



Skill Development Ball

This regulation size and weight volleyball is designed for beginners. The ball includes FIVE different color-coded areas for hand placement, contact placement, and/or alignment.

Red: Setting a Panel

How it Works:

Turn the panel longways (horizontal), place the thumbs and first fingers on the red dots.

THUMB - THUMB - FIRST FINGER - FIRST FINGER

Drill 1: Setter Draw Drill

Start with players discovering the shape and feel of their Setter's Hands. From those Red dots, players then position the ball to toss directly in front of them. From a toss, they quickly shape and imaginary volleyball, ready to receive their toss. Upon catching the Skill Ball, players turn it gently while maintaining the position their hands were in when they caught it - this tells the story of whether they maintained their good Setter's Hands.

Tip: If the younger or very beginners students lose shape of their hands while trying to move it around - coaches or teachers may need to step in to move it back around to find those Red dots.

Drill 2: Toss to Setter's Hands Drill

Young players begin with the Red dots out as the ball is pushed against their mid-section. From the correct "shape a panel" hand formation, players begin to draw the Skill Ball, being mindful of the distance between their thumbs and how their hands shape the volleyball. Then, from a toss, players toss and catch, freezing their hands to self-evaluate their "setter's hands". By maintaining the shape of their hands and with the coach/teacher adjusting the ball or by adjusting it themselves, students learn the importance of these wide and ball-shaping hands.

Tip: Letting the ball fall when the ball is drawn (brought to hairline), encourage players to look for "wrist-wrinkles".

Green: Underhand Serving

How it Works:

Using the green "hand", place your off-hand (not your striking hand) under the ball, low in your stance. Move the ball over to line it up in front of your striking shoulder. With a strong fist, contact the ball near the pinky of your golf tee hand. Saying "One, two, PUNCH" will help accelerate into the ball for a strong finish.

ONE - TWO - PUNCH

Drill 1: High, Medium, Low Serving Drill

Time to experiment with the Skill Ball and their Underhand Serve. Young players will discover, instead of being told, how angles of where the ball is lined up and how it sits prior to being hit, is important. With the Skill Ball is near those knee pads (low) and not out in front of them (high), they will quickly see the results of where and how the ball travels. The medium contact may allow for some of their attempts to be successful, but many will also go into the net or be short. The LOW contact, with the Drip of Sweat YELLOW Skill Ball reference point directly under the server's nose, will be the perfect formula for quick success.

Tip: ONE-TWO-STEP & PUNCH is the rhythm for their new volleyball "routine"

Drill 2: 3 in-a-row Serving Drill

Three equally places Skill Balls as seen in the video, players will quickly pick up each ball and without a lot of thinking, get right into their volleyball underhand serving routine. Emphasis will be placed on correctly setting the volleyball in their holding or off-hand, using the green areas for both off-hand placement and the next-to-pinky strike area. Then, lining up the Skill Ball on their striking shoulder and the Drip of Sweat YELLOW dot directly under their nose, strike all 3 volleyballs one immediately after the other.

Tip: Remind players how their form does not change from the close ball to the furthest. Only the punch or striking of the Skill Ball becomes a little more aggressive.

Blue: Overhand Serving (Float)

How it Works:

Using the blue target in the middle of the ball, focus on a steady contact with a big, open hand. The toss should be only a few inches higher than your extended striking arm, lined up with your hitting shoulder. Toss with your off-hand, step forward with the the foot opposite your striking shoulder, and punch with an accelerated striking arm. The step will open up your hips to incorporate the lower body.

Tip: Drop the elbow "one inch" and reduce your follow through to help make the ball float.

TOSS - STEP - PUNCH

Drill 1: Pop-Pops Ball Handling Drill

Keeping the blue dot in front of you (blue-toward-you), strike the blue dot with a big open hand. Line the volleyball and tossing hand up with the serving/striking shoulder. The ball is tossed or delivered in front of the striking hand. The tossing hand delivers the ball just inches from the point of release - bringing the tossing hand high. Flip the tossing hand around and you will have a blocking hand in place. The first POP is striking the ball and the second POP is the hand or sound of the tossing hand contact. It acts as a backstop after the ball is released. Pop-pops will make two sounds when done correctly. Beginners may hit the ball at the same time - one big POP! Just keep working on the pop-pop rhythm, that starts with the striking hand making the initial contact.

Drill 2: Floor Down Balls Drill

With the Blue Dot UP and a strong open-hand contact, see if you can directly strike the Skill Ball so that the blue dot is still in view upon catching it. Keep the volleyball over and in front of the striking shoulder and maintain a big, open striking hand. The blue dot should be a point of reference in attempting to "cover" the dot at contact.

Tip: Make the Floor Down Ball movement two moves, one - draw off the ball and pause, and two, downward strike on top of the ball or direct hit on the blue dot - this is to avoid a unwanted whip motion off and back to the ball.

Purple: Hitting Hand Striking Zones

How it Works:

The ball has a top third, a middle third and a bottom third. Place the ball in your tossing hand with the purple top third UP, and concentrate on striking the ball in a fully extended manner to hit the top third (purple). Lengthen your reach and rely on your strong wrist snap to gain momentum with this repetitive movement.

FLOOR - WALL - HAND, REPEAT
DIVIDE THE BALL IN THIRDS

Drill 1: Top Spinners Ball Handling Drill

Top Spinners are fun and a great introduction to the question - what is Top Spin? First, show the spin the volleyball will have when top spin is created. Then, using the middle Purple Dot and the top Purple Dot, players can begin experimenting with the full arm and hand movement of sending energy or movement across the top of the volleyball. Players can work alone and discover the ball turning, either controlling the ball by catching it after contact or up against a wall.

Drill 2: Two Slappies - 10 Deliveries Serving Drill

The Two Slappies are fun to help and teach young players to cover as much surface area as possible, but with a big hand and not a stiff hand. The Top Spin effort comes from a ball positioned out in front of the players hitting shoulder and the ball should always stay in front of the player. The 10 Deliveries teaches a steady and well-positioned toss while adding the contact and watching for the ball to turn forward or, the ball coming off the hand with top spin.

Tip: Young players should reach or strike the ball with a high-hand and finish with a driving hand feeling, one that has the striking hand headed toward the top of the volleyball. (or the wall/net)

Black: Passing Numbers

How it Works:

You will see the ball has six panels numbered 1 through 6.

From a toss, SEE THE BALL INTO YOUR PLATFORM and shout out the number you see at contact. A player or coach may stand directly behind you to see if you are both seeing the same number!

Tip: Extend your platform and watch the ball INTO your arms - don't call out the number actually touching your arms, but the one you see while passing.

SEE THE BALL INTO YOUR PLATFORM

Drill 1: Let-It-Fall Ball Handling Drill

Players watch for the numbered panel that is directly in view as they catch a low, falling volleyball. Keeping their thumbs on top and their platform arms long and strong, players will have immediate success in quickly identifying the panel number and SEEING THE BALL into their hands. Remind players this is an important part of becoming a fundamentally strong passer; to see the volleyball all the way in to their platform.

Drill 2: Self-Passing Numbers Drill

This is the perfect backyard, practice warm-up or PE class challenge drill. From a self-toss, players quickly build their platform and pass to themselves, calling out the panel numbered they immediately see just as the ball drops into their arms. Players are encouraged to not reach, but to move their feet for adjusting their platform under the volleyball and to let the ball fall in their stance.

Tip: Emphasize the importance of talking and communicating in the game of volleyball. This “calling out” the numbers is a way to begin being vocal and an early intro to the talking expectation.

