First Ever Beginner Session

Grip and ready position · Rally comfortably · Play a simple game

AUDIENCE	DURATION	PLAYERS	SHOT FOCUS
Complete beginners (first 1–2 sessions)	**60 minutes**	**6 or more (pairs for the drills)**	**Volley · Drive**

Objectives

- **Grip and ready position:** learn how to hold the paddle and take up a ready position.
- **Rally comfortably:** build rhythm and soft hands at the kitchen line.
- **Kitchen and basic rules:** understand the kitchen and the basic faults through play.
- **Play a simple game:** finish with a fun elimination game.

Equipment

- A paddle for each player
- Several balls per pair, plus extra for the game
- A court with net
- 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
10	**Warm-up**	Introduction to the session, then a gentle mobility sequence	**–**
10	**Technique / Skill**	Shadow Swings: forehand and backhand with no ball, checking grip and ready position	**D014**
15	**Drill**	Two-Tap Drill, then Fast Hands Volley	**D002** **D006**
15	**Game**	Around the World Singles: one shot, then run	**D106**
10	**Cool-down and debrief**	Stretches, then reflect, feedback and one practice suggestion	**–**

Coaching notes

- **Demonstrate first.** Show each skill before players try it, then give quality repetitions with feedback.
- **Keep it simple and soft.** The aim of the first session is to rally comfortably, so start slow and let pace build only once the rhythm is there.
- **Use the game to teach the basics.** The elimination rules (net, out, two shots in a row, double bounce) introduce the basic faults in a fun way.
- **Plan the numbers.** Around the World Singles needs 6 or more players. Set the running direction before the first rally.
- **Encourage.** Give constructive feedback and encouragement to keep the first experience positive.

1. WARM-UP 10 min

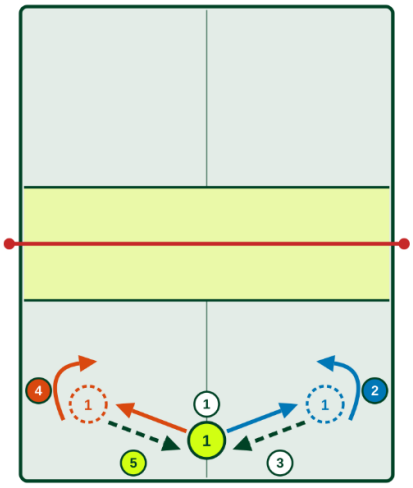
Introduction (about 4 min). Welcome the group and outline what the session will cover and why it matters.
Mobility (about 6 min). Work through each exercise, keeping movements controlled.

- 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

2. TECHNIQUE / SKILL 10 min

D014 Shadow Swings

Technique/Skill · Drive · solo, all together · All Levels. A no-ball drill that builds the muscle memory of forehand and backhand swings. Take up a ready position, swing forehand, return to ready, then repeat on the backhand, alternating with footwork on each swing.



Paddle only, no ball.

Step by Step

1. **Ready position**
   Take up the ready position at the centre baseline.
2. **Forehand shadow swing**
   Move with footwork and swing on the forehand side, rotating the body through the shot.
3. **Return**
   Return to the ready position.
4. **Backhand shadow swing**
   Move with footwork and swing on the backhand side, rotating the body through the shot.
5. **Return and repeat**
   Back to the ready position and repeat, alternating forehand and backhand.

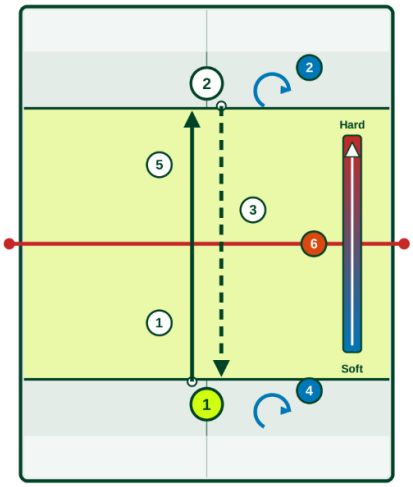
1 Player 1 (solo)
Position during the swing
Return to ready position

- Use the start of this block to check each player's grip and ready position.
- Smooth, fluid movement. Do not rush or tense up without a ball.
- Use correct footwork on every swing, treating each one as a real shot. Rotation, weight transfer and follow-through should all be present.

3. DRILL (1 of 2) about 8 min

D002 Two-Tap Drill

Drill · Volley · pairs · Beginner. Both players stand just behind the kitchen line. Tap the incoming ball up to yourself to absorb its pace, then return it across the net. Start slow, then add pace gradually.



Kitchen only - players directly opposite.

Step by Step

1. **Soft start**
   Player 1 bounces the ball and hits it softly across the net.
2. **Tap up**
   Player 2 taps the ball up to themselves to absorb the pace.
3. **Return**
   Player 2 returns the ball softly back across the net.
4. **Tap up**
   Player 1 taps the ball up to themselves to absorb the pace.
5. **Return**
   Player 1 returns the ball softly to Player 2.
6. **Build the pace**
   Both players gradually increase the pace, medium to hard, as consistency builds.

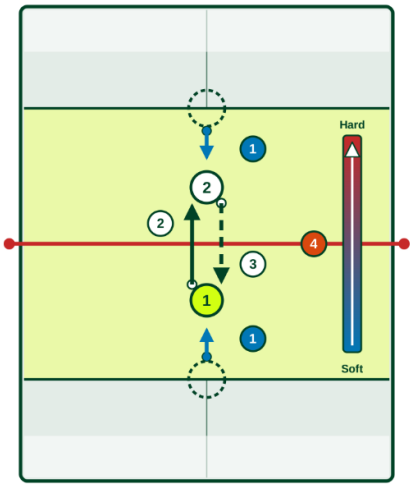
Player 1 (starter)
Player 2 (receiver)
Ball tapped up to self
Pace: soft to hard
Solid: Player 1 hits. Dashed: Player 2 hits.

- The tap should absorb the pace of the incoming ball, not redirect it.
- The touch comes from the wrist and paddle face angle, not a full arm swing. Keep a soft grip and the paddle up and ready.
- Easier version: start with a gentle underarm feed at a very slow pace.

3. DRILL (2 of 2) about 7 min

D006 Fast Hands Volley

Drill · Volley · pairs · All Levels. Both players step inside the kitchen and volley the ball back and forth cooperatively, starting at a comfortable pace and building speed as hands and reactions warm up.



Kitchen only - both players inside the kitchen.

Step by Step

1. **Move in**
   Both players step inside the kitchen, closer to the net than usual.
2. **Hit across**
   Player 1 hits the ball softly and cooperatively across the net.
3. **Return**
   Player 2 returns it softly and cooperatively back across the net.
4. **Build the pace**
   Gradually increase the pace as the rhythm and warm-up develop, from soft to hard.

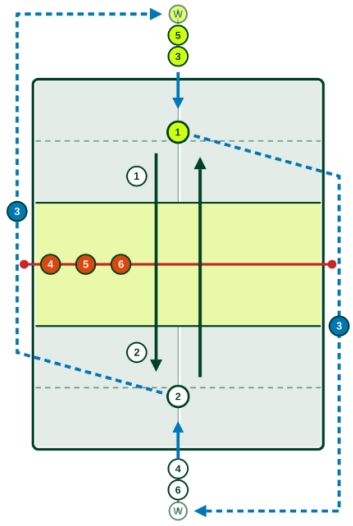
Player 1 (cooperative hitter)
Player 2 (cooperative hitter)
Usual position (kitchen line)
Pace: soft to hard
Solid: Player 1 hits. Dashed: Player 2 hits.

- The aim is collaboration. Keep the ball moving and build rhythm together.
- Start controlled and let the speed increase naturally. Keep the rally alive rather than winning points.

4. GAME 15 min

D106 Around the World Singles

Game · Drive / Drop · 6+ players · All Levels. A fast-paced elimination game of singles rallies. Split the group across both sides of the net. After hitting one shot, run to the other side and join the back of the line. Players are out for hitting into the net, hitting out, hitting two shots in a row or letting the ball bounce twice. Play until three players remain, then finish with a 1v1 rally.



Full court - a line behind each baseline.

Step by Step

1. **Start the rally**
   Coach or Player 1 feeds the first ball.
2. **Hit one shot only**
   Straight or crosscourt, then move at once.
3. **Run to the other line**
   Join the back of the line on the opposite side.
4. **Out of the game**
   Net, out, two shots or a double bounce.
5. **Last 3 players**
   One side rallies alone; the other alternates.
6. **Last 2 players**
   Final 1v1 rally; the winner wins the drill.

1 2 Active hitters, one each side
3 4 Waiting in line, next to hit
W Back of the line

Out for: net, out, two shots or a double bounce.
Last 3: one side rallies alone, the other alternates shots.
Last 2: final 1v1 rally, winner wins the drill.
Coach sets the running direction.

- Players hit only one shot and then move, so quick decisions and shot discipline matter.
- The coach decides the running direction and feeds the ball to start play. Keep the direction clear to avoid collisions.

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.
- **Hamstring stretch:** seated with one leg extended, lean forward from the hips towards the toes.

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:** practise Shadow Swings (D014) at home before the next session, forehand and backhand, with no ball needed.
- **Close:** summarise the key takeaways and thank everyone for their effort.