

Moving Around the Court

All players and coaches agree, footwork is critical for successful tennis. The game is as much about moving as it is about hitting (the higher the level, the more critical moving becomes).

3 BASIC FOOTWORK PATTERNS

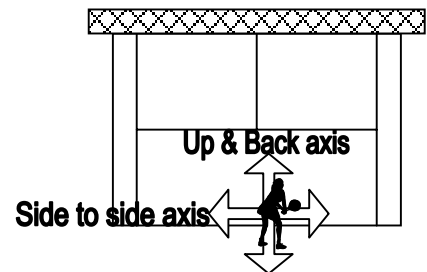
To understand and simplify tennis movement, we can divide moving into categories to make things simpler:

Every shot has **2 Phases of Movement**:

1. Moving to get to the ball (called 'Reception')
2. Moving to get into position for the next shot (called 'Recovery').

When moving on the court, players have **2 axes of Movement**:

- Up and back (moving towards or away from the net)
- Side to side (called 'lateral' movement)



No matter the phase, moving in tennis can be further divided into **3 Distances** a player needs to travel. Each distance is best covered by an appropriate **Footwork Pattern**.

Short Distance = Shuffle Step (Player's feet come together and then apart)

Medium Distance = Crossover step (Feet cross to cover more ground. Can be a cross behind or, a cross in front)

Long Distance = Running stride

Of course there are multiple combinations that can be performed however, every player should master the 3 **Footwork Patterns** along the 2 axes for both **Receiving** the ball and **Recovering**.



Backward Shuffle to position for a deep forehand

Photos Courtesy of TennisOne.com



Recovery Crossover step after a Forehand

Court Home-work

Beginner: Start with a cooperative 'Mini-Tennis' rally (serviceline to serviceline). One player is the 'Mover' and one player is the 'Anchor'. The Anchor stays in one position and send the ball right or left, up or back. The Mover must take the ball after one bounce (no volleys allowed) and send it back to the Anchor. Progress to $\frac{3}{4}$ court, then baseline to baseline. If players have difficulty controlling the ball, the Anchor can hand feed the ball.

Intermediate: Players who are more advanced must not only practice the footwork patterns but quickly identify the characteristics of the ball they are receiving. This is the same drill as above except players are at the baseline and the Mover must call out loud if the ball is "Up", "Back", "Forehand" or "Backhand". To give time for a quick response, the ball should be called before it crosses the net. The rally should be medium paced and cooperative however, the Anchor should move the ball around. Switch roles after 5 minutes.