Senior / 50+ Session

Soft game · Movement safety · Social enjoyment

AUDIENCE	DURATION	PLAYERS	SHOT FOCUS
Older and returning players	**60 minutes**	**Pairs (6+ for the On Deck game)**	**Dink · Drop**

Objectives

- **Soft game:** build control and patience through dinking and soft hands.
- **Movement safety:** prepare the body gently and keep every movement balanced and recovered.
- **Social enjoyment:** rotate partners and finish with a game everyone can join.

Equipment

- A paddle for each player
- Several balls per pair
- A court with net (one per 4 players)
- 2 cones (D116 Footwork + Volleys)
- A wall or sturdy support for leg swings and stretches
- Water and somewhere to sit for rest breaks

Session at a glance

MIN	BLOCK	WHAT HAPPENS	DRILL ID	PAGE
10	**Warm-up**	Gentle mobility sequence, then Footwork + Volleys (Phase 1, footwork only)	**D116**	**2**
10	**Technique / Skill**	Dink and Step Back: balance, recovery and soft hands	**D030**	**3**
15	**Drill**	8 Shape Dinks, then Step-Back Drop Progression	**D046 D035**	**3–4**
15	**Game**	Dink Attack Decision, rotating partners. For 6 or more players: On Deck Doubles	**D091 D105**	**4–5**
10	**Cool-down and debrief**	Standing stretches, then reflect, feedback and one practice suggestion	**–**	**5**

Coaching notes

- **Demonstrate first.** Show each skill before players try it, then give quality repetitions with feedback.
- **Build range gradually.** In the leg swings, increase the range of motion with each swing and let players hold a wall for balance.
- **Keep the pace soft.** Pickleball involves bending, reaching and short side-to-side and back-and-forward steps. Praise control and recovery over power.
- **Don’t rush the progressions.** Move players on (for example, stepping further back in the Step-Back Drop Progression) only when the shots are landing consistently.
- **Rotate partners** between blocks so the group stays social and no one waits for long.
- **Keep the cool-down standing.** Every cool-down stretch in this plan can be done on your feet.

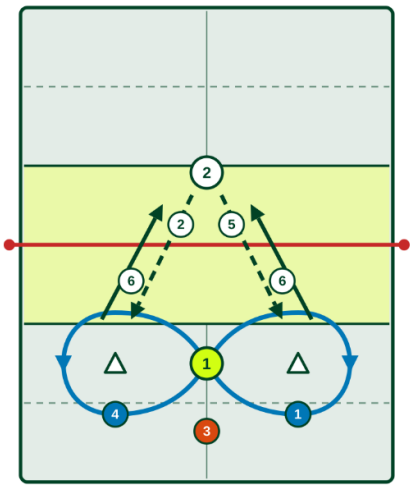
1. WARM-UP 10 min

Mobility (about 6 min). Work through each exercise, keeping movements controlled.

- Leg swings, front to back: 10–15 each leg (hold a wall)
- Leg swings, side to side: 10–15 each leg
- Arm circles: 20–30 seconds each direction
- Hip circles: 10 rotations each direction
- Arm and shoulder stretch with rotation: 8–10 reps per side
- Lateral lunges: 8–10 per side

Movement (about 4 min): D116 Footwork + Volleys

Physical Movement · pairs · All Levels. Run **Phase 1 only** (figure-of-8 footwork, no paddle) with optional hand feeds to catch. Swap roles halfway.



Full court - both cones and the full figure-of-8.

Step by Step

1. **Figure-of-8 footwork**
   Shuffle around both cones, no paddle: centre, deuce, centre, advantage.
2. **Optional hand feed**
   P2 hand feeds a soft ball for P1 to catch as they round each cone.
3. **Set time**
   Continue Phase 1 for a set time, then pick up the paddle.
4. **Figure-of-8 with paddle**
   Same shuffle pattern, now holding the paddle.
5. **Feed**
   P2 feeds a medium ball timed to arrive as P1 rounds each cone.
6. **Volley**
   P1 volleys to the opposite court, alternating forehand and backhand.

1 Player 1, moving player
2 Player 2, feeder (kitchen line)
Cone
Figure-of-8 shuffle steps
Feed (soft by hand, medium)
Volley (medium pace)

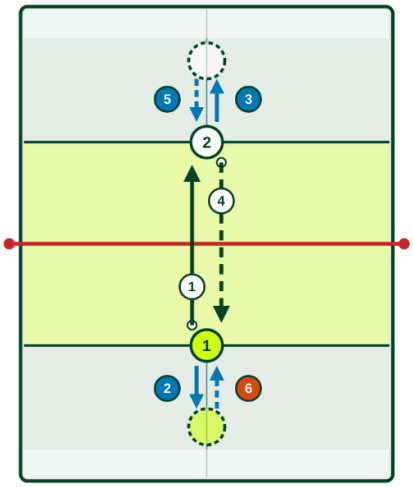
No scoring. Each phase runs for a set time; roles rotate after Phase 2.
Phase 1 hand catches are optional, before volleys are introduced.
Feeds and volleys use the same lanes in both phases.

- Use shuffle steps throughout. Do not cross the feet or break into a run between cones.
- Stay low and keep an athletic ready position through the whole figure-of-8.
- The feeder times each feed to arrive as the moving player rounds a cone, not mid-shuffle.

2. TECHNIQUE / SKILL 10 min

D030 Dink and Step Back

Technique/Skill · Drop / Dink · pairs · Intermediate. Both players start at the kitchen line. After each dink, take a small step back, then step forward to meet the next ball.



Kitchen only - players directly opposite.

Step by Step

1. **Dink**
   Player 1 hits a soft dink over the net from the kitchen line.
2. **Step back**
   Player 1 steps back one step after contact.
3. **Step forward**
   Player 2 steps forward to meet the ball at the kitchen line.
4. **Dink**
   Player 2 hits a soft dink back over the net.
5. **Step back**
   Player 2 steps back one step after contact.
6. **Keep the rhythm**
   Both players repeat the step back and step forward rhythm continuously.

1 Player 1 (hitter and mover)
2 Player 2 (hitter and mover)
One step behind the kitchen line
Step back (dashed line: step forward)

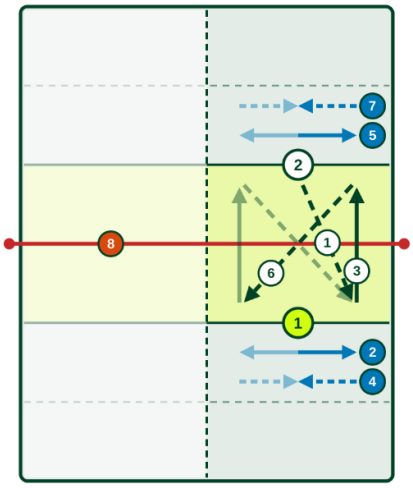
Variation: only one player steps back.

- Keep the step back small and controlled, not a full retreat from the line.
- Step forward with balance and purpose, not in a rush. The footwork should not disrupt the stroke.
- Build a natural, repeatable recovery rhythm. Variation: only one player steps back while the other stays on the line.

3. DRILL (1 of 2) about 8 min

D046 8 Shape Dinks

Drill · Dink · pairs · Intermediate. Both players stay on one half of the court, so one court holds two pairs. Player 1 dinks down the line, Player 2 dinks crosscourt. Switch roles after a set time.



Half court - right half shown.

Step by Step

1. **Crosscourt feed**
   Player 2 feeds crosscourt to the corner.
2. **Shuffle**
   Player 1 shuffles to the corner to meet the ball.
3. **Dink down the line**
   Player 1 dinks straight down the line.
4. **Recover**
   Player 1 recovers to the middle.
5. **Shuffle**
   Player 2 shuffles to the corner to meet the ball.
6. **Dink crosscourt**
   Player 2 dinks crosscourt to the other corner.
7. **Recover**
   Player 2 recovers to the middle.
8. **Keep the figure of 8**
   Repeat from the other corner; switch roles after a set time.

1 2 Start in the middle of their side
Solid: Player 1 hits. Dashed: Player 2 hits.
Solid: shuffle. Dashed: recover.
Faded: the repeat from the other corner

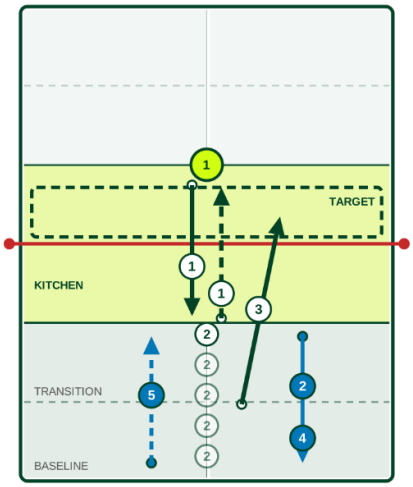
No scoring. Switch roles after a set time or number of reps.
The drill can also be run on the left side.

- Shuffle across to get behind the ball rather than reaching. Focus on placement and consistency, not pace.
- Recover to a balanced position after every shot. The drill raises the heart rate, so allow rests between rounds.

3. DRILL (2 of 2) about 7 min

D035 Step-Back Drop Progression

Drill · Drop / Dink · pairs · Intermediate. The feeder stays at the kitchen line. After every 2–5 successful shots the mover steps back one step towards the baseline, then works forward again.



Full court - Player 1 stays, Player 2 moves.

Step by Step

1. **Rally softly**
   Both players rally softly back and forth from the kitchen line.
2. **Step back**
   After 2 to 5 successful shots, Player 2 takes one step back.
3. **Drop from the new spot**
   Keep dropping into the kitchen from the new position.
4. **Keep stepping back**
   Repeat the step back after every 2 to 5 consistent shots.
5. **Reverse at the baseline**
   Once at the baseline, step forward after every 2 to 5 shots, back towards the kitchen line.

- Player 1 (feeder, stays at the kitchen line)
- Player 2 (mover): starting position
- Later positions as Player 2 moves
- Target: the kitchen on the feeder's side

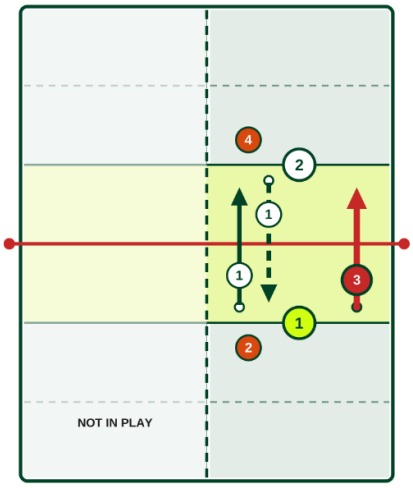
Move only after consistent shots.
Practise both forehand and backhand drops throughout.

- Aim for a soft, low drop that the feeder has to hit upwards. Practise forehand and backhand drops.
- Only step back when the shots are landing consistently in the kitchen. Do not rush the progression.

4. GAME 15 min

D091 Dink Attack Decision

Game · Dink · pairs, can be used with more players · All Levels. Rally straight-ahead dinks on one side of the court. After five consecutive dinks, players can attack, move the opponent or keep dinking until someone wins the point.



Half court - right half shown.

Step by Step

1. **Dink straight ahead**
   Both players dink straight ahead on the right half only.
2. **Count to five**
   Play 5 consecutive dinks before anyone attacks.
3. **Attack**
   After 5 dinks, either player attacks a high ball in front.
4. **Play it out**
   Attack, move the opponent or keep dinking.

- Player 1 (dinker and attacker)
- Player 2 (dinker and attacker)
- Soft dink (dashed line: the return)
- Attack

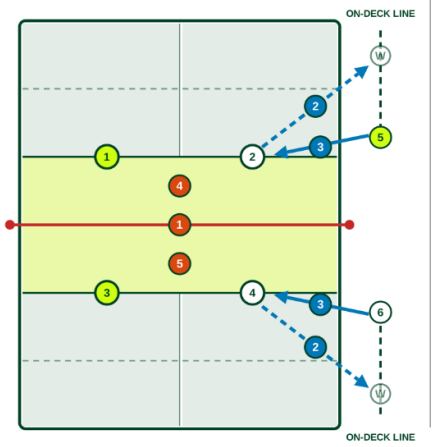
5 consecutive dinks before attacking; the point is played out after the 5th.
Variations (not drawn): 10-dink beginner version; attacker vs resetter.
No formal scoring.

- If the player has to lean or reach, it is not the shot to attack. A ball above net height right in front of you is.
- Variation: play 10 consecutive dinks before attacking. Rotate partners every few points.

4. GAME ALTERNATIVE: 6 OR MORE PLAYERS 15 min

D105 On Deck Doubles

Game · Dink · 5+ players · All Levels. A standard 2v2 game with extra players on the on-deck line. After every point one player from each team goes out and the next in line comes in. Play to 11.



Full court - on-deck line on each side.

Step by Step

1. **Play 2v2**
   Play a standard 2v2 rally until the point is decided.
2. **One player exits**
   One player per team exits to the back of the on-deck line.
3. **On-deck player steps in**
   The next player in line replaces the exiting player.
4. **Play on at once**
   Play continues immediately; rotate after every point.
5. **First to 11**
   The first team to 11 points wins.

1 2 Active team (far side)
3 4 Active team (near side)
5 6 On-deck players, next in line
W Back of the on-deck line
On-deck line (outside the service box)

First team to 11 points wins. Minimum 6 players.
One player per team rotates out after every point.
On-deck players step in immediately.

- Players coming in need to get into position and talk to their new partner quickly.

5. COOL-DOWN AND DEBRIEF 10 min

Cool-down (about 6 min). Hold each stretch for 20–30 seconds, then switch sides.

- **Standing quad stretch:** hold the ankle to the glutes, knees together, stand upright.
- **Calf stretch:** face a wall, step one foot back, press the heel down.
- **Shoulder stretch:** bring one arm across the chest and press it closer with the other hand.
- **Triceps stretch:** raise one arm overhead, bend the elbow and gently pull it across.
- **Chest stretch:** forearm on a wall or doorframe, step forward and press the chest forward.
- **Neck stretch:** tilt the head gently towards one shoulder.

Debrief (about 4 min).

- **Reflect:** what felt good today, and what would they like to improve?
- **Feedback:** give one specific piece of praise to the group and one thing to keep working on.
- **Practice suggestion:** repeat D046 8 Shape Dinks with a partner before the next session.
- **Close:** summarise the key takeaways and thank everyone for their effort.