

How to Pass

Here's How:

1. Place your feet shoulder width apart with your knees bent
2. Move to the ball quickly keeping hands apart and set your feet in position before executing a pass
3. Bring your hands together forming a good forearm platform with your thumbs parallel, locking your elbows, and pushing your forearms together
4. Receive the ball with your arms parallel to your thighs, leaning forward and on your left side
5. With contact of the ball, move your arms forward and upward slightly and transfer your weight forward
6. Direct the ball to your target with your shoulders
7. Follow through by keeping your arms below shoulder level, elbows locked and hands together
8. Keep your eye on the ball

Tips:

1. The less movement, or swing, of your arms the more control you will have

More...

1. Get to the Ball & Set Your Position!

The first thing you must do is quickly get to the ball and set your position. Often players try to pass the ball without first setting their positions. This results in passing errors. It makes sense; get there early and set the same position you always do and your body will have an easier time adjusting to the flight arch and speed of the ball.

2. Setting Your Position

1. [Place](#) your feet, one slightly ahead of the other and [shoulder](#) width apart.
2. Your [hands](#) should be joined together with the thumbs parallel to each other.
3. Your [knees](#) should be bent and arms extended out from your body so that they are [parallel](#) with your thighs.
4. Your back should be [straight](#) and you should be relaxed.
5. Always keep your eye on the ball.

3. Making Contact with the Ball

1. **Hands Together:** With your hands together, try to receive the ball towards your non-dominant side.
2. **Extend, Poke, Slant and Watch:** Upon contact with the ball [extend](#) your legs slightly, and move your [arms](#) in a slight forward and upward "poking" motion, using your legs to propel the ball, not your arms. [Slant](#) your arms toward the target keeping your [hips](#) under your center of gravity and tilted forward. **Watch the ball make contact with your arms.**

4. Follow Through

1. **Follow that Ball:** After the hit, keep your hands together. Your arms follow the ball towards the target.
2. **Keep Arms Still:** Do not swing your arms too much. You want to keep them at all times below your [shoulders](#).

3. **Transfer:** [Transfer your weight](#) to your forward foot. This adds more power and control to the pass. Players sometime "fall back" on a pass, resulting in the ball traveling in an arc higher than anticipated. Maintain eye contact with the ball and stay prepared.

How to Hit

Three Basic Types of Spikes; Approach is Always the Same

An effective team has several different methods of attacks in their arsenal. The three basic attacks are the dink, the off-speed spike, and the hard-driven spike.

- The **dink** is an effective tool when your opponents have learned the timing of your attack. A well placed dink behind the opponent's front line will often demoralize the opponent and let your team gain the momentum.
- The **off-speed spike** is like a dink but delivered deeper into the opponent's court.
- The **hard-driven spike** is hitting hard with the idea of getting the ball to the ground as fast as you can.

Whether you dink, off-speed spike or slam down a hard driven spike the **approach to the ball should always look the same.**

Wait for the spike with your weight shifted forward and ready to move. Be careful not to start off too early and keep an eye on the setter until the ball is set.

After the set maintain eye contact on the ball and **start your approach when the ball is half the distance from yourself and the setter**

BLOCKING

Here's How:

1. Stay close to the net, no more than one foot away, facing the opponents
2. Keep your hands at shoulder level with palms facing forward
3. Once the ball is set, watch the attacker while maintaining peripheral eye contact with the ball
4. Position yourself along attacker's hitting arm, aligning half of your body's length along the side of the hitter's hitting arm
5. Jump immediately **AFTER** the hitter jumps
6. Jump up and extend your arms, penetrating across the net and positioning your hands along both sides of the hitter's attacking arm
7. Angle your hands down and slightly turned towards the center of the court

8. After the attack, bring your arms back and land on both feet, bending your knees to cushion the landing
9. Immediately turn away from the net and look for the ball

Tips:

1. Be careful not to penetrate the net too much, which may result in hitting the net on the way up or down
 2. Be careful not to set up too far away from the net. The ball will hit your hands and land between you and the net
 3. If you find that the ball is contacting you and landing between you and the net, you may need to square your shoulders to the net more
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Setting

Teaching Points

1. Squat under the ball
 2. Basket over the forehead
 3. Extend
1. **Squat under the ball** – knees bent – sit back into a squat position. The back should be slightly erect. Hips lined up under the ball. Knees are in front of the toes and shoulders behind the knees. Hips under the ball are important.
 2. **Basket over the forehead** – bring up the hands. Note that the fingers should be pointing out (or away), this aids in the “spring” action. Make the shape of a basket. This should be the same shape as the ball. Bring the hands together, and then spread out the fingers. Then take the fingers apart, keep the palms facing each other (thumbs pointing to eyes), cock the wrist back, just above forehead. The ball should rest on the first two fingers and the upper insides of the thumbs and remaining fingertips.

Note: The elbow angle never decreases (if so, not using enough legs).

3. **Extend** – extend into the ball using the arms and legs in unison. Legs and arms extend up in direction of the pass. The wrists should flex forward and the thumbs “through” the ball + out.
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Serving

1. Fencer stance
 - o Balance important. Lefty or righty? - opposite foot forward.
 - o Weight should start on the back foot.
 - o Where your opposite foot is facing is where the ball will go.
2. The ball in opposite hand - waist level.
 - o Arm outstretched - raise to nose - ball should come up centerline of body
 - o Wrist and elbow frozen.

- Raise your hand above your shoulder + release the ball.
 - The release should be 6 - 12 inches .
 - As you release the ball, front knee bends – similar to tennis serve.
3. On the hitting arm, the elbow should be high above the shoulder.
- The shoulder should be square.
 - The player then must shift their weight from back leg to front leg.
 - The back leg should end up with the toe down for balance.
 - This should be one fluid motion.
4. Contact the ball at the highest point of the toss (apex).
- You want to make sure that you contact the middle of the ball.
 - One trick I use is – take the v-ball, find the trademark or the middle, then put your hand over it. Go through your routine.
 - You want to use the heel or middle of your hand to contact the ball.

One other thing – having trouble with one hand toss, try two. It really comes down to with what you are most comfortable.

Note: On a floater, it is important to keep the wrist frozen.

Critical Aspects in Defense Strategies

Screening - Avoid It; Getting Deep; Shadowing - Get It

One aspect of volleyball every new coach faces is which defense to use. A coach has available a wide number of defense possibilities. Most of us coaches do prefer a certain defense and stick to it. I am one of them. Moreover, I think even the majority of college coaches will rely on one particular defense, with certain adjustments from year to year.

I am sure there are a number of coaches who do not; although I have never worked with anyone, who changed defenses every year.

However, regardless of what defense you choose, there are some basic principles that coaches must follow:

1. SCREENING: NEVER have defenders screening each other.

Spread out your diggers so that, ideally, at the moment of the opponent's hit, each digger can see the hitter. This is possible in nearly every blocking scheme.

Also, encourage your diggers to know which one of them will take the ball that is hit between them BEFORE the opponents hit the ball there. This will reduce the number of balls that fall between them and, likewise, the number of the balls that two diggers are fighting over. This “no screening” goes for serve receive also.

2. HOW DEEP DO DIGGERS PLAY:

If an attacker hits the ball is at a digger's forehead, the digger should be in a position where it is IN!! If she has to reach up, stretch, or jump to make the dig, it should be (a) out or (b) someone else's. This rule also applies to serve receivers.

3. THE SHADOW:

If your blockers are tall enough to create a "shadow," then your diggers should never be standing there at the moment of the opponent's hit. Near the end of a 5-game match that was on TV, a replay showed a setter who was about 6 feet directly behind her 6' and 6'2" double block. What is she doing there? Is her team that slow that if a ball is tipped/rolled over that huge block, no one could get it? No way. She was in the wrong defensive position. If the opponent tips a ball in the shadow, then the coach should have previously designated who's responsible and it should come up most of the time!! The taller the blockers, the more we expect shadow shots to come up.

THINGS THAT MUST HAPPEN:

Regardless of the defense you play, at the moment the opponents spike that ball, then you must depend on your diggers to do two things:

1. DIG what's in their "zone," and;
2. REACT to the tips & off-speed shots that are landing in their "zone." If they follow the three rules above, they are likely to be more successful!!

Improve Your Team's Serve Receive

Follow the Cues from the Server and the Ball

Train your passers to focus in on the following "cues" from the server and their serve receive skills will improve dramatically!

1. **Where are the server's hips and shoulders squared to?**
 - All servers square to the direction they are going to attempt to serve the ball.
2. **Where is the server stepping with their front foot?**
 - **Just as when an athlete throws a ball** - they will step in the direction they are attempting to serve.
 - *When facing a server who doesn't step, simply focus in on where their front foot is pointing.*
 - **As they begin to serve, where is their serving arm moving towards?**
 - Again, just as when throwing a ball, the servers serving arm will begin forward in the direction they are attempting to serve.

Once the server contacts the ball, passers must immediately pick up on the following "cues" from the ball:

1. **Speed** how fast is the ball traveling
 - it will only slow down from the time it leaves the servers hand
 - if it comes out slow, it's going to be short!
2. **Spin**-is it top spinning?
3. **Height** - how high above the net is the ball traveling?

By learning to pick up on these three cues and their possible combinations, the passer can predict the ball's course and react to its flight more quickly.

Examples of possible cue combinations:

1. **Fast, low and top-spin:** The ball will dive quickly toward the end of its flight. It will be medium in depth at best.
2. **Fast, high and top spin:** The ball will be deeper and may come down by the back line.
3. **Fast, high, and floating:** The ball will be deeper, and may be out.
4. **Slow, high, and floating:** The ball will be shorter, coming down further up in the court than thought.
5. **Fast, low, and floating:** The ball will be medium to long in depth, and may go long.

-Note: Many times, I relate this to reading the flight of a softball off the bat on a fly ball in the outfield. (I coach at a softball mecca)

Teaching your players to focus in on these cues will immediately improve their reaction time and movement to the ball. At the same time, it will keep their thoughts clear, focused on the task at hand, and free of any distractions!