



# 10 Steps to a Perfect Volley

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in partnership with  
OnCourt OffCourt



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# 1. The Grip

The grip on your volley should be the continental grip. To find the continental grip, form a “V” with your thumb and forefinger and place the “V” on the throat of the racket and slide it down until you reach the grip handle.

If you don't have a continental grip on your volley you will be forced to change grips as the ball comes to either side – forehand or backhand. This might work at the lower levels, but when the ball starts to move faster, there is not enough time to change grips.

The **pressure** applied on the grip should be like if you were holding a bird. Don't kill the bird by over squeezing, but don't let it fly away either. If you must squeeze the grip do so from the pinky and ring fingers for the forehand volley and the thumb and forefinger for the backhand volley. This will give you a good feel for the racquet and control over it.



To keep continental through the stroke, consider the Start Rite Grip Trainer.

## 2. The Ready Position

The ready position is the stance you should have whenever you are at the net and not in the act of hitting the volley. For proper balance, lean forward onto the balls of your feet. Hold an athletic stance, which will make it easier to move to the ball. Make sure you are not leaning back as this will create a tendency to lift or fall back as you are hitting the volley. You want to be leaning into the volley as you hit and it starts with good balance, leaning forward in the ready position.

**The Ready Position "Vs"** – When you hold both hands on the racquet in front of you with the non--dominant arm on the throat of the racquet you will form two "V"s.



**The First "V"** is formed with both arms extended in front of you with the connection point being the racquet. (Above image)

**The Second "V"** is formed by your racquet and the arm you are holding it with. (Left image)





The Flex Trainer is an essential tool to help players of all ages and abilities improve their balance and movement skills.

The ready position should always be exaggerated with the racquet directly in front of you and not leaning in either direction. Your knees should be slightly bent.

The tendency for players is to lean their racquet toward the backhand volley and be too upright. The shortest distance to either volley is if the player's hands are directly in the middle of your body.



To help with the Ready Position, consider the Flex Trainer as well as the Backswing Solution.

# 3. The Split Step

The split step is a critical component of any volley. It should happen every time the opponent is about to hit the ball. Try to do a little hop or shuffle with your feet or a split step. Think back to when you were a kid and played hopscotch.

Ideally, the split step happens simultaneously and not staggered. By this I mean that the feet hit the ground at the same time, like in hopscotch. The step should happen with your balance forward on the balls of your feet, not the heels. The split step will help you move to the ball quickly in either direction. The timing is critically important. If you split too soon or too late you have lost the benefit of the split step.



## 4. The Turn

The Turn on your volley should initiate with the shoulders and not with the hands. Keep your elbows in and simply turn the shoulders keeping the "V" created with the arms in the ready position.



Make sure your hips turn with your backswing and don't simply take the racket back with your arms, without turning your shoulders.



## 5. The Backswing

The backswing should be short and compact. The backswing is initiated with the turn of the shoulders. A simple turn is as far as you need to take the racket back on the backswing. If you can't see the racquet with your peripheral vision on the backswing, you have taken it back too far.

To help with the Ready Position & the Backswing, consider the Backswing Solution.



## 6. The Posture

Your posture should be relaxed. You don't want to be too tense while standing waiting for the ball. Maintain an athletic posture with a straight back. Attempt to maintain eye level with the point of contact bending from the knees and not from the waist or dropping the racquet head to hit low volleys whenever possible.

To help with your Posture, consider the Flex Trainer.





## 7. The Hit

Less is more with volleys. The racquet should be aimed at the target and you should try to hit on the outside of the ball. Try to hold the angle on the wrist throughout the shot, maintain the “V” created with the arm and the racquet.

Don’t think of “hitting” the ball but rather you should simply put a swing towards the ball with your arm and intercept the ball at some point during the path. This allows the ball to “remain on your strings” for an additional split second, which should help with accuracy and control.

To help you with the Hit consider the Sweet Spot Trainer.



## 8. The Swing Path

It is important to understand the geometrical planes of a volley. Players work hard to not break the various planes during the volley swing path. Both planes, horizontal and vertical, are equally important. The horizontal plane is crossed if you incorrectly swing at your volleys from high to low. If your racquet is hitting the ground when you volley or it ends below the level of the net you have likely crossed the horizontal plane. The vertical plane is crossed if you swing across your body or the racquet has come around in front of you to the opposite side (Racquet is on the left side of your body when you hit a forehand volley). Make sure your racket is pointing at your target when you make contact as far into the swing as possible.

To help with the Swing Path consider the Angle Doctor.

## 9. The Follow Through

The follow through on the volley is short and compact. The strings should be pointing at the target at contact and at the end of the stroke the racquet should be on the same side of the body as it was at contact. For right handed players, that means the racket stays to your right side on the forehand volley and to the left side on your backhand volley.

To help with the Follow Through consider the Volley Arrow.



**The Angle Doctor** guides players to feel the correct angle between the racquet and the hitting arm, and is fully adjustable for players of all sizes.

To help with The Hit, Swing Path and Follow Through, consider the Angle Doctor, Sweet Spot Trainer and the Volley Arrow.

Many players hit the ball OFF-CENTER. This is the purpose of the Sweet Spot Trainer - the best ball training aid that tells you when you hit off-center!

The Volley Arrow is a double-headed foam arrow that visually teaches how the point of contact determines the ball's direction.

The Angle Doctor guides players to feel the correct angle between the racquet and the hitting arm, and is fully adjustable for players of all sizes. It also prevents most common volley swing errors.

# 10. The Recovery

The recovery step is very important to successfully complete the volley sequence. Depending on how far you had to stretch to hit your volley, you may have to take an additional step to help in the recovery. The recovery step gets you back into the ready position as quickly as possible. Once in the ready position, repeat the sequence.

The training aids mentioned in each step, are included in the **“10 Steps to a Perfect Volley”** program in partnership with OnCourt OffCourt.

To learn more, visit [www.gigifernandeztennis.com/oncourtoffcourt](http://www.gigifernandeztennis.com/oncourtoffcourt).





# Bonus!

## At Home Practice Plan

**Lesson:** Day 1 - Continental Grip Work

**Duration:** 10-20 minutes

**Props:** Start Rite Grip Trainer and a wall

**Location:** Outside wall or Basement wall.

This is a great practice drill, even if you already have a continental grip on both your forehand and backhand volleys.

1. Place Start Rite Grip Trainer (If available) on the handle of your racket following the package instructions.
2. Hit 2.5 to 5 minutes of forehand volleys against your basement door, side of the house or garage door. Any semi flat surface will work.
3. Hit 2.5 to 5 minutes of backhand volleys against your basement door, side of the house or garage door. Any semi flat surface will work.
4. Hit 2.5 to 5 minutes of alternating one forehand and one backhand. If you are not successful hitting one to each side, hit the ball slower.
5. Hit 2.5 to 5 minutes to either side.

You can practice your volleys even if you don't have the Start Rite Grip Trainer

Remember there is an inverse relationship between power and control. For now, you are just working on maintaining your continental grip while hitting forehands and backhand volleys. The Start Rite Grip Trainer will keep you from switching the grip to your comfort zone.

**FUTURE PRACTICE LESSONS AVAILABLE WITH THE  
10 STEPS TO A PERFECT VOLLEY PROGRAM**