Volley Skills Session

Fast hands · Soft hands · Footwork into the volley

AUDIENCE	DURATION	PLAYERS	SHOT FOCUS
Improvers and intermediate players	**60 minutes**	**Pairs, with fours for the target drill**	**Volley · Reset**

Objectives

- **Fast hands:** speed up hand reactions at the kitchen line.
- **Soft hands:** absorb pace and reset with a controlled block volley.
- **Placement:** place volleys with intention, forehand and backhand.
- **Footwork:** move to the ball and keep the feet moving through the volley.

Equipment

- A paddle for each player
- Several balls per pair
- A court with net (one per 4 players)
- 2 cones (D116 Footwork + Volleys)
- 5 coloured targets (D078 Volley Target Drill)
- Water and somewhere to sit for rest breaks

Session at a glance

MIN	BLOCK	WHAT HAPPENS	DRILL ID
10	**Warm-up**	Mobility, then Fast Hands Volley as the on-court warm-up	**D006**
10	**Technique / Skill**	Footwork + Volleys replaces the Technique block: figure-of-8 footwork, then volleys	**D116**
15	**Drill**	Kitchen Block Volley Resets, then Volley Target Drill	**D076** **D078**
15	**Game**	Baseline Attack vs Kitchen Reset: drive against block volley resets	**D097**
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.
- **Paddle up and ready.** Late preparation is the most common cause of losing control at the kitchen line. Encourage a soft grip.
- **Footwork leads.** The Technique block is a movement drill, so coach the feet first and let the volley follow.
- **Groups of four.** D078 works best with two feeders and two volleyers. Rotate positions after each sequence.
- **Stronger groups.** Swap in Quick Hands + Speed Up (D054) for D078, or add Roll Volley Drill (D077) as an advanced extension.

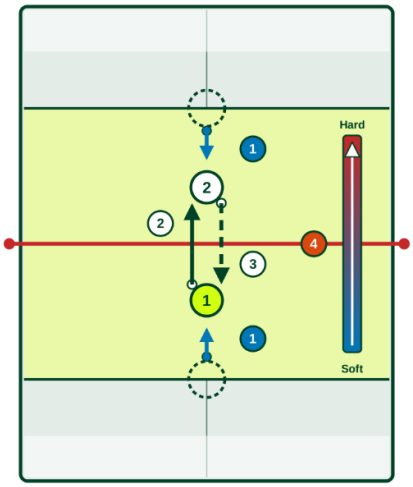
1. WARM-UP 10 min

Mobility (about 5 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
- Lateral lunges: 8–10 per side

D006 Fast Hands Volley

Drill · Volley · pairs · All Levels · about 5 min. A cooperative warm-up. Both players step inside the kitchen and volley back and forth, 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.

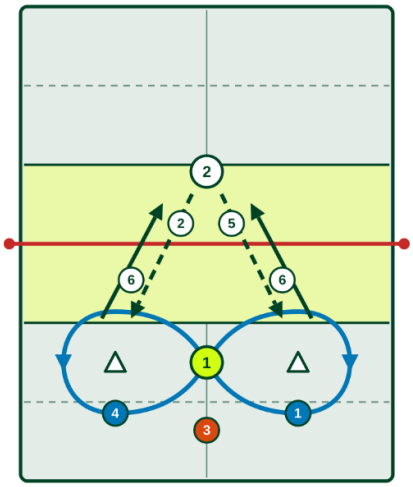
- Player 1 (cooperative hitter)
- Player 2 (cooperative hitter)
- Usual position (kitchen line)
- Pace: soft to hard
- Solid: Player 1 hits. Dashed: Player 2 hits.

- The aim is collaboration. Keep the ball moving and build rhythm together.
- Stepping inside the kitchen removes reaction time and naturally forces faster hands.

2. TECHNIQUE / SKILL — 10 min

D116 Footwork + Volleys

Physical Movement · Volley · pairs · All Levels. Footwork is the technique here, so this drill replaces the usual Technique block. Phase 1 (about 4 min): figure-of-8 shuffle steps around two cones, no paddle. Phase 2 (about 6 min): the same pattern with a paddle while the feeder feeds balls to volley. Switch roles after Phase 2 if time allows.



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)

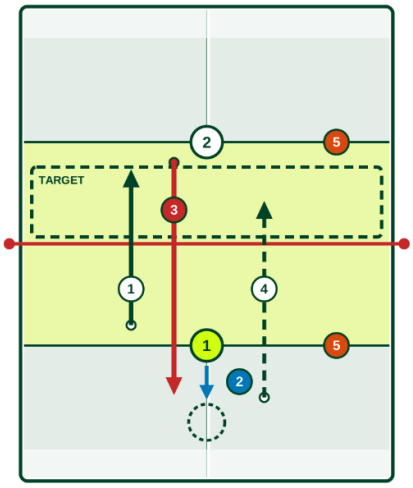
No scoring. Each phase runs for a set time; roles rotate after Phase 2.
Phase 1 hand catches are optional, before volleys are introduced.
Feeds and volleys use the same lanes in both phases.

- Use shuffle steps throughout. Do not cross the feet or break into a run between cones.
- Stay low in an athletic ready position. In Phase 2 the volley must not interrupt the movement.
- Alternate forehand and backhand volleys deliberately. The feeder times each feed to arrive as the moving player rounds a cone.

3. DRILL (1 of 2) — about 8 min

D076 Kitchen Block Volley Resets

Drill · Volley / Reset · 2–4 players · All Levels. Player 1 hits a high, short, attackable dink to Player 2, then split-steps back and retracts the paddle. Player 2 attacks, and Player 1 blocks the ball back into the kitchen. Switch roles after 5 successful resets.



Kitchen only - players directly opposite.

Step by Step

1. **Feed the dink** — Player 1 hits a high, short, attackable dink to Player 2.
2. **Step back** — Player 1 takes backward split steps, retracting the paddle to a defensive position.
3. **Attack** — Player 2 attacks the ball hard back at Player 1.
4. **Block volley reset** — Player 1 blocks the ball softly back into the kitchen.
5. **Five resets** — After 5 successful resets, switch roles.

1 Player 1 (feeder and resetter)
2 Player 2 (attacker)
Defensive position, one step back
Target: the kitchen (landing zone for the reset)

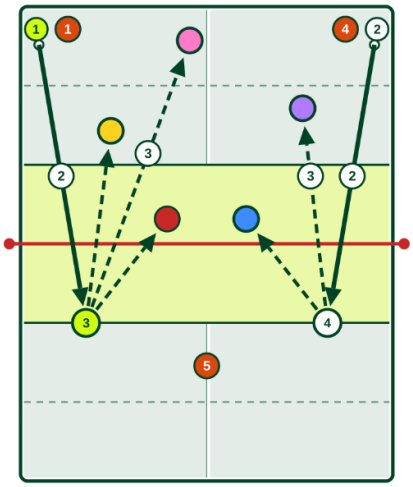
5 successful resets before switching roles.
Variations (not drawn): backhand target and four players.

- Progression 1, Backhand Target: the reset only counts if it lands towards Player 2's backhand.
- Progression 2 is the four-player version, where a player puts their partner on the defensive by setting up the opponent with a high dink.

3. DRILL (2 of 2) about 7 min

D078 Volley Target Drill

Drill · Volley / Drive · 3–4 players · All Levels. Place 5 coloured targets around the court. Two players volley at the kitchen line and two feed from the baseline. The feeder calls a colour, then feeds the ball to the volleyers, who place the volley on that target. Play 10 volleys, then rotate.



Full court - four-player setup shown.

Step by Step

1. **Call a colour**
   Player 1 calls a colour to name the target.
2. **Feed the ball**
   The feeder sends a medium-pace ball to the volleyer.
3. **Volley to the target**
   The volleyer volleys to the called colour target.
4. **Call again**
   Player 1 calls a new colour and feeds the next ball.
5. **Rotate**
   After 10 volleys, or a set number, rotate positions.

1 Player 1 (feeder and colour caller)
2 Player 2 (feeder, four-player version)
3 4 Players 3 and 4 (volleyers, kitchen line)
Coloured targets

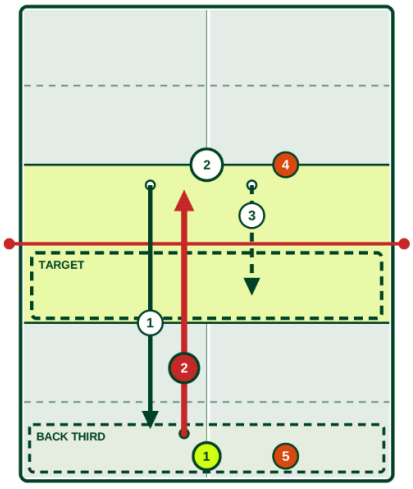
10 volleys per sequence before rotating. Only one feeder calls colours.
Two-player version: one feeder, one volleyer.

- Only one feeder calls the colours. Both volleyers aim for the same target on each ball.
- Control and placement come first, not power. Get into position with good footwork before contact.
- Stay ready for both forehand and backhand volleys, and adjust the volley for short and deep targets.

4. GAME 15 min

D097 Baseline Attack vs Kitchen Reset

Game · Drive / Volley · pairs · Intermediate. Player 1 starts at the baseline and Player 2 at the kitchen line. Player 2 feeds a weak, high ball and the point is live. Player 1 drives to win the point. Player 2 resets the attack to keep Player 1 in the back third. Switch roles after a few minutes or a set score.



Full court - straight ahead shown.

Step by Step

1. **Weak, high feed**
   Player 2 feeds a weak, high ball to Player 1.
2. **Drive**
   Player 1 drives and attacks hard at Player 2.
3. **Soft reset**
   Player 2 resets the attack softly into the kitchen.
4. **Live point**
   The point is live from the feed, so play it out.
5. **Switch roles**
   Switch after a set time or score is reached.

1 Player 1 (attacker, baseline)
2 Player 2 (feeder and resetter, kitchen line)
Back third: the contested zone
Target: the kitchen (landing zone for the reset)

The point is live from the feed. Switch roles after a set time or score.
Also played crosscourt.

- Player 1: capitalise fully on the weak feed with a committed, aggressive drive.
- Player 2: control on the reset is the priority. Neutralising the attack keeps Player 1 at the back for longer.

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 Fast Hands Volley (D006) with a partner before the next session.
- **Close:** summarise the key takeaways and thank everyone for their effort.