

5 Technical Fundamentals

To play tennis successfully, it is important to have technique that allows a player to be effective, not waste energy, minimize potential injury, adapts to the various situations a player encounters, and paves the way for higher levels of play. There are 5 basic fundamentals that build a solid technical foundation.

(1. Grip, 2. Set-up, 3. Impact Point, 4. Hitting Zone, 5. Recovery).

Developing a relationship: You and your Impact Point (part 3)

Tennis is an, 'impact sport'. The impact of the ball is the most important moment in all of tennis. Setting up a good relationship between you and the ball effects balance, power, coordination, timing, control, and a host of other crucial elements.

VOLLEY 'BOX'

For the Beginner... (Play Tennis rating 1.0-2.5)

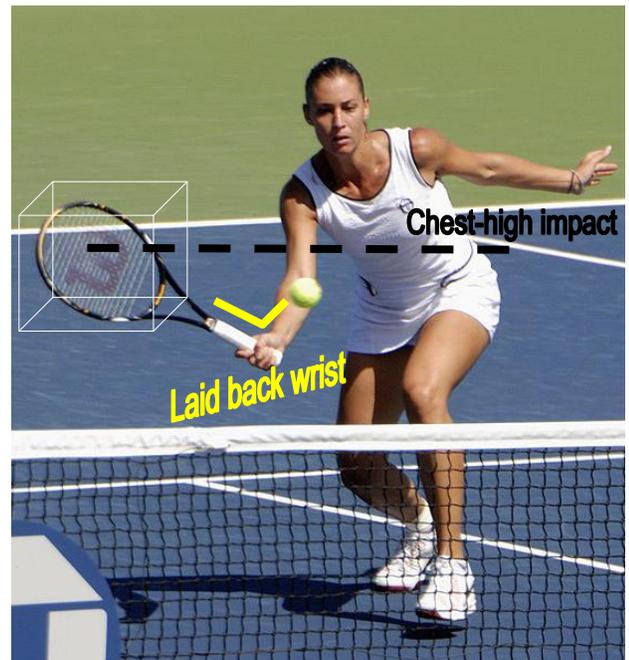
When in the mid-court or at net, it is more effective to volley (take the ball in the air before it bounces) than to move back and let it bounce. The 'ideal' impact point on a volley is created by imagining a 3 dimensional box floating about chest level, a comfortable distance from your body, and slightly closer to the net than the rest of your body. When at the net, organize your body around the oncoming ball in order to have it pass through this "Ball Control Box" before the ball bounces.

The main way volleys are used at this level is to direct the ball to an open court. The volley would be described as a 'catching action'. Keep the muscle tension in your arm low. A 'laid back' wrist (an "L" shape created between your wrist and forearm) should allow you to 'absorb' the impact of the ball (just like catching a ball).

For the Intermediate player... (Play Tennis Rating 3.0-4.5)

At these levels, different volleys are used for different situations. 'Catch' the ball for accurate direction control, 'punch' the ball on higher shots for a power putaway. 'Carry' the ball for low shots to guide it deep.

In these situations, the 'ideal' Ball Control Box must be modified for the height of the ball. The higher the ball is impacted, the further from your body 'ideal' becomes, the lower the ball, the closer.



Photograph courtesy of Wikimedia commons

Court Home-work

Beginner: Start with partners halfway between the net and the serviceline across the net from each other. To train making a quick decision, call out "bounce" before the ball hits the ground. Take the ball after it bounces if the landing point is in between you and the net. Call out "Volley", if you anticipate the landing point will be at your feet or behind, and intercept the ball in the air. Attempt to impact in your "Ball Control Box" with a laid back wrist every time. Groundstrokes at waist level, volleys at chest level. Every time you exchange the ball 6 times with your partner, they move back 2 steps. When your partner reaches the baseline, switch roles.

Intermediate: Player "A" starts at $\frac{3}{4}$ court with a 'friendly' shot to Player "B" and comes to the net. Player "B" tries to keep the ball low on the first shot and the point begins. The goal is for Player "A" to set up a 1st volley and finish the point within the next 2 shots. Player "B" cannot lob. First player to 5 points wins. Switch roles.