SECTION 2

GRIPS

This section looks at how badminton players hold their racket. Grip range, position and strength all play a key role in determining the control and accuracy of the shot and the power the player can generate from their hitting action.

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GRIP RANGE, POSITION & STRENGTH

How badminton players hold their racket (their grip) is critical to the success of many of the shots they will play in a game. The grip plays a key role in determining the control and accuracy of the shot and the power the player can generate from their hitting action.

The key information around grips can be broken down into 3 concepts:

Grip range **Grip position** **Grip strength**

2.1 | Grip range

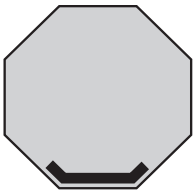
The grip range refers to which area of the racket handle is being held during the stroke that determines the position of the racket head at the point of impact with the shuttle.

This range should be thought of as a **continuum** with the grip terms being reference points to guide the player to the optimum grip range for the different badminton strokes.



Pan

V between 1st finger & thumb bottom of the handle

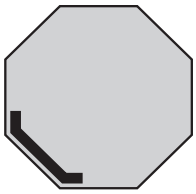






Bevel

Side of thumb presses on bevel

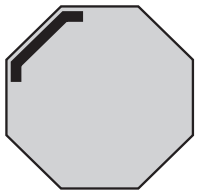






Basic

V between 1st finger & thumb on side of the handle

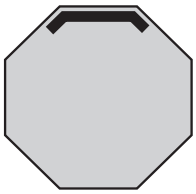






Thumb

Thumb placed flat on top of the handle







The optimum grip range for each shot maximises the mechanics of the body, due to the often complex rotations that take place in the upper and lower arm. However, players need to be able to make subtle changes within this range according to where the shuttle is in relation to their body position.

These changes within each grip range are controlled by the thumb and index finger and are only possible if the grip is sufficiently relaxed in between shots. This ensures that the head of the racket is in a position at impact that enables the player to hit the shuttle to the intended area of the court. The space between index finger & 2nd finger is important to maintain control and promote the change in grip range.

The general principles are:

- The wider the shuttle goes on the forehand side, the more towards the thumb area of the continuum
- This makes the racket head (forehand side) face into the court in the prepare phase



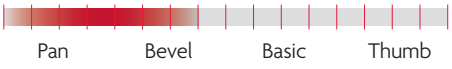


- The wider the shuttle goes on the backhand side, the more towards the pan area of the continuum
- This makes the racket head (backhand side) face into the court in the prepare phase





- If the shuttle travels towards the front of the body on the forehand side, the grip would be towards the pan area





- If the shuttle travels towards the body on the backhand side, the grip would be towards the thumb area





2.2 | Grip position

The grip position refers to the length of the grip and identifies where the optimum areas are on the handle for the different types of strokes.

This should also be seen as a continuum that runs from the top of the handle (also known as the ferrule) to the bottom.

Top (Ferrule) **Middle** **Bottom**

The general principles are:

- More power can be generated by holding the racket towards the bottom of the handle (long grip)



Top (Ferrule) Middle Bottom





- The racket can be moved quicker with more control if held towards the top of the handle (short grip)



Top (Ferrule) Middle Bottom





2.3 | Grip strength

The grip strength refers to the amount of tension that the hand applies to the grip at different stages of the stroke cycle.

This can again be considered along a continuum to ensure that the optimum amount of force can be applied to each stroke.



The general principles are:

- When hitting the shuttle with pace, tightening the grip on impact provides the optimum transition of force to the shuttle





- Having a relaxed grip in between strokes enables most efficient grip change to achieve optimum grip range





2.4 | Receiving

Receiving and sending skills form the foundation upon which hitting eventually builds. Receiving can be divided into catching and blocking.



Catching involves tracking a moving object and allowing your hands to coincide effectively with the flight path of that object.



Blocking is a development of catching which uses implements (e.g. table tennis bats, GetNets, short badminton rackets) to block the flight path of an object (e.g. beanbag).

Catching

Pupils work individually, throwing a ball against a wall and catching it or pupils work in pairs or small groups, tracking and catching a variety of objects (e.g. beanbags, shuttles, fluff balls, ribbon-tailed balls).

- Catch one handed, either with dominant or non-dominant hand.
- Try backhand catching with catching hand in a palm down position (backhand catching).
- Throwing shuttle in air, bend the elbow of the catching arm so the hand finishes palm up, just above one shoulder. Catch the shuttle in this hand. (This helps pupil's move into position for striking an overhead later in their development.)

- Slide beanbag to each other and catch it using cupped hands/fingers together.
- Use slow moving objects, brightly coloured objects or shuttle with ribbon attached to aid tracking.
- Allow ball to bounce before catching.

- Watch the object as carefully as possible. In the case of a shuttle, to focus concentration, watch the solid base of the shuttle rather than the whole shuttle.
- For catching objects low down (e.g. below the waist), cup the hands together with little fingers touching.
- For catching objects higher up (e.g. chest height), cup the hands together with thumbs touching.

- Resilience and Grit

Blocking

Blocking allows players to develop their tracking skills. The aim is to judge the flight of the object so it coincides with an implement held by the blocker. Working in pairs, one 'penalty taker' and one 'goalkeeper'. The goalkeeper carries a table tennis bat, GetNet or a short badminton racket. The goalkeeper defends a designated area and aims to block any beanbags/fluff balls/shuttles thrown towards the goal but can only do so with the implement they are carrying.



- Vary the length and size of the blocking implements.
- Play the goalkeeping game with two penalty takers who can pass the objects to help outmanoeuvre the goalkeeper.
- Goalkeeper uses split-step timed with throw.

- Focus on throws to specific predicable areas.
- Use slow moving objects, brightly coloured objects.
- Use large implements so it is easier to block.

- To track an object, it is important to watch it carefully.

- Respect

2.5 | Sending

Sending skills involve different methods of delivering an object. Methods of sending include throwing, flicking and pushing.

Push

In pairs (distance approximately one to two metres apart), pupils experiment pushing different objects (beanbags, shuttles, different weights of ball) to each other using an underarm technique. Note this does involve eventually releasing the object so at some stage it flies through the air. Focus on the feel of the movement, with the hand pushing the object and continuing to push through even after the object has been released.



- Aim at different size/heights of target.
- Pass objects over the net.

- Repeat with eyes closed to focus on the feel (kinaesthetic movement).

- Hand follows through line of intended travel direction of object.
- Forehand pushes are palm up and involve a bent wrist.
- Backhand pushes are palm down.

- Tolerance

Flick

Tricky flickies are essentially mini underarm throws. Working in pairs with one foot on a line, the aim is to flick an object as far as possible without taking the object back behind the line on the backswing (flex wrist). The longest flick can be marked with a cone. Tricky flickies can be performed with the palm or back of the hand leading. Pupils can compare the effectiveness of using either palm/ back of hand, e.g. back of hand when reaching across the body.



- Adapt game to focus on height or depth, or both. Pupil holds hoop in air for partner to flick object through.

- Pupils start with back to wall to restrict backswing action.
- Pupils lean over lowered net to flick object. If during backswing action hand/arm touches net, turn does not count.

- Flicks can be tricky because it is difficult for opponent to guess your intentions (but only when movement is short). They add deception to shots.
- Forehand flicks are more 'wrist' dominated.
- Backhand flicks are more 'rotational' and 'elbow' dominated.

- Integrity

Throw

a) Overarm Throw

This activity investigates how the body loads into a throw by gradually allowing more and more segments of the body to build a powerful throwing action. Working in pairs or facing a wall with a target, pupils throw a beanbag shuttle/ribbon-tailed ball or shuttle, working through the following stages:

Stage 1: Cross-legged.

Stage 2: Low kneel (allows shoulders to contribute).

Stage 3: High kneeling (releases the spine and allows hips to contribute).

Stage 4: Half kneel/stride kneel with opposite leg in forwards position to throwing arm (further releases the spine and hips).

Stage 5: Standing, sideways square stance (releases the knees, ankles and encourages full body rotation).

Stage 6: One step back to sideways stance to preload rear foot. Back leg pushes throwing hip forwards, closely followed by other body segments (trunk, shoulder, upper arm, lower arm, and wrist) in sequence. Object is released and rear leg steps through after ball is delivered.

- Throw with non-dominant hand.
- Increase distances between thrower and receiver.

- Game: as above but start closer to partner.

- Using the whole body, with the parts working in sequence, is the most powerful way to throw.

- Optimism

b) Wall Contact Throw



This game enables pupils to develop and refine their throwing skills by experimenting with different body shapes and fixation points.

In pairs, using different points of contact on a wall, pupils throw shuttles/fluff balls to each other applying the following variations:

- Both pupils place one hand on the wall and throw to their partner.
- Legs apart, heel of hand in contact (and arm straight) with the wall (can only use arm to throw).
- Feet together and heel of hand in contact with the wall. (Encourage flexion/rotation of hips.)
- One foot in contact with the wall – both legs flexed to stabilise hip.
- One hand and one foot in contact with the wall.
- One hand in contact with the wall whilst standing on one leg.
- Star shape with hand and foot in contact with the wall.

Change places and repeat above variations. Next, allow pupils to throw, utilising all parts of their body without the restriction of the wall.

- Increase distance between pupils.
- Use fluff balls.
- With the arm restricted, it is extremely difficult to preload for the throw. With the later stages, by allowing more space to preload the throw enables the balls/shuttles to fly further and the body to work more efficiently.
- Perseverance

c) Moving Target

This is a reactive 'turn and throw' game.

Attach traffic light cards to a wall at different heights (high, medium, low) and have available the following equipment: large ball (e.g. gym ball or equivalent), foam balls, beanbags, fluff balls, shuttles and basketballs.

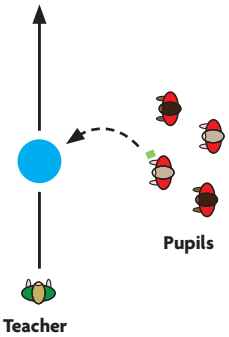
The teacher rolls a gym ball along the hall; pupils throw at the moving target using different types of throws:

Green = overarm
Amber = underarm/overarm sideways action
Red = underarm



Target challenges:

a) Hit target once.
b) Hit target twice.
c) Aim for target whilst hopping on one foot.
d) Turn to face the wall, teacher/partner calls 'Turn'.
e) Three balls to throw in quick succession.
f) Target ball is bounced.
g) Throw with non-dominant hand or start with feet together.



- Extend to bouncing targets and smaller targets.
- Use different weighted objects to throw.
- Use non-dominant hand.
- Place badminton net as a barrier to throw over.

- Start closer to target.

- Focus on preloading body to ensure object is 'weighted' accurately to reach target.
- Balance/posture.
- Discuss: difficulties encountered with different weighted objects.

- Honesty

d) Stance and Dance

Mark out playing area. Divide pupils into two teams. Nominate 'stance and dance' umpires. To score a point, a team must complete nine consecutive passes to other members of their team to spell the word 'badminton'. Meanwhile, the opposing team must try to intercept and gain possession so they get the opportunity to spell 'badminton'.

Game variations:

The 'stance and dance' umpire calls 'Fault!' if the following technical rules are not followed:

- The thrower must adopt a sideways stance before throwing the shuttle.
- The thrower must elevate non-throwing arm to throw shuttle.
- The thrower must take one-step back to preload throw.
- Throw shuttle with a jump and turn movement.

If fault is called, possession goes to the other side.



- Adapt game with the same throwing rules but involving a goal at each end of the court.

- Pupils practise throwing stance and throw ball against a wall.

- Relaxed sideways throwing stance, with front arm elevated and rear elbow bent.
- Load the rear leg.

- Tolerance

e) Throwminton

Using a weighted shuttle, contestants face each other on a court. To commence the rally, a serve is played by throwing the shuttle underarm. Rules are:

- Players must throw from the point they catch the shuttle.
- Players throw underarm if they catch the shuttle in the forecourt, overarm if they catch the shuttle in the mid and rearcourt.
- Points scored by landing the shuttle on the ground in the court boundaries, or forfeited by throwing the shuttle out of court or into the net.



- Change court size, play doubles or add more pupils to each side.

- Use a predictable rally that mixes overheads and underarms.

- Flicks and pushes in the forecourt can keep your opponent guessing.
- Overhead throws from the rearcourt can be powerful.

- Respect