

# How to Play Badminton

Badminton is an exciting, indoor or outdoor, racquet sport you can play with some friends or play competitively through a club. Check out the basics right here, then read further to improve your skills, techniques and strategies.



## Steps

1. Toss a coin. The player winning the toss chooses between serving or receiving first.
2. Start service from the right side (always) and serve to the diagonal service box.
3. Serve underhand only.
4. Count scored points only on your serve.
5. Gain control of the serve by winning the point when your opponent is serving.
6. Rally by hitting the shuttle (sometimes called a birdie) over the net, trying to land it on your opponent's court to score a point.
7. Score a point also when your opponent hits the shuttle out of your court, into the net, hits the shuttle with his body or clothing, or hits it before it crossed the net.
8. Win the game by scoring 15 points first.
9. Play a match based on the best two out of three.

If the score becomes 14-14, the player who reached 14 first decides whether to set the score at 15 or 17.

Players change ends and at the conclusion of each game and in the 3<sup>rd</sup> game when leading scorer reaches 8 points.

# How to Grip the Racket in Badminton



Before you begin using the proper badminton swings, follow these steps to learn how to hold your racket. Using both the forehand and backhand grips, and being able to switch easily from one to the other, are some of the most valuable skills you'll need.



The Forehand Grip: used to make most overhead shots and shots on the same side of your body as the racket.

## Steps

1. Hold the neck of the racket in your left hand (reverse all instructions if you are left-handed). (Image 1)
2. Hold the racket face perpendicular to the ground. (Image 2)
3. "Shake hands" with the racket, placing your right hand in the middle of the grip. (Image 3)
4. Wrap your fingers around the grip, with your thumb on the side of the handle pointing forward toward the head of the racket. (Image 4)
5. Allow your forefinger and third finger to spread as much as feels comfortable on the grip. (Image 5)
6. Check to see that the "V" of your thumb and forefinger is on the top notch of your eight-sided handle. (Image 6)

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## Tips

- The grip should feel comfortable, not awkward
- Grip tightly for power shots and loosely for finesse shots.

# How to Keep Score in Badminton

Use the following method to score your badminton games and matches.



## Steps

1. Flip a coin before the first game to determine who will serve first.
2. Score a point only when you are serving.
3. Change service when the receiving side wins the serve.
4. Win a game by being the first to score 15 points.
5. Choose to "set" the game, or not to, if the score reaches 14 to 14, and you were the first one to reach 14.
6. Set a 14-14 game to play three more points.
7. Choose not to "set" the game and the first player to get 15 points wins.
8. Serve first in the next game if you won the previous one.
9. Change sides between games. In the third game, switch when one team reaches eight points.
10. Play best of two out of three games to determine a match.
11. Play the next challenger if you win two of the three games.

## Tips

- In women's singles, games are often played to 11 points instead of 15.

# How to Play Singles in Badminton

In singles, each player must cover the entire court. Try to make your opponent run all over the court until he or she is out of position.



## Steps

1. Serve deep when playing singles because the court is 2 1/2 feet longer.
2. Use mostly high, deep serves, aimed to drop down just before the back line - this forces your opponent to return to the center of your court.
3. Backpedal to prepare for your service return. Expect the serve to come high and deep.
4. Return serves to where your opponent is not - if he or she moves forward after his or her serve, hit deep. If your opponent backs up after the serve, hit short. Watch your opponent to learn his or her tendencies.
5. Make your opponent run. Hit the shuttle so as to get him or her out of position.
6. Aim your shots for the four corners. In singles play, try to avoid hitting to the middle.
7. Hit long, then short. Hit right, then left. Try to make each shot the opposite of the previous one, at least until your opponent expects this.

## Tips

- If you see your opponent preparing to receive a high, deep serve, hit a short, low serve.
- Concentrate on gaining advantage from your service by hitting high and deep and to the corners. You can only score on your service.
- Practice backpedaling. If you jog, include some backpedaling into your jogging routine.

# How to Play Doubles in Badminton

The most important aspect of playing badminton doubles is coordination with your partner.



## Steps

1. Decide in advance what formation, or combination of formations, you will use - discuss this in terms of your overall strategy.
2. Choose between a side-by-side formation, an up-and-back formation, or a rotation formation.
3. Use the side-by-side formation when your team is in a defensive position. Both teammates stand at midcourt, following a lifted return that puts your opponents on the attack.
4. Use the up-and-back formation when you are on the attack. One teammate covers the front, trying to get the smash shot off a weak return; the other covers the backcourt, to handle clear shots.
5. Use a rotation formation to recover from difficult shots that drive you out of position. Each time one partner moves, the other adjusts on the diagonal.
6. Use verbal communication until you and your partner understand each other well. After playing for a while with the same partner, this should become less necessary.
7. Serve short serves, unless your opponent is expecting them. Deep serves invite an attack.
8. Rush the serve when returning serves. Attack.
9. Crouch low when the shuttle is behind you so that your partner can more easily hit over your head. Keep your eyes forward and trust your partner.

## Tips

- Play against your opponents' weaknesses. If one player is weaker than the other, hit primarily to him or her.
- A good doubles partnership of average players should be able to beat an average partnership of good players.

## Warning

- Be very careful not to whack your partner with your racket. No point is worth losing your partner to injury.

# How to Practice Your Footwork in Badminton

The importance of good footwork in badminton cannot be emphasized enough - it is the foundation of every shot you make and underlies the effectiveness of your overall strategy.



## Steps

1. Stretch thoroughly before you play or practice badminton.
2. Begin in an alert and ready position, with your eyes on the shuttlecock.
3. Lead with your forward foot when moving in a diagonal direction.
4. Take short, quick steps.
5. Use short shuffling steps to reach the shuttlecock.
6. The last step you take before hitting should always be with your racket foot.
7. Practice your footwork without a shuttlecock.
8. Start in the centre position and move in a figure-eight pattern, utilizing the entire court.
9. Start slowly, to get comfortable with the short shuffling steps. Then speed up your figure-eight pattern, pausing as if to hit in each corner of the court.
10. Keep your head and eyes forward at all times. Try not to turn your back on the shuttle.
11. Stay light on the balls of your feet.
12. Bend your knees slightly during all hitting motions.
13. Lunge forward to quickly gain a little extra distance.
14. Practice backpedaling to the baseline.
15. Practice recovering to your ready position after each hit.

## Tips

- For all power hitting and throwing type swings, your racket leg should be back.
- Turn your hips and legs in the same direction as your nonhitting shoulder when you are backswinging.
- After you hit the shuttlecock, your weight should be on your front foot and your back foot should almost leave the ground.

# How to Backhand Swing in Badminton



Use the backhand swing for all badminton shots on the non-racket side of your body. Practice hitting your backhand as well as your forehand for a balanced game.



## Steps

1. Notice the shuttlecock coming to your backhand side (your nonracket side) from your ready position. (Image 1)
2. Pivot on your left foot and step your right foot around in front of your body, so your right shoulder is facing the net (left-handed players should reverse this step).
3. Bend your elbow to draw your right hand across your body, almost to your opposite shoulder, for your backswing. This motion will cause your body to coil up slightly. (Image 2)
4. Shift your weight to your back foot.
5. Uncoil your body and shift your weight to your forward foot. (Image 3)
6. Straighten your elbow as you swing. (Image 4)
7. Snap your wrist forward as your racket face connects with the shuttle, powering through the shot. (Image 5)
8. Follow through, allowing your wrist to relax and your palm to face upward. (Image 6)

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## Tips

- Backhand shots are most often defensive shots, and generally should be hit high and deep.
- Practice to make your backhand as strong as your forehand. Otherwise, your opponents will capitalize on your weak side.

# How to Hit a Smash Shot in Badminton

The smash is the most powerful offensive shot in badminton. Fire the shuttlecock with all the force you can muster, so that it hits the floor before your opponent can reach it.



## Steps

1. Get into position behind and beneath the shuttle.
2. Point your non-racquet shoulder toward your opponent and shift your weight onto your back (racquet) foot.
3. Hold both arms up. Hold your non-racquet arm out in front of you for balance, and your racquet arm up behind you with your elbow bent 90 degrees and your wrist cocked. The racquet head should be behind your shoulders. (Image 1)
4. Begin your swing from your shoulder while opening your torso toward your opponent.
5. Reach up for the shuttle, jumping off your back leg and transferring your weight to your forward foot.
6. Strike the shuttle as high as you can reach it, while it is still out in front you. (Image 2)
7. Snap your wrist, as you contact the shuttle at least three or four feet above the net level and in front of your body.
8. Hit the shuttle with a closed racquet face. (Image 3)
9. Follow through, keeping your arm high, while your wrist snaps completely through the shuttle. Then swing your arm down and through the shot.

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## Tips

- When first learning the smash shot, only do it from the front half of the court.
- Use the extension of your arm and a powerful wrist snap to generate the power in this shot.