

20 Tips to Improve Energy in Practice

Be a cagey practice planner

1. Play a game to start practice.
2. Switch partners frequently in all 2's/3's situations.
3. Instead of punishment, create drill formats that reinforce expectations (½ and ½ drills).
4. Use your assistant! Maybe even recruit a parent.
5. Establish an end-of-practice ritual that rewards players for positive behaviors.
6. Be creative with scheduling.

Manipulate time to your advantage

7. Keep time durations short, 10 minutes might be the max. You'll need more activities.
8. Communicate a clear end to each activity (time, number of contacts, in-a-rows, game to 5).
9. Experiment with creative ways to reinforce hustling between activities (positive instead of negative).
10. Use a "throw in" on missed serves to keep the action moving.

Make competition your friend

11. Keep competitive games short. Instead of a game to 25, play best out of 5 mini-games to 7 points (begin at 18-18).
12. Use the Doghouse format instead of Queens. This rewards your better players and improves the level of play.
13. Use ladders. Once again, keeping your best players engaged is critical.
14. Record scores, both team and individual.

Manage your coaching behaviors

15. Be clear, be patient, and teach.
16. Talk less.
17. Be engaged, active and get excited. (No stealing glances at your phone! Players see everything.)
18. When possible, coach individuals instead of stopping everyone.
19. When stopping everyone, catch a player doing it correctly and use her as a model.
20. Celebrate little improvements!