

Ball Control Basics

"Making the little round fuzzy ball do what you want is what tennis is all about". Controlling the ball is how players create and solve tactical problems on court. To master tennis, players must learn to receive and send variations of the 5 Ball Control characteristics (Height, Direction, Distance, Speed, and Spin)

SPIN CONTROL

Making the ball spin is a key way to control the trajectory of the ball. Spins cause the ball to fly differently through the air. Spins also cause the ball to bounce differently as well. Using spin gives a player more options to challenge an opponent with. The 3 spins used in tennis are:

Topspin: Makes the ball arc more and bounce higher. It is created by a low-to-high racquet path and a vertical racquet angle.

Underspin (also called slice on groundstrokes): Causes the ball to fly in a more level trajectory and stay lower on the bounce. It is created by a high-to-low racquet path and a slightly open racquet angle.

Sidespin (also called slice on serves): Makes the ball fly in a curve and bounce off to the side. It is created by the racquet brushing across the side of the ball.

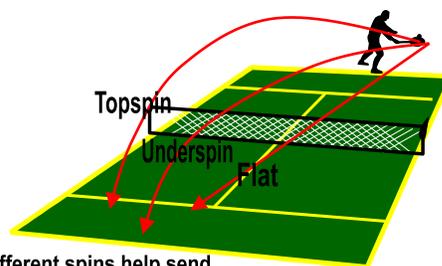
Receiving different Spins

Since spin affects the ball's flight and bounce, it is important to identify what type of spin is coming at you. Because the racquet must brush across the ball in specific ways to make specific spins, you can focus your attention on the path of an opponent's racquet as they contact the ball. This will allow you to 'read' the spin. Generally, when the opponent hits an underspin shot, move forward since the ball is usually low. When a topspin shot is identified, either move back and allow it to bounce and fall to a comfortable level, or move forward and take it early, before the ball bounces too high.

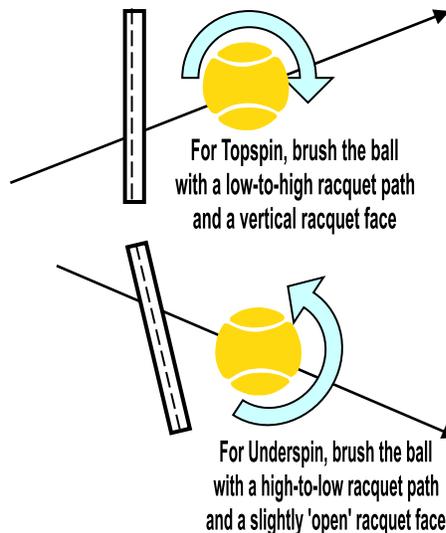
Kinesthetic Key (Key feeling when doing it)

The main challenge when learning spin is to feel the path of the racquet. Spin is actually, "a controlled mis-hit", so it feels strange at first to brush across the ball rather than strike it dead-on. Practice is the solution.

TACTICAL CONNECTIONS: Spin allows superior control of the ball's trajectory. You can exploit space and time to a greater degree.



Different spins help send the ball with different trajectories



~~Court~~ Home-work

Practice Activity: 'Sending & Receiving different spins on groundstrokes': Practice spin by modifying the boundaries of the court while playing points: To start these games, players alternate starting the point with a 'friendly' feed.

Underspin games: (Players are only allowed to use underspin. Ball can be taken as a volley or a groundstroke)

- **Slow/short angles & Drop-shots:** Play in both service boxes including the doubles alleys.
- **Deep slices:** Play on ½ of a singles court (singles line to centre line). Balls must land past the service line to be in. (For more challenge, string a rope two racquet lengths above the net. All shots must travel under the rope to count).

Topspin Games: (Players are only allowed to use topspin. Ball can be taken as a swing volley or groundstroke)

- **High arcs:** Play on the singles court past the service line. The ball must clear the net by 4 racquet lengths or more.
- **Short 'dipping' angles:** Play on a ¾ length court but including the doubles alleys. Ball must clear the net by 1 racquet length to count..