

MAY 2022

CONTACT POINT



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FOOTWORK DRILLS:
TECHNIQUES FOR
PLAYERS ON THE ROAD

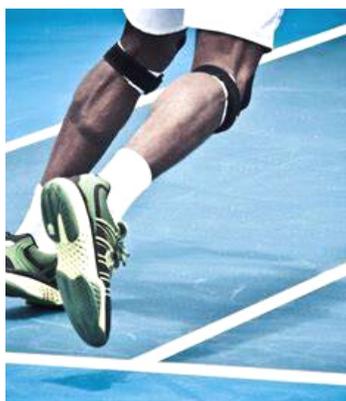
PLUS

MAKING TIME FOR YOUR TENNIS
FITNESS TRAINING

CLOSING OUT MATCHES

BY CAMERON TAYLOR AND
ADRIAN RATTENBURY

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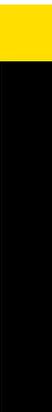
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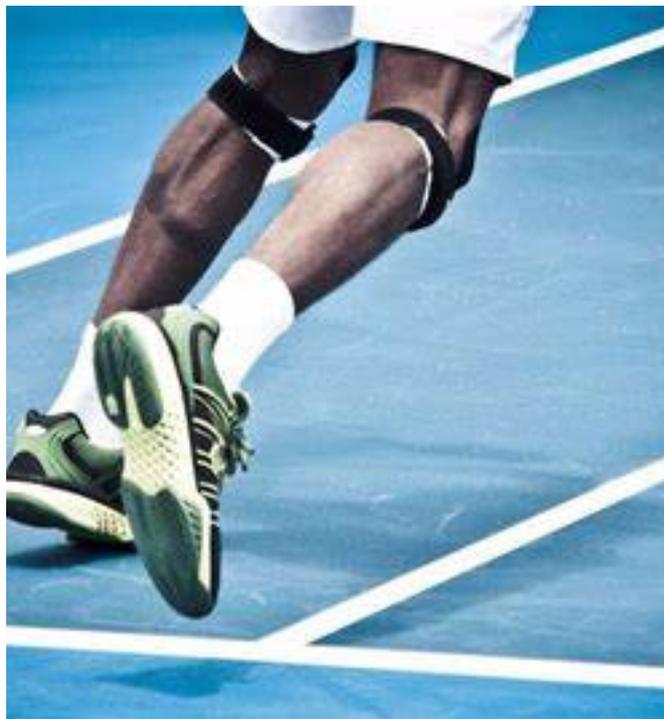
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➔ 1) Line drill

1) Line drill - The line drill uses exactly what you would expect, a single line that can be the line on a tennis court or a line drawn with chalk on the floor of a hotel room. Don't worry about the chalk, a damp washcloth will remove the chalk from the carpet when you are finished. The basic movements for the line drill include

- double leg front to back (jumping forward and backward over the line as quickly as possible).
- single leg front to back.
- stagger step front to back (with one foot in front of the line and one foot behind the line, alternate jumping forward with one foot and backward with the second foot at the same time),
- double leg side to side.
- single leg side to side.
- straddle with crossover (standing with one foot on each side of the line, cross the feet so one leg is on front with the legs crossed, then back to the straddle position, then with the same leg behind the other leg, then back to the straddle position).

The drills can vary in length, generally performing each drill for approximately 5, 10 or 15 seconds. The athlete can move consecutively from one drill to the next without rest once they have become conditioned to the exercise. While performing single leg drills, the athlete may need to switch between the right and left leg every few seconds until they become conditioned to the exercise. To make the drill harder, roll up a towel from the bathroom and jump over the towel instead of a line.



➔ 2). Cross drill

To perform the cross drill, use chalk to draw a large cross on the floor. Number the boxes as shown in Figure 1. Perform the drill as follows:

- double leg clockwise (1,2,3,4)
 - double leg counter-clockwise (4,3,2,1)
 - right foot clockwise.
 - left foot clockwise.
 - right foot counter-clockwise.
 - left foot counter-clockwise.
 - double leg with "X pattern" (2,3,4,1); and h) single leg with "X pattern".
- Again, the length of each set will average from 5-15 seconds, with some longer sets as the athlete improves, and some shorter sets to work on power. Drills can be performed consecutively to increase the difficulty, and towels can also be used instead of lines to make the athlete jump higher in the air.

➔ 3.) 5 Dot Drill

3.) 5 Dot Drill - 5 dots are placed on the floor, 4 dots in a 2x3 foot rectangle, and one dot in the centre (Figure 2). The dots can be a bit closer for young players and beginners, or a bit larger for experienced athletes. The basic movements in the 5 dot drill are

- front to back (or together/apart, one foot on each dot on the narrow end of the rectangle, the athlete jumps and lands with the feet together on the middle dot, apart on the next two dots, then backward and together to the middle dot, then backward to the original starting position).
- two feet together (in a "skiing motion", two feet stay together and hit each dot going forward except on one leg).
- left leg only.
- turn-around (the athlete starts with the feet apart on two dots, jumps to the middle dot for both feet, then the end dots with one foot on each dot. The athlete then jumps in the air turning the body 180 degrees to face in the opposite direction with one foot on each dot. The athlete then jumps to the middle dot, the end dot, and continues to turn around on each end of the drill. Just as it is important to use a variety of exercises to improve footwork, it is just as important to use a variety of work/rest intervals. The athlete will move more slowly when first learning these drills. Initially, the length of time may be limited by fatigue or inability to perform the activity. As the athlete becomes better conditioned, work sets can last from three seconds to 1-2 minutes. The average work set will last 5 to 15 seconds, with a 1:2 work/rest ratio. That means if the work set lasts 10 seconds, the athlete will rest for 20 seconds. Occasional rests of 1.5 to 2 minutes should be interspersed in the workout to simulate the rest allowed on a court changeover. These exercises are considered low intensity plyometrics as they generally do not involve jumping from a height. Still, they must be performed properly to avoid the risk of injury. To ensure safety in performing these exercises, follow these general guidelines:

- if possible, perform the exercises on a soft surface
- do not increase the total number of foot contacts by more than 10% from any previous workout
- make sure the athlete has a good general lower body strength base before performing these exercises
- progress to single leg drills only when the athlete is comfortable performing double leg drills, and
- perform these drills no more than 3 times per week with at least one day of rest.

With practice and consistency, these drills can be very beneficial in helping tennis players move quickly on the tennis court.

TECHNIQUE: FOOTWORK DRILLS FOR TENNIS PLAYERS ON THE ROAD

Technique: Footwork Drills for Tennis Players on the Road

(The information in this article was taken or adapted from the USTA High-Performance Coaching Programme Study Guide.)

Quick feet are an asset to tennis players at all levels. Foot speed and coordination can be improved by performing drills that require strength, balance, and explosiveness. There are many ways to improve footwork, including on court drills, ladder drills, and jumping rope. It is often difficult to maintain a footwork-conditioning program for tennis players, especially when they are traveling. In this article, footwork drills will be presented that can be performed in a small amount of space indoors. The carpeted floor of a hotel room can be turned into the perfect place to practice lower body quickness, balance, and foot speed! Tennis players must move in a variety of directions with accuracy, speed, and coordination. A conditioning program to improve footwork must include a wide variety of movements. Single leg drills are particularly important to tennis players, as they must often stop, balance, and shift the body weight in the opposite direction from a single leg. A lower body strength base is a prerequisite to effective movement training. With a good strength base, tennis players can progress into low intensity plyometric training. In addition to a good strength base, the athlete performing these drills should be well supervised. The program should carefully monitor the volume of activity, usually by counting the number of single leg and double leg foot contacts in a single session. These sessions should be performed no more than 2-3 times per week, allowing at least one day of rest between days of footwork training.



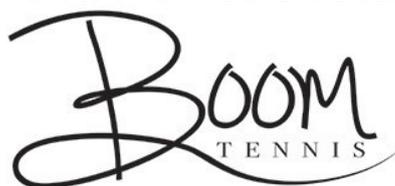
I'm sure like me you look back at some of the mistakes you've made when coaching a player and as a coach of over 20 years there have been some howlers! There's not an honest coach working today who hasn't messed up during lessons and got things wrong but what I couldn't understand was how some players got it so quickly and others never could. I could be telling a player exactly what to do and teaching them the best technique for their shot yet they couldn't do it outside of a hand fed drill. I was searching for this answer and by chance stumbled across the story of boxer James Braddock who won the world title after damaging his hand and having to take a job in the docks using his weaker hand which meant he returned to the ring without a weakness. Digging deeper I then read an article by a Brazilian footballer who said that playing crowded games on uneven surfaces meant that he had to develop a good touch and lots of skill. A light bulb moment.

Looking further into the subject some of the greatest coaches in all sports having been using CLA for a long time. The Constraints Led Approach (CLA) is where a coach can alter conditions of practice to encourage players to find a natural solution for example I recently heard about a Coach using Orange balls with their adult national player to encourage them to come into the net. The Coach used Orange because it gave the player time, they couldn't be passed and they didn't have the fear of being hit. They then constrained the points with full ball so they gained more points for a volley and lots of the natural practice was gone. The biggest change in the last example is the fluidity of a lesson in that there was more Tennis, less talking, more practice and repetition without repetition.

When I started using CLA in my sessions some players or parents aren't impressed because they have a pre conceived idea of what a Tennis lesson should look like but the results are there to be seen, the players I work with now can take ownership of their own training and come to me with good ideas. I'm encouraging them to work with the chaos of Tennis not try to find a way of organising the chaos which is impossible.

I would encourage coaches who want to find out more to follow Luke Regan and Phillip O'Calaghan on Twitter. If you're into podcasting then search Constraints Led Approach and you'll start to hear loads of great coaches talking about how they use CLA to teach their sessions. One thing I've hopefully learnt over the last 20 years is not to say never to traditional coaching approaches and technical breakdowns but it's knowing when to use it and how to approach sessions.

I'm available on hello@boomtennis.co.uk if you want to email me and find out more or even attend my 3 hour RPT course on CLA. Happy hitting everyone.



CLOSING OUT MATCHES

BY JEFF GREEWALD

Matches at all levels are lost every day because players are unable to “close it out.” Pros, juniors, college players, and competitive league players confront this challenge universally. Interestingly, in many ways, this phenomenon is a microcosm of the dynamics that play out in athletic competition in general – trusting your skills and playing to win, focusing on the process versus the results, maintaining concentration and intensity, and neutralizing momentum shifts.

We’ve all been there – leading 5-2 in a set then somehow letting it slip away. And how these losses hurt! After the match we shake our heads and replay the key shots in our minds wondering what would have happened if we had only attacked that second serve or come to the net for a volley at match point. Deep down we are disappointed in ourselves because the loss could have been avoided. We fell short not because we didn’t have the strokes, but because we lost our mental and emotional edge. This realization irritates us for days. We can live with the other player out hitting us, picking up his game at key moments but giving it away is unforgivable, and we are very hard on ourselves. But it is this very challenge and those frustrations that intrigue us and bring us back the next time to test ourselves again.

So, what typically happens when a player is leading in a match and then loses? Well, it depends on the player, but here are several reasons:

PROTECTING THE LEAD

The most typical response in this situation is to tighten up and become tentative. Players begin to protect their lead and hope their opponent will hand them the match. These players, as Tim Gallwey long ago discussed, begin playing “not to lose.” In other words, they abandon their more aggressive style of play and rely on the opponent to make errors. This is a recipe for disaster. Even if these players win, they feel horrible about how they played. It hurts their confidence, and, unfortunately, reinforces the possibility that they will play in a similar way the next time.

ATTACHED TO RESULTS (HIGH AROUSAL)

Invariably, players become overly attached to results, particularly in competition that counts. Getting absorbed in the process of competition – being in the moment and focused on the task at hand, enjoying the experience separate from the outcome of the match – that is the ultimate challenge for tennis players and athletes alike. As players begin savouring the possibility of winning, they become distracted by the attractiveness of this outcome. They lose focus, are unable to stick with their game plan, and instead of enjoying the game, they shift their attention to the results. They become too attached to winning and it makes them tight. As they try to protect their lead, they get nervous and over analyse, which negatively affects stroke production.

RELAX AND LOSE MOMENTUM (LOW AROUSAL)

Other players, though less frequently, actually relax too much. They feel they are in the “driver’s seat”, and have the room to pull out from the match for a moment and briefly celebrate their success. This is often fatal. Losing a game or two at this point can be very costly. The players with the lead frantically attempt to bring their attention back to the match – they get tight, over think, and perceive the momentum has shifted. And, often, it has shifted. Relaxing when leading, though on the surface seems to be the opposite of getting tight, is simply a different manifestation of the same problem—attachment to results. Attention shifts to the score, and we feel we have some “breathing room.” Although relaxing feels better than getting nervous, it can be just as costly. As soon as a game or two is lost, we are back to the anxiety anyway. In many cases, we have created a momentum shift both in our own minds and in our opponent’s as well.

THE CRITICAL VOICE KICKS IN

We all have a critical voice with which we must contend. We grew up with that voice—the doubter, the critic—and he/she comes out in full force when we need him the least. As soon as we are on the verge of something good, enter Mr. Doubt. “You better not lose this now. You’ve choked before. Here we go again.” He knocks on our door, and we let him in. It’s all downhill from there. And once again, we’ve lost the “mental edge.” Instead, answer the intruding critic with “I’m tougher than this player. I’m not going away until it’s over. He’s going to have to beat me”

HOW DO WE KEEP THE MENTAL EDGE?

Stay with your game plan. Don’t change it because you are leading. Finish him/her off with the strokes and strategy that got you there.

Use positive phrases to maintain concentration and appropriate arousal. When you need it, repeat any of the following affirmations as much as possible: “I am winning this match.” “This is mine.” “I deserve this one.” “I love this challenge.”

Smile when the critic comes knocking. Don’t fight him. Laugh at him. You are in control and busy enjoying the competition.

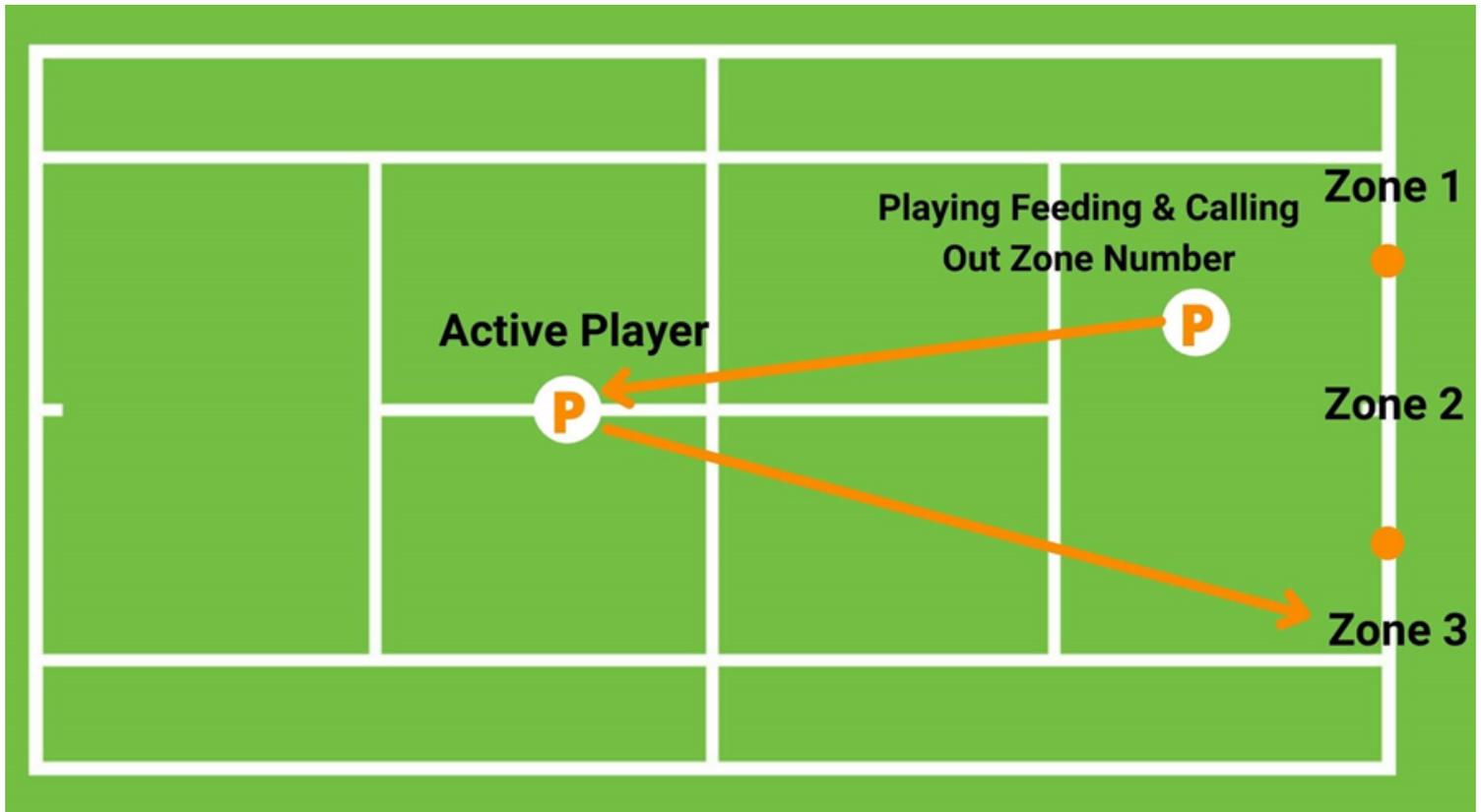
Keep your eyes focused on specific targets—Strings, ground, where you want to hit the ball. Avoid looking around.

Breathe deeply and rhythmically to maintain physical relaxation. Make this a routine. Players tend to constrict their breathing under stress.

In the final analysis, closing out a match is no different than any other aspect of competition. Like every point in the match, it requires total focus, intensity, and appropriate arousal level. Stay loose, stick to your game, focus on each point, and enjoy the challenge. Diffuse the inner critic with a smile and you are on your way to having and keeping the mental edge.

Targeted Volley

By Robert Dexter



This drill requires two players one being the ball feeder standing between the baseline and the service line.

The feeder must have a hopper with 20-30 balls to feed continuously. Before you start this drill, mark three zones on the baseline of the feeder's court side, each zone 12 feet apart. You can use cones to mark the zones.

Before feeding, the feeder must say loudly "zone 1", "zone 2", or "zone 3" to set a target for you. You must return the volley to the zone targeted by your partner.

This drill is a great way to improve the precision of your volleys.



HOW DOES TENNIS COMPARE TO OTHER SPORTS FOR FITNESS?

www.futuredemandtennis.com



Tennis has long been considered the ultimate lifetime sport as it can be played from ages 5 to 95. But did you know there is actual scientific evidence that supports this?

In addition to being a naturally social distancing sport, playing tennis regularly has been shown to literally extend your life while also providing physical, mental health and social benefits.

Don't take our word for it — take a look at the facts below to see why tennis is the best sport to develop a strong mind, body and spirit for a long, healthy and active life.

The ball is in your court!

LIVE LONGER

Want to live longer? PLAY TENNIS!

People who played tennis or other racquet sports had a 47 per cent lower risk of all-cause mortality compared with those who played no racquet sports, according to Dr. Stamatakis, senior author of a study published in the British Journal of Sports Medicine that included over 80,000 UK adults at least 30 years of age. People who played tennis and other racquet sports also had a 56 per cent lower risk of CVD mortality.

In another study out of Copenhagen that compared eight different sports, investigators found that tennis players had the greatest gain in life expectancy — 9.7 years longer than people who did not exercise. Interestingly, the leisure-time sports that inherently involve more social interaction [like racquet sports] were associated with the best longevity — a finding that warrants further investigation," the authors concluded. Tennis is the perfect sport for all ages and abilities, whether people have played before or are trying it out for the first time.

PHYSICAL BENEFITS

Improve your fitness — The stop-start nature of the game mimics what you see on treadmill programs but an hour on the tennis court seems like 15 minutes while an hour on the treadmill seems like an hour on the treadmill. An hour of singles play can burn 580 to 870 calories (according to Oja, et al, Brit J Sports Med, 2016).

Healthy heart — Playing just three hours a week will reduce your risk of heart disease by 56 per cent (according to a 2016 Harvard University study). Compared to other sports, tennis players have the lowest incidence of cardiovascular disease (40-year study conducted by Johns Hopkins University).

Develop better balance, agility, coordination and stamina — Playing tennis involves numerous skills that help improve your agility, balance, hand-eye coordination, reaction time, stamina and more.

MENTAL HEALTH BENEFITS

Reduce Stress — Tennis helps you deal with physical, mental, social and emotional challenges, which increases your capacity to deal with stress in everyday life.

Increase brain power — From alertness to tactical thinking, tennis enhances the neural connections in your brain. Kids who play tennis regularly get better grades (according to a 2013 United States Tennis Association study).

Develop problem-solving skills — Every point in tennis is a problem-solving exercise. Players need to respond to their opponents' shots in real time, like a high speed and physical game of chess. This requires quick thinking about court coverage, spins, angles, and geometry on nearly every point. Studies have shown that tennis, since it requires physical and mental alertness and tactical thinking, can help promote a lifetime of ongoing brain development. Sudoku and crossword puzzles have nothing on tennis.

Health benefits from playing tennis include living longer, improved fitness, reduced stress and increased brain power.

SOCIAL BENEFITS AND LIFE SKILLS

Enjoy family and friends — Tennis is a wonderful activity for the whole family, no matter what your age or ability. With minimal equipment needed and public tennis courts and clubs readily available, it's easy to get in the game with family & friends.

Teamwork, sportsmanship and social skills — Tennis is both an individual and a team sport. Playing doubles and/or on a league team helps develop your ability to communicate, work together, persevere and deal with wins and losses in a positive way.

Develop positive personality traits — Tennis outperforms all other sports in developing positive personality characteristics (according to a study by Dr. Jim Gavin at Concordia University & author of The Exercise Habit).

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COACHING TENNIS: A SCIENCE AND AN ART

BY FLORIAN MEIER

Coaching Tennis, like coaching any other sport, is a difficult task. I like to say that there is the science of coaching and then there is the art of coaching someone. There are of course many different coaches with different approaches to teaching the game. Some coaches focus heavily on the science and for others it is purely an art. Let's have a close look at the science and art of coaching and its implications.

The Science of Coaching Tennis

The science of coaching is based on scientific facts/information that the coach needs to know. For example: If you want to hit a great groundstroke you need to swing with an inside-out swing pattern. This is a scientific fact that no coach can really argue against. If you look at any good professional player, you will see this swing pattern because they cannot fight physics and still be successful at what they do!

For some strange reason the science of Tennis is often overlooked in coaching though! Tennis coaches rarely take a scientific approach, analysing things in detail with video analysis. Also, biomechanics experts are rarely consulted.

As a result, there are a million and one theories out there on how to hit a forehand/backhand or serve. Most coaches have their own unique theories on a subject that is really a strict matter of physics and not of opinion!

Great tennis coaches have known the scientific facts about how to best hit a tennis ball for many years now!

The information does not seem to spread well through the tennis industry though! I assume that the main reason is simply laziness on the part of tennis coaches. It does take a certain amount of effort to really get in touch with the science of Tennis and most coaches might think to themselves: Why bother if I get paid anyways simply because I can hit a good ball! This holds true especially on the professional tour. Most professional tennis players have coaches that are former professional players and very few of those are in touch with tennis research/science. In other professional sports like Golf, Football and Cricket it is standard procedure for pro players and teams to work with biomechanics experts trying to get the biggest edge on the competition possible!

The Art of Coaching Tennis

In coaching you cannot solely rely on scientific information even though that information is very important. There is always a very personal element involved when you are working with a tennis player on a regular basis. The Art of Coaching Tennis really comes down to the question: How do I get my student to do what I want him to do. Timing is often crucial here!

There is a right time and a wrong time to work on certain aspects of a player's game. Often the best coaches are not the ones that give the player all the information that they are thinking about but rather the ones that tell the player only the least amount of information necessary at the moment.

When I analyse someone's forehand for example, I might see 5 things that I do not like and would like to change. Yet if I tell him all these things wrong with his forehand, I will probably confuse him and hurt his self-confidence. So instead, I go through the information in my head and figure out what needs to be worked on first and then I only talk to the player about that subject. The goal in coaching tennis is not to impress but to help the student!

This in my opinion is the most important aspect of the art of coaching: Knowing when to say what and when to keep your mouth shut!

How to work on the technique?

The technique is one of the most significant aspects of and physical aspects. However, it would be impossible to play well without having a solid understanding of the technical fundamentals. All players have different playing styles, more or less stylish and beautiful to watch but, all of them respect the fundamentals.

What is the technique in tennis?

The technique is necessary to achieve a result. There are fundamentals to respect in order to correctly hit a tennis ball. As spectators, we easily notice when someone faces technical difficulties. As players, it is quite different. Understanding what can be corrected, improved or even changed can be complicated and requires years of experience. Doing a mistake in tennis can be the consequence of a bad technique. Sometimes, you don't have to look any further than the basic rules to find out why you made a mistake. You need to go back to the court with a clear vision of what needs to be done, to avoid mistakes. Here are fundamentals that will help you become a better tennis player:

- To pass the net, my swing must be upwards.
- To keep my balance, my stance must be low and there must be a significant distance between my feet.
- To hit a great serve, I need to hit the ball as high as possible in order to get an angle. To hit a great serve, my arm must be fully extended when I make contact with the ball.
- To hit a low volley, my racket head should be open and facing the sky.
- To create speed on your shots, your hand must be relaxed and accelerate.
- To react fast, I need to stand on the front of my feet.
- To hit correctly and avoid hurting myself, I need to make contact with the ball in front of my body.

All of these technical aspects seem simple – they are natural – but they are often the reason behind our mistakes. It is important to note that there are many biomechanical factors that define the technique. It is the coach's responsibility to transmit them to the students.



When and why work on the technique?

Depending on the player's level, there are different moments to work on the technique. Professional players, for instance, prioritize working on their technique during the preseason (long practice periods without tournaments). At a lower level, the technique can be worked on all year long, to varying degrees. It is crucial to work on the technique in order to improve players' games. It is sometimes difficult for a coach to find the right technical work. For example, we may not dwell on technical work of regularity on a player doing serve-volley and return-volley. It is necessary to have your player's game identity in mind. It will help you focus on the things that will maximize the potential of your players.

Another important point: if a player has a technical defect but his shot is effective, why change it? We often see high-level players with unorthodox strokes. As long as the stroke does not slow down progress, there is no need to make technical changes.

What are the key things to keep in mind when working on the technique? There are many important factors to efficiently work on the technique: Focus on one or maximum two technical points at a time. Indeed, a technical change will result in neurosensorial modifications. It is very important not to get lost in a multitude of technical changes, as the brain will not be able to efficiently register all these changes. Repetition will be your best ally in the process of learning to assimilate the new movement well.

Mentally prepare the player: it is necessary to make players understand the purpose of the change. Indeed, when the learning process takes place, there is an inevitable regression phase just before seeing progress. This is why it takes some time, it is recommended to avoid playing tournaments in such a transformation phase. The player must understand and visualize the desired technical change in order to technically judge himself. The change must have a medium-term objective, the final goal being the construction of a shot.



MOURATOGLU
— ACADEMY —



Keep it fun! To be a great coach, you must brainstorm, reinvent yourself and add fun in practice sessions. Of course, when focusing on one or two technical changes, we are most of the time focused on the same shots. It is then essential to find situations that keep players motivated and determined.

The teaching tools: first and foremost, the coach must have a good knowledge of biomechanics. It is necessary to improve the player's game. Then, he will have to put things in place to correct the technical mistake. There are two main categories of teaching aids: educators and patchers.

The educators' goal is to facilitate the task with a tip, an instruction or a material. To make the right shot, players have to respect the instruction. Here are some educational examples: for the early opening and/or the forehand preparation, put an object on the side, force the player to do the early-opening and make sure he/she has the racket under the ball before hitting. To work on the server's toss, give him/her a point to fix in the air so that he/she knows if the toss is correct. Add an extra-net to work on the ball trajectories.

The patchers' goal is to exaggerate an aspect of the game to reach an end-goal. Here are some examples: if you have an - extreme - full western grip and that it is nearly impossible to hit a flat ball, you can try to play with an open grip to feel the sensations and then gradually close it to reach the desired end-goal. If you have troubles with the service's pronation or struggle with kick's effect, you can serve facing upfront. It will force you to accentuate your pronation to hit a serve in the court. For someone with a big preparation who struggles to block back when balls come fast, we can, for example, ask him to prepare with the elbow tucked into his body on his forehand.

These teaching tools must be wisely used. By respecting the basic rules, you will earn wins and reach personal milestones. It is also important to remind yourself that it is much easier to change your technique at a young age than when you get older. It is much easier to automate new movements then. That's why the first years of a player are crucial in the learning process. They are required to develop a player's good habits. We must keep in mind that the technique part of a tennis game must not be ignored. Of course, the mental and physical aspects are important, but without the right technique, nobody can reach the highest level.

It is essential to change habits in the earliest stage of a player's career. There are many different ways of coaching but it is obvious that these fundamentals are key to success.

CONTACTPOINT

➔ Froggie jumps



Start doing the squat "froggie" jumps from one side of tennis court to the other. Or if you are in the grass or sand, do about 20-30 deep, powerful jumps.

Perform the squats as deep as you can. Your joints will get used to it, and you train the muscles in the full range of motion. Make sure you always keep your chest and head up so your upper body doesn't collapse. I always like to say that if you had a sign on your chest, let other people read it in the bottom squat position and on the way up and down.

➔ Burpees



Everybody's favourite exercise. It is super intense and trains the entire body. Squat down and put the hands on the ground. Jump your feet out away from your arms into a plank position.

Keep your core firm and solid, don't let your hips sink. Do a beautiful push up and then jump your feet back to the starting position, towards your hands. Land gently. The last part of the burpee is to jump up as high as you can and softly land back into deep squat. That was one burpee. Now repeat 15 times.

➔ Plank



Now give your legs a little break and get down on our feet and elbows into the plank position and hold it for at least 1 minute. If you feel strong, hold it for 1.5-2 minutes.

If you are already strong in your core, you can do the plank on your hands instead of the elbows and with alternating lifts of the opposite leg and arm (see the picture). This will be challenging not just your strength, but balance and coordination as well. Each time you lift your limbs up, hold the top position for 1-2 seconds so you feel you have a good control of the movement and good balance. Then switch the side to lift the opposite limbs. Keep going for one minute, at least.

➔ Walking lunges

Shake off the lactic acid from your legs (you got some, right? If not, do more of the jumps!) for a few seconds and perform walking lunges back to the starting position. Again, about 20-30 lunges. Focus on going really deep low and keep your body erected. Focus on driving the movement from the butt cheek of your front leg. It's all about the booty (in tennis, and life, ha ha) and we want to get it strong and powerful.

MAKE TIME FOR YOUR TENNIS FITNESS TRAINING

By Suzanna McGee www.tennisfitnesslove.com

Like with everything in life, with every goal, every accomplishment, every new healthy habit, it's all about consistency and a compound effect of small acts. You can easily apply this to your tennis fitness training. Just a little workout after each tennis practice, maybe 20-30 minutes and another 10-20 minutes for stretching, and over a period of one week it adds on to 3-5 hours of tennis fitness training. It is 150-250 hours per year. Pretty amazing, isn't it?

You can train after your tennis practice when others talk or go for a beer. You can train early in the morning when everybody still sleeps. Or late at night, instead of watching TV or going to a bar! You don't even need to do any fancy workouts. Choose a few intense exercises that work the legs, hips and shoulders and just repeat them in sequence for several small circuits. It will be fast, intense, and even challenging. Using your body as a resistance is often one of the harder things to do, especially when your body is a bit on the heavier side. But that's a good thing, the body will be motivated to become light so you don't need to struggle, and you will drop (fat) weight faster.

Try this simple circuit several times per week and watch the results happen within not too long time.



Repeat the entire circuit of these 4 exercises 4-6 times, depending how much time you have for your training. It should take you about 20-30 minutes. And you have addressed all the legs, hips, core, shoulder stabilizers, chest, arms, power, balance and coordination. How cool is that!

If you still have some time left, do a little static stretching routine, so you would even out the imbalances in your body that tennis (unfortunately) creates. We cannot stop playing, but we don't want to be forced to stop, that's why we have to stretch, right?

Do this workout a few times a week, which means 3-5 times, and you will notice how much stronger your legs will get and how much easier it will be to move around on the tennis court. You will run down balls that you haven't dreamt about before, and you will have more power as well, because your core will be more stable, you will have better balance and you will also be in better position to hit, because you will get to the spot faster. Then it will become so much fun and you will become even more motivated to do more tennis fitness training.



IF YOU'VE EVER PLAYED THIS GAME ON THE PLAYGROUND YOU WILL UNDERSTAND THE RULES ARE PLAYED THE SAME EXCEPT YOU WILL BE USING A TENNIS BALL AND RACKET INSTEAD OF A HANDBALL. THE FOUR SQUARES SHOULD BE NUMBERED FROM 1 TO 4 CLOCKWISE SO THAT THE NUMBERS ARE DIAGONAL FROM EACH OTHER I.E. THE NUMBER 1 AND 4 WILL BE DIAGONAL. THE SERVER WILL BE THE PLAYER STANDING IN THE HIGHEST NUMBERED SQUARE AND HE/SHE MUST SERVE TO THE LOWEST NUMBERED SQUARE. THE RECEIVER MUST ALLOW THE BALL TO BOUNCE INBOUNDS ONCE BEFORE HITTING THE BALL TO THE SQUARE OF THEIR CHOICE. WHEN A BALL BOUNCES OUT OF BOUNDS THAT PLAYER IS ELIMINATED UNTIL THERE IS ONLY ONE PERSON LEFT ON THE PLAYING FIELD. YOU CAN MIX IT UP A BIT BY STARTING THE KIDS WITH TOSSING THE TENNIS BALL BEFORE USING THE RACKETS AND YOU CAN START FROM THE LOWEST TO THE HIGHEST NUMBER IF YOU WISH. YOU CAN ALSO ROTATE THE KIDS AROUND THE SQUARES WHEN THEY GET HIT TO KEEP THEM IN THE GAME. THIS IS GREAT FOR AN EYE-HAND COORDINATION EXERCISE AND BALANCE.

TENNIS STRINGS FOR JUNIORS

[HTTPS://WWW.PERFECT-TENNIS.COM](https://www.perfect-tennis.com)



When it comes to choosing a tennis string for a junior racquet, it might seem complicated, but it's relatively straightforward, at least when they are just starting to play. The problem is that there's so much conflicting information online, and not much of it is tailored towards junior players.

Therefore, a lot of parents end up incorrectly choosing strings that professionals and high-level player use. However, as coaches know parents need to think less about results and more about development. So, for a developing junior tennis player, the key is not how much topspin they can generate; it is to ensure your kids stay injury-free by avoiding unnecessary strain on their joints and muscles.

The issue I keep seeing when choosing strings for a junior is that many parents massively overestimate their child's ability on a tennis court. It is almost at delusional levels.

They then do a little bit of reading, invent problems that do not exist and then cook up numerous ideas on how to improve their child's game to get Rafa like topspin. There is not a single child under the age of thirteen that needs to be using a polyester tennis string.

I'm almost tempted to raise that to fifteen/sixteen, but there are certainly a few high-level juniors ahead in physical development that start breaking strings, in which case a hybrid polyester is an option. But for 99.9% of juniors aged from ten to twelve years old? They do not need a polyester string in their racquet.

Why? Consider the following properties of polyester strings:

Polyester was developed for string breakers – it enables you to hit out and not break strings.

Polyester enables more access to topspin, assuming you hit with it in the first place. String does not create spin, and it only enhances it. Polyester is stiff on the arm, shoulder, wrist and elbow. It transfers more shock to the body.

Then take a look at what junior players are doing on the court:

·Do they break strings? No, junior players do not hit with enough spin to break strings.

·Do they hit with big topspin and want to add even more spin so they can reach Rafa RPM levels? No. Juniors always hit flatter – they can't sacrifice power for topspin like a full-grown adult.

·Do they constantly overhit the ball beyond the baseline to require more control? Rarely, in most cases, it is the reverse; junior players struggle for depth of shot.

·Do they have top-level physical conditioning to mitigate any arm/wrist/shoulder damage? No, they are still growing.

So, while a player may or may not be highly 'talented' to give them the best chance don't put polyester in their racquet at 10, 11, 12, 13 years old unless you want to predispose them to arm injuries that they may develop at a later age.

Start with a Multifilament

Outside of natural gut, the best choice for all young players is to start with is a multifilament string there are lots of good quality multifilament on the market, all of which will give good power, are soft on the arm, and last a reasonable amount of time.

SERVING/RECEIVING AND TENNIS ANALYTICS

BY ANDY DURHAM, FOUNDER OF RACKETSTATS

SERVING CHOICES FACE ALL OF US DURING A MATCH. WE HAVE FAVORITES THAT WE LIKE TO STICK WITH, BUT AS OUR OPPONENTS ABILITY RISES, IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT WE DEVELOP OPTIONS. THEN ONCE YOU PERFECT ALTERNATIVE SERVES, OUR ABILITY USE BOTH SERVES BECOMES THE CHALLENGE, THAT IS UNLESS YOUR OPPONENT HAS A DEFINITE WEAKNESS TO EXPLORE. SO LET'S EXAMINE WHAT IS AVAILABLE TO YOU WITH THE FOLLOWING THREE ISSUES.

1-ALTERNATE 1ST SERVES,

WE SERIOUSLY NEED AN EFFECTIVE ALTERNATE SERVE, PROBABLY TO THE OTHER CORNER OR JAMMING SERVE. BECAUSE THIS IS NOT OUR PREFERRED SERVES, WE TEND TO PRACTICE IT LESS, AND ACCEPT THAT IT REALLY DOES NOT FILL THE BILL SO TO SPEAK. BUT IF YOU REACH A HIGHER LEVEL, YOU BEST HAVE A GOOD ALTERNATE SERVE.

2-RECEIVERS DEUCE/AD COURT SPLITS

YOUR OPPONENT HAS A FOREHAND AND A BACKHAND RETURN, BUT THEY PROBABLY DO NOT RETURN AS WELL WITH THEM FROM BOTH THE DEUCE AND AD COURTS. THE MAJORITY OF PLAYERS VARY IN THEIR EFFECTIVENESS FROM BOTH SIDES. SOME FAVOR WIDE SERVES, DOWN THE MIDDLE SERVES OR ANY OF THE POSSIBLE VARIATIONS. YOU NEED TO OBSERVE THESE VARIATIONS AND TURN THEIR RETURNS INTO PATTERNS THAT BENEFIT YOU.

3-HOW AN OPPONENT DEALS WITH YOUR 2ND SERVE.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WHAT OPPONENTS DO WITH 1ST AND 2ND SERVES IS OFTEN IGNORED. RECEIVERS CAN BE PLACED IN TWO CATEGORIES: THOSE WHO ATTACK 2ND SERVES WELL AND THOSE WHO DON'T. NOT ALL RECEIVERS CAN REALLY ATTACK 2ND SERVES, BUT THERE ARE WAYS TO HANDLE THIS. I HAD A STUDENT PLAYING THE SEMIS OF THE CANADIAN OPEN JUNIORS AND LOST IN THREE SETS. THESE TWO PLAYERS MET AGAIN AT THE US OPEN JUNIORS SO WE LOOKED AT THE STATS FROM THEIR FIRST MATCH AND REALIZED THAT HIS OPPONENT REALLY ATTACKED THE 2ND SERVE AND WON THE MATCH BECAUSE OF IT. THEREFORE IN THE THIS SECOND MATCH UP MY PLAYER GOT A HIGHER PERCENTAGE OF 1ST SERVES IN TO PREVENT HIS OPPONENT FROM ATTACKING HIS 2ND SERVE; THE RESULT IS THAT THIS TIME HE WON THE MATCH. BY THE WAY, ALL PLAYERS SHOULD PRACTICE GETTING THEIR 1ST SERVE % HIGHER IN CASE THEY RUN INTO THIS SITUATION.

HOW DO YOU SEE THIS TYPE OF INFORMATION? THE ONLY WAY IS WITH TENNIS ANALYTICS WHICH PRODUCES A REPORT LIKE THE CHART BELOW. THIS IS AN EXAMPLE FROM A LIVE MATCH GATHERED BY A TEAMMATE DURING THE MATCH ON THEIR SMARTPHONE. THE FIRST CHART IS OF BOTH PLAYER'S 1ST SERVES.

1st serve win/loss %	57.78 (26-19)	39.53 (17-26)
Deuce Ct 1st serve %	73.91 (17-6)	40.00 (8-12)
Ad Ct 1st serve %	40.91 (9-13)	39.13 (9-14)
Second serve points won %	31.25 (5-11)	42.11 (8-11)
Deuce Ct 2nd serve %	10.00 (1-9)	46.15 (6-7)
Ad Ct 2nd serve %	66.67 (4-2)	33.33 (2-4)

NOTICE PLAYER 1'S 1ST AND 2ND SERVE VARIANCES BETWEEN THE DEUCE AND AD COURTS. THIS IS WHAT WE CALL THE DEUCE/AD COURT SPLIT, DOING BETTER ON THE DEUCE COURT ON 1ST SERVES AND THE AD COURT ON 2ND SERVES. IN ORDER TO SEE THE "WHY" THIS IS HAPPENING WE GO TO THE RETURN OF SERVE STATISTICS IN THE NEXT CHART.



Return of Serve



1st Serve Return Points Won %

60.47 %
26 • 17

42.22 %
19 • 26

FH 1st Serve Return Deuce Ct %

57.89 %
11 • 8

33.33 %
5 • 10

BH 1st Serve Return Deuce Ct %

0 %
0 • 0

12.5 %
1 • 7

FH 1st Serve Return Ad Ct %

55.56 %
10 • 8

56.25 %
9 • 7

BH 1st Serve Return Ad Ct %

80 %
4 • 1

60 %
3 • 2

LOOKING AT THE RACKETSTATS RETURN OF SERVE STATISTICS YOU WILL NOTICE THAT THERE ARE %'S AND NUMBERS TO BACK THESE UP. THE FOUR RETURN NUMBERS TO CONSIDER ARE THE FH AND BH IN BOTH THE DEUCE AND AD COURTS, WITH PLAYER1 IN THE FIRST COLUMN AND PLAYERS 2 IN THE 2ND COLUMN. IN THE DEUCE COURT YOU WILL SEE THAT PLAYER 2 SERVED THE MAJORITY OF SERVES TO PLAYER 1'S FOREHAND RATHER THAT THE WEAKER BACKHAND. AND IN THE AD COURT THIS TREND CONTINUED. PLAYER 2 SERVED A TOTAL OF 50 SERVES TO PLAYER 1'S FOREHAND AND ONLY 7 TO THEIR BACKHAND. THIS IS OBVIOUS INFORMATION FROM CHARTING, BUT WAS IT OBVIOUS TO THE PLAYERS? ANALYTICS MAKE THESE OBSERVATIONS OBVIOUS OFTEN COUNTERING WHAT OUR EYES ARE TELLING US. THE INFORMATION OUR EYES TAKES IN IS SO VAST THAT THE HUMAN MIND CAN NOT TRANSLATE ALL THAT IT SEES INTO THE DATA THAT ANALYTICS CAN.

DON'T BE SHOCKED AT THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WHAT YOU THINK IS GOING ON AND WHAT IS REALLY HAPPENING. WHEN TRAINING PEOPLE TO FLY, ONE OF THE FIRST PRIORITIES IS TO LEARN AND EXPERIENCE THE FACT THAT YOU CAN NOT RELY ON YOUR SENSES, WHICH CAN FOOL YOU INTO THINKING THAT YOU ARE GOING UP INSTEAD OF DOWN OR VISA VERSA. PILOTS ARE TRAINED EARLY ON TO RELY ON THEIR INSTRUMENTS OVER THEIR SENSES. AS PROS, YOU EACH BRING A HUGE DEPTH OF EXPERIENCE AT DEALING WITH ADVERSITY AND TACTICS ON THE COURT THROUGH YOUR PLAYING EXPERIENCES. YOU HAVE LEARNED THROUGH EXPERIENCE TO DEAL WITH NEARLY EVERY SITUATION YOUR STUDENT CAN RUN INTO. TENNIS ANALYTICS ONLY HELPS YOU SPOT THINGS WHICH ARE VERY DIFFICULT TO SEE, EVEN WITH THE TRAINED MIND, AND TRANSLATE THEM INTO ACCURATELY HELPING YOUR STUDENT.

THERE ARE HALF A DOZEN AFFORDABLE TENNIS ANALYTICS APPS ON THE MARKET FOR SMARTPHONES, EACH WITH DIFFERENT ENTRY METHODS AND REPORTS. LIKE THE VIDEO CAMERA MANY YEARS AGO, ANALYTICS IS JUST ANOTHER TOOL, AND THOSE OF YOU WHO EMBRACE IT WILL SEE IMMEDIATE BENEFITS. MY SUGGESTION IS TO TRY THEM OUT AND FIND THE ONE THAT YOU ARE MOST COMFORTABLE WITH. USE THE REPORTS OF SEE THINGS YOU MAY NOT HAVE NOTICED AND CONFIRM THE THINGS THAT YOU HAVE. SHOW THE REPORTS TO YOUR STUDENT SO THAT THEY BECOME AWARE OF ALL THE INFORMATION PRESENTED. AND SHOW THEM AS REPORT CARDS TO PARENTS PROVING THAT YOUR PROGRAM IS FOCUSING AND IMPROVING EACH STUDENT'S INDIVIDUAL NEEDS.

TENNIS ANALYTICS IS VERY NEW TO THE TENNIS WORLD AT LEVELS BELOW THE PROFESSIONALS. AND ITS USE IN TENNIS SERIOUSLY LAGS BEHIND MOST OF THE MAJOR SPORTS WORLDWIDE. AS AN INDUSTRY WE NEED TO ENJOY THE BENEFITS THAT ANALYTICS OFFERS. BE ONE OF THE LEADERS AND LEARN WHAT IT CAN OFFER TO YOU, YOUR STUDENTS AND YOUR PROGRAM.

RPT Courses

National professional certification course dates

COURSE DATES	VENUE
1st and 8th May	Redhill
13-15th May	Manchester
30th May – 1st June	Middlesex
26-28th June	Leeds

World Tour course dates

Course Date	Venue
13-15th July	London
16-18th November	London

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN HOSTING AN RPT CERTIFICATION COURSE OR CPD COURSES AT YOUR CLUB ? IF SO PLEASE CONTACT STUART@RPTEUROPE.COM AND LET THE RPT COME TO YOU !