

Paul's Drills

"Practice makes permanent". Make sure you are striving for good habits / proper technique so you don't drill bad habits into your game! Only then does "practice make perfect".

Without over-thinking your shots, you probably already follow these basic steps (RIPER).

Ready: *Be in a good ready position, athletic stance, paddle up between you and the net (paddle above wrist - elbows "on the table").*

Identify: *Is this a forehand or backhand?*

Prepare: *Get your paddle ready (position, angle face), grip, footwork (where is your body pointing).*

Execute: *No matter what shot, a good point of contact between you and the net (or "in front" of the body) is important. Keep strokes short and efficient (big swings affect your consistency for good point of contact and therefore consistent shots).*

Recover: *Your follow through should typically get your paddle back to your ready position. You may also need to move forward (or stay or even move back) depending on the shot you executed.*

As you start drilling, focus on one of these at a time to make them become a habit. For example, one of the easiest things to do to improve your game is having a good ready position (recovery). Work on that during warmups and check yourself during games. Once your paddle is in the right position then preparing and executing shots will become a lot easier.

Dinking:

1. Stand inside the NVZ line and dink softly/slowly into the first half of the kitchen. ("squats")
2. Stand at the NVZ line and dink softly into the first half of the kitchen. ("lunge"/reset dink)
3. Stand at the NVZ and dink face to face to the back half of the kitchen.
4. Two touch dinks.
5. Locational dinking (1 to 1, 2 to 2, 3 to 3, 1 to 3, 3 to 1, figure-8 or X-pattern)
6. Locational dinking "call" your shot
7. Placement dinking / reset - one player dinks to any location - the other resets to 2.
Switch
8. Cross court dinking (use all locations). Both sides. "Call" your shot. Make sure to "follow shot" on recovery.
9. X-drill. One ball four 4 people, one side dinks straight the other cross court to make an X pattern (figure 8). Make sure to "follow shot" on recovery.
10. Movement dinking (2-person drill): together side to side, window wiper
11. Dink game

Volleys:

1. Two touch drills (dinks, volleys)
2. Control volley (backhand to backhand, forehand to forehand, forehand to backhand, "figure 8")
3. Quick hands - control volleys from inside the NVZ line
4. Dink volleys
5. Cross court. Both sides
6. X-drill: One ball four 4 people, one side volleys straight across, the other side cross court to make an X pattern (figure 8)
7. Block volleys - defend drives from transition and baseline (keep it deep or drop in kitchen)

Resets:

1. At the NVZ line, one side "attacks", the other side resets (block volleys and dink volleys) - defend your NVZ line, try not to step back.
2. 3 dinks - 3 volleys - reset (repeat). Play the same game with no pattern (ie speed up and slow down)
3. Resets from the transition zone - drops and dink/reset volleys. Try cross court too.
4. Slinky - drop or reset volley and move forward to NVZ (dink or reset volley) then move back, then forward.....

Drops or approach shots (e.g 3rd shot or 5th shots):

1. From the transition zone (5th shot approach) continuous drop shots (dinks and volleys). Try cross court too!
2. From baseline continuous drop shots. Try cross court too!
3. Slinky - move forward from baseline (3rd shot) to transition zone (5th shot) then back, then forward...(repeat)..... Use drops on all shots. You can add moving to NVZ after your transition drop.
4. up/back game: "up" team always puts ball in play with an easy shot from the NVZ line, "back team moves forward from baseline to NVZ, play out the point. You can play for 6 points a switch positions after 3 points or play "0-6" - up team starts at 0 points and back team starts at 6 - play to 11.
5. Drive and drop - alternate shots. Try some lobs. Make good decisions based on height and location of feed.

Groundstrokes:

1. From transition zone forehand and backhand, focusing on preparation, footwork, technique and contact point and control
2. From baseline: straight (your forehand to partner's backhand), switch (your backhand to partner's forehand)
3. From baseline: cross court
4. X-drill: One ball four 4 people, one side hits straight across, the other cross court to make an X pattern (figure 8)

Serves - returns:

1. Serves from both sides: target specific areas - vary speed/height of serve, have your partner point where the serve is to go or you tell them
2. Serve-return: "Deep-Deep Drill" deep serve, deep returns - target specific areas
3. Two shot drill: Serve and step back - Return and run (stop at the bounce) Server catches the return and ensures the returner has stopped in a good ready position.
4. Three shot drill: serve - return (stop at bounce) - third shot drop -catch the 3rd shot.
5. Controlled game: serve – return – third shot - DO NOT put away a high third shot – 5th shot get to NVZ - play out point in dink rally.

Important tips.

A drill doesn't last one or two minutes. Start with at least 5 minutes and build up to 10 - 15 minutes per drill. Set a timer! Your drill session could be an hour or more and you may only work on a few things at a time.

When a drill becomes too easy or you are having great success, have your partner increase the difficulty of their feed.

Do drills straight ahead and cross court - both ways.

Have your partner give feedback either verbally or by putting away bad (high) shots.

Become a great feeder. Learn control to give good feeds to your partner. Be able to give easy, medium and hard feeds (speed, location) so your partner can improve their shots.