

# 100 (+1) TIPS

## For Your Best Tennis

*by Cosmin Miholca*



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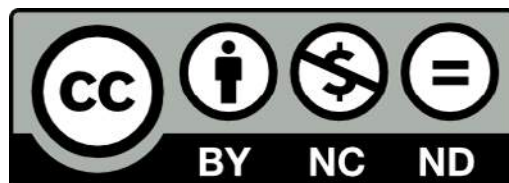
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## 100 (+1) Tennis Tips For Your Best Tennis

The **FOREHAND GROUND-STROKE** is the most «popular» stroke in tennis therefore many pay a particular attention to make it a weapon besides the «mighty» serve.

Following are some tips that you can apply in making this stroke a consistent and dependable one:

### 1. Prepare for the Stroke Early

Turn the hips and shoulders in the direction of the incoming ball before it bounces on your side.

Keep in mind that the racquet goes back as a result of turning the shoulders and hips and getting the hands behind the path of the incoming ball.



## 2. Shorten Your Backswing

By doing that, you will be a lot quicker to make contact with the ball further out in front especially when returning serves or playing against powerful players.

To do that consider the following tips: raise your elbow on the racquet take-back or have your dominant palm facing down. This will stop you from taking the racquet too far back and as a result you will have a short and compact backswing.



## 3. Stay Low

Adopt a low stance on your forehand ground-stroke (and backhand too) because you will have a better balance and body control and you will also hit the ball cleaner (in the sweet spot).



#### 4. Hold the Racquet with Your Non-dominant Hand on the Initial Backswing

Very important to do that because it will stop the racquet to be taken back by the dominant arm independently from the rest of the body. By holding onto the racquet with the non-dominant hand the backswing will be the action of the upper body coiling which will translate into more power and consistency into the stroke.

How long should you hold onto the racquet with the non-dominant hand? Until your upper body is just about sideways.



## 5. Spread Your Dominant Hand on the Handle

Have more control of your racquet when you grab as much grip as possible. Your hand should be relaxed and spread the fingers along the racquet handle.



## 6. Bounce / Hit

To improve timing and concentration when hitting the forehand try saying these two words: «bounce» when the ball bounces on your side of the court, then say «hit» as you swing to contact the ball. This is great especially for beginning players or when you feel tense during a tennis match.

## 7. Follow Through

A long follow-through is key to a good, consistent forehand ground-stroke. It relaxes your arm, helps you swing through the contact and in long run it saves you from arm injuries. Not only that, but you will notice an increase in stroke consistency too.





## 8. Visualize the Contact

One of the best way to be consistent with your forehand is to visualize what should happen at contact between strings and ball: see the racquet swinging through while brushing up and a little toward the top of the ball. This up and over stroke visualization will allow you to impart spin on the ball just enough to keep it in play when hitting with pace.

## 9. Open or Neutral Stance?

The modern tennis promotes a lot of open stance (hips facing the net) and for the right reasons - better hips and shoulders rotation, quicker recovery etc. but that does not mean you should ignore the neutral stance (hips sideways)... When attacking a short ball and/or intending to move up to the net, a square stance (neutral) is essential for helping your body move into the ball and caring your momentum forward.





## 10. The Power

Consider the following aspects for a powerful forehand ground-stroke: good/early preparation, a relaxed arm and timing the swing to make contact out in front.

The **BACKHAND GROUND-STROKE** is for most of the people their weaker stroke but it does not have to be the same for you. Apply the following tips to make it a stronger and more reliable stroke for you:

### 11. Finish High

A long finish will result into relaxed muscles and racquet acceleration through the contact. The opposite would be stopping the racquet short after the contact which results in racquet deceleration at contact.

So accelerate through the contact and let your racquet finish over the shoulder (for a two-handed backhand) or high in front of you (one-handed backhand).





## 12. Slice Anyone?

Regardless you use a two-handed or one-handed backhand, you will need a slice backhand too. This shot will allow you to get back in play that wide shot that your opponent sends sometimes to your backhand. The slice keeps the ball low and as a result it will be difficult for your opponent to hit a very aggressive reply.

Use it as a defensive shot and as a way to give yourself more time to cover the open court.

### 13. Non-dominant Hand

For a more consistent and controlled two-handed backhand stroke learn to swing with your non-dominant hand. Do drills where either a coach, a practice partner or ball machine feeds balls to your backhand side; take the dominant hand off of the racquet and swing at the balls with your non-dominant arm holding the racquet with a forehand grip (eastern).

Alternate hitting 5 balls using only non-dominant hand then 5 balls using both hands on the grip. This simple drill will improve your two-handed backhand racquet and ball control.



## 14. Turn for Power

When using a one-handed backhand make sure you turn your shoulders (coil) a lot to prepare for the incoming ball (see photo below). A good body coil will provide energy to transfer into the ball (uncoiling) thus creating more power, and save your arm and wrist from too much effort.



## 15. Spread the Wings

When executing a one-handed backhand remember to extend the non-dominant hand towards the back fence. This will keep your body sideways and in balance.



## 16. Contact Point

While the two-handed backhand contact point is more forgiving as far as distance from the upper body, the one-handed backhand contact point must be very precise - out in front (of the front foot). Timing is key - do not let the ball get close to your front foot!





The **SERVE** - arguably the most important stroke in tennis, it is the most complex also. Consistency, placement and power are three aspects that every serious tennis player should strive to achieve on their Serve (in that order).

### 17. User Your Legs to Create Power

Many players think that power comes from the arm and wrist only and thus often get injured by trying too hard to swing with them.

When you practice your serve, make sure you bend the knees as you toss the ball and push off of the ground as the ball begins to come down. Not only this will add more power to your serve but also by pushing up into the ball you will be extended at contact which results in higher net clearance and the wrist snaps easier when the arm is extended at contact.



## 18. Keep Your Head Up

Often players tend to drop their head through the contact because they want to see where the ball goes.

Try to resist temptation to do so; keep your head up at all times through the serve. A still head helps you with balance and to clear the net easier. When you drop your head, your racquet tends to point down at contact too.

So keep your head up through the contact for a more consistent serve and better body balance.

## 19. Hit Up on the Ball

Only because the contact with the ball is made high above and in front of you that does not mean you have to swing down. You must always consider hitting up on the ball. By doing this you will defeat the gravity which wants to bring your ball down into the net. Your consistency will improve a lot if you hit up on the ball and keep your head up at contact.

## 20. Use a Continental Grip

If you are not already, do it. A continental grip (see picture below) allows you to hit flat, slice or kick serves a lot easier and it is comfortable for your forearm.



## 21. Keep the Tossing Arm Up Longer

Extend the arm up as you release the ball and keep it there until you see the ball beginning to descend. This will help you have a good balance and body control.

It will increase your serve consistency tremendously.



## 22. Accelerate on Your Second Serve

Even though there is a lot of pressure to deliver the second serve you should not hit it slow and expose yourself for an attack.

Learn to hit the second serve as hard as you do on the first one but add a lot more spin to it. The slice or topspin will slow down the ball in the air and bring it into the court earlier.

## 23. First Serve In - here is why...

Never rely on the second serve. Think only one serve (first). Even if you have to put more spin or take some pace off of the first serve, make it in.

That's because on the first serve return, your opponent plays defensive (by standing further back and prepared to just get it in), while if you miss it he'll try to attack your second serve.

## 24. Toss the Ball the Right Way

A good serve always begins with a good toss. One of the best tips on the toss would be to lift the ball up in the air with as little rotation as possible. If you think that, your arm will relax and your toss will improve.

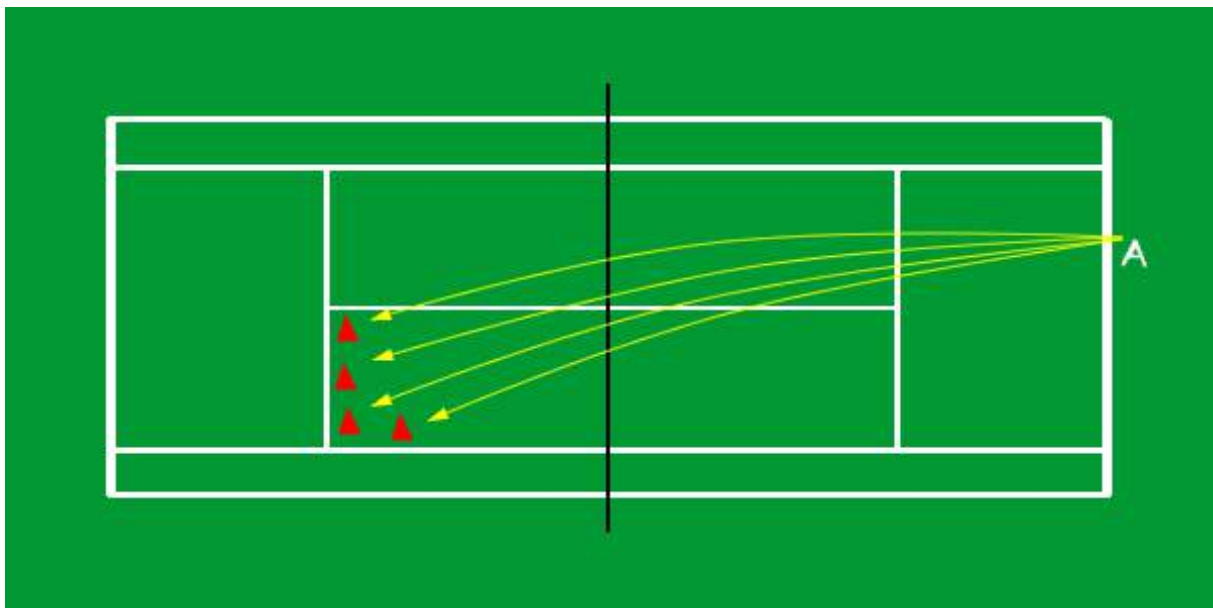
## 25. Loose = Power

The more relaxed your hand and arm are the more power you get. You should never muscle the serve. Instead imagine you want to just “throw” the arm into the ball. Another way to see your arm during the serve is as it was a whip (very loose).

## 26. Use Targets in Practice

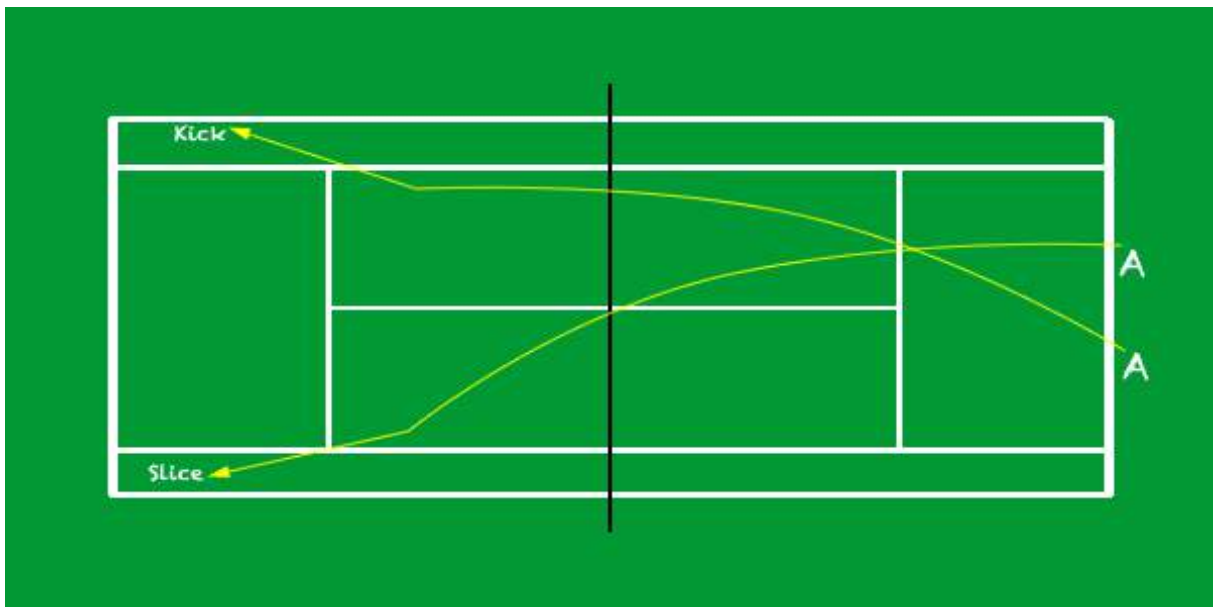
Always use targets when you practice your serve. Just trying to get the ball anywhere inside the service court can be boring.

To make your service practice fun, place some cones in strategic areas inside the service box: one close to the corner of center line and service line, one close to the service line about half-way between singles line and center line, one cone at the corner of service line and singles line and the fourth one close to the singles line and about 4 feet inside the service line.



## 27. Wide Serves Pay Off

Learn or improve your wide serves. When serving from the deuce side you should have a good slice serve (if you are right handed), when serving from the ad side you should be consistent with your kick serve close to the singles line. With these two types of serves you can move your opponent off the court and control the point from the start.





## 28. Breath to Serve

Sometimes in the stress of competition we forget an essential part of our strokes success - proper breathing. Knowing how to breath right is key for a consistent serve - always breath in as you toss the ball and breath out when you swing (reach) at it. This succession will allow you to get a good rhythm and relax your upper body for a great serve.

## 29. Timing is Key

If your serve is inconsistent it could be most of the times because of your lack of rhythm on the serve. Often I help my students by telling them to count when serving: count 1 as the ball goes up, 2 when it reaches its peak, 3 when it begins to come down - the ball should be swung at on 3.

If they have a low toss, then counting 1 when the ball goes up, then 2 as it begins to come down helps too - strike at 2.

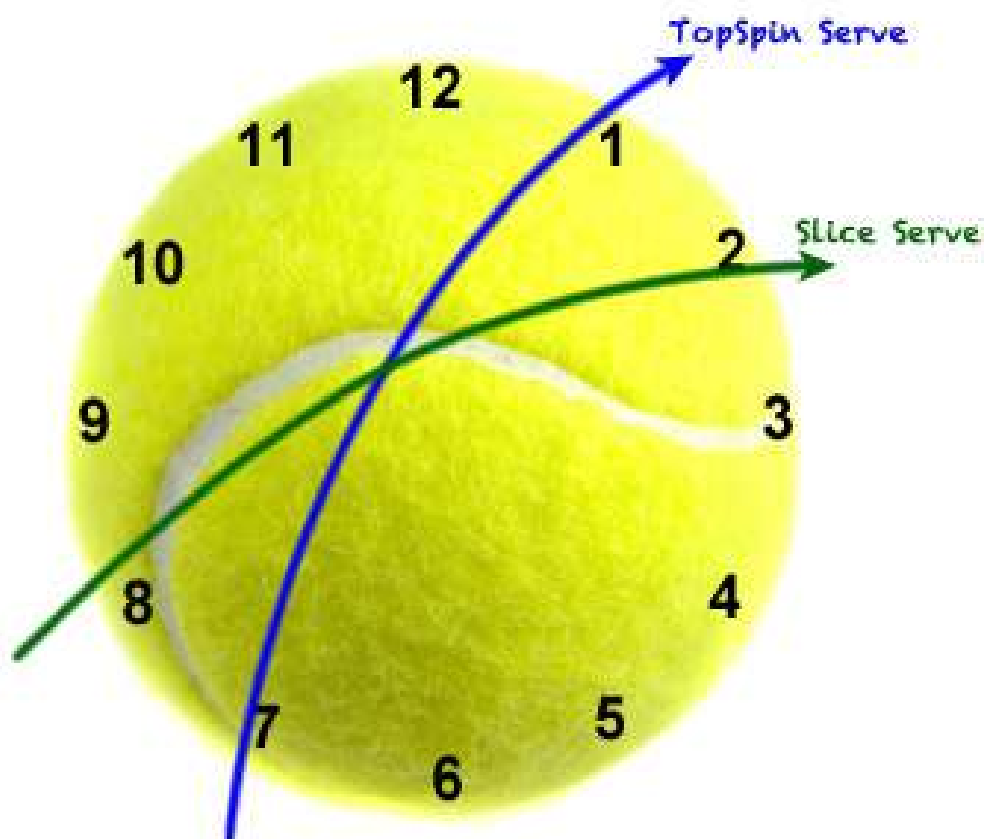
### 30. Spin Serves - how to...

Proper amount of spin on the serve delivery is key to consistency.

When delivering a topspin serve imagine you want your racquet to brush the back of the ball from low to high and over the ball (meaning that the racquet should roll up and “towards” the top of the ball).

When slicing the serve visualize that the racquet should brush the back of the ball away from you (from left to right if you are a right handed player).

Slice and topspin are very important especially on the second serve delivery.



### 31. High Toss vs. Low Toss

Some people believe that tossing the ball higher gives them more time to load the body and as a result create more power. But these people must consider that a higher toss will make the ball drop faster to the contact point which, as a result, will create more friction with the racquet strings. This friction can slow down the speed of the ball off of the racquet.

So would that mean that a low toss can be better? Depending of how low...

I recommend you toss the ball about as high as you can reach with the tip of your racquet - ok, maybe slightly higher.

You want the ball to descent through the racquet window a little slower so that you avoid too much spin created by the friction of the ball and strings.

The high tosses are great for kick serves while low tosses favor flat and slice serves.

**RETURN OF SERVE** is one of the least practiced strokes but equally important as the “mighty” Serve.

### 32. Shorten the Backswing

When you practice the return of serve always imagine that you are returning by having your back against a fence. In this way you will not take the racquet back, instead you will focus on preparing it behind the path of incoming ball and contact it out in front.



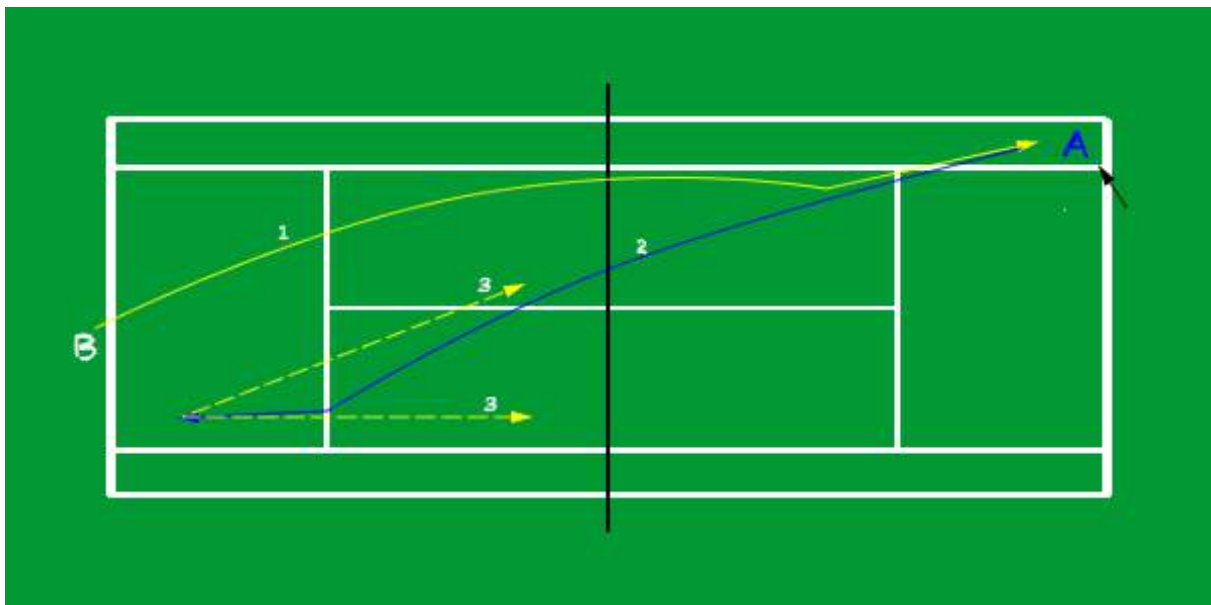
### 33. Facing Serve-and-Volley or Baseline?

Adjust your serve return placement according to your opponent:

- if he is a serve-and-volley player, then aim your return short somewhere inside the service line;
- if he is a ground-stroke player, then your serve return should land beyond the service line.

### 34. Wide To Wide

Return most of the wide serves cross-court. From a court coverage point of view, the cross-court option puts you in the best position to cover the court and not have to hustle too much to get ready for the next shot.



### **35. It is Not a Ground-Stroke**

Do not treat the return of serve like you do a ground-stroke! The serve usually comes at a higher speed than a ground-stroke and from a higher point of contact.

Which means on the return of serve you deal with a faster and higher bounce ball.

### **36. Split Step and Footwork**

Do add a split step as your opponent tosses the ball up then get the feet moving forward as she contacts the ball. This movement will get the body ready for the fast coming serve.

### 37. Train Your Eyes

Practice training your eyes to guess what kind of serve you will be receiving. Usually flat serves have the ball thrown more in front of the body, slice serves have a toss slightly to the right of the player (if right-handed) and kick serves have the toss move over the server's non-dominant shoulder.

Pay attention to these cues in order to see what kind of ball you will get your way.

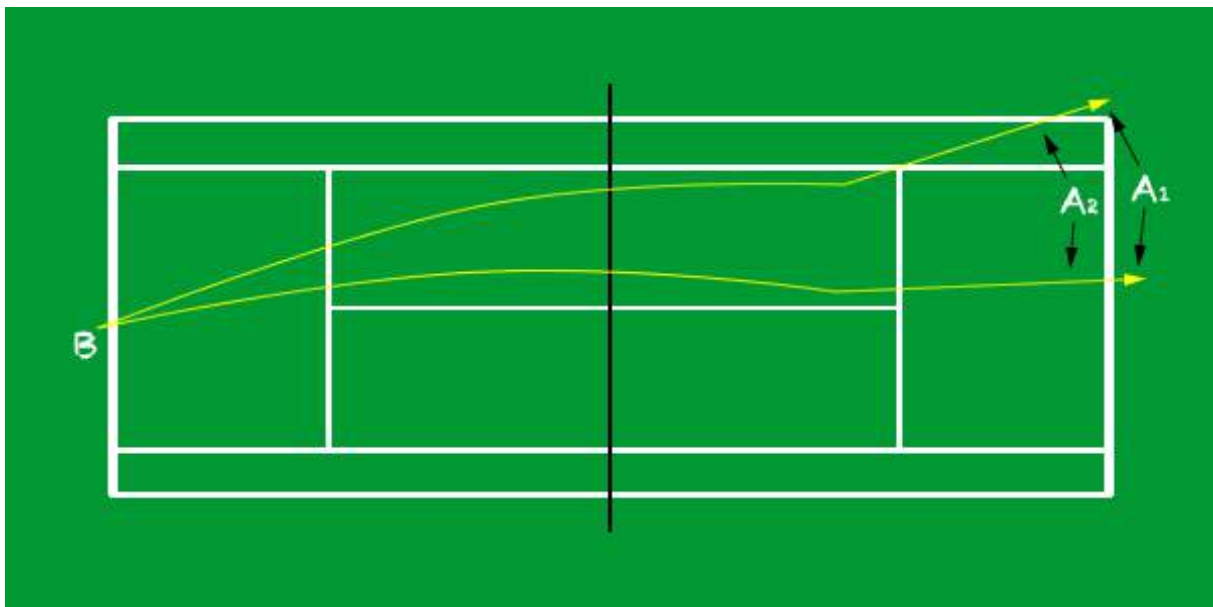
### 38. Move in on the Kick

If you see your opponent tossing the ball over the non-dominant shoulder (kick serve toss) move forward to take the ball on the rise. Failing to do so will put you in a tough situation when you will have to deal with high balls of which contact will be above your shoulders.

### 39. Dealing with Angles

Keep in mind that if you wait to return serve too far behind the baseline you will have to cover a lot more court against a fast paced ball (the serve). Also if you stay too close to the service line to close the angles it requires quick reflexes and a block return instead of attacking it.

You will have to find the proper position for returning serve so that you combine the advantages from the previous options.





## 40. Challenge the Server

When receiving serve you should sometimes challenge the server by standing more towards your weak side.

For example, when receiving from the ad side, move over toward the alley so that you show the server a bigger opening to your forehand (assuming this is your strong side).

By doing so you put pressure on the server to either stress aiming to the little room he/she has left on your backhand side or make him go for the big opening which is your strong side (the forehand).

**VOLLEY** - simple, yet not powerful...

### 41. Step Out First

To move faster to a ball for volley always step out in the direction of it with the foot closer to the trajectory of the ball. By doing this you will cover more court quicker.

### 42. Get Close

When you volley it helps if you can get closer to the net. This gives you better angles to place the ball to. So don't wait for the ball to come to you - instead move in toward it.



### 43. Two Punches

Often players tend to hit a winner off of the first volley. Instead consider the first volley as a set-up shot and look to put it away on the second volley. That unless the first volley is a high one and very close to the net...

### 44. Catch the Ball

For more controlled volleys visualize catching the ball on your racquet strings. See your racquet head as an oversized hand that cushions the ball as it comes to you.

### 45. All in Front

Avoid swinging at the ball when taking it in the air. If you do that, most of the time you will take the racquet too far back and you will fail to contact it early.

It is important that you strive to make the stroke out in front of you.

A good exercise, in practice, would be to imagine you are standing against a wall/fence and every time you take your racquet back it would hit the wall/fence - so keep the body moving forward and the racquet away from the imaginary wall/fence from behind you.



## 46. Low and High Volleys

Treat the low volleys (the ones you contact below net level) as set-up or placement shots and consider the high volleys to finish the point with or wrong-foot your opponent.

## 47. Practice on the Move

Most of the people practice volleys by standing inside the service court and rally against a player at the baseline. But this is not how the players hit volleys in a match.

The volleys are hit on the move. So when you practice it, always begin the volley rally either from no-man's land (between service line and baseline) or at the service line.

Feed the first ball to your baseline partner then move up (with small steps) toward the net while volleying the ball.

**OVERHEAD** - is the Serve's brother... the active brother.

### 48. Power and Placement

The first key ingredient to a successful overhead is power. Hit the first one hard and if you see that your opponent can block it easily then go for placement.

Hitting the overhead hard every time is not the way to go if your opponent can just block it and send the ball up over and over.

### 49. Let It Bounce

If you are tense when a lob comes, you can let it bounce first. I know it would be better to take it in the air and deprive your opponent of time but if you are one of the players who is inconsistent with their overheads, by letting it bounce first, you will have more time to breath (relax) and set your body in position for a better delivery. That, of course, assuming the lob is high and not too deep.

If the lob is deep and low, then consider spinning it for more control - just like you would hit a second serve (use slice).

## 50. Hit Up on It

When executing an overhead always consider hitting up or forward at the ball. Knowing that the ball is coming down on you, it already has the tendency to go down.

So to avoid hitting it into the net, try keeping your chin up and swing up.

## 51. Keep your Non-dominant Hand Up

When hitting an overhead, body balance is key. To have a good balance make sure you keep your non-dominant hand up like you would try to catch the incoming ball.



## 52. Get Sideways and Stay Sideways

Avoid backpedalling when you see the lob coming. Instead turn sideways and move back either by shuffling or cross-cover steps to keep the body balanced and move quicker.



Good **FOOTWORK** is the key to your best tennis.

### 53. Physics Teach Us

We have learned since the fifth grade that we move toward an object a lot quicker if we are already in motion when the time comes.

So keep the feet moving during the points and with the weight on the front part of your feet (avoid placing too much weight on the heels).

### 54. Step Out First

For a quicker movement to the ball always step out first - with the foot closer to the ball's trajectory.



### **55. Always Hustle**

Sometimes you might feel that the ball is out of your reach and you give up on it. Don't! Give yourself a chance and chase every ball. You will be surprised how many balls you can get to if you hustle. You are faster than you think!

### **56. The Smaller, the Better**

Take small steps to move to the ball - unless you have to cover longer distances (in this case make the first couple of steps big followed by small steps). This keeps your body in balance and easier to time your last two steps before you strike the ball.

## 57. Split Step

The split step is executed when your opponent makes contact with the ball. Do this on every stroke to get your body low (spread the feet at least shoulder width apart), in balance and ready to react into the direction that the ball will come to.

## 58. Tennis-Like Run

Train your footwork to be specific to tennis. While jogging gives you endurance, your main focus when practicing your tennis footwork should be short and quick sprints in different directions. Do sessions in which you run/sprint for 15-20 seconds then rest for 15-20 seconds. Focus on short sprints rather than a long race.

**SINGLES PLAY TIPS****59. Play Different Opponents as Often as You Can**

By playing different opponents you learn to adapt to different personalities, ball spin and pace, different tactics. This will also teach you to successfully get out of your comfort zone which is critical for a good player to be able to master.

**60. Learn to Change Direction of the Ball**

If you want to dominate the point, you must be in control of ball placement. Forget about hitting only cross-court or only in the direction from where the ball came.

If you want to take advantage of court openings or your opponent's weak shots then you must be able to hit in that direction any time comes an opportunity.

## 61. Take Notes of Opponent's Weaknesses

This can begin from the warm-up. One way to see which side your opponent favors is to hit the ball at him/her and see which stroke he sets-up with - then avoid it during the match.

## 62. Depth or Power?

If you were to choose between power and depth, choose depth. Aim your balls to land beyond the service line. That should be enough to keep your opponents away from hitting aggressive shots back to you.

## 63. Do Not Try to Win Points Off

of second serve, deep overheads (the ones you must over-stretch to reach them), half-volley and low volleys and... return of serve. These are balls that you just have to get in and if possible place them so that your opponents cannot attack you off.

## 64. Open Court

Move your opponent about the court. As you prepare for the incoming ball, with your peripheral vision, try to see the opening and direct the ball there. If there is not opening, create one by hitting the ball closer to one of the side lines, then aim for the open court just created.

You should always remember that when you get your opponent running, you are in control.

## 65. More First Serves In

One thing is certain: on your first serve delivery, your opponent plays defensive (waits for the ball behind the baseline, wants to get it back in play etc.) while on your second serve, she will attempt to take control of the point by attacking it.

Knowing that, strive for getting more first serves in: take some pace off of it or use more spin.

## 66. Deer in the Headlights

When you bring your opponent up at the net don't try to win the point on the first shot (pass her). Instead, make her volley at least once.

Most of the time, when players come up to the net, they are too tense to put the first volley away. If you hit right at them, they might give you a nice "sitter" in the middle of the court so you can only then put the ball away.

## 67. Surviving at the Net

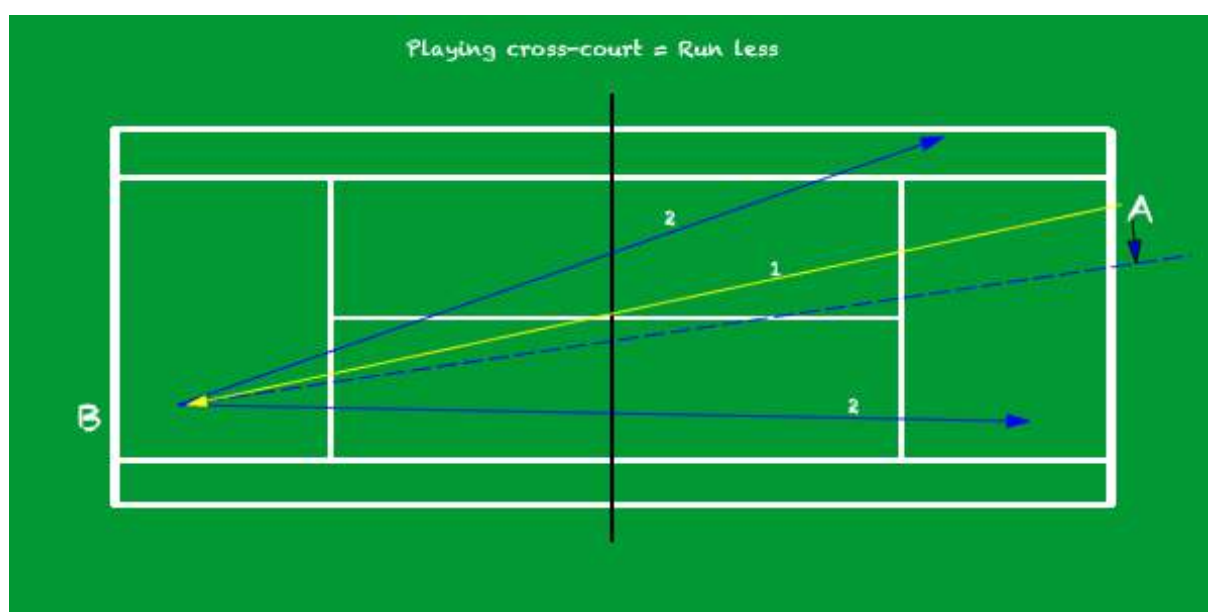
The way you perform at the net depends a lot on how you got there - your approach shot.

Do pay attention how you approach the net. Always consider the following:

- the approach shot should be low so that your opponent must hit up on the ball (which can set you up for a high volley)
- hit your approach shot toward your opponent's weak side (e.g. backhand) - chances of her passing you will be low off of her weak wing.

## 68. Smart Playing

Hit most of the shots cross-court: you will run less and be in a better position to cover the court on the next shot. You will also be hitting over the lowest part of the net and have more court to hit to.



Playing smart means using high percentage shots most of the times: hitting cross-court, using spin, taking advantage of the open court, keeping your approach low, getting a high percentage of first serves in, staying calm throughout the match, etc.



**DOUBLES PLAY TIPS****69. Attack the Poacher**

If the opposing net player poaches a lot, to make him stay put hit the ball aggressively his/her way a couple of times. This will make him/her think twice before poaching.

**70. Keep the Ball Low**

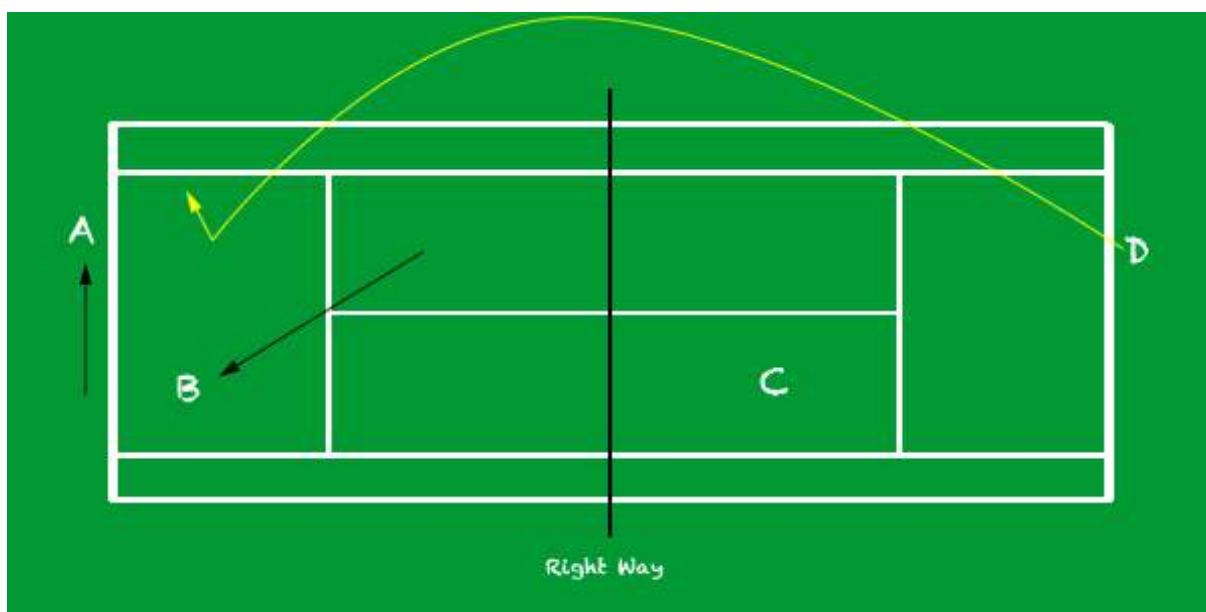
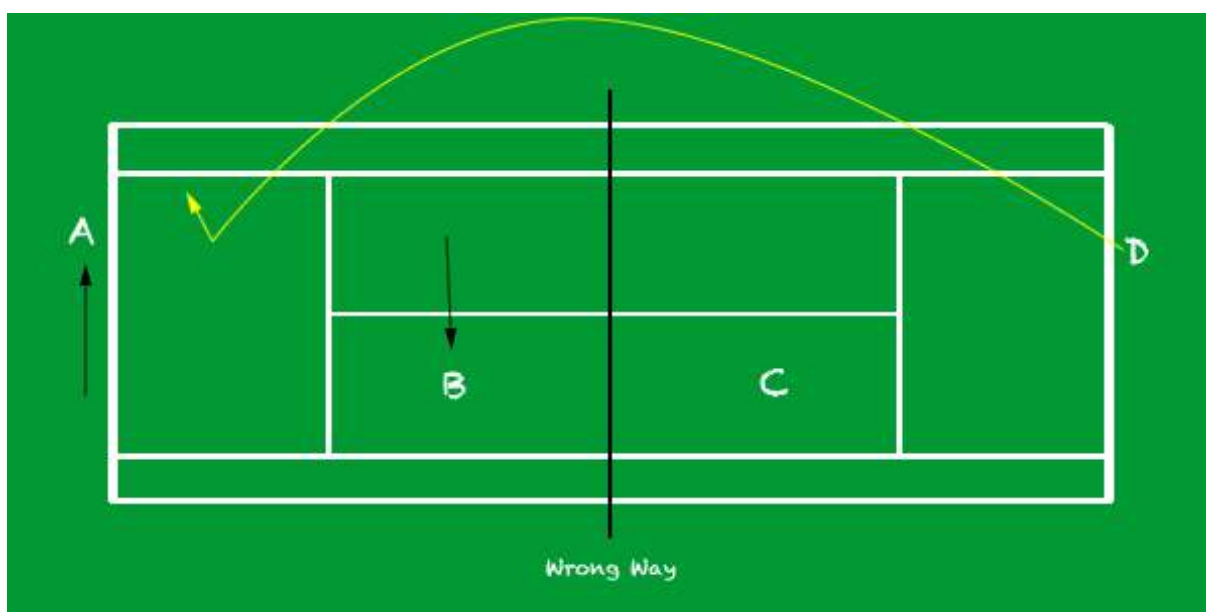
In doubles play learn to keep the ball low. And that is for a few reasons:

- your opponents will have to hit up (which will set you or your partner for volleys)
- it will make it hard for your opponents to lob your team (when the ball is low that is)
- a poaching opponent will have difficulties putting the ball away off of a low incoming ball

## 71. Move Back Together when Lobbed

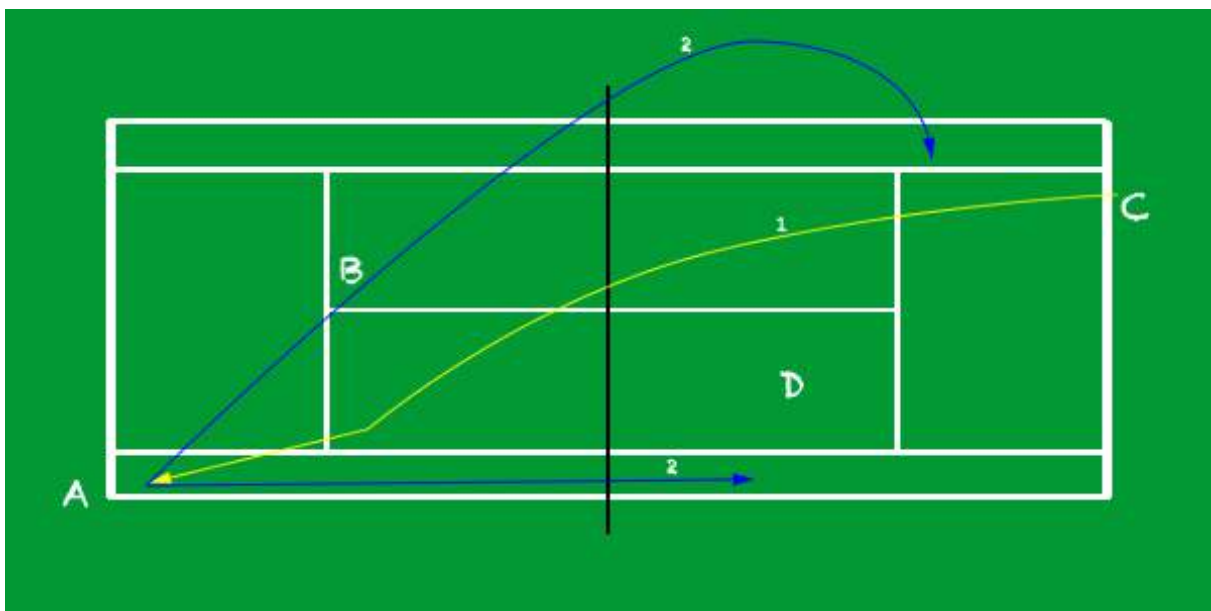
If either you or your partner gets lobbed, you should both move back to get the ball. Sometimes I see a player moving back to chase the lob while her partner lags at the net waiting. That is not a good idea because the partner who chases the lob could return it short which puts the remaining player at the net exposed to an aggressive overhead from the opposing team.

So move back together when chasing a lob.

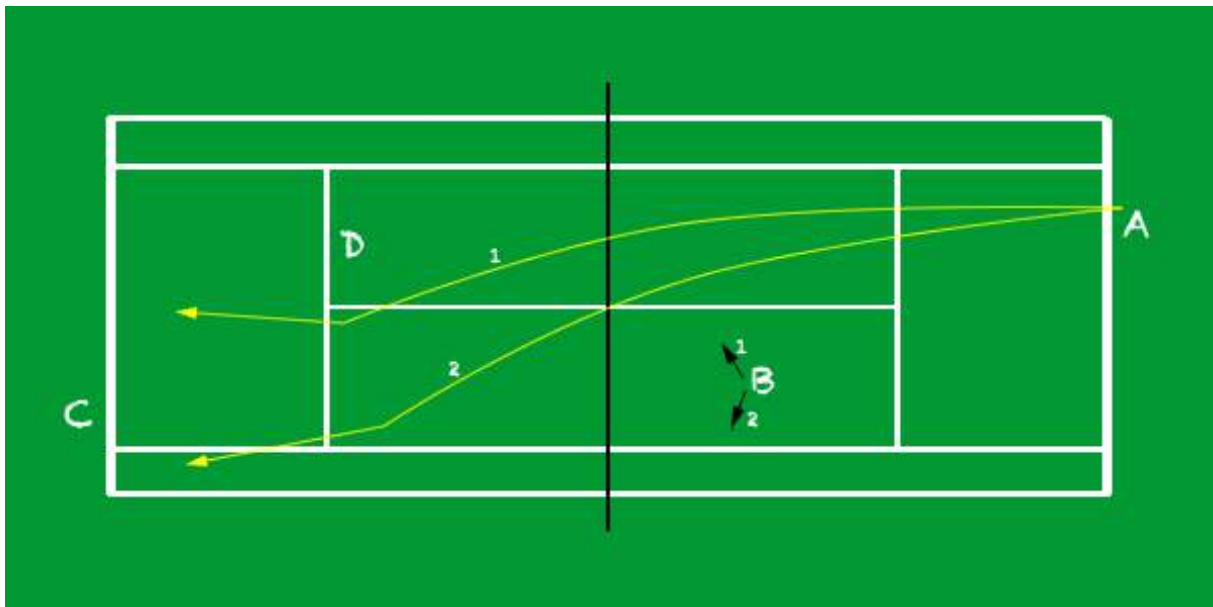




73. When you are being pulled off the court by a wide ball choose to hit it either down-the-line or lob cross-court. These choices give your partner better court coverage while your recover.



74. When you are at the net and your partner is serving, as soon as the ball passes you, move (step) toward the side the ball will land on: if the serve is wide then move a step toward the side line too; if the ball lands close to the center line, move (a small step) toward your center line. So move according to where the ball lands - stay behind the ball.



### 75. Slice your Serve Deep

If you cannot serve hard then develop a deep slice serve. Depth will give your net partner time to get ready for serve return and the slice will force the returner to hit up on the ball (setting your partner at the net up for the volley).

### 76. Let Your Partner Know...

Strive to keep a constant communication with your doubles partner. When serving, before you do it, let your partner know whether you intend to serve wide, middle or down-the-T. In this way, she'll know which way to move to poach.

When you return serve, again, let your partner know, ahead of time, what your intention will be as far as placement of the ball.

By doing this your partner will be much better prepared to intercept the next ball coming and both of you will benefit by knowing what to expect during the first shots.

## 77. How to Avoid Lobs

Many people hate lobs because they get them out of their comfort zone. If you are one of them, here is a simple tip to avoid getting lobbed: hit your ground-strokes and approach shots with under-spin.

This makes it hard for opponents to get under the ball and hit it too high because the ball stays low and the backwards spin does not favor lobs.

## 78. Play the Both-Back Formation Only When...

If your partner's serve is weak or your opponent's serve is powerful then it is recommended that you begin the point from the baseline.

In both ways you will avoid being "crushed" at the net by a fast ball directed at you.

**MENTAL TENNIS** - every serious tennis player knows that tennis is not about strokes; it is all about the mind works.

### 79. Be Aware of the Pressure Points and How to Play Them

There are certain times like 15-30, 30-40, break point, etc. when you must choose your strokes carefully.

Avoid going for low percentage shots. Instead use the strokes that you feel comfortable with - that you are comfortable making a high percentage of them in.

If the ground-stroke cross-court shots work for you very well, then use them in the pressure points.

### 80. Have Fun vs. Playing to Win

When you play to win or... not to lose, a tennis match becomes a workout. If you want to have fun playing tennis and loving the competition you must accept the winning and losing as not being the most important thing. Instead enjoy hitting the ball, the exercise you get from chasing it and for the challenge that is when figuring out your opponent.



## 81. Never Stop Your Opponent from Beating Himself/ Herself

As funny as it sounds, if you see that your opponent is losing his temper or going for unsuccessful attempts to hit winners, don't stop him. Just keep the ball in, play steady and let him/her make the mistakes. Don't try anything fancy if you see your opponent is doing the job for you.

## 82. Never Give Up

I know this tip is kind of a cliché but I think you should consider that even when we found ourselves behind in a game if we persevere and believe we can win, good things can happen.

## 83. Learn to Forget

As a tennis player, you must learn to have a short-term memory. When you make a mistake, analyze the lesson that you gained from it and move on to the next point. Never dwell on a miss. Instead learn from it then focus on the next ball.

## 84. Never Worry about How Good Your Opponent Is

This is one advice I got from my father: “Let your opponent worry about how good you are!”

## 85. Look Confident and Relaxed

No matter what, during a match avoid showing any emotions. Your opponent will get frustrated seeing you this way. Be smart and don't let emotions control you!

## 86. Only the Ball

One way to calm your nerves at the beginning of the match is to tell yourself that the only thing that matters is the ball. It is easy to get distracted by people who are watching you playing, your opponent's intimidating attitude or other external factors. But if you just focus on one thing only, the ball, then you'll be more relaxed during the match.

## 87. Visualize Good Things Happening

Before you toss the ball to serve, imagine it going in and landing on the spot of your choice. Before a tough point (e.g. 15-30, break point) visualize yourself already winning it.

By visualizing good things happening your body will relax and you will play with more confidence.

## 88. Mistakes

You must accept that mistakes happen and they will always happen. One should strive not to avoid mistakes but learn from them and correct them.

For example, if your slice backhand is inconsistent then you might want to use the topspin instead and admit that it needs a little more work in practice.

We, as players, should be always willing to move on from feelings of frustrations and learn to find new solutions to our problems.

## 89. Understand Momentum

Many players give up the match too easily when they see their opponent gets an advantage in the beginning... You should never over-estimate your opponent!

Understand that even though the other player plays well in the beginning, the momentum can shift in your favor if you believe that you want to win and work hard all the way throughout the match.

## 90. Nervousness and Performance

If you want to avoid being nervous at the beginning of the match try this tip: avoid thinking of the outcome; live in the present.

We put too much pressure on us by thinking about whether we'll be winning or losing the match. Indeed, it is hard to eliminate these thoughts but who says you cannot condition your mind to do so?

## 91. Negative Talk

Feeling frustrated after missing a shot? Try taking three deep breaths before you say anything once the point is over. In this way you'll avoid any negative self-talk and body language.

**OTHER TENNIS TIPS.** But wait... there's more! :)

## 92. Breath to Play Well

Use proper breathing techniques for everything you do in tennis:

- as you prepare to strike the ball, inhale; as you swing at the ball, exhale - it helps with timing and rhythm, and to relax your body.
- before you serve, take a couple of slow and deep breaths - this will help you clear your mind and release tension.

## 93. Body Language

Regardless of what happens on the court keep your head up and appear to be calm and un-distracted.

If you show negative emotions (yelling at yourself, sagging your shoulders or throwing your racquet against the fence) all you do is fuel your opponent's confidence - so why would you do it?

If you get frustrated with your game, hold it in until after the match.

### 94. Tennis Is Fun

Don't beat yourself up. Remember that tennis is a game and it should be played for exercise and your enjoyment.

Win or lose, shouldn't matter as long as you had a good time playing it.

### 95. Use Your Non-Hitting Hand Properly

After you serve, catch the racquet with your non-dominant hand so you can get the proper grip for the next shot.

Hold onto the neck of your racquet when preparing for the forehand ground-stroke - this will help you coil the body more.

Support your racquet between shots to help your dominant hand relax.

Carry your racquet with the non-dominant hand between points to give the dominate one a rest.

### 96. Shadow Tennis

As a warm-up you should always do "shadow tennis" (go through the strokes motion without hitting balls) not only to review the proper form but to also loosen up the muscles using a stroke related action.

Do it in slow motion in the beginning (for about 1 minute), then you can accelerate the swing motion.

## 97. Talk to Yourself

During tight or pressure matches it helps to get relaxed and fluid in your strokes by talking to your self. For example you can have specific cues like “turn” (when preparing for the stroke) and “hit” when striking the ball.

This can take your mind off of the pressure of the match and focus on the main elements - body control and ball.

## 98. Routine

The week before the tournament you should not change your routine. Keep it the same throughout at least 4 days before the match - eat the same food, go to bed and wake up at the same time, don't change your strokes or work on a new one, do the same warm-up routine etc.

## 99. Off Time

You probably are aware that we spend more time on the court in between points than we actually do playing.

That means you should treat this time more carefully: shift your racquet from the dominant hand to the non-dominant (to reduce tension), breath slowly and deeply and think about how you will approach the next shot.

## 100. Controlled Power

We all like to hit the ball hard but the problem is that we make mistakes more often this way.

But if you understand how to control the ball sent with power you will enjoy fast swings more often.

The solution is... the spin. Learn to brush up and over the balls when you hit them with more pace.

The harder you swing the more topspin you need in order to control the ball.

## 101. What Kind of Player are You?

This is a serious question that every player should ask themselves.

We tend to picture ourselves being a certain type or wanting to play like some of the players we admire.

The reality is that every time we want to model our game after some others we'll end up in frustration.

The best time on the court we'll have when we establish exactly what works for us and respect who we are as players.

We'll never be a Roger Federer or Rafael Nadal but we'll always be the best self players that we can be.



## About the author

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### Introduction:

I am a certified professional tennis coach who traveled the world over the last 10 years teaching amateurs and aspiring pros alike. My coaching abilities are built on 25 years of playing experience and teaching over 13,000 hours of tennis lessons.

As a result of my passion for the game and willingness to offer my students an enjoyable way to learn tennis, I founded WebTennis24.com and WebTennisDrills.com, two very well-known tennis instructional sites.

If you have questions or feedback, do not hesitate to visit our websites [WebTennis24.com](http://WebTennis24.com) and [WebTennisDrills.com](http://WebTennisDrills.com), or write us at [cosmin@webtennis24.com](mailto:cosmin@webtennis24.com)