

THE SERVE

1. GETTING TO TROPHY POSITION (BALL TOSS, RACKET LAG AND LOADING LEGS)



Rock back, put the ball up while breathing in point at the ball and at the same time watch how the ball moves in the air.

- Put the ball up – feel slow - and point at it.
- Breathe in as your tossing arm goes up.

Common mistakes:

- Tossing arm bends
- Too fast ball toss, throwing the ball up and the whole action is rushed, too quick
- Releasing the ball too early (below eye level)
- “Lazy” left hand not pointing at the ball and watching it
- Right elbow goes too high/too low or comes around to the right side

What does it do?

- Inconsistent ball toss, loss of ball control, balance
- Inconsistent ball toss, can’t find timing on the serve
- Too low, inaccurate ball toss, loss of ball control
- Harder to time the serve and hitting the ball too flat. When you drop the left hand it will bring down the left shoulder and at the drive phase the right shoulder will come around rather than going up and will give you a flat swing path. More balls will go into the net or floats out.
- Lose timing and ball control – especially power – as arm will do inefficient throwing action.

Solution:

- a. To keep your arm straight feel that your elbow is locked all the way.
- b. Take a deep breath while your left arm goes up and think you are **PUTTING** the ball up “sloooow”
- c. Bring the ball up to eye level and then put it up. Think “up and up” rather than just throwing the ball up
- d. When the ball is in the air just point at it with your fingers, it will feel like you are stretching with your left side up.
- e. Do half serves where you start from pre-throw position, upper arm – forearm – torso form 90 degree angle while shoulder – shoulder – elbow forms a straight line pointing up. This will take time and a lot of repetition until you get the feel for your elbow position, be patient and keep trying.

2 & 3. UP AND TRHOW



This feels like one action but there's two main parts to it: 1. before contact point and 2. what happens from the contact onwards.

Before contact: Just feel slow, this is a “precision phase” your target is on the ball and you want to get your strings accurately onto the surface of the ball. Hold your breath at this phase.

From contact: This is the power/fast phase where you want you use your hand skills to throw the racket. It feels like as you are throwing the racket over a volleyball net that is right in front of you. The tip of the racket reaches maximum speed after contact so keep throwing after the ball is gone. Maintain a soft grip and breathe out!

- Get your strings on the ball as you are jumping up, this phase is still **SLOW**, hold your breath.
- Throw your racket with your hand, **FAST** phase, breathe out
- Your grip is soft all the way

Common mistakes:

- a. Gripping the racket too tight
- b. Targeting the box rather than the ball
- c. Hitting too early and getting onto the ball too fast.

- d. Body too aggressive and rotates too early.
- e. Head drops
- f. Arm is too tight (arm remains straight after contact), losing racket head speed

What does it do?

- a. Loss of feel, timing of the serve and less ball control
- b. Inaccurate serve placement
- c. Missed timing and losing ball control
- d. Less ball control
- e. Contact point behind, no ball control and less power
- f. Losing serve speed and feel

Solution:

- a. Keep soft fingers as you are getting the strings on the ball
- b. Your target is on the ball, watch the point where you want to get your racket onto.
- c. Hold your breath while getting the racket on the ball and think slow.
- d. Feel slow and sideways as you are jumping up and think getting the racket up (rather than just hit)
- e. Toss the ball more in front and make sure you see your contact point
- f. Keep your grip soft and throw the racket with your hand