



# THE SAFE SQUASH GUIDE



CREATED BY



## PLAY SAFE

These practices are designed to allow players to maintain social-distancing while practising and playing squash games. They should be adapted to players' levels.

## SAFE SQUASH

Be aware of your court entry and exit responsibilities. Adapt the intensity of the exercises depending on local social distancing regulations and advice.

## SAFETY LETS

Sometimes a shot may encroach into a partner's territory. In this case stop and play a safety let.

## SQUASH ACTIVITIES

You may be able to participate in safe squash activities which will develop skill and movement, allow you to have fun and enjoy a challenge.

**Warm-up:** warm up safely before you enter the court including some shadow shots.

**Coaching:** your coach will be able to watch you practise from off or on court and offer coaching instruction. Also a coaching session can be planned to maintain social distancing.

**Feeding:** you can work with a partner and feed balls for each other to practise shots.

**Movement and Fitness:** if appropriate consider shuttle running (court sprints) and ghosting (shadow movement) in intervals at the end of your court session. These can vary but you may start at six sets of 10 court lengths and build up to 10 sets of 20.

## PLAN YOUR SESSION

It is a good idea to plan out your court session by writing down a sequence of practices before you arrive. Bring this guide with you or check the one on the club notice board. Each practice in this guide is named and numbered but it is not of course exclusive. Research and collect more. There are suggestions for this at the end.

A debrief would also be very useful. You could ask your partner, "which practices and games worked best and what changes do we need to make next time?"

## TYPES OF PRACTICE AND GAMES

When planning your social-distanced court session using this Safe Squash Guide, consider the four different types of practice and games:

**Cooperative practice:** practise technique and control while working with your partner (rather than trying to beat them) to get into a rhythm and maybe attempt a challenge. Provide a suitable shot for your partner so you can both keep the practice going and get better results overall.

**Practice:** in practice you get time to be aware of and to try to improve the elements of technique. Try little checks to see how you are doing. Practice moving your feet to get in the best place for your shots early; adjust; use your knees, your suspension system; prepare for your swing early; turn your body; pause for the best timing and to make just the right impact; check your balance; groove your swing; exit the shot. Be aware of your target areas.

**Scored practices:** these develop your sporting concentration under a little pressure.

**Games:** these develop the mental, tactical and decision-making parts of your game as well as technique. They can also be fun.

## ADAPT

Regard the practice guidelines as a framework and adapt them to allow good skills practice, rallying and competition. If you are not getting good rallies make it a little easier. Adapt the rules, variations, development suggestions, options and areas to make the exercise work. Start easily with feeding shots and progress.

**Challenges:** set some targets; break records and make it interesting.

**Serving:** generally here serving is just a starting shot, a fair way to get the practice or game underway without trying to win an advantage. It is an 'accepted serve'. If an opponent does not accept the serve (or first shot) it is played again until accepted. Some games may allow a 'full' serve.

**Straight:** often drives and straight lobs can be interchangeable.

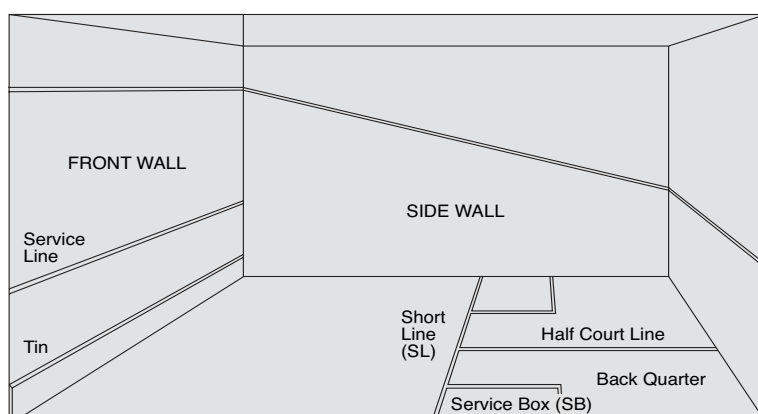
**Two bounces:** in practices two bounces are acceptable to keep the practice moving.

**Feeds and Self-Feeds:** a feed is an easy shot, set up so you can practise a shot. Coaches use them all the time. If a practice proves difficult, use more feeding shots initially to make it work. Self-feed by throwing the ball underarm, off the wall, let it bounce and then hit.

**Areas** – adapt the 'in' and 'out' areas to make the exercise work.

## COURT LINES AND AREAS

**Safe squash areas:** for frontcourt shots we tend to just use an area roughly a quarter of the way down the court from the front wall but it can be defined if you like. One rule you can try is if the second bounce lands behind SL, it is out. Alternatively you can exclude low drives and kills or shots that may force you back into your partner's area. If in doubt play a safety let.



## SCORING

You can score many of the practices and games. Perhaps have a little trial of a few rallies to get the rules, the level and the scoring right.

**Game scores:** as you like. Often these are PAR to 6, 9 or 11.

**Match scores:** you can put several different games together and, for example, use a 'best of five' match score or total the points from each game.

**Handicaps:** giving a weaker player a few points headstart may make games more interesting if players' levels are different.

## KEY

SL: short line, SB: service box.

## REFERENCE

1. You can download this poster on [squashplayer.co.uk](http://squashplayer.co.uk) and see it in the squashplayer digital magazine: 2020 Issue 2.
2. More routines with social distancing can be found on: [squashtraining.ch](http://squashtraining.ch)

## 1. KNOCK-UP

### (1) Full Knock-Up

Player (A) hits straight or across to the opposite back quarter; Player (B) hits straight or across.

The knock-up (or on-court warm-up) allows players to get their hitting going before a match; practise and groove their shots; practise observing and anticipating an opponent; and lastly warm the ball.

This is a good place to start for a practice session. Try to focus in on your own hitting. Run through the elements of your technique: footwork, racket and body preparation, stance and balance, maintaining balance as you hit and as your weight transfers, swing (perhaps feeling your racket head at the start and end points of the swing) and exiting the shot. Examine your target areas and make adjustments. Recognise and repair shots that are astray.

Develop a little checklist to run through what you are trying to do. There are a whole variety of shots and combinations to practise.

Note: players must share the ball. It is useful to hit both straight and across. Generally players will not hit more than three shots.

## 2. SIDE to SIDE

We are familiar with side-to-side hitting from the knock-up. This can be limited to specific shots and turned into formal practices and competitive games.

### (1) Two-Shot Cooperative Practice

Players hit straight and then across.

**Challenge:** How many can you do: anywhere; above the service line; behind the short line; behind the service box including off the back wall?

### (2) One-Shot Cooperative Practice

Players hit across to each other.

**Challenge:** how many can you do: anywhere; above the service line; behind the SL?

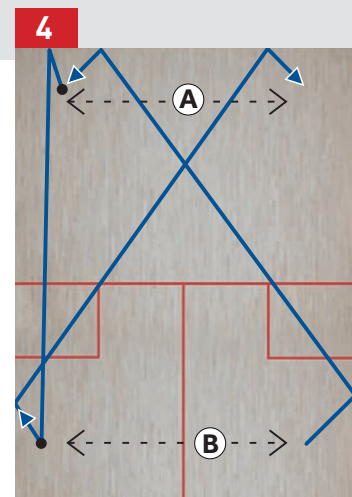
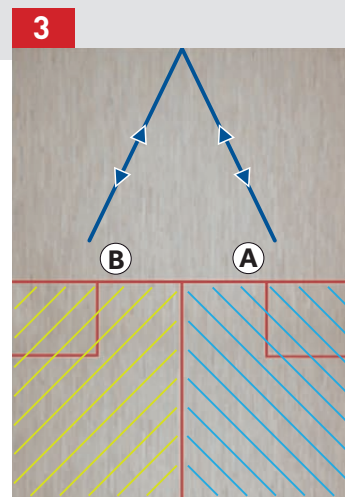
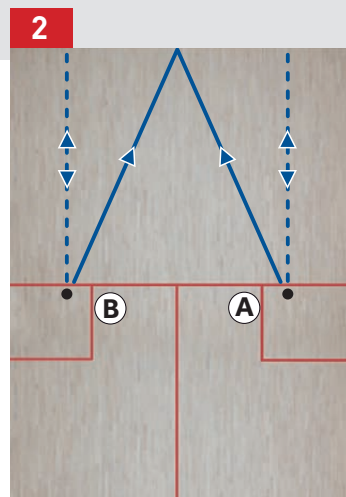
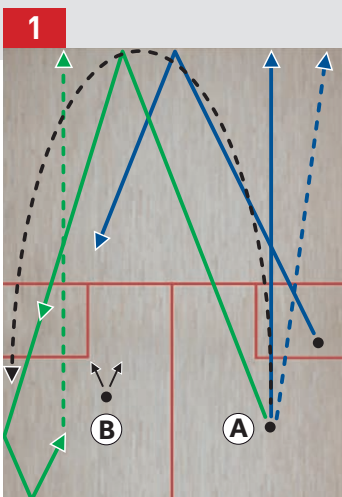
### (3) Opposite Quarter Game

Players serve and hit across to the opposite quarter behind the SL. When a player doesn't return to this area their opponent wins the rally.

### (4) Two-Shot Opposite Quarter Game

As (3) but each player can hit to themselves (to land behind the SL) and then hit across.

**Variation:** players must hit to themselves behind the SB.



### (5) Opposite Sides Game

Normal serve. Players play as normal but must hit every shot to the opposite side.

### (6) Two-Shot Opposite Sides Game

As (5) but each player can hit to themselves and then hit across.

**Variations:** (a) shots hit from the front half must be hit behind the SL; (b) shots hit from the front half can be hit anywhere.

## 3. VOLLEY ACROSS

### (1) One-Shot Cooperative Practice

Move up to the SL (or closer to the front if it helps) and practise volleying across to each other.

**Challenge:** how many can you do: anywhere; above the service line; behind the SL?

**Develop:** gradually move back.

### (2) Two-Shot Cooperative Practice

As above but players volley straight and then across.

**Challenge:** how many can you do: anywhere; above the service line; behind the SL?

### (3) Volley Quarter Game

Players serve and then volley across to the opposite back quarter. When a player cannot return to this area their opponent wins the rally.

### (4) Two-Shot Volley Quarter Game

As (3) but each player can hit to themselves and then hit across.

### (5) Volley Sides Game

Players volley across to opposite side; shots in front quarter can be played off first bounce and must be hit to back opposite quarter.

### (6) Two-Shot Volley Sides Game

As (5) but a player can hit straight to themselves (off bounce or volley) then volley across.

## 4. BOAST AND DRIVE

### (1) Two-Shot Boast and Drive Cooperative Practice

Start easily with feeding shots. Player (A) in the front self-feeds a high drop and drives to land around the service box and out from the sidewall. Player (B) self-feeds a high drive, lifting the ball to the service box and boasts. (A) moves to the opposite side and repeats.

**Challenge:** how many can you do?

**Develop:** gradually progress the practice to full drives and drops (see (3)).

### (2) Boast and Drive Practice

(i) (A) straight drives and (B) boasts

Initially both players play to develop a rhythm (as (1)) then tighten and target their shots.

(ii) As (i) with (B) volley boasting or boasting.

### (3) Two-Shot Boast and Drive Practice

(A) drops and straight drives and back-pedals to a ready position; (B) straight drives and boasts and skips to a ready position on the T.

### (4) Boast and Drive Scoring Practice

(i) (A) drops and drives behind the SL (and within the SB width); (B) drives behind SL and boasts. Score each rally after the service is accepted.

(ii) (A) drives and (B) boasts.

**Develop:** (i) and (ii) above by varying the areas when appropriate to behind the SB and boasts below the service line.

**Options:** introduce volley boasts; introduce straight volley drops; introduce straight drops.

### (5) Boast/Volley Boast and Drive Practice

As a practice or with scoring.

## 5. DIAGONAL

### (1) Two-Shot Boast and Crosscourt/Lob Practice

(A) feeds a straight drive then boasts; (B) feeds a drop and crosscourts. Move the feeds to full drops and drives as appropriate.

**Develop:** (A) volleys straight and boasts; (B) drops and crosscourts or lobs.

### (2) Boast and Crosscourt/Lob Practice

(A) boasts; (B) crosscourts or lobs.

### (3) Boast and Crosscourt Scoring Practice

(1) and (2) above can be scored.

### (4) Diagonal Game

(i) (A) either backcourt boasts or crosscourt drops; (B) either crosscourts or lobs.

(ii) As above including volley.

**Develop:** (B) plays to opposite quarter (or alternatively areas behind the SB).

### (5) Two-Shot Diagonal Game

(i) (A) backcourt hits straight to land behind the SL and then boasts or crosscourt drops; (B) drops, and crosscourt or lobs behind the SL (or SB).

(ii) As above including volley.

## 6. ALTERNATE

This practice combines the straight driving/lobbing of No.4 and the crosscourt driving/lobbing of No.5. Basically Player (A) frontcourt alternates straight and crosscourt shots.

### (1) Two-Shot Alternate Cooperative Practice

(A) frontcourt self-feeds or drops then straight drives;

(B) backcourt self-feeds or drives then boasts; (A) drops

and crosscourts; (B) plays straight and boasts etc.

**Challenge:** how many you can do?

### (2) Alternate Practice

(A) frontcourt drives straight; (B) boasts; (A) crosscourts;

(B) boasts etc.

### (3) Alternate Scoring Practice

As (2) but boasts must be below the service line; drives and crosscourts behind the SL or SB (as agreed).

**Also see:** Diagonal Game: 5 (4).

### (4) Two-Shot Alternate Practice With Volley

(A) as in (1) above; (B) moves to volley (A)'s straight or crosscourt shot straight and then boasts.

### (5) Alternate Scoring Practice

As (4) above with (A) trying to beat (B) with drive/lobs to the area behind the SB. (B) must volley or lose the point.

## 7. STRAIGHT AND DROP

### (1) Two Shot Straight and Drop Practice

(A) frontcourt self-feeds or drops then straight drives;

(B) backcourt self-feeds or drives then straight drops.

**Challenge:** how many you can do?

### (2) Straight and Drop Practice

(A) frontcourt straight drives; (B) backcourt straight drops.

### (3) Straight and Drop Scoring Practice

(A) frontcourt straight drives; (B) backcourt straight drops.

Set areas as appropriate: behind the SL; behind the SB.

### (4) Two Shot Straight and Drop Practice With Volley

(A) drops and drives; B volleys (or drives) and drops.

In practice you may let the volley bounce twice to keep the exercise moving.

### (5) Two Shot Straight and Drop Practice With Volley Drop

(A) frontcourt drops then straight drives/lobs; (B) backcourt volley drops.

### (6) One Side Front/Back Game

(A) drives/lobs to back; (B) drops and volley drops.

Adjust areas as appropriate.

## 8. FRONT/BACK

### (1) Front/Back Practice

(A) frontcourt drives, lobs and crosscourts to the backcourt;

(B) boasts and drops (straight and crosscourt).

### (2) Front/Back Game

(A) as above with scoring.

**Areas:** define areas or use the Safe Squash Areas.

