



Drill Your Way to Improvement!

Improve your game through drills! The best way to do that is to make drills fun and game like...

Drill format...regardless of what you are drilling, if you use this format you are more likely to have your subconscious mind remember the shot(s) you are working on. Drill the shot for twenty to twenty-five minutes and then immediately play for ten to fifteen minutes, focusing on the shot you were drilling. Play out points, but **do not keep score!** Simply rotate serves when someone faults. The purpose is to drill in a game-like setting, but not keep score, which tends to encourage winning points rather than working on drill shots. Drilling is all about mastering **consistency and control**, which is the most important of the six elements of a Pickleball shot.

One person drills...when you can't find someone to drill with, here are some drills you can practice on your own...

...serve – grab some balls and chalk a target or use a towel center court three steps up from the baseline

...lob from NVZ (*disguised as a dink*) – bounce the ball softly as if returning a dink...extend your dink into a lob, picking a spot in the back of the court as your target

...lob from near the baseline – toss the ball high, to replicate returning a high deep lob from your opponent...your goal is a deep lob, giving you time to get back to the NVZ line

...overhead shot – standing at the NVZ line, toss the ball up (similar to a serve in tennis) and using an overhand swing try hitting a target midway down the center line simulating a shot at the opposite ankle of an opponent (using 80% of power)

...forehand and backhand ground strokes...take a bucket of balls and from no-man's land, bounce and hit forehand shots and then backhand shots, aiming for a target.

Two person drill - ground strokes...working on forehand and backhand ground strokes, line up in no-man's land on the center line. Player one bounces the ball and hits forehand shots aiming for the line across the net. Player two catches or taps the ball back while player one keeps bouncing the ball for forehand shots for five minutes. Then the ball goes to player two to work on their forehand shot for five minutes. The ball then comes back to player one to work on their backhand shot for five minutes and then back to player two for their backhand work for the last five minutes. As they improve, the goal is to keep the ball moving without catching.

Dinking – two person drills...start across from your drill partner and dink straight across for five minutes, moving your partner by hitting to their backhand then forehand, etc. ...then, while dinking, both of you side step to the far side of the court and then back and forth two or three times...then both players move to opposite sides to drill cross-court for five minutes before moving, again, to the opposite sides and continue cross-court for another five minutes.

Dinking – four person drills...two balls straight across (five minutes)...one ball – do not return ball to the person who hit to you (five minutes)...two balls cross-court (five minutes)...rotate one position to the left so you are hitting in the opposite cross-court direction (five minutes)...three balls with six players - four players are hitting two balls cross-court, while the two new players are center court hitting directly across from each other...with three balls in play, you really must concentrate on your ball...it's a great drill to help with your focus!

Dinking – play a game at the NVZ...play an entire game at the NVZ, keeping score as you do in a regular game...everything must hit in the NVZ. Important that the last dinking game you play, you may 'put away' any shots that are high enough to allow it.

Block shot – two person drill...feeder is in no-man's land hitting the ball hard to the driller at the NVZ...driller, using Coach Mo's continental grip, with the paddle horizontal, 8" to 10" in front of chest, driller pushes paddle forward to drive the

ball back to feeder (designed to keep feeder back at baseline)...as the driller becomes more proficient and consistent with their shots, the feeder slowly moves around the court and hits the ball harder...feeder is always hitting to the drillers chest...drill for fifteen shots and then players switch roles for the fifteen shots...switch roles until you have drilled 20 – 25 minutes.

Freeze drop shot – two person drill...same set up as block shot drill, only driller does not push block. Instead they hold their paddle still, with the top of the paddle slightly tilted back toward the body...this lets the inertia of the ball do the work...paddle position should cause a back spin as the ball drops short over the net into the NVZ. Key is feeder hitting ball hard enough to driller.

Volley from the NVZ line – two person drills...start across from your drill partner and volley straight across for five minutes, moving your partner by hitting to their backhand then forehand, etc. ...then, while volleying, both of you side step to the far side of the court and then back and forth two or three times...then both players move to opposite sides to drill cross-court for five minutes before moving, again, to the opposite sides and continue cross-court for another five minutes.

Volley from the NVZ line – four person drills... two balls straight across (five minutes)...one ball – do not return ball to the person who hit to you (five minutes)...two balls cross-court (five minutes)...players rotate one position left so you are hitting in the opposite cross-court direction (five minutes)

Hot seat volley from the NVZ – four person drill... one player on one side of the net with three players on the other side...the three players on the one side are actually in the hot seat as they do not know when the ball will be coming their way...the single player knows the ball is coming to them...rotate left at two minute intervals

Serve – catch – serve – catch – two person drill...with or without a chalk target, first player serves to second player who catches the ball...second player serves back to first player who catches the ball...serve-catch for 10 minutes then move to odd courts & continue for 10 minutes

Serve, return serve – two person drill...with or without a chalk target, one player serves deep, while the other player returns the serve deep (the server catches the return and continues to serve a total of five serves)...then the other player serves

Serve, return serve, third shot soft – two person drill...when you become very comfortable and consistent with the serve, return serve drill, add the third shot soft so the drill becomes a three shot drill.

Serve, return serve, third shot soft – four person drill...player one serves...receiving team must return to server who must hit third shot soft...all four players play out point...player one will serve until they have hit a total of five third shots soft...serve goes to player two who serves until they hit a total of five third shots soft...then on to players three and four.

Step back drill – two person drill...both players start dinking at NVZ line...one player takes a step back dropping the ball into the NVZ...another step back and another step back, always dropping the ball into the NVZ all the way back to the baseline...feeder is working on placing a shot so the driller can drop into the NVZ...driller hits 5 drop shots from baseline (does not have to be consecutive shots) then works back up to the NVZ and the feeder becomes the driller.

Four person – four shot drill (around the horn)...standing at the baseline, player one hits directly across the net to player two at the NVZ, who drops cross court to player three, also at the NVZ, who hits a ground stroke to player four back at the baseline. Player four hits deep groundstroke to player one. Goal is to keep the ball moving, with no faults or stops in the drill. Each player is working on a different shot. At five minute intervals rotate players clockwise so in a twenty minute period each player will have drilled four different shots.