

Top Sportsability Tennis:

Balance & Bounce

This card introduces basic racket and ball control, simple striking and balance skills; supports tennis 'ABCs' (agility, balance & co-ordination).

What you need

- A racket and ball for every player
- Variety of different size bats or rackets (see 'Equipment')
- Different size or density balls; or alternatives, such as bean bags (see 'Equipment')

How to play

Balance

These activities introduce basic racket and ball control

- Players balance a ball (or alternative) on the racket; provide challenge by:
 - using both sides of the racket (forehand and backhand)
 - holding the racket with either hand
 - rolling the ball around on the racket
- Start from a static (still) position and then introduce movement

Bounce

- Players begin by bouncing the ball (low bounce) and catching it:
 - using both hands to catch
 - one hand (try alternate hands)
- Move to 'patting' the ball with the flat of their hand
- Finally players progress to using a racket to bounce the ball

Players begin in a static (still) position then introduce movement, starting slow then moving faster.



Think about

- Keeping your eye on the ball/balloon

Top Sportsability Tennis: Balance & Bounce



Use the STEP model to modify this game

Space

- Start by working in a static position and then introduce movement where more space is used
- When working with a partner, vary the distance between players

Task

Bounce

- A larger, slower-moving ball may be easier to control initially
- Try striking the ball with the bat every other bounce

Equipment

Balance

- Players can use bean bags, small juggling balls, paper balls or similar to practise balancing before trying with a ball

Bounce

- Use larger, slower-moving balls to practise the keepy-uppy or floor bounce; a balloon, balloon ball or beach ball can give players more reaction time
- Use balloons attached to the racket or juggle squares ('floaty' material squares) to help players maintain control and coordination
- Large lightweight bats provide a bigger striking surface
- Play in teams; players can take turns at 'nudging' the target stone towards the line
- Players can provide verbal or sound cues for each other to help with targeting

People

- Players can work in pairs; for example, when balancing, transfer the ball from their racket to a partner's
- Partners can bounce the ball to each other, first by hand, then using bats

Extension game

Target Bounce

- When bouncing the ball, players can use a circle or hoop on the floor as a target
- In pairs, one partner bounces the ball into the target by hand; the other catches and returns
- Progress to one player using a racket to play the ball back to their partner (via the target)
- Vary the size of the target circle; begin with a large target area and gradually reduce

Safety

- Ensure that players have sufficient space to move around unimpeded
- Some players can take turns at keeping the area clear of loose balls

How to improve

- Introduce a time challenge; for example, how many successful bounces in 15 seconds?

Integrity

Whatever modifications are used, maintain the integrity of the game. Avoid modifying a game to the point where it no longer resembles the original.

Links

For more information about schools tennis, including teacher training, resources and equipment, please visit www.schoolstennis.org