



# Play Racquetball Lesson Plans Ages 10-14



## Lesson 1 (45 mins)

**Major Skills:** Grip, Forehand and Backhand stroke, Drop and Hit Forehand and backhand

**Goal:**

- **Demonstrate the proper grip**
- **Demonstrate the proper FH and BH stroke**
- **Demonstrate the proper Drop and Hit FH and BH**
- **Introduction to Racquetball**

**Warm up:**

- Pizza – divide the kids into 3 different teams (pepperoni, mushrooms, cheese). Have them line up against one of the walls. The coach yells out 1 team vs another team (i.e. pepperoni and cheese OR mushrooms and cheese OR pepperoni and mushrooms). When their team is called out by the coach the kids run to the wall (or designated line, etc.) across from them as fast as they can. The person who arrives last must go to the “oven” (a designated area off to the side). Once there are a few kids gathered in the oven the coach may yell “pizza” and the kids in the oven the race to the other wall. Once they have run this race, they may enter back into the main game.
- Stretch

**Intro to equipment:**

- Review proper fit of equipment
  - Eye guards fit comfortably
  - Wrist tether is securely fastened around the proper wrist and attached to the racquet
  - Grip of racquet is the appropriate size for the individual
  - Non-marking athletic shoes are being worn
  - Make any corrections as a group so athletes know what is/is not appropriate

**Grip:**

- Forehand: Have individuals ‘shake hands’ with the racquet and turn the racquet a 1/4 of an inch to the left for right-handed players and turn the racquet a 1/4 of an inch to the right for left-handed players. (5 times starting from the hand shake position).
- Backhand: Have individuals ‘shake hands’ with the racquet and turn the racquet a 1/4 of an inch to the right for right-handed players and turn the racquet a 1/4 of an inch to the left for left-handed players. (5 times starting from the hand shake position).



### Forehand stroke:

- Ensure proper forehand grip.
- Crouch slightly with knees bent and feet a little wider than shoulder width apart (an athletic position)
- Racquet in set position with elbow above shoulder with wrist cocked
- Transfer weight from back leg to front leg by stepping the lead leg at an angle where the front foot's heel and back foot's toe could form a straight line
- Rotate upper body through entire stroke by allowing the elbow to drop, and as the elbow comes through bend the back knee at the same time.
- Extend racquet arm to have a front foot contact point
- Racquet is perpendicular to floor and approximately the same height as the back knee when it would meet the ball
- Finish the swing with a follow-through that snaps around to opposite elbow and back foot pivoting for maximum rotation

### Backhand stroke:

- Ensure proper backhand grip
- Crouch slightly with knees bent and feet a little wider than shoulder width apart (an athletic position)
- Turn shoulders in opposite direction of forehand rotation
- Cock wrist with elbow chest height
- Transfer weight from back leg to front leg by stepping the lead leg at an angle where the front foot's heel and back foot's toe could form a straight line
- Rotate upper body through entire stroke by allowing the elbow to drop, and as the elbow comes through bend the back knee at the same time
- Extend racquet arm to have a contact point in alignment with the lead leg closest to the front wall
- Racquet is perpendicular to floor and approximately the same height as the back knee when it would meet the ball
- Finish the swing with a full follow-through that snaps around while the back foot pivots for maximum rotation

### Fun drill/game to improve skill:

- Simon says: Use actions that require reviewing the proper forehand and backhand stroke technique, as well as review of forehand and backhand grips.

### Water Break



### **Drop and hit forehand:**

- Ensure proper forehand grip
- Practice swing to warm up and reinforce good technique
- Put targets on the front wall and floor to help the individual understand where to aim
- The targets are there for feedback but it is important to reinforce looking at the ball when making contact
- Demonstrate the proper technique to help the individual understand what is expected of them
- Drop the ball for the individual so they take a full step and get good extension
- Have the individual drop and hit the ball themselves and monitor technique and give appropriate feedback based on results

### **Fun drill/game to improve skill:**

- Have children attempt ten to twenty at a time against the wall.

### **Drop and hit backhand:**

- Ensure proper backhand grip
- Practice swing to warm up and reinforce good technique
- Put targets on the front wall and floor to help the individual understand where to aim
- The targets are there for feedback but it is important to reinforce looking at the ball when making contact
- Demonstrate the proper technique to help the individual understand what is expected of them
- Drop the ball for the individual so they take a full step and get good extension
- Have the individual drop and hit the ball themselves and monitor technique and give appropriate feedback based on results

### **Fun drill/game to improve skill:**

- Place several targets along the walls and have children move from target to target, attempting to collect points for hitting the targets while using a backhand drop and hit.

### **Quick discussion about the game of racquetball:**

- Explain that racquetball is played using the racquet to hit the ball and score points against another person.
- The objective is to win each rally by serving or returning the ball so the opponent is unable to keep the ball in play. A rally is over when a hinder is called or when a player (or team in doubles): 1) is unable to hit the ball before it bounces twice, or 2) is unable to return the ball in such a way that it touches the front wall before it touches the floor.



**Fun cool-down game:**

- Alligator in the Swamp:
  - The first group is lying on their stomachs (alligators). The second group are the runners.
  - On the go signal the runners must run across the playing area to the opposite line in order to be safe from the alligators.
  - The alligators leave their circle to chase the runners. If the runners are tagged by the alligators they must sit out until the next game.
  - Repeat this from the other side of the playing area each time. When 3 to 5 people are left, start again.

## Lesson 2 (45 mins)

**Major Skill: Drop and Hit FH and BH down the line (from various positions)**

**Goal:**

- Demonstrate the proper drop and hit FH and BH down the line
- Review the lines of the court
- Practice movement around the court

**Warm up:**

- Fun game to get kids running – Octopus: One person stands in the middle of the boundary area. The rest of the kids line up at an end of the bounds and when the tagger says go they all run to the other side of the bounds. Whoever the tagger tags then has to stay and help him, except that the additional people that are tagged have to sit down, and can only help "It" by using their arms. This goes back and forth until you're down to the last person who then starts the next round.
- Stretch (focusing on legs and arms)

**Grip review:**

- Review the proper forehand and backhand grip: have children repeat the forehand and backhand grip from the "hand shake" five times.

**Forehand and backhand stroke review:**

- Review the proper forehand and backhand stroke: have children demonstrate their forehand and backhand strokes. Correct any errors.

**Drop and hit forehand down the line:**

- Start at front position (short line) of the court, approximately 5 feet away from and facing the side wall
- Practice swing to warm up and reinforce good technique
- Put targets on the front wall and floor to help the individual understand where to aim
- The targets are there for feedback but it is important to reinforce looking at the ball when making contact
- Demonstrate the proper technique to help the individual understand what is expected of them
- The ball bouncing twice before the back wall is a goal but isn't expected at this level. It is more important that the ball wall does not hit the side wall, but bounces in between the player and the side wall while travelling to the back wall
- Drop the ball for the individual so they take a full step and get good extension through the hitting zone



- The contact point is in alignment with the lead leg which is the leg closest to the front wall
- Have the individual drop and hit the ball themselves and monitor technique and give appropriate feedback based on results
- Attempt ten at a time.

**Fun drill/game to improve skill:**

**Water Break**

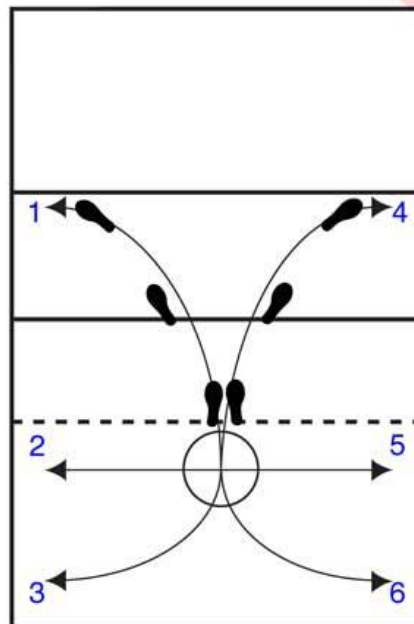
**Drop and hit backhand down the line:**

- Start at front position (short line) of the court, approximately 5 feet away from and facing the side wall
- Practice swing to warm up and reinforce good technique
- Put targets on the front wall and floor to help the individual understand where to aim
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- The ball bouncing twice before the back wall is a goal but isn't expected at this level. It is more important that the ball wall does not hit the side wall, but bounces in between the player and the side wall while travelling to the back wall
- Drop the ball for the individual so they take a full step and get good extension through the hitting zone
- The contact point is in alignment with the lead leg which is the leg closest to the front wall
- Have individual drop and hit the ball themselves and monitor technique and give appropriate feedback based on results
- Try ten at a time Always monitor results in relation to technique and accuracy of hitting desired targets.

**Fun drill/game to improve skill:**



## Movement around court:



- Movement is done in an arc to properly set up to the ball with shoulders square
- Break down each section at first with low speed concentrating on correct footwork, primarily making sure the proper lead leg is forward when arriving at the ball
- This diagram illustrates the “J” movement to the ball
- The numbers 1 - 6 on the diagram represent the six main places where an individual hits the ball from
- The movements to positions 1 and 4 on the diagram are essentially the same. For example, starting in center court moving to position 1 for a right handed player taking 3 steps:
  - The first step is with the right leg straight ahead, the second step with the left leg is straight ahead as much as possible while starting to arc towards the first position
  - The third step which is with the right leg arriving at the first position as the lead leg and the shoulders are square to the side wall
  - To go back to center court do the exact reverse of the three steps
  - To move to position number 4, being right-handed and taking 3 steps, simply start with your left leg and follow the same pattern
  - When taking 4 steps to arrive at positions 1 or 4, your first step should be with your non-lead leg. For Example: for right-handed players for a backhand movement the first step is with your left leg- The movements to positions 2 and 5 on the diagram are essentially the same. For example, starting in center court moving to position 2 for a right-handed player taking 2 steps:
    - The first step with the left leg step towards position number 2 while continuing to face forward
    - The second step with the right leg cross over and arrive to position number 2
    - To go back to center court do the exact reverse of the two steps



- To move to position number 5, being right-handed and taking 2 steps, simply start with your right leg and follow the same pattern.☒
- The movements to positions 3 and 6 on the diagram are essentially the same. For example, starting in center court moving to position 3 for a right-handed player taking 4 steps:
  - The first step with the left leg towards position number 3, is directly behind center court which opens the hips
  - The second step with the right leg which continues straight towards the back wall
  - The third step with the left leg continue as straight possible while arcing towards position 3
  - The fourth step with the right leg arrive at position number 3 square to the side wall
  - To go to back to center court do the exact reverse of the 4 steps
  - To move to position number 6, being right-handed and taking four steps, simply start with your right leg and follow the same pattern
  - Once it is automatic to move to the various sections with correct foot work and speed, add a practice swing to each.

#### **Fun drill/game to improve skill:**

#### **Quick discussion about the game of racquetball:**

- **Understand the lines on the court:**
- **Name and point out each line and explain its significance.**

#### **Fun cool-down game:**

- Amoeba Tag
  - Two people are it. They hold hands and chase people, the person they catch joins the chain by linking hands. When another person is caught they can stay together or spilt 2 and 2 they must split even numbers and can link together at will. This game is played until nobody is left.



## Lesson 3 (45 mins)

**Major Skill: Drop and hit forehand and backhand cross-court shots**

**Goal:**

- Demonstrate the proper drop and hit forehand and backhand cross-court shots
- Briefly review the rules of racquetball

**Warm up:**

- **High Fives:**
  - Players are in two lines facing each other. Players are two to four paces apart.
  - Players warm up by high-fiving each other for a set amount of time or a set distance.
  - Player 1 runs between the rows of players high-fiving each player, when player 1 reaches the end they hop back in line to receive high-fives from the other players.
  - Players follow player 1 in the order in which they are lined up.

**Grip review:**

- Review the proper forehand and backhand grip: have children repeat the forehand and backhand grip from the “hand shake” five times.

**Forehand and backhand stroke review:**

- Review the proper forehand and backhand stroke: have children demonstrate their forehand and backhand strokes. Correct any errors.

**Drop and hit forehand and backhand down the line review:**

- Review the proper forehand and backhand down the line shots: have children demonstrate their shots. Correct any errors.

**Fun drill/game to improve skills:**

**Water Break**

**Drop and hit forehand cross-court:**

- Start at front position (short line) of the court, approximately 3 feet away from and facing the side wall
- Practice swing to warm up and reinforce good technique
- Put targets on the front wall and floor to help the individual understand where to aim
- The targets are there for feedback but it is important to reinforce looking at the ball when making contact
- Demonstrate the proper technique to help the individual understand what is expected of them



- The ball should bounce two times before hitting the back wall- zone
- Drop the ball for the individual so they take a full step and get good extension through the hitting zone
- The contact point is in front of the lead leg which is the leg closest to the front wall
- Have the individual drop and hit the ball themselves and monitor technique and give appropriate feedback based on results
- Focus on hitting 5-10 successful shots before switching
- Always monitor results in relation to technique and accuracy of hitting desired targets
- Move to middle position (behind encroachment line) then to back position (5 feet from back wall) to add difficulty
- To add even more difficulty, drop the ball so that the individual has to move slightly and set up to ball, rather than just standing and waiting to hit it

#### **Fun drill/game to improve skill:**

##### **Drop and hit backhand cross-court:**

- Start at front position (short line) of the court, approximately 3 feet away from and facing the side wall
- Practice swing to warm up and reinforce good technique
- Put targets on the front wall and floor to help the individual understand where to aim
- The targets are there for feedback but it is important to reinforce looking at the ball when making contact
- Demonstrate the proper technique to help the individual understand what is expected of them
- The ball should bounce two times before hitting the back wall- zone
- Drop the ball for the individual so they take a full step and get good extension through the hitting zone
- The contact point is in front of the lead leg which is the leg closest to the front wall
- Have the individual drop and hit the ball themselves and monitor technique and give appropriate feedback based on results
- Focus on hitting 5-10 successful shots before switching
- Always monitor results in relation to technique and accuracy of hitting desired targets
- Move to middle position (behind encroachment line) then to back position (5 feet from back wall) to add difficulty
- To add even more difficulty, drop the ball so that the individual has to move slightly and set up to ball, rather than just standing and waiting to hit it

**Fun drill/game to improve skill:**

**Fun cool-down game:**

- Caterpillar Tag:
  - Divide the group into partners, with partners holding hands. Designate which partners will be the taggers. On the go signal, the taggers chase and try to tag the other partners. When tagged, they must freeze. To become unfrozen, another set of partners must join hands with this pair. This group must now stay together and try to avoid being tagged. There is no limit to the size of the group or groups that form from joining with the frozen players. Play for a designated time period or until all of the players are frozen.

## Lesson 4 (45 mins)

**Major Skill:** Basic lob serve, basic drive serve

**Goal:**

- Demonstrate the proper lob serve
- Demonstrate the proper drive serve

**Warm up:**

- **Front of the Class:**
  - Define an area with 4 cones or use an existing area (lines on the gym floor, volleyball court, etc.)
  - Players jog past each other on the team's right, to the front of the line until all players are back in their original positions.
  - The group starts a slow jog around the designated area.
  - The player in the back of the line runs on the outside of the group to the front of the line.
  - When that player makes it to the front, the player who is now last in line runs to the front of the line.
  - They continue until all are back in their original positions.

**Grip review:**

- Review the proper forehand and backhand grip: have children repeat the forehand and backhand grip from the "hand shake" five times.

**Forehand and backhand stroke review:**

- Review the proper forehand and backhand stroke: have children demonstrate their forehand and backhand strokes. Correct any errors.

**Drop and hit forehand and backhand down the line review:**

- Review the proper forehand and backhand down the line shots: have children demonstrate their shots. Correct any errors.

**Drop and hit forehand and backhand cross-court review:**

- Review the proper forehand and backhand cross-court shots: have children demonstrate their shots. Correct any errors.

**Fun drill/game to improve skills:**

**Water Break**



#### **Lob serve:**

- Starting from the middle of the service zone, continue and build the skill in similar progression to a drop and hit
- In terms of technique the wrist remains solid and does not break, as the arc should come from getting the legs low and extending up
- The wrist does not break to improve consistency
- Pick a target on the front wall that will allow the first bounce to be close to the encroachment line and finish in the respective back corner depending on what side the individual is hitting to
- Another target (mat or can) could also be placed in the back corner to help with aiming

#### **Fun drill/game to improve skill:**

#### **Drive serves:**

- Starting from the middle of the service zone, continue to build the skill in similar progression to a drop and hit
- Pick targets that will allow the individual to get the first bounce in between the short and encroachment line and the second in the back corner of the respective side the ball is being hit to
- Teach the two step serve from the start to foster good habits

#### **Fun drill/game to improve skill:**

#### **Fun cool-down game:**

- 'What time is it Mr.Wolf?'
  - Students line up against one wall with the "Wolf" (chosen by the coach – perhaps the winner of the racquet race) at the opposite wall.
  - Students yell "What time is it Mr. Wolf?" the Wolf responds with a number (i.e. 2 o'clock) and the students must then bounce the ball with their good hand that number of times (i.e. 2 times).
  - This continues until the Wolf responds with "lunch time!" at which time the Wolf chases all the other children back to the wall they started at. If the Wolf catches anyone, they become the new Wolf.



## Lesson 5 (45 mins)

**Major Skill: Putting it all together**

**Goal:**

- Brief review of all major skills
- Enjoy a basic rally against another child
- Learn to keep score (basic)

**Warm up:**

- **Running the Rails:**
  - Players lie in a row facedown beside each other, about a half step apart.
  - The first player in line stands up and runs over the top of his/her teammates and lies down beside the last player in line.
  - Once the first player has gone over the second player, the second player stands up and runs over his/her teammates and lies down beside the last player in the line.
  - Players continue until they reach the established distance.

**Grip review:**

- Review the proper forehand and backhand grip: have children repeat the forehand and backhand grip from the "hand shake" five times.

**Forehand and backhand stroke review:**

- Review the proper forehand and backhand stroke: have children demonstrate their forehand and backhand strokes. Correct any errors.

**Drop and hit forehand and backhand down the line review:**

- Review the proper forehand and backhand down the line shots: have children demonstrate their shots. Correct any errors.

**Drop and hit forehand and backhand cross-court review:**

- Review the proper forehand and backhand cross-court shots: have children demonstrate their shots. Correct any errors.

**Lob and Drive serve review:**

- Review the proper lob serve and drive serve: have children demonstrate their serves. Correct any errors.

**Fun drill/game to improve skills:**

**Water Break**



### Quick discussion about scoring the game of racquetball:

- Points are scored only by the serving side when it serves an irretrievable serve (an ace) or wins a rally. In doubles, when the first server loses the serve, the second server then serves. After the second server loses the serve, it is a side out.
- A match is won by the first side winning two games. The first two games of a match are played to 15 points (win by one point). If each side wins one game, a tiebreaker game is played to 11 points (win by one point).

### Basic rally:

- To start playing, you have to decide who will serve first. You can do this by lagging, coin toss, or any other method you choose.
- To serve, the server must drop the ball in the service zone and hit it after it takes one bounce. The server gets two chances to put the ball into play.
- A good serve means that the ball hits the front wall first and did not hit more than one other wall before hitting the floor beyond the short line. Bad serves are called either fault serves or out serves.
- If a server commits two fault serves, they lose the serve, or if they commit one out serve, they lose the serve.
- All of the lines on the court apply to serve and return of serve only and do not apply after a good serve has been returned and the rally has started.
- During the rally, opponents take turns hitting the ball to the front wall. Players may hit the ball directly to the front wall, or use any combination of the side wall, back wall, or ceiling, as long as the ball hits the front wall before touching the floor.
- The non-hitting team must yield the right of way to the hitter, including moving to worse court position if required.
- A player wins the rally when their opponent does not make a good return by either:
  - 1) *Two Bounce*. Opponent could not return the ball before the second bounce on the floor.
  - 2) *Skip Ball*. Opponent's return hit the floor before touching the front wall.

### Discussion of how they can continue in racquetball:

- Hand out the Play Racquetball information directing them to the website.
- Explain that they can find local places to play on the website.

