



Learn to Play Tennis in Minutes

***The Ultimate Guide to
Teach Yourself Tennis!***

Lesson One

The Topspin Forehand Beginner to Improver

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Modern Tennis International Limited

The Topspin Forehand in Minutes!

Introduction

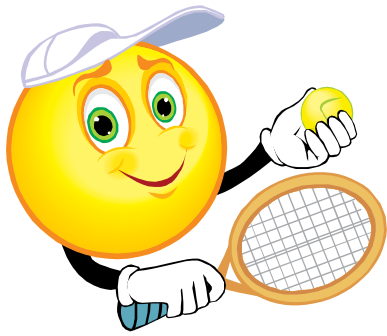
Yes this book can teach you to play a topspin forehand in minutes! Not weeks, not months or years, but here today. All you need is a partner, some tennis balls, a couple of racquets and of course, a tennis court! This guide will allow you to learn as you teach your partner, friend or child - whoever they may be.

Tennis is really an easy game to play but has been complicated through the years by over choreographed coaching. You will see as you go through this guide that tennis is truly a wonderful and simple game to play and learn.



Tia (7) tracking the ball like a pro!

She learned to do this in minutes!



Before we begin!

Please wear the correct footwear.

It's really important in all sports to have the correct equipment in order to prevent injury and to have a comfortable experience when playing. We wouldn't dream of trying to play a game of football without football boots or golf without the correct pair of golf shoes.


Invest wisely...

Many people try to play tennis in trainers or running shoes. This can be dangerous as these shoes are designed to move in one direction only. They are not designed for the quick turns and movements that you need to make on a tennis court. We have seen many injuries to calf muscles and knees due to poor foot wear and as a result these shoes fall apart. A good pair of tennis shoes should last you some time and can be purchased from most good sports shops.


Which balls?


Should you be taking a child on court to play between the ages of 4 to 10 years of age, then we would advise that you start them with low compression balls. These softer balls will make it easier for both of you as the yellow ball can sometimes be a little too bouncy and hard to control. Below is a rough guide to the balls you can use.

Our advice is to experiment with each colour to find the best ball for you. If you find you are ready to move up a ball category, despite not being within these age ranges don't worry – do what feels right.

 **Red balls** 4 – 7 year olds

 **Orange balls** 7- 9 year olds

 **Green balls** 9 – 10 year olds

 **Yellow balls** – 10 year olds plus

Racquets

The good news is there are not many bad racquets on the market today.

We strongly advise you to avoid metal racquets as they have no shock absorbing qualities, so vibration tends to go straight up your arm into your joints. Many a tennis elbow has been created this way.

What size?

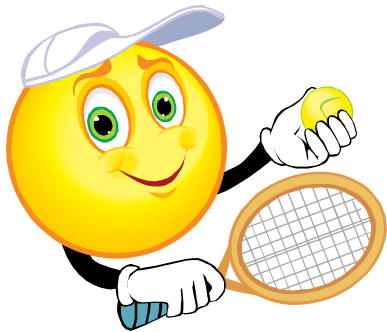
A child's racquet can be metal if they are using the low compression ball, but as they improve - and they will with these methods, we advise you change to a composite or graphite frame. A rule of thumb for the correct size of racquet for a child is that they should hang their arm down at their side with their racquet in hand and the tip of the racquet should just touch the floor.

Clothing

Most clubs have a dress code for tennis that usually says you can wear recognised tennis attire, which means most sportswear is acceptable. I would advise against strapless tops or cycling shorts and stick to a simple t-shirt and shorts or skirt to start off with! Once you have completed a few lessons you may feel ready to take the plunge for a Sharapova outfit or a Nadal shirt, or both if you are that way inclined.



Anneliese (4) ready for action



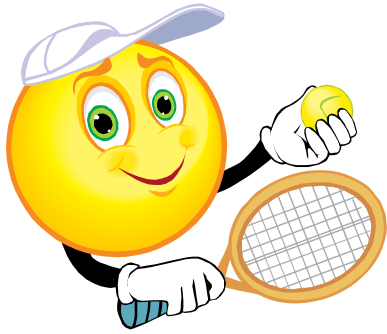
Let's Get Started!

Many people have tried to play tennis, probably at school with friends and they end up playing what I call a game of “Sorry!”. Both players usually rush to the back of the court and whack the ball to each other without ever getting a rally of more than 2 shots and are always apologising to each other for their mistakes.

Did that ever happen to you?

Maybe or maybe not, but that is usually the frustration that leads people away from the beautiful game of tennis. This guide will show you some simple progressions that will have you playing controlled rallies in hours!

This system has many beginner players of all abilities having a 20-50 shot rally in their first lesson with another total beginner.



The Benefits for you

Tennis is such a wonderful game that will give you, your friends and your family a game to play for life.

Fitness for life for you and your children! How does that sound to you?

You can play this sport from 4 to 104 years of age and be of any standard!

It teaches you and your children an **ethos and sportsmanship** that is disappearing from lots of other sports.

Take the great rivalries in tennis through the years from Borg and McEnroe, Sampras and Agassi, to Federer and Nadal. All these great players had a fierce desire to win but also had great respect for each other and were, and are, great friends off court.

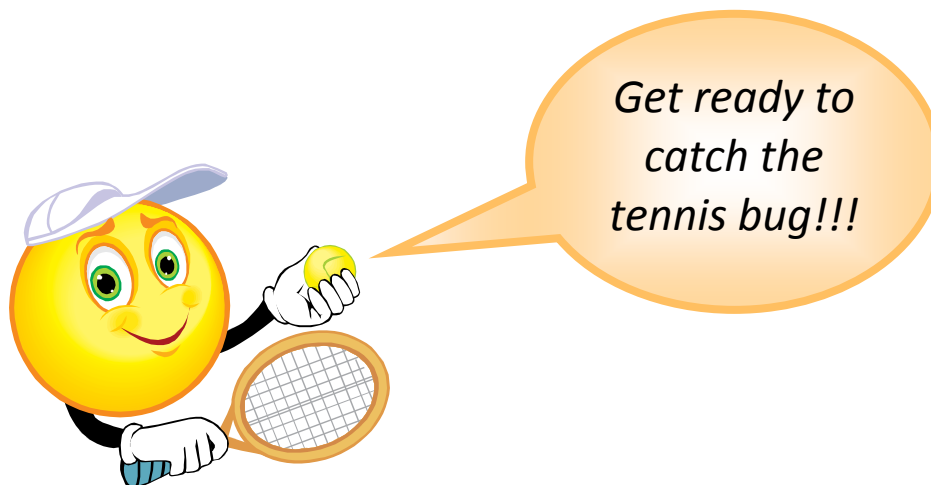
These superb players were not only great winners, but lost with grace and dignity. They are great example for young people to follow.

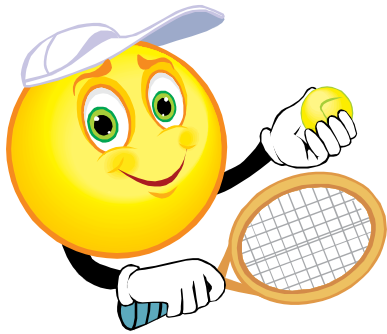
Live longer...

Tennis also hugely improves **your fitness**. An average match burns more calories than a workout in the gym or aerobics class and it's also much more fun! It can be played outside in the beautiful fresh air or inside if the weather isn't so good.

Tennis teaches you **team work** when you play doubles or for your club team. You have to learn to play with others and to accommodate their strengths and weaknesses to get the best out of your partnership and you learn how to give your all for the team or your partnership.

I think you can guess by now that we love tennis and so will you!





Before we get on court, here are some tips:

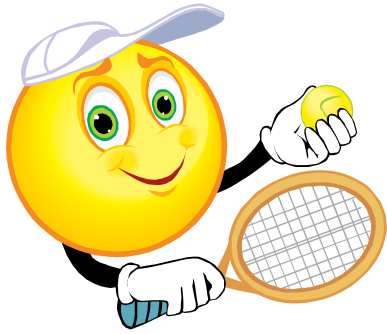
With all shots we teach - you **begin close to the net** no matter how good or natural you are!

- ✿ The following steps are an easy progression into tennis and it is crucial that you follow them and DO NOT miss any out - or your game will not blossom as it should
- ✿ Please note that even the top players re-take these steps to find their rhythm again, after all *tennis is a game of timing*
- ✿ During your practice, one of you will become the student and the other will become the coach. You will reverse roles as you progress through these simple steps
- ✿ Please take your time and make sure you fully grasp each step as you move along
- ✿ You will soon be hitting topspin forehands and backhands before you know it – yes really!

☀ If followed in the steps provided, you will find your natural tennis talent - and believe as we do - that TENNIS is truly **a simple game to play**



Finding the ball in front of you is the key



So let's begin with the Topspin Forehand

Please do not worry when you read the word spin, this all happens naturally if you follow the simple steps that follow. You don't even have to think about it, you will just witness it happening and feel control of the ball.



Finishing high over your shoulder is crucial to help you feel the ball

Step 1 No racquets yet - just your hands

Start with a simple game of catch.

- ☀ Finding the ball! – Have a throw and catch rally. Encourage your partner to catch the ball after one bounce naturally in front - one handed if possible. This action of stalking the ball with your hand is called finding or tracking the ball



Start with a simple game of catch close to the net

- ☀ Encourage the student to count 1 to 5 after the bounce, while waiting for the ball. This encourages the student to wait for the ball. Say **1** when the ball bounces, then 2, 3, 4 and **5** is when they catch the ball. Emphasise numbers **1** (bounce) and **5** (catch)
- ☀ At this point you can introduce a scoring system relevant to the level of players and have some fun games

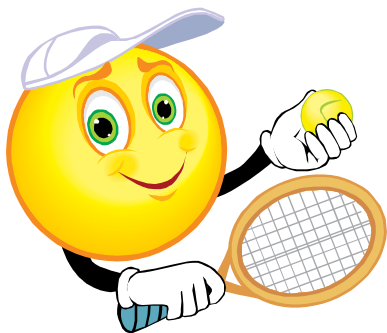


Here is Thibault finding the ball with his hand

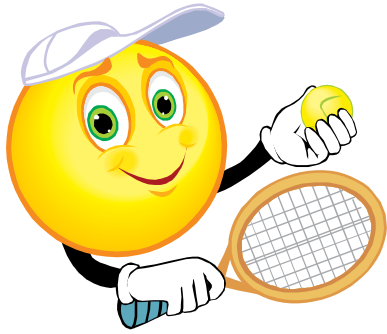
So what will success feel like at step 1?

1. You will be finding the ball just in front of you after one bounce
2. You will be counting 1 on the bounce and catching the ball in your hand when you count to 5, counting 2-3-4 in between 1 and 5
3. You will have had a fun game of catch with a scoring system similar to that of tennis e.g.
 - a. Win the first point if you are serving or starting the rally and you are 15 love up (unfortunately in tennis “love” means nothing or nil – it comes from “loeufr” the French word for egg, which is a similar shape as zero!)
 - b. Lose the second point and you are scored at 15 all

- c. Lose the third point and you are 15 – 30 down
- d. Lose the fourth point (and I will be having words with your coach!) and you are 15 – 40 down. Please note that if you lose the next point you would lose the game and be 1 game to love down
- e. Win the next point and you are now 30 – 40 down
- f. Win the next point and the score is 40 – 40 also known as deuce (to win the game you have to win 2 points in a row)
- g. Win the next point and it's now your advantage (if you lose the next point you will be back to deuce!)
- h. Well done – you win the next point and that puts you 1 game to love up
- i. Now you only have to repeat that process 6 times and you complete a set, as long as you have won 2 or more games than your opponent e.g. 6-4 or 6-3 or 6-2 etc but you can't win 6-5 it would have to be 7-5. Basically, to win a set, you have to win by 2 clear games after one of you reaches 6



It's a games based approach and so much fun this way



Step 2 Still using your hands

With each of the following techniques, the following progressions must be completed in order

- ✱ Always encourage the student to find/track the ball first, and to wait for the ball
- ✱ The ball is fed to the student who is fairly stationary and who only uses their hand at this stage or a 'magic hand' - see photo



Here Thibault is pushing the ball up with his 'magic hand'

- ✓ The Student pushes the ball up on contact to get the ball back and over the net back to the coach. ***IMPORTANT**

NOTE – No swinging, just pushing!

- ☀ The ball is fed to the student who is encouraged to move in all directions - again using their hand only
- ☀ The ball is again fed to the student who is encouraged to finish the push with the back of their hand close against their cheek. *** This is known as striking the pose!**



***Katerina striking the pose with
Petr tracking the ball with his hand***

- ✓ The player will now start to experience the feel of the ball through the spin they are imparting upon it

☀ Ball to hand rally between coach and student - just pushing the ball up and finishing. Start close to the net then move back as the player feels comfortable

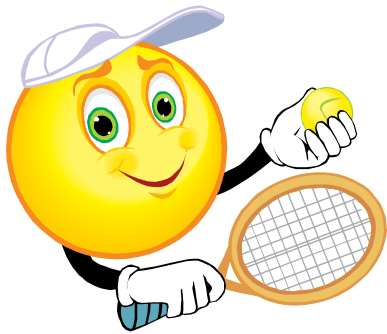
☀ You will both start to experience the 3 “F’s”

- ✓ **Find** it (track the ball)
- ✓ **Feel** it (push it up over the net)
- ✓ And **Finish** it (with your hand up to your face)

☀ Now repeat process so that the coach becomes the student and vice versa

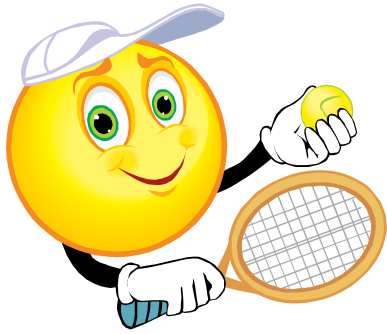


William(5) striking a pose!



So what will success feel like at step 2?

1. You will be **finding** the ball with the palm of your hand
2. You will be pushing the ball on contact (not swinging) and **feeling** the ball spin off your hand
3. You will be **finishing** with the back of your hand on your opposite cheek striking that pose
4. You will be playing a fun scoring game pushing the ball over trying to move your opponent about while adhering to the 3 “**Fs**”
5. Don’t forget to count **1-2-3-4-5**; 1 on the bounce; 5 on the push



Step 3 Okay, go on - pick up the racquet!

Introduce the racquet

- ☀ The student holds the racquet by putting their index finger through the “V” of the throat thus making the racquet shorter and a more stable grip for a beginner. This photo shows a natural forehand grip with the palm of the hand behind the ball when contact is made



***Put your finger through the throat to
help you find the correct grip***

- ☀ The ball is fed to the student. The student tracks or finds the ball with the racquet head and pushes the ball back over the net so that the coach can catch it
- ☀ The ball is fed to the student who is encouraged to move in all directions using the racquet
- ☀ The ball is fed to the student who again, is encouraged to strike the pose with the back of the hand finishing on their opposite cheek

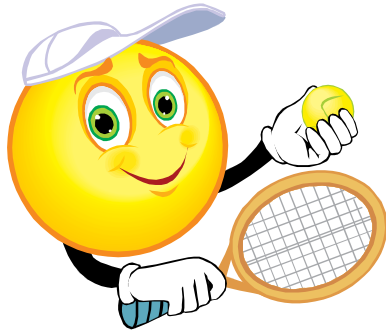


Pushing the ball up with your finger in the throat



Then you finish over your shoulder striking the pose

- ☀ The ball to racquet rally – the coach and student both start close to the net. The coach feeds the ball to the student, who is encouraged to move back away from the net as they feel more comfortable
- ☀ Repeat the process so that the coach becomes the student and vice versa
- ☀ Then when both players are comfortable with **finding** the ball, **feeling** the ball and **finishing** the stroke correctly....
- ☀ You are now ready for a racquet to racquet rally progressing back from the net gradually as you become more confident and proficient
- ☀ PLEASE DO NOT RUSH THIS PROCESS. Be patient and feel what you are doing
- ☀ As you move back from the net, you can both slide your hand down the grip, withdrawing your finger from the throat of the racket or “V” as you feel more comfortable. Again only progress when you are ready



✓ There are different grips for the topspin forehand available to you:-

- ✿ Firstly, there is the 'Eastern grip'. This is with your hand slightly off centre (like a handshake)
- ✿ Then there is the 'Semi Western grip' with the hand slightly behind the grip (from the Eastern grip position, turn your hand slightly outwards)
- ✿ Finally there is the 'Full Western grip' with the hand underneath the grip (from the Semi Western grip, move your hand even further around the grip)

Remember, comfort and reliability are the most crucial factors.

- ✿ Now you need to introduce the **navel ready position** and repeat the 3 "**F's**" when the ball comes to you. The navel ready position is holding the butt (the very end of your grip) into your navel with both hands on the racquet when waiting for the ball. This is a really necessary procedure that will become clearer when learning the backhand and other strokes you have to be ready for

Lesson 1 – The Topspin Forehand



In the ready position waiting to return the serve

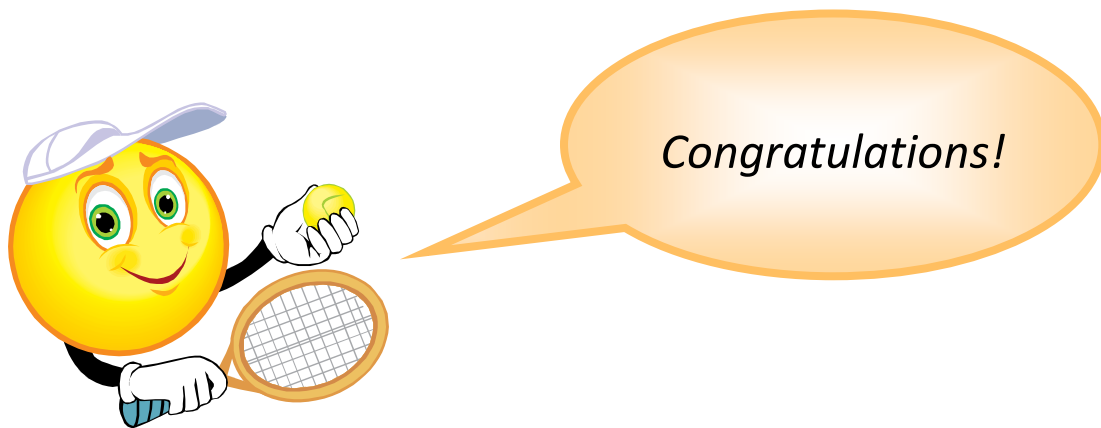
- ☀ When your opponent hits the ball to you immediately track /find the ball with your racquet head in the position you want to contact the ball at
- ☀ The ball bounces and you take your racket back appropriately to the time you have to hit the ball - remembering to count 1 on the bounce and 5 on the hit (with 2, 3 and 4 in between!).
- ☀ You then strike the ball and concentrate on that pose for a finish

☀️ Now do some fun drills to test your new found topspin forehand

- ✓ Start your student at the net and throw the ball to them making them move backwards to hit the ball. Gradually move them back ball by ball. When they have moved right to the back of the court or to their limit, feed the ball shorter so they have to move forward to hit the ball and again move them progressively closer ball by ball. Repeat as necessary
- ✓ Put a cone down in the centre of the baseline (backline). Get your student to stand just behind it. Then feed the ball to the students backhand so they have to move away from the cone. All the student has to do is return to the cone after every shot making sure they run around the cone before they hit the next ball. The student concentrates on the 3 “Fs” on the move and makes sure they have a target in mind when hitting the ball. Repeat as necessary

☀️ Once you have completed this, swap roles so that the coach becomes student and vice versa

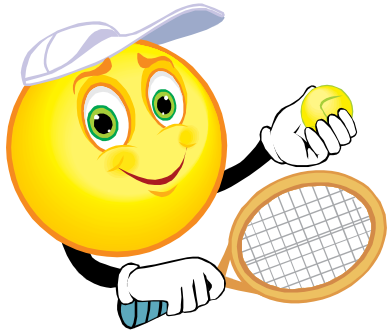
☀️ You are now ready for a fun game to make things a little more competitive in the same way you did in steps 1 and 2



You have just learned to hit a

“Topspin Forehand”

In just 3 easy steps!



In summary the Topspin forehand

Hand/racquet in front, push up and finish over shoulder, hand to cheek.

Push and pose!

Encourage each other to experiment with varying contact angles on hitting the ball. Open the racquet face (tilt backwards) and see the ball go up as a lob, then close the racquet face (tilt forwards) and see the ball stay low, just going over the net.

End of Lesson One

We hope you are enjoying these simple progressions!

See you next time for

Lesson 2 – The Topspin 2 handed backhand