

# Introduction to Tennis Practice Program

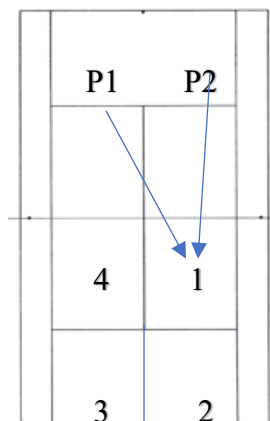
As a beginning (or returning) player, your goal when practicing is to take as many proper swings and hit as many balls in a focused manner as possible. Trying to rally back and forth with a partner will not accomplish this. With that in mind, we've put together the below (60-minute) practice program for you.

**0-5: Shadow strokes:** Take ten (slow and methodical) practice swings for all your strokes.

**5-15: Drop hit forehands.** Begin in your ready position and slowly go through the following progression:

- Turn your shoulders to prepare your racket.
- Drop the ball approximately two feet in front of you.
- When the ball reaches its peak, step forward, rotate your shoulders (which will move your racket) to strike the ball. Aim for the center of the court.
- Finish with your racket pointing toward your target and freeze. If you can comfortably freeze, it means you've likely executed a balanced stroke.

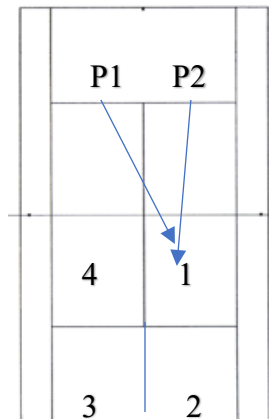
**15-25: Drop hit forehands to targets.** Divide the court into four quadrants (targets) and drop hit balls, aiming for various targets. Make sure to begin in your ready position, go very slowly and strive to maintain your balance.



**25-35: Drop hit backhands.** This will be a bit more awkward as you have a two-handed backhand. Here's how to do it. Begin in your ready position, holding a ball in your left (non-racket) hand and slowly go through the following progression:

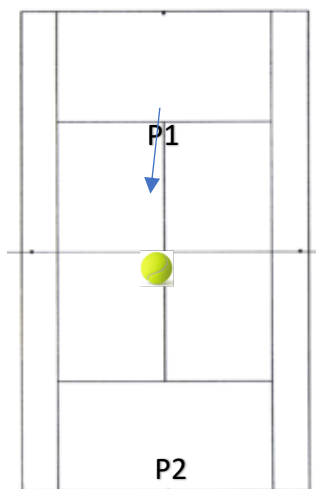
- Turn your shoulders to prepare your racket.
- Take your left hand off the racket and, bringing your left arm under your right, drop the ball approximately two feet in front of you.
- Place your left hand back on the racket and, when the ball reaches its peak, step forward, rotate your shoulders which will move your racket to strike the ball. Aim for the center of the court.
- Finish with your racket pointing toward your target and freeze. Again, if you can comfortably freeze, you've likely executed a balanced stroke.

**35-45: Drop hit backhands to targets.** As before, divide the court into four quadrants (targets) and drop hit balls, aiming for various targets. Make sure to begin in your ready position, go very slowly and strive to maintain your balance.



**45-50: Mini-tennis rally.** If you have a practice partner, playing mini tennis is a great way to begin to work on your rallying skills. It's a simple game with many variations. Here's how to get started:

- Each player stands at the center of their service line as shown below.
- One player drops a ball and gently hits to the other.
- Players try to rally back and forth.
- Keep count and work on improving your number.
- Be sure to use proper technique on all strokes and return to ready position after every shot.
- As your skills improve, gradually move back until you reach the baseline.



**50-60: Serve.** Begin at the service line and start with 15-20 practice tosses. Then, practice serving to the opposite service box as shown below. As your skills improve (and confidence grows) gradually back up until you reach the baseline. Be sure to practice from both sides of the court.

