9 KILLER FOOTWORK DRILLS FOR MODERN TENNIS

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Zayne Publishing, LLC
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Paul Gold is widely considered one of the web’s leading tennis training consultants.

Paul has been coaching and training tennis players of all levels (beginner to Pro) since 1995 and is still actively doing so today.

As well as being a Licensed Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) Level 2 coach he has a Masters degree in Sport Sciences as well as being a certified Performance Enhancement Specialist (PES) through the National Academy of Sports Medicine (NASM) and is also a Speed Agility Quickness (SAQ) trainer.

When he’s not working, Paul can be found spending time with his family, playing some form of sport esp. football (soccer), in the gym or out on the tennis courts playing a couple of sets such is his love for the game.

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INTRODUCTION – Before going further PRINT THIS OUT!

”Better footwork was the key to my tennis longevity” – Andre Agassi

“If your footwork is poor then it doesn’t matter how good your strokes are you will never be in a good position to hit them” – Ivan Lendl.

Do you need a better endorsement than that?

If two of the all-time greats tell you how important something is you had better stand up and take notice!

Think about your own game for a minute, how many times have you missed shots when you were just in the wrong position or too lazy to move for a ball that was coming at you?

“Bad footwork hurts your timing, your balance, your power and your consistency” - Brad Gilbert (coach to World No1’s Agassi & Roddick)

Is it me or is there a pattern emerging?
FOOTWORK & THE ABC’s

Improving your footwork gives you all the essential components for great tennis – a bit like learning the alphabet gives you the foundation to read & write.

- **Agility** – better agility = movement around the court at speed whilst retaining control.
- **Balance** – better balance on the court = better and more powerful shots.
- **Coordination** – better coordination = making all kinds of shots from all kinds of positions.

With all the evidence I have given you, I am still surprised that so many people don’t practise. They just don’t see it as important as practising forehands and backhands – **THIS IS MADNESS!**

In general people fall into 2 camps when it comes to their footwork and excuses!
Camp 1 - those that seem to know that footwork is important, but don’t do anything about it!

Camp 2 - those that say they want to do something then say they don’t know where to start!

Well now you have no excuses, you can see how important some of the biggest names in the game think it is and below you will find some essential drills to get you on your way.

If you never progressed to practising any other footwork drills and just perfected these drills, you would be doing more than most other players and see a massive improvement in your movement and more importantly in **YOUR GAME**!

**LET’S BEGIN!**
DRILLS

I have divided them into 4 types

- Ladder
- Dot
- Box
- Court Drills

LADDER DRILLS

If you do not have access to a fast foot ladder you can draw one on the ground using chalk. Also alternate the foot that you first enter the ladder with on every single pass through as this will promote true bi-limb dexterity where you become equally comfortable initiating moves with any foot.

Single Run

Run through the ladder by placing one foot in each ladder space. Turn around and come back through the ladder in the opposite direction.
Don’t forget to alternate the first foot that you place into the ladder on each pass.

Lateral Double Shuffle
Performed using a sideways shuffle motion placing both feet into each ladder space. Stop and come back through the ladder in the opposite direction.

In In Out Out (Lateral)
Moving sideways along the ladder, step into each space with both feet (one at a time) before stepping out again (see diagram).
Stop and come back through the ladder in the opposite direction.

**DOT DRILLS**

*Again if you don’t have a purpose built mat or even some drop down dots, you can just draw them on the floor with chalk etc.*

43-35a

Start with both feet on dot 3.
Move your left foot to dot 4 followed by your right foot to dot 5. Move both feet back to dot 3 and continue the sequence.

1-2-3-4-5-4-3-2-1

Start with both feet on dot 1.
Step with both feet (one at a time in quick succession) following the sequence.

**LOW BOX DRILLS**

Something as simple as an aerobics step is perfect for these drills!

Start with both feet on box and perform sequence as shown.

Start with both feet on the floor. Alternate bringing your left and right feet up to touch the box with a light touch.
COURT DRILLS

1. T-Drill
Place 4 cones 5m apart as shown above. Starting at cone A run forwards towards cone B. Split step at cone B and then side shuffle to cone C before side shuffling to cone D and then back to cone B. Turn around and sprint back to the start (A) - repeat as prescribed.

6. THE CRUCIFIX
Place 5 cones as shown above with all cones 2.5m apart from cone A. Start at cone A go forwards to B then backwards to A, side shuffle to C then back to A, go backwards to D then forwards to A, side shuffle to E then back to A - repeat as prescribed.
DISCLAIMER

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