

## WEEK 2

### SESSION 1: SOLO

**Aims - to continue work at varying pace and height only. To build and consolidate on and to improve what we worked on last week. We have not set a time for each session this week as discussed on the Zoom call, do not be limited by time but feel the exercise. If you want to do longer or shorter that is entirely up to you.**

#### 1. One high drive one low

This is a great exercise for attuning the mind to remembering to vary pace. Many of us can vary pace and height but we often don't do it, and we don't mentally tune in to doing it in practice. This makes you do it. The more you practice it the more automatically you will do it in a match.

#### 2. Figure of eight with kill cross court

This is different to what we've been doing and encourages you to break the straight lines and factor in the cross-court attack off the high ball. Plus this is a fun practice, and squash should be fun for us all should it not!

#### 3. Drop feed for cross-court lob

This gets tricky as the ball gets cooler so start with a warm ball. Just get used to and enjoy playing the lob. Absolutely no hitting out from the front! By default, when we panic under pressure at the front our natural instincts are to force our way out of trouble.

This is drilling yourself to play the lob under pressure. Once you repeat it over and over here, you will find yourself automatically doing it more in a match. It will override the cross-court hack.

#### **Key points on the lob:**

- Make sure you aim for the top of the wall. Many players I coach don't get high enough on the lob. Don't settle for low lobs.
- Have an open racket face
- If the ball is low, be sure to get down low, in order to get underneath the ball.
- The backswing on the lob will be minimal as you don't want a heavy lob, so therefore, be sure to concentrate on a stronger follow through so as to not leave the ball mid court. We are aiming for depth and height.



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## **WITH JAMES WILLSTROP**

#### **4. Boast feed for straight drop (or lob)**

A good practice now to use variation on your responses to the short shot. This also again gets your mind practising not to just slog out from the front.

By using the boast instead of the drop we have more movement to consider.

#### **5. Straight feed with cross-court hit or lob**

Now to practice the variation of height solely on the cross-court, from deep. Feed yourself different straight balls, play a cross-court of different heights and paces off that.

When you've cross-courted, repeat from the other side.

**Note on these practices: some of them will feel bitty and broken up. You are not just hitting the same ball repeatedly and the ball will go cold quickly. That's ok, just stay with it. These practices are great practices for the mind, as well as the control of the ball. You are teaching the mind to be aware and open to all of these different options and you are repeating playing these options. When you do this it means you will be quicker to use all this variety in a match situation.**

## **SESSION 2: SOLO**

The aims now are slightly different. It's time to concentrate now on angles or surprise angles. In the process of constructing your rally, it's important to break up line and length hitting with angles. Even a small change of angle for an opponent forces them to consider your options and can break up their rhythm. Remember, predictability and sameness is what we are wanting to avoid. It's basically what the course is about, in a few brief words. Good to remember that.

Warm-up, [freestyle solo](#) if you'd like. **5 mins**

1. [Feed the ball cross-court to come off the sidewall. Play a drop or drive.](#) That can be straight or x court drop or drive. If you've played two or three straight, be sure to switch the angle with a cross-court variation. Use both sides. **10 mins.**

2. [Simple straight feed or hit - vary the lengths - then cross-court drop soft, cross-court stun or kill type shot](#) (racket face going quicker through - a little more cut on the strings if possible) or the odd straight drop or kill to mix. Use both sides. **10 mins.**

3. [Feed x court as in the first exercise. Now off the side wall play trickle boast, drop or drive.](#) Practice the trickle on its own first if you want. Use different lengths off the feed. Some shorter, some deeper.  
Practice the element of speed on the trickle. It needs to be quickly played with sharp racket head speed. It's the element of surprise we want. Use both sides. **10 minutes.**

4. [Corner routine volley practice.](#) For fun! Go quicker and slower. Change pace. Enjoy! **5 minutes to break up the routines.**

5. [Drive to the back straight - off the back wall this time play a cross-court drop or stun.](#) For variation, you can use the straight drop or stun but keep the focus on the cross-court change of angle. I like to do both at the same time because it gets you programmed to changing and not simply repeating. Which is what you will need in a match. Use both sides. **10 minutes.**

6. [Freestyle solo](#) now. Again, a period of freedom to practice these elements without restriction.

## **SESSION 3: PAIRS**

**We want to bring the work we have done in the solos together now. The psychology of the practice is important. As you are doing these fairly basic practices, think about the multitude of variations you can bring to them to make them anything but basic!**

**1. Warm-up freestyle.** Do a knock up together. But within the knock-up use the time to practice different shots. Use the **5-10 minutes** to really experiment with some of the things you've been working on. Enjoy working without any restrictions. Eg you might hit a cross-court nick and then hit back to your partner. You might hit a straight drive then lob back. Anything ( good!) goes.

**2. Drives deep** - within this look for the opportunity to kill stun and lift. If someone kills or goes short, just put the ball back in to play deep. **5 or so minutes each side.** If you are enjoying it go a bit longer.

**3. Two shots** - front player plays a x or straight drop then a drive - back player plays a drive then a boast or drop. **10 minutes total.**

**4. Front v back.** Front player plays any shot deep. We want to see lobs, hits, down the middle shots, as much variation as possible in the angles and heights.  
Back player can play anything short. Boast, drops, stun or kill balls. Can you add a deep trickle boast? This can be done as a practice like boast and drive, or you can play it as a game and score. Up to you. **8-10 minutes.**

**HAVE A DRINK. That will probably have been tough!**

### **5. Play.**

Don't play to win. Play to be various. Is there an option to switch the angle? To play a trickle boast? If I've played three or four straight drives how can I change things up? Am I playing the same pace shot all the time? Am I hearing the same sound on the wall? Can I quicken my shots, or slow them up?

**10 or so minutes.**

**DINNER TIME!!! WELL DONE!**

## ***BONUS: SOLO - Improve your backhand***

### **1. Straight drives, one above, one below**

- Use this drill to play around with different contact points and how to take the ball behind you with shape and an open grip or in front of you with more flatness
- Do for 5mins on just the BACKHAND side

### **2. Straight drives off the back wall**

- Using this drill to work on trying to dig the ball out the back with the tools presented in the playlist by Jesse. When you have hit a really good drive (and try and do this often), look to get the ball high and straight
- Do for 5mins just on the BACKHAND side

### **3. Volleys up and down the court**

- Use this drill to work on the different aspects of the volley and explore taking it high and late as well as taking it early and flatter. Every so often just punch a volley through to the back of the court
- Do for 5mins just on the BACKHAND side

### **4. Midcourt feed for straight volley drop**

- Feed yourself a variation of straight feeds to practice the different elements of the backhand volley drop. Be sure to feed some right at your body also in order to deal better with those awkward balls
- Do for 2.5mins just on the BACKHAND side

### **5. Cross-court feed for straight volley drop**

- Now feeding yourself cross-court so the angles are slightly different, continue to practice your backhand volley drop and the variations within them
- Do for 2.5mins just on the BACKHAND side

### **6. Boast feed for straight drop**

- Using this drill to feed to your front backhand, rather than playing a drop from the boast, look to flick the ball down the line and look to mimic what it would be like trying to execute this shot under pressure
- Do for 2.5mins just on the BACKHAND side



## ***BONUS: FITNESS - Power Circuit***

**Run through this twice.**

Try this tough power-based session, combining a series of skips and jumps to help you develop explosive movement around the court.

Complete a thorough warm-up/mobilisation routine before you begin.

### **1. Skipping**

- Keep the skip light and fluid, aiming to establish a consistent pace and rhythm
- Skip for 1 min

### **2. Squat jump**

- Take a moment to reset your feet after each rep - the focus is to get as much height as possible through each jump, don't just rush through them with 6 consecutive 'bounces'
- x6 reps, then rest 1 minute before moving on

### **3. Skipping**

- Keep the skip light and fluid, aiming to establish a consistent pace and rhythm
- Skip for 1 min

### **4. Jumping split-squat**

- Aim for max height on each jump, pausing briefly between each rep to rebalance yourself before pushing into the next one. Complete 6 reps in one position before switching onto the other leg, taking no more than 5-10secs for the changeover
- x6 reps, then rest 1 minute before moving on

### **5. Skipping**

- Keep the skip light and fluid, aiming to establish a consistent pace and rhythm
- Skip for 1 min

### **6. Tuck jump**

- Complete the 6 reps continuously (so no bounce between each tuck jump), aiming to get as much height and knee drive with each rep as possible
- Rest 2 minutes before repeating the circuit for the second time