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Based on the Play Practice book by Alan Launder, Human Kinetics  
20 tasks and progressions to teach beginning- Tennis

## 20 Progressions for Tennis

### Grip

Progression 1: The “Shake hands” Grip (forehand grip)

Have students extend arm and hand as if they were going to shake hands and then use the other hand to place the handle of the racquet in their “shaking” hand. The racquet should be vertical with a slight tilt of the top half forward and the bevel of the racquet should be in the palm of the hand. **Focusing**

Progression 2: The Backhand Grip (two handed)

Have students using a forehand grip, and then demonstrate how to rotate the grip slightly backwards in the hand so that the top half of the racquet will still be tilted slightly forward. Place the non-grip hand on the back of the handle slightly overlapping the dominate grip hand, reinforcing the grip. **Focusing**

Progression 3: One Handed Backhand

Student rotates racquet grip in hand and moves racquet across body. Rather than having the other hand reinforces the swing, the racquet arms comes back and allows for more swing speed. **Focusing**

### Position and Stance

Progression 1: Moving to the Ball

Have partner hit ball over the net. Student is to run to the ball, and with their shoulders perpendicular to the net they are let the ball bounce near their front foot allowing the ball to bounce up into a good striking position for the return. Student is not to return the ball. Each student will receive five balls from partner.

Progression 2: Bringing Racquet Back

Students are to follow the same guide lines as the above except for this time the students will bring the racquet back in either a forehand or backhand position (either grip), but will not strike the ball. Make sure knees are bent and racquet is in the proper back swing position.

### Serve

Progression 1: Close Serve

Have student stand between back service line and baseline and serve cross court to partner five times. Reverse sides and serve five more times. Partner on other side catches balls that are served over.

Progression 2: Cross-Court to Partner

Serve five balls from one side of the court to the other (cross court) where partner catches and holds them. After you hit five balls from one side of the court, move to the other side where you will again hit five balls. **Shaping, Enhancing, Focusing**

#### Progression 3: Wide Serve

A piece of line-marking tape is placed down the center of the half (extending all the way to the baseline) you are serving to (the center line dividing the service courts is extended throughout all drills to the baseline). They will hit ten serves trying to land the ball in the outer half of the divided court. They are to keep track of the number of successful attempts because the partner will then serve back to you with their service court set in the same format. Most number of accurate serves wins. **Shaping, Enhancing, Focusing**

#### Progression 4: Tight serve (inside serve)

The courts are set up in the same format but this time the goal is try and hit it to the inside of the divided service court. Again, they are to take ten serves and keep track of successful serves because the partner will again compete against their score. **Shaping, Enhancing, Focusing**

#### Progression 5: Deep Serve

Now the service court will be divided into quarters. The goal of this exercise is to land a serve in either of the two back quadrants. The decision of which quadrant you are hitting to should be predetermined. They should announce to the partner what rear quadrant they are hitting to and for every successful shot to an announced quadrant 2 points are earned, 1 point is earned for the other rear quadrant, and 0 points for faulting or near two quadrants. The partner will again compete against your score. **Shaping, Enhancing, Focusing**

#### Progression 6: Topspin Serve to Near Quadrant

This exercise will have two requirements to earn points and they are: to land the serve in one of the two near quadrants, and they shot must have topspin on it. A shot with noticeable topspin that lands in the predetermined quadrant earns 3 points, a shot lacking noticeable topspin that lands in predetermined area earns 2 points, and 1 point for other near quadrant. Each person will again get 10 attempts. Partner will again compete against the score. **Shaping, Enhancing, Focusing**

### **Returns and Shot Placement**

#### Progression 1: Forehand Return

Partner tosses ball over net to forehand side of student allowing for a forehand return. Students will return tosses from each side of the court. Students will get five tosses from each side and 1 point will be for a successful return over the net. Student will compete with the partner's score. **Shaping, Enhancing, Focusing**

#### Progression 2: Forehand return

Student will be in ready position and awaiting partner's serve. Partner will give them a wide serve to the forehand side of their partner and student is to return with a forehand shot without error. Students will receive five serves from one side and then service court will switch. The serve will again come to the forehand side of their partner allowing for a forehand return.

Each successful return (a return over the net) earns a point. (Competition with partner).

**Shaping, Enhancing, Focusing**

Progression 3: Backhand Return

Now the partner will move back toward the middle of the court and toss the ball to the backhand side of their partner. A backhand return will be attempted, and for every successful return a point is earned. Competition with the partners score will again take place. **Shaping, Enhancing, Focusing**

Progression 4: Backhand Return (either grip)

Students will now follow the same format as before but serves will be directed to backhand side of partner. Any shot that is returned without error is considered a successful attempt and earns a point. (Competition with partner). **Shaping, Enhancing, Focusing**

Progression 5: Return to Half

The students will now serve to each others' forehand side again, but the return will need to be hit with a forehand shot to the opposite half the serve came from. They will receive five serves from each half and for every successful return to non service half, a point will be earned. (Competition with partner). **Shaping, Enhancing, Focusing**

Progression 6: Backhand Return to Half

Same format for above forehand returns but serves will come to the backhand side and a backhand shot will be used. (Competition with partner). **Shaping, Enhancing, Focusing**

Progression 7: Forehand Return Up Near Line

The same format is followed for above two drills, but this time the half intended for the return will be split into two vertical halves. In order to earn a point in this drill the ball must be returned with a forehand shot to the half closer to the line. A point can only be earned when hit in this half. **Shaping, Enhancing, Focusing**

Progression 8: Backhand Return Up Near Line

Same format as above drill except a backhand shot will be used to hit up the line. Five balls are received in both drills and there is again completion with your partner. **Shaping Enhancing, Focusing**

Progression 9: Return Accuracy

The ball is now again to be returned to the opposite service side. This half is now divided into quadrants and the goal is to hit a deep return. Either a backhand or a forehand can be used to return it. The quadrant is to be predetermined and the scoring is 2 points for called quadrant and 1 point for the other. (Competition with partner). **Shaping, Enhancing, Focusing**

Progression 10: Return to Deep Half with Backspin (slice)

This exercise is the same as the previous but the forehand or backhand attempt must have noticeable backspin on it. The court is again divided into quadrant with the rear two being the goal. Shot must be predetermined and 3 points are earned for called quad with back spin, 2

points for called quadrant, and 1 point for either back quadrant. Five returns are attempted and competition with partner will happen. **Shaping, Enhancing, Focusing**

Progression 11: Return to Near Half with Topspin

Now the goal of this exercise is to return the serve to the near half with topspin using either shot. Same format as the above exercise and there will be completion with partner. Five returns are attempted. **Shaping, Enhancing, Focusing**

Progression 12: Overall Accuracy

There are four hula hoops placed on both sides of the net and the goal of this exercise is to score as many points in a 5 minute rally. A point is earned for returning the shot in the hoop and there will be competition with a partner. **Shaping, Enhancing, Focusing**

### **Tactics**

Progression 1: Planned Tactics

Students will put together a three shot tactic that earns them a point. They will try and execute this plan to the best of their ability in game play with their partner and for and every time their tactic works, they earn 2 points. Game play lasts for 5 minutes. **Shaping, Enhancing, Focusing**

Progression 2: Students will plan out a four shot tactic that includes their serve and the format for scoring is the same as above. Students will compete with partner for 5 minutes of game play. **Shaping, Enhancing, Focusing**

Note: I believe that almost all of my progressions lend themselves to be considered for shaping enhancing and focusing. Shaping because I change the design of the court, enhancing because I use competition to stress importance of content matter, and focusing because each progression hones in a particular element that leads to building skills.