

Junior & Adult Drills & Games

Drills

Warm-up

Roll with Hands and racquet: Using a red ball, have players stand 4 to 5 feet apart and have them roll the ball back and forth to their partner. Have them catch the rolling ball with two hands directly in front of their body or on their racquet. Quickly progress to rolling with a racquet and add movement while rolling ball onto partner's racquet.

Koosh Ball Pass: Use one Koosh ball or beanbag for each pair. Have the players begin by standing close together with their racquets, passing the Koosh ball back and forth from one racquet to the other. After several successful trials, have them move back so they have to use a gentle toss to get the Koosh ball from one racquet to the other. Add a challenge by tossing the Koosh ball low, high and even adding a creative catch, such as standing on one leg, between the legs, just above the ground, on one knee, etc. Let the players be creative with their catch.

Train Crash: two players face each other, standing about 4-5 feet apart. Each player rolls their foam balls with hands or racquets to their partner at the same time. Players try to crash balls in the middle.

Rolly Polly. The players stand across from each other on either side of the doubles alley. Players have a racquet and should position themselves sideways to the ball as they might be positioned for a forehand with the edge of the racquet on the ground behind the ball and the strings touching the ball. Using the racquet, the player with the ball rolls it to his partner, who stops the ball with his foot and rolls it back. After five successful attempts, the two players roll the ball – and stop it – with the racquet before rolling the ball back.

Player in the middle. The players form a circle 10-15 feet out from a player in the middle of the circle. Player in the middle dodges balls as the players roll their balls trying to hit the player in the middle. Whoever hits the player in the middle takes their spot.

Frog Hops. Jump from a crouching position along the ground, landing quietly on the balls of the feet and with both feet together.

Racquet Quickness. Two players stand facing one another, each standing a racquet on the top of the frame with the handle pointing up. At the count of three, the players will switch places and

catch the other player' racquet without letting it drop. After several successful trials, move the players back a half-step at a time and see how far they can go without letting the racquet drop.

Dynamic Warm-Up. The following activities are a perfect way to warm-up and also give players an opportunity to toss, catch and learn about the flight of the ball. Use some or all of these with the coach leading the activities:

1. Jog in place while juggling ball from right hand to left-hand and back
2. Slow jog and fast juggle
3. Fast feel and slow juggle
4. Regular jog and regular juggle
5. Skip and regular juggle
6. High knees and regular juggle
7. Heel kicks and regular juggle
8. Pass ball around left leg three times
9. Pass ball around right leg three times
10. Pass ball around waist three times, stop and reverse direction
11. Pass ball around knees three times, stop and reverse direction
12. Pass ball around neck three times, stop and reverse direction
13. Toss ball straight into air with a leap and catch
14. Dribble ball from right hand to left hand
15. Dribble ball through the group
16. Toss one ball with a partner while shuffling through the group
17. Bounce pass one ball with partner while shuffling through group

Simon Sez – Lines of the Court. Use this activity to learn the areas and lines of the court. The coach calls out a line or area of the court and a movement. For example: “Hop on one foot, skip tip-toe, little mouse steps, monster steps, etc.” After all players have gone to their line or part of the court, the coach goes to the correct area so everyone learns the correct line or area.

Red Light - Green Light. Players line up side by side, facing the coach who is a distance away. Players have a racquet with a ball, beanbag or Koosh ball balanced on the strings. The coach calls out either “green light” or “red light.” On green light, the players can move toward the coach. When red light is called, they must stop. If the players are caught moving when red light is called, if the ball falls off the racquet or if they touch the ball, they must go back to the starting line. The first player to reach the coach wins.

Team Tag. Divide players into two groups. Use the area between the baseline and the service line. Call the name of one player who will attempt to tag as many players as he can in 30 seconds. If a

player moves out of the defined playing areas or if they get tagged, they are out. After 30 seconds, all players are back in and the coach calls out a new name.

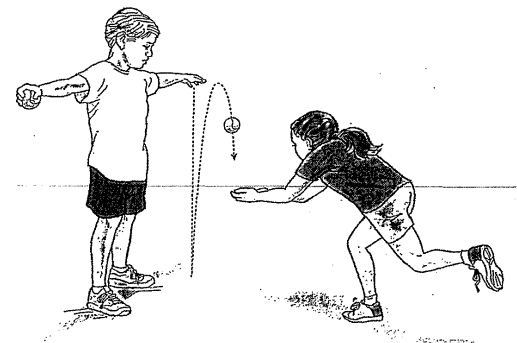
Cannon Ball. The coach uses a large ball, either a playground ball or a beach ball, and tosses it high in the air and calls out a player's name. The player attempts to catch the ball after it bounces, counting how many times it bounces before it is caught. This continues until all the players have been called. This can also be done with partners, with one player tossing the ball up and the other partner catching it.

Catch Me if You Can (self toss and catch). Each player has a ball and tosses it in the air at least head high, lets it bounce on the court and catches it.

Underhand Throw and Catch (add clapping). Show players how to toss the ball underhand, standing with both feet facing the target and stepping forward with the opposite foot (left foot if they are right handed) and swinging their arm at their side. Place a target for the ball about two-third of the distance to the partner so the player has an aiming point. Have the catcher clap when the ball bounces before catching. You can have them add multiple claps if they elect to catch the ball after two or three bounces.

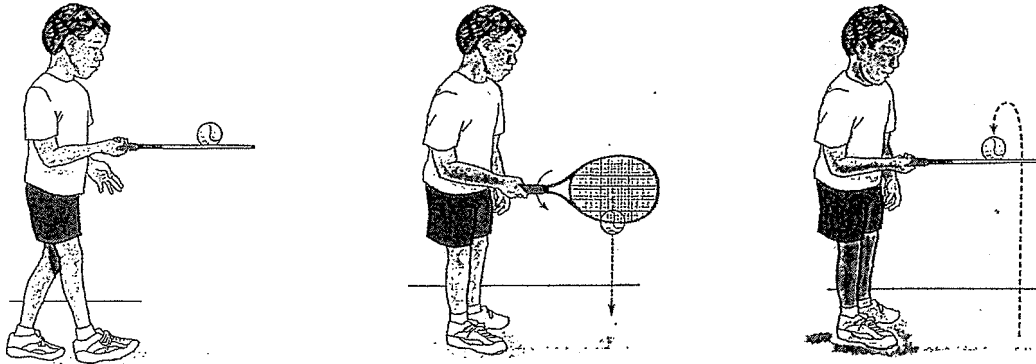
Funny Bones. To get players moving, balancing and learning the lines of the court, have them move to the lines called out by the coach and balance on the line with the instructed number of body parts. The coach will give two commands: One will be for the line, and the second will be for the number of body parts to put on the line. For example, the coach could say "Skip to the baseline and balance on three body parts" (as in two feet and one hand), or "March to the center service line and balance on two body parts, but you can only use one foot."

Ball Drop. In pairs, one player has a ball in both hands with arms extended at shoulder height. The player drops one ball and the partner runs and catches the ball after one bounce. Move slightly back after each successful drop and catch.



Sharks in a Tank. Define the play area, such as the entire backcourt (between the service line and the baseline) or one service court, depending on the size of the group. The coach calls out the name of a participant and that participant becomes the "shark" and attempts to tag as many players as possible. When a player is tagged, he steps out of the boundaries, does two jumping jacks and then rejoins the game. It is a good idea to control the movement – calling out "fast walk," "skip" or "march" – to prevent anyone from getting hurt while running. The coach changes the identity of the shark frequently.

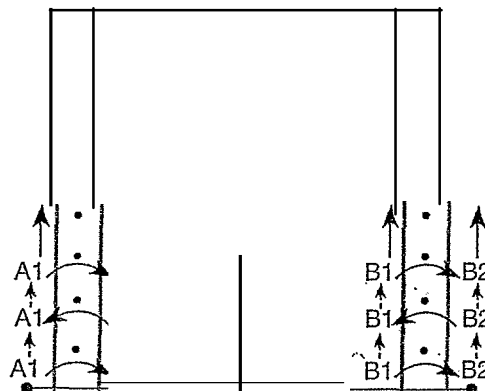
Bungee Jump. Each player has a ball that is balanced on the strings. The players move around the court balancing the ball. When the coach calls out, "Bungee Jump," the players let the ball drop off the racquet, let it bounce and then catch the ball back on the racquet. They may have to use their hands to trap the ball on the strings, but with practice they can just use the racquet face. Once the ball is on the strings, the players continue to move until the coach calls, "Bungee Jump," again.



Clear the Court. Divide players into two teams and put them on either side of the net. Dump out as many foam balls as you have on both sides of the court. When the coach calls out, "Clear the Court," players pick up balls and throw them over the net to the other side of the court. Let them continue to catch or pick up balls and throw them over to the other side for a minute to see what side of the court has the fewest balls.

Call My Name. Players are in pairs, one partner with a ball and the other with her back to her partner. The partner with the ball tosses it up and calls out the partner's name. The partner has to turn around and catch the ball after one bounce.

Slamma Jamma. Place through down lines or poly spots/donuts every 5-6 feet inside the doubles alley. Players stand on either side of the doubles alley facing each other. Players side shuffle up and down the court tossing a ball underhand to a partner. The ball must bounce between the players before the partner can catch it. The goal is to move from the net to the baseline without dropping the catch. Every time a player drops the ball, the team quickly goes back to the nearest throw down line or spot before continuing on.



Follow the Leader. Have players follow a leader around the court and imitate the movement of the leader, such as run, hop, swimming arms, monster walk, march, shuffle sideways, skip, etc. The coach can substitute a player to serve as the leader.

Inch Worm. Players line up shoulder to shoulder in a straight line, with their racquets held out in front with the strings facing up. The last player in the line has a beanbag or Koosh ball. That player passes it from his racquet to the next player in the line and then runs behind the line of players to the front of the line. As each player passes and moves to the front of the line, the line will move forward to the opposite end of the court.

Different Moves. Players are in pairs with one person designated as the leader. The leader will do a movement activity on the court, such as jogging, hopping, skipping, jumping, etc., and moving in different directions – forward, backward, and sideways. The partner has to copy the movement and follow **the leader as closely as possible. Players should take turns as the leader.**

Change formation. Teams of 6 players form a single file line with the first in line at the service line. The other 6 players do the same on the opposite side of the net. The Pro puts a ball in play and players rally gently over net with "friendly hits" to team on other side. Players hit just one ball, turn to the outside of the court and go to end of line. Aim for 10 hits without a miss. Compete with group on other half of court to reach 10 first. Repeat the same activity... but each team of 6 is only allowed 1 racket! After they hit, they pass the racket to the next person in line. Watch the smiles come!

Pass the racquet game. Split the court into 3 lanes. Cooperatively rally the ball back and forth to each other. One player is in the center of the court and sends the ball to the sides. The players at the sides send the ball into the center. Rotate other players in after 3 misses or, after the players complete a sequence of 4 shots.

Tennis volleyball. Team of 2-4 players positioned on each side of the net. One side starts with a serve. The ball can be hit out the air or off the bounce. It must be returned with 3 hits or less. Hits must be made within a confined area. Hits must be in air or ball can bounce on the ground between its.

Skills

One Bounce – Two Bounce. One player tosses the ball underhand over the net and calls out "One" or "Two." The other player must allow the ball to bounce that number of times before catching it and tossing it back, also calling out a number. Progress to one player trapping the ball with the racquet, and the eventually hitting the ball on either one or two bounces.

Tennis Hockey. Players form two teams and stand across from each other on the doubles sidelines and place two cones as goals about 3 feet beyond the end of the line. Keeping the ball close to their racquets, players tap the ball along the line (have them name the line) trying to keep the ball on the line. When they get to the end, they must try to score a goal for their team by hitting the ball between the two cones.

Kirk-O-Rama. To liven up simple racquet-handling activities like bounding balls up and down, add some music and change activities every 20 to 30 seconds. Use a variety of activities and have players change every time they hear a whistle. With racquets, have players try any or all of these activities for variety in your practices:

1. Bounce ball down
2. Bounce ball up, letting it bounce on the court after each hit
3. Bounce ball down on the edge of the racquet
4. Bounce ball up, keeping the ball in the air
5. Bounce ball up, alternating sides of the racquet
6. Bounce ball up, alternating sides but add a hit up on the edge between hitting on both sides
7. Bounce ball high
8. Bounce ball low
9. Bounce ball while on one knee
10. Bounce ball while sitting on the court
11. Bounce ball while lying on the court
12. Bounce ball in a circle around the body
13. Bounce ball in a Figure 8 around the legs
14. Bounce ball down while hopping on one foot
15. Bounce ball up while hopping on the other foot
16. Bounce ball up, with the racquet between the legs
17. Bounce ball up, with the racquet around the back
18. Toss the ball up and catch it on the racquet without it bouncing on the strings
19. Balance the ball on the strings and turn the racquet 180 degrees without the ball falling off the strings
20. Spring quickly in a circle while balancing the ball on the strings

Partner Ball Tossing and Catching.

- Roll the ball to a partner standing 6-8 feet away. Start with one ball and then do two balls at the same time.
- One player underhand tosses; one player catches the ball after one bounce.
- One player with two balls in her hand tosses two balls positioned side by side (horizontal position). Her partner catches balls on one bounce or two bounces.

- One player with two balls in her hand tosses two balls stacked on top of each other (vertical position). Her partner catches the balls after one or two bounces.

Lollipops – Roll or Toss to a Color. Two players, each with a racquet, stand 5 to 6 feet from each other with two spots of different colors in front of them. One of the players calls out a color or one of the spots and rolls the ball to that spot. The partner moves to stop and pick up the ball, calls out a color and rolls the ball back to that spot. Start this game with a rolling ball, progress to a tossed ball and finally incorporate rolling the ball with a racquet.

Throw Ball. Using a playground ball and a 36-foot court, players play tennis by throwing the ball over the net with two hands and catching it on the opposite side. You can permit multiple bounces but all other rules of tennis apply. By using two hands you can encourage rotation and getting sideways. Players learn to see empty spaces and can play over a net with relatively little skill while learning to move the opponent and learning the tactic of hitting to the open court.

Dirty Harry. Each player has a partner. One player is positioned off to one side of the court (tossing) while the other player (catcher) is starting on her “home base.” Home base is just inside the singles side line of the 36-foot court. The tosser makes an underhand toss diagonally to a large target area (working on crosscourt). The “catcher” has to move out to catch the ball. Allow players three bounces, then two bounces, then one bounce before catching the ball. The “catcher” then does an underhand toss back to the tosser before returning to “home base.” Address side shuffle on the recovery. The tosser can only toss the next ball once the catcher has returned to home base.

Each time the catcher successfully catches the ball and the tosser tosses the ball in the target area, they get one point. Use either scoring flip cards or cones to keep track of the score. The coach announces the number of points the players need to achieve. Players who are struggling may be challenged to score fewer points than more skilled players. As they progress, the team can be challenged to get seven points. Stay within the seven-point goal, as this will help them learn the match play scoring system for QuickStart Tennis. When a team reaches their designated points, they yell “Dirty Harry” and they are the winners. All players rotate roles after a team has a “Dirty Harry.”

Note: A large target area is essential to ensure success by all.

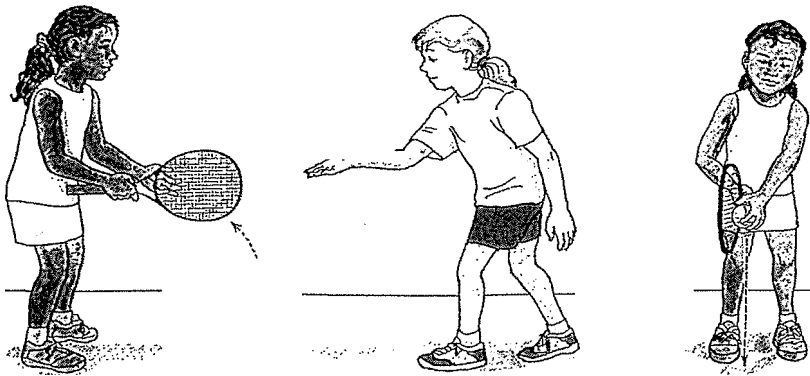
Variation: The tosser tosses the ball underhand to a large target area straight ahead (working down the line).

Variation 2: The tosser tosses from the other side of the court.

Ball Drop: Players are in pairs facing each other. One player has one ball in each hand and his arms extended at shoulder level. The player drops one ball and the other player has to run and catch the dropped ball after one bounce. Switch partners after three drops. To increase the difficulty, have players move one step farther away after every successful drop, bounce and catch.

Lobster Trap. This activity is done in pairs. The players stand 8 to 10 feet apart with one player holding two racquets, one in each hand, and the partner with one ball. The player with the ball (the tosser) makes an easy underhand toss and the player with the racquets (the lobster) catches the ball after the bounce by trapping the ball between both racquets. After trapping the ball, the player drops the ball from the racquets and hits the ball back to the tosser. Encourage the “lobster” to trap the ball at the side of this body as it is easy to make the drop and hit from a sideways position. Change tossers and “lobsters” after five tosses.

Half-Pound Lobster Trap. One player has a racquet and the other player has a ball. The player with the ball will underhand toss to the player with the racquet. The player with the racquet holds the racquet with the butt cap against the belt buckle in the line with the contact point and the ball should be caught (trapped) against the strings with the hand after one bounce.



Lobster Rally. Players are on both sides of the net with two racquets each and one ball. The first person drops the ball and hits it over the net. The second player moves and traps the ball between his racquets, turns sideways to the net, drops the ball and hits it over the back racquet. Play can go for a continuous rally or the players can try to hit to the court on either side of the partner on the opposite side of the net.

Tennis Shoot Out. Players are divided into two teams. Sports are spread out along each singles sideline of the 78-foot court, and two cones forming a goal are placed behind the baseline. Make sure the goals are large enough to ensure success. Players from each team stand on a spot so they form a line along the singles sideline.

The ball starts with the player at the net, who rolls the ball with his racquet to the next player, who stops it and rolls the ball to the next player until it gets to the last player, who shoots the ball between the cones with her racquet. The first team to get the designated number of balls between the cones wins the game.

Home Base. Players are hitting or tossing a ball to each other over the net. A spot is placed in the center of the baseline as the “recovery spot.” Every time a ball is tossed or hit, the player goes for the ball, traps it on his strings and hits or throws the ball to the other side of the net and recovers to his spot. The players are working cooperatively to score five points – a successful hit or toss, the trap, return and recovery.

Team Lily Pad. Players work as a team to get from one side of the court to the other (the swamp). To cross the swamp, one player must step only on the “lily pads” (poly spots or donuts). Each team has two poly spots and one player places on “lily pad” in front, where the other player can hop to or step on. The partner picks up the vacated “lily pad” and moves it in front so the partner can move forward by stepping or hopping to the next “lily pad.” This continues until one team makes it across the swamp. At this point, the players change roles and one person moves the lily pads while the other steps or hops to the open lily pad in front until she makes it back across the swamp.

Through the Tunnel. Players line up right behind each other, with their legs wider than shoulder width apart. The last layer in line, or the coach, rolls the ball between the legs of the other players. After the player rolls the ball, she runs to the front and tries to stop the ball before it passes her. Continue this format until the team reaches a designated area, such as one of the lines of the court.

Crash Test. This activity uses four players, each with a racquet and one foam ball per pair. Partners stand diagonally opposite each other with one ball, and the other pair is also diagonally opposite with one ball. When the coach calls out, “Go,” the players roll the ball with their racquets to their partner opposite them, so two balls are going at the same time. If the two balls collide in the middle, the players yell out, “Crash.”

Side Show. Players are in pairs, throwing a playground ball with both hands across their body to a partner on the other side of the net. The throw should resemble that action of the forehand and backhand ground stroke.



Tennis Hockey – Use Backhand Side of the Racquet. Place children in groups along a line starting by the net. Place two cones as a goal about 4 feet beyond the baseline. Keeping the ball close to the racquet on the backhand side, players tap the ball along the line while trying to keep the ball on the line. When they get to the baseline, they try to score a goal by hitting the ball between the two cones.

Jacks. The player tosses the ball up and lets it bounce, bumps it up with the racquet one time and catches it – “onesies.” The players then attempts to tap it up twice – “twosies” – and soon until they reach “fivesies” – or five in a row.

Partner Jacks. Same as above except the all is caught by a partner on each tap-up.

Rally Me. Within the service box, the player tosses the ball, lets it bounce off the top court and bumps is up with the racquet, lets it bounce and taps it up again. This can be done while moving around the service box.

Survivor. Players line up on one side of the net (the island), and drop and hit a ball over the net – or, if need be, hit from a toss made by the coach. If the ball goes over the net, the player stays on the island and goes to the end of the line.

If the player misses, he is off the island and goes across the net, where he will try to catch a ball. If he catches the ball in the air, everyone on that side (the off-the-island side) gets to return to the island. If the ball is caught after one or two bounces, only that player goes back to the island. The last player left who successfully hits the ball over the net, into the court and that is not caught is the survivor.

Partner Toss and Catch. Place two players in a service court with one ball. The player with the ball will toss it up at least head-level height so it lands anywhere in the service box. The other player must move and catch it after one or two bounces, then toss it so the first player must run and catch it. See how many successful toss and catches each team can make. Change partners frequently.

Partner Rally Jacks. Partners alternate hits going from one hit each, “onesies,” up to the going from one hit each, “onesies,” up to the five hits each, “fivesies.”

Tag Team Singles. There are a few variations to this cooperative game where players in two lines on opposite sides of the net hit and move to the end of the line while keeping the ball in play. The rally begins with the first hit being a drop hit by the first player in line or by an underhand toss from the coach. This game is perfect for coaches and helps to play as part of the team. They should be in line and participate just like the kids, hopefully adding consistent and accurate hits when they play.

Ball Chase. Both players stand beside each other, one with the ball, and the other player with his back to his partner. The player with the ball rolls it away from the partner and calls out, “Go.” The other player turns around, chases after the ball and stops it before it finishes rolling. A variation is to face forward and have the back player roll the ball between the legs of the player in front, who runs after the ball and stops it before it stops rolling.

Instant Rally Progression – Forehand. Each player will have a racquet and ball. Follow this sequence in order and newer players will develop rally skills in just a few minutes. To keep players engaged, move through these activities quickly. For example, the coach might say, “Let’s see how many you can do in 30 seconds.”

1. **Tap up, bounce and catch.** Players will tap the ball up about head-level height, let the ball bounce and catch it.
2. **Self rally.** This time, rather than catching the ball after the first bounce, continue to tap the ball up after one bounce to about head-level height.
3. **Rally with a partner to a target.** Find a partner and alternate tapping the ball up to about head level. After the bounce, the partner taps up and lets the ball bounce. See how many consecutive tap ups each pair can get in a row. To help them focus on hitting up rather than out, place a poly spot, donut or draw a chalk circle as a target between the two players. Players should try to hit every ball up to head level.
4. **Rally over line with partner.** Draw a line or find a line and place each player on either side. Have them match up racquet faces forehand to forehand and move back two to three steps. Have them rally so the ball bounces over the line. The ball should be hit about head high. See how many they can get in a row, hitting all balls on the forehand side.
5. **Rally over a net.** This is similar to the above, but the players will rally over a net or barrier. Start at the net and have players match up racquet faces forehand to forehand and move 3-4 feet away from the net and play all shots on the forehand side. To assist them with control and direction, add a target about three feet from the net (poly spot, donut or chalk circle).
6. **Game – Step-back forehands.** Players are on either side of the net and match up racquet faces forehand to forehand, then take two steps back. The player with the ball drops and hits it to the partner, and they rally for two shots on the forehand side. After two successful consecutive hits, both players take one step and try again for another two-ball rally. After each successful two-ball rally, they move back. If they miss, they must both move forward one step. Try this again with a three-ball rally before the players can step back and eventually get to a four-ball rally.

Splat. Rally with Partner to a Target – the target is made up of four tennis balls constructed in a pyramid. (This is done by placing three balls on the ground in a triangle, with one ball on top.) All balls must be hit up to head level, and the team scores a point every time they hit a shot that knocks the pyramid down.

Throw Ball Tennis. Players are on either side of the net on a 36-foot court. Players throw a foam ball underhanded over the net. The opposite player must catch it and throw it back after the ball bounces one time on the court. To make this game easier, players can use a larger ball (such as a playground ball) and they are allowed multiple bounces before catching. Also, they can move closer to the net, marked by a poly spot or donut, before throwing the ball back over the net. Play

can be a continuous rally, or let the players play points to see if they can toss the ball in the court and away from the opponent. (This stimulates real match conditions and strategy.)

Call My Name. Players are in pairs, one with a ball and the other with his back to the partner. The player with the ball tosses it up and calls out the partner's name. The partner has to turn around and catch the ball after one bounce.

Rally Me. All players begin in one of the service courts. Each has a ball and racquet. They toss the ball up, let it bounce off the court and bump it up with their racquet. They continue to bump the ball up after it hits the court (self rally). This can be done while moving around the service court.

Four Square. This popular playground game can be adapted for tennis. It can be played over the net using the four service courts of the 36-foot court. Each service court is numbered one through four, and players enter the court in Square 1. All points begin the Ace Square (Square 4). The player in Square 4 starts the ball with a drop-hit into any of the other three squares. The player in the receiving square must hit the ball before it bounces twice. If the player hits it out of any of the squares, or if it bounces twice before she hits it, that player is out, the remaining players move up to the next vacant square and a new player enters on Square 1. (For example, if the player in Square 3 misses, the player in Square 2 moves up to Square 3 and the player in Square 1 moves up to Square 2). The game can be played without racquets by tossing and catching a larger ball.

Tracking Skills

Learning how to read and track the variables of the flight of the ball in the limited time available is one of the most difficult parts of learning tennis. Below is a ball tracking progression that can be used.

1. Roll the ball to a partner. Trap with the foot.
2. Roll the ball to a partner. Pick up with the hand.
3. Roll the ball to a partner. Do a unit turn – step sideways and pick up the ball.
4. Try on the backhand side.
5. Play tennis hockey.
6. Drop the ball and catch it waist high.
7. Toss the ball to head height; let it drop to waist height and catch it.
8. Play Kirk-O-Rama games.
9. Play drop ball with partner.
10. Teach students to throw a ball underhand. Step with opposite foot. Toss head height. Have them toss at a target in front of partner.
11. Throw to a partner's target and catch. Throw back.
12. Add step & catch.
13. Practice lobster catch and one half lobster trap.
14. Toss- partner hits back- tosser catches.

15. Toss- partner hits back- tosser one half lobster traps.
16. Toss- hits twice and trap.
17. Play one bounce- two bounce. Play partner toss & catch.
18. Play Dirty Harry.
19. Hit up on ball – rally with partner standing 4 feet off of singles side line. Land ball on singles side line.
20. Rally over net. Look at Instant rally progression.
21. Pro teaches student to understand the trajectory of short balls; waist high balls; higher & deeper balls and how to move for each. Pro feeds consecutive ball of each kind. Pro mixes up feeds. Players catch; have players say out loud what kind of ball is coming, “high!” “low” “short”; players hit; add more variety and movement further away.
22. Play Splat.
23. Play 4 Square.

Athletic Development Drills (ABC’S: Agility, Balance, Coordination, and Reaction Speed)

#1: Throw Tennis

Purpose: To develop the athletic ABC’S and basic reception skills while exploring the space of the court.

Description: Players position themselves across from each other on the Red Court. Players compete in a baseline game with standard tennis rules without racquets while only using their hands to catch or throw the ball. The ball may be caught in the air or on a bounce, and the ball must be thrown across the net underhand.

Variation:

- A) This game can also be played as tag team singles (2 on 2) where one player alternates throws with their partner.
- B) Ball must be caught with only one hand

#2: Medicine Ball Throw

Purpose: To develop the athletic ABC’S and basic reception skills while exploring the space of the court. Additionally, this encourages the development of the kinetic chain, and the motion used when striking a groundstroke.

Description: Players position themselves across from each other on the Red Court. Players compete in a baseline game using a playground ball. Emphasis should be placed on proper technical throwing form with arms fully extended and palms out to the target.

Variation:

- A) This can also be done as a tag team singles activity where the two players alternate throws.
- B) In order to encourage greater shoulder rotation, after full extension the player can continue to rotate until the arms and palms face the side curtain. This player then freezes with their palms up until their partner runs over and tags both palms with their hands. Players switch spots and this continues until the point completes.

#3: Color Cones

Purpose: To develop the ABC'S of athletic development and improve recognition skills in a dynamic environment.

Description: Four cones of different colors are placed on the baseline in a rectangular formation. Each cone is also given a number one through four. The player starts behind the baseline in the center of the court. The coach calls a color or a number and the player must sprint around the cone and recover to the middle of the court.

Variation:

- A) Coach can call out combinations of two or more (ex. Red, 2 or 3, Green, Blue). The player must always recover to the center after circling a cone.
- B) The location of the cones can be changed by the coach creating a more randomized and dynamic pattern

#4: Color Ladder

Purpose: To develop the ABC'S of athletic development and improve recognition skills in a dynamic environment.

Description: Cones of different colors are placed on the baseline all the way to the net in a straight line. Each cone color has a specific movement assigned to it by the coach (ex. A red cone could mean do a side-shuffle and a blue cone could indicate a split step). The player moves through each cone in the ladder executing the appropriate movements and then returns to the start of the ladder.

Variation:

- A) The location of the cones can be changed
- B) The order of the cones can be changed
- C) The coach can place a new cone of a different color on top of an existing cone in the middle of the exercise

#5: Mirror Hands

Purpose: To develop the ABC'S of athletic development and improve ability to maintain posture, balance, and stability while moving.

Description: In pairs the players line up in front of each other on the baseline with their arms out and hands shoulder height. The players' hands should be almost touching. One player is assigned to be the leader and, while keeping their hands perfectly still, the player begins to move back and forth in a side-to-side shuffling pattern. This is done while the other player attempts to keep their hands directly in front of the leading player. After 20-30 seconds players switch roles.

Variation:

- A) Leading player can change the location of one or both hands as they move
- B) Leading player can change direction forwards and backwards in addition to the side-to-side movement pattern

#6: Sport Wall

Purpose: To develop the ABC'S of athletic development and improve recognition skills, reaction speed, and movement skills in a dynamic environment.

Description: In pairs the players position themselves a few feet from each other. One player is the leader and hides their hands behind their back, while the other player positions themselves ready to sprint. When both players are in position, the leading player chooses to makes a fist or an open palm with their hands, and then quickly shows both hands at shoulder height to their partner. The sprinting partner must rapidly attempt to tag the open palm. After 20-30 seconds switch roles.

Variation:

- A) Players can change the height that they show their hands
- B) Additional movement can be added as the leading players can move side-to-side and change directions during this exercise

#7: Ball Drop

Purpose: To improve reaction speed

Description: Players work together in pairs. One player holds a ball in each hand at shoulder height. The other player waits several feet away in a sprinting position. The player holding the balls chooses one to drop, and the other player sprints and attempts to catch the ball before it bounces twice.

Variation:

The players can move further back to add challenge to the sprinter, or closer to help the sprinter achieve success.

#8: Racquet Switch

Purpose: To improve reaction speed

Description: This exercise can be done in pairs or in small groups. Players stand a few feet away from each other while balancing their racquet upside down on the ground. On the count of three the players sprint to switch positions and attempt to catch the other player's racquet before it falls to the ground.

Variation:

The players can move further back to add challenge to the sprinter, or closer to help the sprinter achieve success.

Pre-Rally Drills

#9: Inchworm

Purpose: To develop racquet control

Description: Players form a straight line and the last player in the line balances a ball on their racquet. The last player passes the ball to the next player in line, and then runs to the front of the line. This continues until the line reaches the net.

Variations:

- A) Use a Koosh ball to help the student balance the ball on their strings
- B) Do the inch-worm as a team race

#10: Racquet Control Relay

Purpose: To develop racquet control while in motion

Description: Players get into pairs or small teams. The first player in line balances a ball on their strings, and runs to the net and back. Once the player gets back to the start they pass the ball from their strings to the next player in line. This exercise can be done cooperatively or competitively. Encourage players to move fast, but to avoid dropping the ball off of their strings.

Variations:

- A) Change the movement pattern that must be performed by the teams (Shuffle, crossover, grapevine step, moving through a series of cones, etc.)
- B) Have the player balance the ball in their opposite hand

#11: Shark Tank

Purpose: To develop racquet control while in motion

Description: A group of players all find a spot on one side of the Red Court while balancing a ball on their strings. This area is called the shark tank. The students are the fish and the coach is the shark.

The students are free to move anywhere in the shark tank while walking. The Shark (coach) moves to a player and attempts to knock their ball off of the strings. If a player's ball falls from their strings, or they step out of bounds, they must leave the shark tank and perform an exercise or task in order to rejoin the game (ex. 10 tap ups, or 10 jumping jacks). The coach should regulate the students' movements in this game to avoid collisions.

Variations:

- A) Change the movement pattern that the students must perform
- B) Change the hand the players hold the racquet

#12: Tennis Hockey

Purpose: To develop a simple control of the ball and racquet while sending and receiving a ball, and to learn the concept of the rally.

Description: Two students are placed on either side of the Red Court, but only throw down lines or caution tape separate the students. The players take turns rolling the ball down the center of the court to each other and stopping the ball with their racquet.

Variations:

- A) Stroke restrictions: FH to FH, FH to BH, BH to FH, or BH to BH
- B) Zone restrictions: Only deuce court, only ad court, only half court (either side)
- C) Increase or decrease the distance between the two players
- D) Turn this into a competitive baseline game

#13: Self-Rally

Purpose: To develop a simple control of the ball and racquet, and to learn the concept of the rally.

Description: A player takes one ball and positions himself behind a target (a cone, dot, or throw down line). The player then lets the ball bounce, taps the ball up to eye level, and attempts to get the ball to hit the target on the ground. After the ball bounces, the player continues this pattern until they lose control of the ball. Special care should be taken when there are multiple students present to make sure they avoid running into another player's space to hit the ball.

Variations:

- A) Palm-up or palm down
- B) Opposite hand only or switching hands
- C) Right leg or left leg only
- D) Moving in a circle around the target
- E) Hitting between two targets
- F) Turn this into a competition

#14: Lobster Trap

Purpose: To develop simple control of the racquet, improve sending and receiving skills, and further the student's conception of the rally.

Description: In pairs the students take their racquets and a single ball and position themselves a few feet from each other. The players then take turns tapping the ball to each other and trapping the ball on bounce between their strings and their hand. Technical emphasis should be placed on starting in the ready position, turning sideways to send and receive the ball, and taking a short swing to control the distance of the ball. Additionally, it helps to place a dot between the students as a target, and to remind them to hit the ball up to about eye level.

Variations:

- A) Only one player has a racquet while the other catches with their hand
- B) Two racquets can be used by one player (a racquet in each hand)
- C) Play to the zones of the court (Deuce, Ad, and Half Court)
- D) Increase or decrease the distance between the students
- E) Add or remove an obstacle

#15: Serve, Hit, Receive

Purpose: To develop simple serving, striking, and reception skills

Description: In groups of three, the players take on the role of server, hitter, or receiver. Throw down lines should be used so each player knows where to stand, and all of the players should be educated so they know not to run into another player's space. The server has a basket of balls next to them, and they throw a ball underhand to a predetermined target. The hitter then moves and attempts to hit the ball to the receiver who, in turn, attempts to catch the ball on a bounce. Emphasis should be taken on proper underhand serving mechanics, a controlled hit on the ball, and catching the ball away from the body. Make sure the players have a chance to play in all three roles.

Variations:

- A) Change the ball the hitter receives (ex. FH, BH, Volley)
- B) Do this in pairs: The server is also the receiver.
- C) The coach can fill in as the server in order to control the feed
- D) Do this with or without an obstacle (ex. net, cone)
- E) Coach or hitter can call out 0,1, or 2 indicating the number of bounces the ball has to take before the receive must catch it

- F) This can be done as a competition where one successful hit and reception can be a point. Race to 6 and then rotate positions.

Learning to Rally Drills

#16: Alley Rally (Partner Rally)

Purpose: To develop simple control of the racquet, improve sending and receiving skills, and further the student's rallying skills.

Description: In pairs the students each take a single ball and their racquets and position themselves a few feet from each other. The players then take turns tapping the ball to each other and sending the ball back on a bounce. Technical emphasis should be placed on starting in the ready position, turning sideways to send and receive the ball, and taking a short swing to control the distance of the ball. Additionally, it helps to place a dot between the students as a target, and to remind them to hit the ball up to about eye level.

Variations:

- A) Only one player has a racquet while the other catches with their hands
- B) Play to the zones of the court (Deuce, Ad, and Half Court)
- C) Increase or decrease the distance between the students
- D) Add or remove an obstacle
- E) Hit a specific stroke pattern: FH to FH, FH to BH, BH to FH, or BH to BH

#17: Partner Rally Over Obstacle

Purpose: To develop simple control of the racquet, improve sending and receiving skills, and further the student's rallying skills.

Description: Similar to the Alley Rally this exercise operates the same except now the players must execute the rally over an obstacle (ex. A cone, basket, caution tape, or the red net)

Variations: FH to FH, FH to BH, BH to FH, BH to BH, step back

#18: Rally Race

Purpose: To improve the student's understanding of the rally, and begin to reward rally tolerance.

Description: Students work together in pairs on opposite ends of the baseline. Once everyone is in position the coach starts the clock, and each pair attempts to complete a two-ball rally in their assigned space. Once a two-ball rally is achieved, one player runs to the net where they attach a clothespin. Then the pair attempts to achieve a three ball rally which, when achieved, earns them another clothespin. The next rally number needed to earn a clothespin is four, and play continues in this fashion until time is called or a rally of a certain number is achieved.

Variations:

- A) Play to a rally number (ex. 10 ball rally). First team to achieve the rally number wins.
- B) Change the zone in which the students are rallying
- C) Pick a specific number like 6 balls in order to earn a clothespin. The team with the most 6 ball rallies after 3 minutes wins.

Tactical Development

#19: Mr. Freeze

Purpose: To learn to find and create space. Additionally, teaches the player to control time and improve balance.

Description: This is a variation on Champion of the Court, and the champion's are on the Mr. Freeze side. When on the Mr. Freeze side the players must freeze immediately after they hit the ball. Once the challenger hits the next shot they are free to move and hit the next ball.

#20: Zones

Purpose: To learn the shapes that play occurs on the Red Court and how to best utilize these court shapes.

Description: Written down on cards are the 6 court shapes that occur on the Red Court (Deuce to Deuce, Ad to Ad, Deuce to Ad, Ad to Deuce, Backcourt Only, and Front Court Only). The players pull a card out of a hat and play a baseline game on the court shape shown on the card.

Learning to Serve Drills

#21: Instant Serve (The 5 serves)

Purpose: To introduce the concept of serving to beginners and allow them to achieve serving success as soon as possible.

Description: Learning to serve is one of the most challenging skills in tennis, and this is especially true for young students. In order to learn the concept of serving and promote serving success it is essential that they learn the 5 serves: Throwing the ball underhand (racquet tucked under non-dominant arm), throwing overhand (racquet tucked under non-dominant arm), bounce hit, underhand serve without a bounce, overhand serve without a bounce.

Practice these serves with a receiver across the net. The player across the net attempts to catch the ball served to them, and then serves it back to their partner.

Variations:

- A) Play as a cooperative game (ex. Every successful serve is one point, or every serve and catch is a point)
- B) Play as a competitive game (ex. First team to 6 points wins)

#22: King Cone

Purpose: To develop service throwing mechanics and accuracy

Description: A series of cones are placed on the other side of the net. The players take turns lining up and attempting to throw the ball over the net. Each time a cone is hit in the air the player runs around and collects the cone. The players attempt to collect as many cones as possible before the duration of the exercise. Technical emphasis should be placed on good throwing mechanics (balance, palm down through backswing, full extension of the arm on release, etc.).

Variations:

- A) Do this drill using any of the 5 serves outlined above
- B) Award a cone for a throw that is close to a target
- C) Play as an individual or team competition
- D) Increase or decrease the distance to the cones
- E) Increase or decrease the number of cones on the court

#23: Serve and Receive with Recovery

Purpose: To develop service throwing and recovery mechanics, timing, and accuracy.

Description: Players take up standard singles serving and returning positions. Using any of the 5 serves, the first player serves crosscourt and immediately shuffles across along to the opposite side of the baseline where a basket of balls is placed to be used for the next serve. Across the net, the returner attempts to catch the ball on a bounce, and then immediately shuffles along to the opposite side of the baseline where they place the ball that they received. The idea is to add an element of movement to an otherwise typically stationary exercise, and help set the stage for the recovery that is necessary after the serve and return in competition.

Variations:

- A) Turn this into a cooperative game by awarding a point for each successful service and reception. Play to 6.
- B) Turn this into a competitive game by working in pairs against other players. First team to 6 wins.

- C) Allow the returner to hit the ball back to the server who then attempts to catch the ball. Again you can turn this into a cooperative or competitive activity.

Team Competitions

#24: Around the World and Around the Block

Purpose: To improve basic rallying skills and get the beginners to interact with one another in a fun, team environment while learning the basic elements of competition.

Description: In this classic game, the students form two lines on either end of the red court. Each player is given three clothespins, which indicate the three lives they have in the game. The coach feeds a ball to the longest line, and the first player hits the ball and runs around to the end of the opposite line (all players must run to the right). If the ball is in the player is safe, and if the ball is out the player who misses removes one of their clothespins. Play continues in this fashion until there are two players remaining, and these players compete without circling the court. The last player alive wins.

Variation:

Around the Block is a team variation on Around the World. There are two teams located on either side of the court. Again, each player is given three clothespins, which indicate the three lives they have in the game. Play begins with a coach fed ball and, after the player hits, they run around to the end of their team line. The player loses one of their clothespins for each miss, and when they run out of pins they leave their team line. The team that knocks out all of the players on the opposing team wins.

#25: Wipe Out

Purpose: To improve basic rallying skills and get the beginners to interact with one another in a fun, team environment while learning the basic elements of competition.

Description: Players are placed into two teams on either side of the baseline. Play begins 1 on 1 with a singles baseline point. Each time a team wins a point they add a player to their side of the court to play the next point, but each time they lose a point the coach says “Wipe Out” and the team goes back to one player on court. The team that gets all of their players on court and wins a point is the team winner.

Variations:

- A) Play to 5 permanent points with all players on court
- B) Play two out of three sets (teaches normal match scoring)
- C) Play for time
- D)

#26: Super Team Tennis

Purpose: To learn the basic elements of competition as the beginners serve, rally, and score in a fun team environment.

Description: Players form two teams and line up across from each other. To begin the competition the two players at the front of the line go to one of the red courts and play a short baseline game to 4 points. At the completion of the game, the winner goes back to their team and places a tennis ball in their team basket to indicate the win. Make sure that the same players don't play each other two times in a row. This game is played for time, and at the end of the event the team with the most balls in their basket win.

Variations:

- A) This can also be played as an individual game with the beginners keeping track of every victory by pinning a clothespin to their shirts. Play for time or to a predetermined number.
- B) Points can start with a serve (one of the 5 serves)
- C) Play can occur in a specific zone of the red court

#27: Roll the Dice

Purpose: To learn the basic elements of competition as the beginners serve, rally, and score in a fun team environment. Additionally, the element of chance in the starting score adds fun and teaches resilience.

Description: This game is a variation on the super team tennis format. Players form two teams and line up across from each other. To begin the competition, the two players at the front of the line each take a turn rolling a dice. The number on the dice is their starting score for their baseline game. Once the dice have been rolled, the two players at the front of the line go to one of the red courts, and play a short baseline game to 8 points. At the completion of the game, the winner goes back to their team and places a tennis ball in their team basket to indicate the win. Make sure that the same players don't play each other two times in a row. Play for time, and at the end of the event the team with the most balls in their basket win.

Variations:

- A) This can also be played as an individual game with the beginners keeping track of every victory by pinning a clothespin to their shirts. Play for time or to a predetermined number. In this format, players should both enter the same line after they play in order to ensure that they play different opponents in the next round.
- B) Points can start with a serve (one of the 5 serves)
- C) Play can occur in a specific zone of the red court

#28: Stick or Swap

Purpose: To learn the basic elements of competition as the beginners serve, rally, and score in a fun team environment. Additionally, the element of chance adds fun and teaches resilience.

Description: Players form two teams and line up facing each other. Next, each player draws a card from a deck of playing cards. All cards are worth face value except for the jack (11 points), queen (12), king (13), and ace (14). The players must keep their card secret throughout the competition. To begin the competition, the two players at the front of the line go to one of the red courts, and play a short baseline game to 4 points. The winner of the game gets to choose whether they want to stick with the card they have, or swap a card with the player they just defeated. Afterwards, the players return to end of their team line, and prepare to play again. Make sure that the same players don't play each other two times in a row. Play this event for time. Once the event is completed add up the scores from both teams, and the team with the highest card score wins.

Variations:

- A) Players can be given the choice to swap with the deck or the player they defeated
- B) This can also be played as an individual game with the player with the highest card being the winner.
- C) The Joker card can be used as a wild card by the coach, and can have a rule assigned to it (ex. The player's draw two cards from the deck in exchange for the joker)

#29: Team Singles

Purpose: To learn the basic elements of competition as the beginners serve, rally, and score in a fun team environment.

Description: Players are placed into pairs and go to the court to play a baseline game. The winning player can stay in for an additional point before they must rotate out. Play continues until the team reaches the winning point number.

Variations:

- A) This can be played using the Super Team Tennis format
- B) Players can hit alternate shots rotating out with their partner after each hit
- C) Play as standard doubles
- D) Start the point with a serve (one of the 5 serves)

#30: Animal Ball

Purpose: To learn the basic elements of competition as the beginners serve, rally, and score in a fun team environment. Additionally, this can introduce the basic elements of doubles.

Description: Two doubles teams are positioned on either side of the baseline. One point is played and the winning team begins the next point at the net. The next feed goes to the baseline team and

another point is played. If the net team wins they earn one point. If the baseline team wins they knock the net players back to the baseline and take up position at the net. The only way to win a permanent point is to be the team that starts the exchange at the net. Play to 5 points.

Variations:

- A) Have the players self feed with a bounce or underhand serve
- B) Play 2 out of 3 sets to 5 points
- C) Play using the Super Team Tennis format
- D) Play as an individual a game with each winning team collecting a clothespin. All players will enter the same line in this format in order to avoid playing the same players in the next round. This should help mix up doubles teams as well.