III. ATHLETIC SKILLS

FIGURE 8 CONE WEAVES

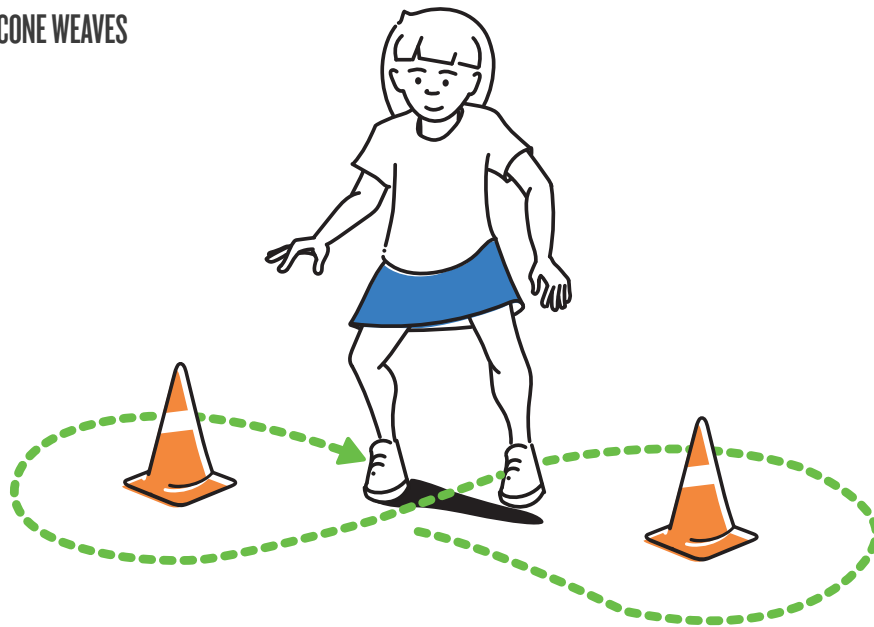
Setup

Players in pairs with two cones or balls between them, placed about four feet apart.

Mission

- One player at a time shuffles around cones in a figure 8 pattern.
- After four complete figure 8s, next player goes.
- After players have done three sets, switch movement to forward and backward through cones.

ILLUSTRATION: FIGURE 8 CONE WEAVES



VERTICAL JUMPS

Setup

Players spread out around court.

Mission

- Jump up as high as possible as if attempting to grab a rebound in basketball.
- Land in athletic stance, as quietly as possible.

Progressions

1. Jump and spin 180 degrees, landing in athletic position. Pause after each jump to get your balance.
2. Attempt to jump and spin 360 degrees, landing in athletic position.

HI-LO TOSS

Setup

- Players in pairs with orange ball.
- Maximum four pairs spread out on each side of net.
- Players face each other, four to five feet apart.

Mission

- One player feeds, other catches.
- Toss to catcher, who catches after bounce and tosses back.
- Toss second ball high. Catch in the air above waist level and toss back.
- Catch with right hand on right side, left hand on left.
- After four successful hi-lo catches, switch roles.

Progressions

1. Toss first ball high over catcher's shoulder, forcing catcher to back up.
2. Toss second ball high in front of catcher.
3. Increase distance between players.

IV. TENNIS SKILLS

FIGURE 8 VOLLEYS

Type: Cooperative, players in pairs.

Focus: Change of direction on volleys.

Setup

Two pairs per court, using half-court. Players start in front half of service boxes.

Mission—Change direction on every volley.

- Volley cooperatively; one side down the line, other crosscourt.
- Control each shot so partner takes no more than one step.
- Spend one minute on each pattern, then switch. Total of two rounds.

Goal—Use an open face on each side to keep ball in the air.

Progressions

1. Increase distance from net.
2. One side hits all forehand or all backhand volleys.

CLOSE THE NET

Type: Cooperative, players in pairs.

Focus: Approach and volley with direction.

Setup

- Two pairs per court, using half-court.
- Partners on opposite sides of net, starting on service lines.
- One partner volleys, other hits groundstrokes.

Mission—Perform approach, split-step and two volleys.

- Volleyer drop-hits ball down the line, moves to net and does a split-step, ready to volley.
- Partner rallies ball back, and pair attempts a two-volley, two-groundstroke rally.
- After four attempts, players change roles. After a complete rotation, switch to other side.

Goal—Successfully switch grips and/or hands for approach/volley sequence.

Progressions

1. Player hitting groundstrokes moves back to baseline.
2. Play first volley deep, second one short.
3. Play first ball as volley, second as lob.

V. GAMES

PASS ME

Type: Competitive, team.

Focus: Move opponent with approach and volley.

Setup

- Two teams of two or three on opposite ends of court, starting on baseline.
- One side approaches, other hits passing shots. Play points one on one, other players are off court at a safe distance.

Mission—Approach and volley to open court.

- Volleyer drop-hits down the line, approaches net and plays out point. First volley must go to opposite side.
- Baseline tries to pass with a groundstroke to either side.
- Volleyer scores a point for approach shot and open-court volley, and a bonus point for winning point.
- Baseline scores for winning point.

Goal—Execute an approach shot and split-step when baseliner makes contact.

Progressions

1. Approach with backhand.
2. Hit approach shot down the line or crosscourt.
3. Coach or a player can feed short ball to approacher.



COACHING TIP

This a great time to teach “shading” at the net. Take a break in the middle of the game and show (more than tell) why players should stand off-center for their split-step. TDLs are a great way to show them visually, and you can keep the lines down during play.

VI. PLAY AT HOME

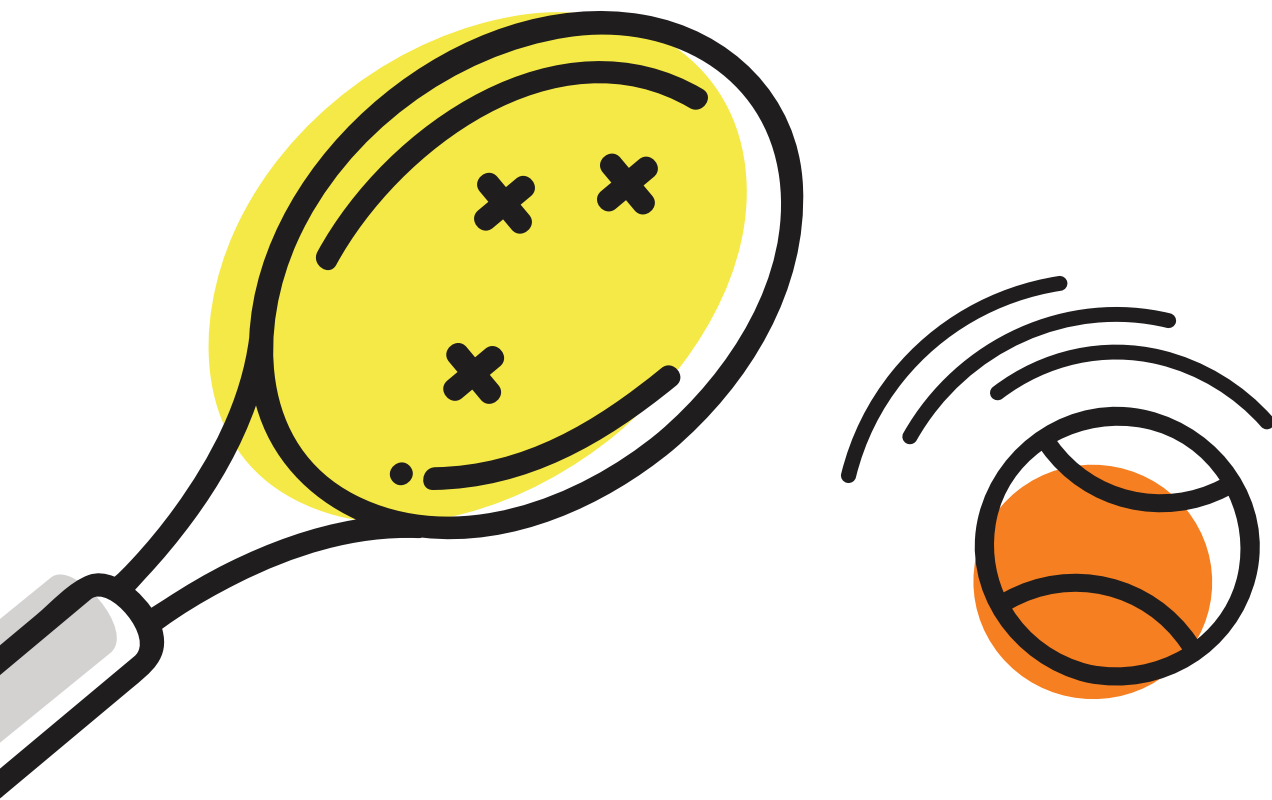
TRICK SHOTS

Setup

Play on driveway or any flat surface.

Mission—Create cool shots on a bounce and in the air.

- Use any part of racquet to hit ball.
- Practice shots after bounce and in the air.
- Use different grips to create different effects.



GROUNDSTROKES, VOLLEYS, OVERHEADS & SERVES, OH MY!

Equipment: Mini-net, caution tape or any type of rope; 21 to 23-inch racquets; red balls and orange balls; cones, poly-spots and TDLs.

I. WARMUP

MINI-TENNIS

Type: Cooperative, players in pairs.

Focus: Direction, spin.

Setup

Two pairs per court, using half-court. Players in service boxes.

Mission—Keep ball going with continental grip.

- Pairs rally over net from middle of service box using dink slice with continental grip.
- Next, one player at net, other in middle of service box. Dink slice to volley, then switch.
- Next, volley to volley.
- Need help? Hand-feed volley and slice with partner.

Goal—Keep non-dominant hand on throat for ready position after slices and volleys.

Progressions

1. Crosscourt.
2. One stroke only.
3. Alternate strokes.



II. CHARACTER

INDEPENDENCE

- Practice being your own coach.
- Ask, “What did I do well today? What can I improve?”



III. ATHLETIC SKILLS

JUMP ROPE TO SKIP LOOPS

Note: Have each player bring a jump rope to practice, or provide one.

Setup

- Each player with jump rope.
- Set up a simple path for players to follow, such as lines of court or cones and markers.

Mission

- Once players have established a baseline of jumping rope in place (single jumps), they can begin to move along designated path.
- Make sure path involves moving forward, sideways and even backward.

Progressions

1. Move forward by jumping.
2. Move forward by jogging.

SHUFFLE TOSS

Setup

- Three or four pairs on each side of net.
- Pairs facing each other on sideline with one orange ball.

Mission

- While shuffling from sideline to sideline, bounce ball downward (palm down) back and forth with partner, catching between bounces. Use only one hand to bounce and catch—either hand.
- After two successful times to sideline and back, toss and catch in the air.

Progressions

1. Left hand only, right hand only.
2. Different hand than partner.
3. Alternate two straight on bounce, two straight in the air.



THREE-BALL THROW

Setup

- Maximum three pairs per court.
- On one side of net, position players at net—one on each sideline and one in the middle.
- On same side, place three balls in a straight line for each player—in middle of service box, on service line and on baseline.

Mission

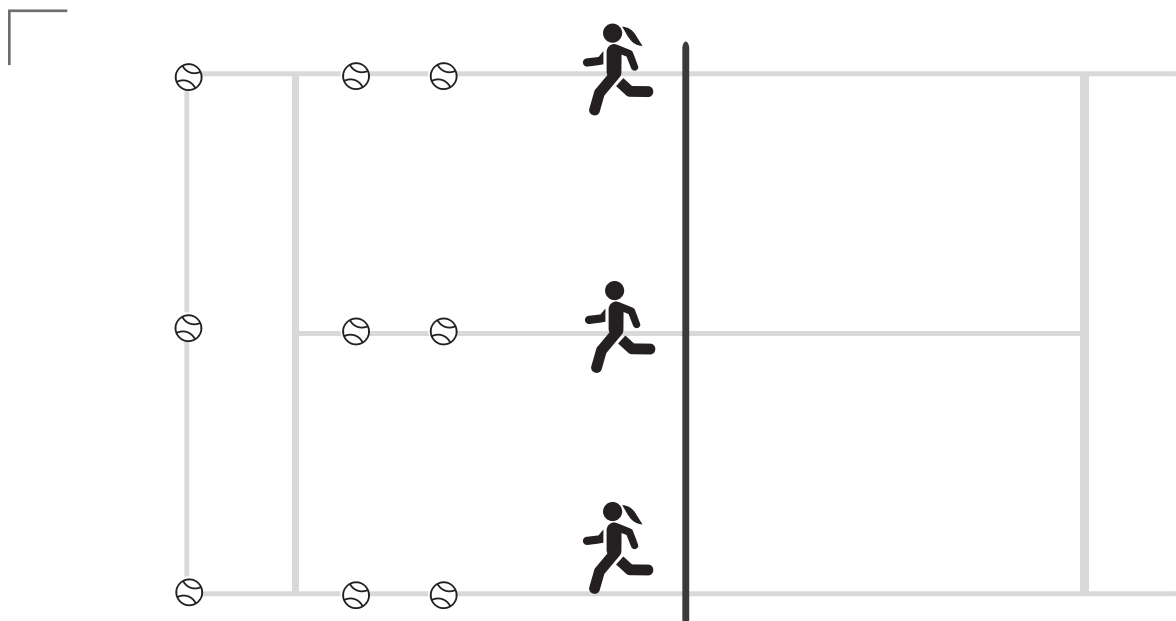
- Starting at net, players with balls on their side turn around, jog to first ball, bend down, grab it and throw, all in one motion. Throw is high to other side of net.
- Turn around and jog to second ball, and so on.
- Partners catch all three balls, place them in same positions, and players switch roles.
- Need help? Pick up ball, pause, then throw.



TEACHING TIP

This activity has several important movements wrapped into one drill: a drop-step/crossover while running back to the ball, loading on back leg while bending down, and driving upward with legs while throwing. This is a great way to work on moving back for overheads and exploding up on serve.

ILLUSTRATION: THREE-BALL THROW



IV. TENNIS SKILLS

HI-LO

Type: Cooperative, players in pairs.

Focus: Consistency on volleys and overheads.

Setup

Two pairs per court, using half-court. One player at net, other at baseline.

Mission—Control volleys and overheads with partner.

- Baseline drop-hits groundstroke to net player, who volleys back. Baseline traps and drop-hits lob to net player, who hits overhead back.
- Complete four sequences and switch positions.
- Need help? Move baseliner to service line.

Goal—Step out and across for volley.

Progressions

1. Play a cooperative rally and keep ball going.
2. Hit lob with continental grip (first drop-hit, then rally).



ISLAND TENNIS

Type: Competitive, team.

Focus: Take deep balls on the rise.

Setup

- Two teams of two or three on opposite sides of net, starting on baseline.
- “Island” is boundaries of court. Beyond that is “water.”

Mission—Hit every ball standing inside court.

- Play points with serve and return. Server starts off in water and must move inside baseline after serve lands (one serve only). Returner starts inside baseline.
- Team wins point by getting opponent to step off island or miss shot.
- Play one point and rotate players.
- Play rounds to seven points, then other team serves. Switch opponents, if necessary.

Goal—Take deep balls as they come off ground and cut off angles on sideline.

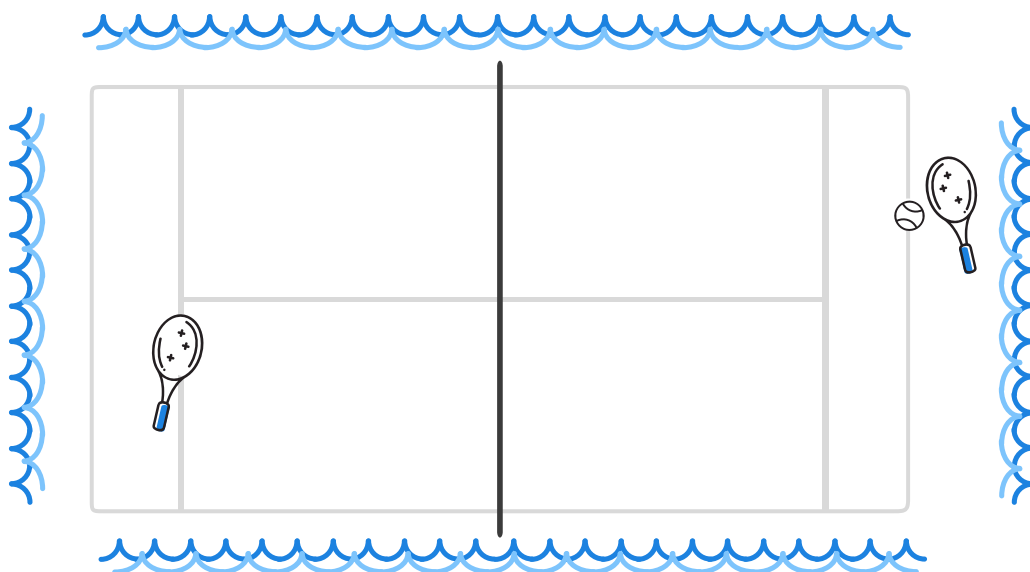
Progressions

1. Only one side plays Island Tennis.
2. Bonus point for winning at net (volley or overhead).
3. Bonus point for making opponent step outside sideline (using angles/width).

COACHING TIP

Learning to play the ball on the rise takes time. Because of the rules of the game, kids will start to figure it out without the coach having to tell them.

ILLUSTRATION: ISLAND TENNIS



VI. PLAY AT HOME

MINI-TENNIS

Setup

- Make your own court on driveway or any flat surface.
- Play mini-tennis with a friend or family member.

CHECK OUT MY SKILLS

Equipment: Mini-net, caution tape or any type of rope; 21 to 23-inch racquets; red balls and orange balls; cones, poly-spots and TDLS.

I. WARMUP

MINI-TENNIS HI-LO

Type: Cooperative, players in pairs.

Focus: Direction on slice, volleys, overheads.

Setup

- Two pairs per court, using half-court.
- Start off in service box, move to baseline.

Mission—Rally with partner in multiple ways.

- Both pairs in middle of service box rallying dink slice with continental grip.
- Next, one player at net, other in middle of service box. Dink slice to volley, then switch.
- Next, volley to volley.

Hi-Lo

- Continue warmup with one player at net and one on baseline. Alternate groundstroke/volley and lob/overhead.
- Need help? Drop-hit groundstroke, trap and drop-hit lob, trap, and repeat.

Goal—Step out and across for volley and use square stance for overhead.

Progressions

1. Straight ahead then crosscourt.
2. One stroke only.
3. Alternate strokes.

II. CHARACTER

RESPECT

Be grateful for the chance to play tennis.



III. ATHLETIC SKILLS

BIG-BALL TENNIS

Setup

- Split players into two big teams. Let players choose a team name.
- Within each team, divide into smaller teams of two or three.
- Set up “matches” with two or three players from each team playing against two or three players from opposing teams.
- Play matches on entire court. Use one big ball for each match.

Mission

- Points begin with a serve (toss from side), which can land anywhere in court.
- Toss balls over net from side of body. First bounce must be within court boundaries.
- Rules can vary for level of players—only one bounce, endless bounces, one side serves two straight points then switch.
- For teams of three, rotate positions every few points.
- Have teams play to a certain number of points, then switch opponents. Focus on play, not which team wins.

Progressions

1. Must toss serves diagonally to proper box.
2. Can catch ball either in the air or on bounce.



TEACHING TIP

Finding the right size and weight for the big ball is important. If the ball is too light, it will move in the air. Too heavy, kids will bend from the waist and lose control. A junior size basketball or a two-pound medicine ball that can bounce works well.

IV. TENNIS SKILLS

SQUEEZE RALLY

Type: Cooperative, players in pairs.

Focus: Direction on groundstrokes.

Setup

- Two pairs per court, using half-court. Players on opposite baselines with two TDLs each.
- Start with sideline as one boundary and TDLs as other. Depending on level of players, each court can begin as wide as eight feet.
- Place TDLs parallel to each other to create two rectangular courts.

Mission—Control rally within court boundaries.

- Start a rally with straight-ahead serve and return.
- Rally four balls (two each) in boundary and yell “Squeeze!” Then move TDLs in one racquet length.
- Players continue until boundary is too narrow.

Goal—Extend follow-through to help direct ball into boundaries.

Progressions

1. Increase number of shots required.
2. Hit specific strokes such as slice or topspin only.
3. Use dice or cards to determine number of shots.

V. GAMES**SIDELINER**

Type: Competitive, team.

Focus: Angle groundstrokes.

Setup

- Teams of three or four on opposite sides of net.
- Use extra TDLs to split court in half.

Mission—Move opponent outside sideline.

- Play all points crosscourt. Can play two points at same time.
- Start points with serve. Players must use their outside strokes.
- Score point for your team by winning point and/or forcing opponent outside sideline.
- First team to seven wins.

Goal—Use spin to move ball off court.

Progressions

1. Must let every ball bounce.
2. Play full court.

**COACHING TIP**

At this stage, all players are able to play on the 36-foot court, and are developing more complete games. This doesn't mean they're ready for individual competition. Keeping the competition within a team environment and focusing feedback on what they do well are more important at this age and stage.

FOUR-SQUARE BLACK HOLE

Type: Cooperative or competitive, partner or team.

Focus: Deep/short and side to side.

Setup

- Teams of three or four on opposite sides of net.
- Divide court into four equal squares using TDLs or poly-spots.
- Teams select a square opponents can't hit to.

Mission—Move opponent side to side and deep/short.

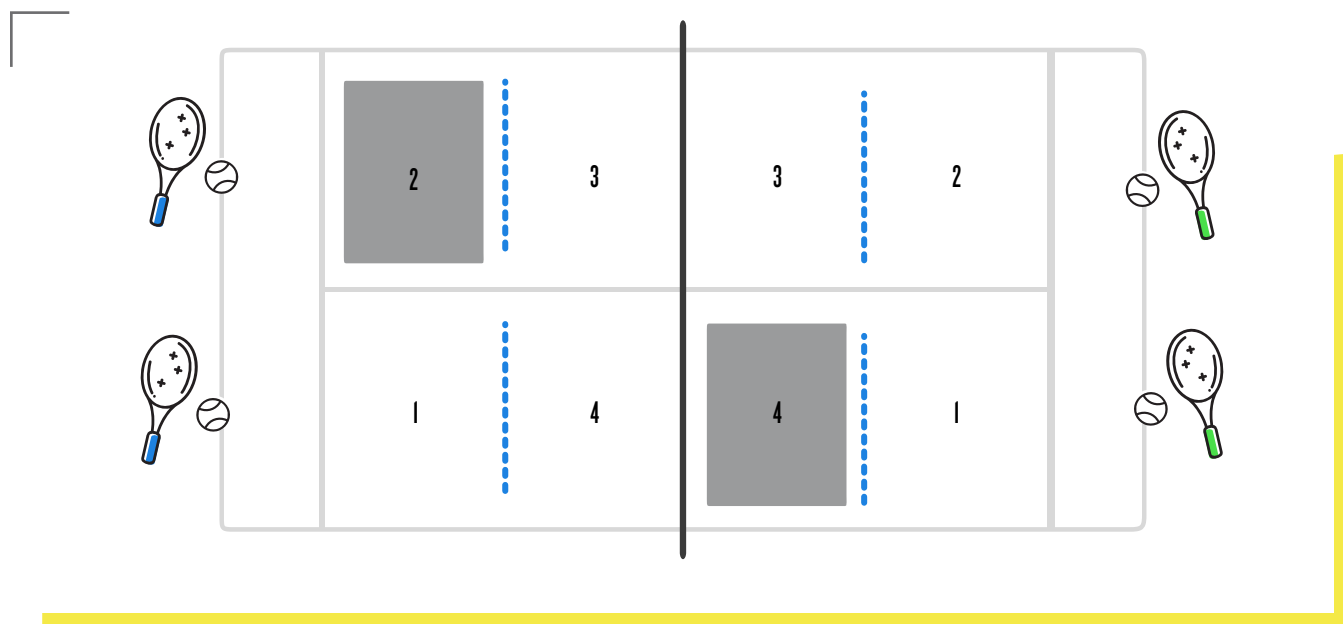
- Points begin with serve and return. After serve, players can't hit into same square two straight times.

Goal—Use depth and spin to move opponent.

Progressions

1. Require slice for short boxes.
2. Teams can select a square on their side of net or opposite side.

ILLUSTRATION: FOUR-SQUARE BLACK HOLE



VI. PLAY AT HOME

PLAY A TOURNAMENT

After participating in Play Days at their facility and Junior Team Tennis in their area, players are ready for an entry-level tournament. Contact your district or section office if you don't have JTT or tournaments in your area.

TOGETHER WE WILL

GROW THE GAME

