

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).

RECOVERY

In tennis, it is important to see points as a chain of connected shots. Tennis is not golf, a player's task isn't over once they hit the ball. After a stroke, the opponent attempts to send the ball back, and the whole cycle repeats.

To ensure being in the best state to respond to an opponent's shot, a player must **'Recover'** after every shot. A poor recovery leads to a poor preparation for the next shot. For example, in a baseline rally a player receives an opponent's shot that makes her stretch and as a result, she sends the ball out. It would be too easy to blame poor execution of the final shot however, the culprit may be something that happened earlier in the rally.

If the whole rally were analyzed, we may have seen a good 1st groundstroke in the rally but a poor recovery. Consequentially, the player was not quite prepared for the 2nd shot which she returned with poor quality and had another late recovery. Starting from such a disadvantaged position, the opponent sent the next ball in a way that put our player in trouble. The poor performance on the final shot was a result of the poor recovery on the first shot.

COMPONENTS OF RECOVERY:

The purpose of recovery is, as the name implies, to recover the player's balance and put them in a location that allows them to get to any shot the opponent makes.

Recovery has 4 components:

1. Time
2. Position
3. Footwork
4. Location

"A poor recovery leads to a poor preparation for the next shot."

1. TIME

This really is the most important (and often undertrained) aspect of recovery. If everything is done well, but not in time, the whole process doesn't help the player much. To be fully recovered, the player must achieve their position and location before the opponent contacts the ball. This allows them to react appropriately to the opponent's shot.

Timing of Recovery: "If everything is done well, but not in time, the whole process doesn't help the player much."

2. POSITION

The player must regain their neutral balanced position with a lower posture and wide base (see photo #3 in Federer sequence below). This body position allows a player to explosively start in any direction. Balance is defined as having a good 'Line of Gravity' with the head over the centre of gravity, and the feet shoulder width or more apart.

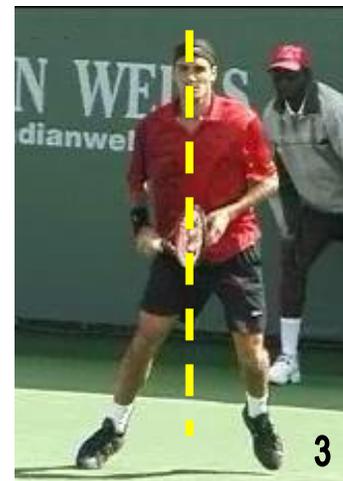
3. FOOTWORK

Players use 3 basic movements to cover the ground required to regain good location:

- **Shuffle Step:** This is for moving short distances
- **Crossover:** For moving medium distances (see Federer crossover sequence below)
- **Run:** For covering maximum ground quickly

Of course in many situations, players may use a combination of footworks.

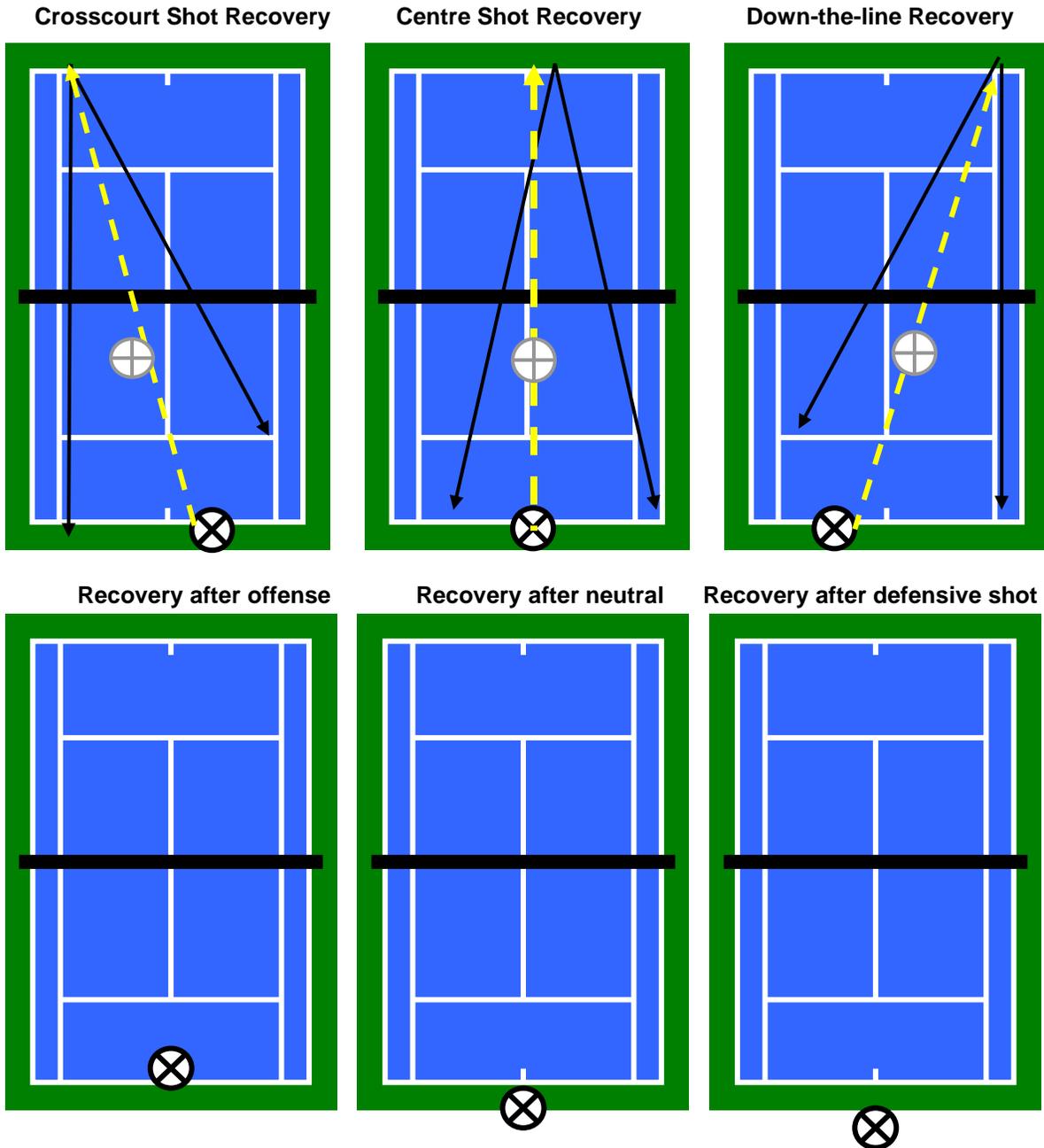
Example of a recovery using a crossover



Photos Courtesy of TennisOne.com

4. LOCATION

The player must place themselves in order to respond to any shot the opponent makes. The location of recovery includes side to side (lateral) as well as up & back (offensive vs defensive). The diagram includes groundstroke recovery (black 'X') as well as net recovery (grey '+').



CONCLUSION

Recovery allows a player to be in the best position, in the optimal location, at the appropriate time. This maximizes their chance to respond with the best shot possible. Training recovery is critical for tennis success.

If you would like to ask a question, give feedback, or want more information, contact us at:

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