

Week 1: Kitchen Control

60 minutes | 16 players | 4 courts | Current level: 4.0+

Hi everyone! This week we'll start with plenty of dinking with a focus on consistent targeting and moving between shots. The basic outline is that we have a series of drills to work through in the first hour and then we'll have 90 minutes of rec play to try it out in a more competitive setting. Help each other build good rallies and enjoy the friendly competition!

Goals for this week

- 🧠 Building consistent dink rallies with intentional ball placement
- 🧠 Having a plan for positioning after the shot
- 🧠 Moving both with and without the ball
- 🧠 Determining appropriate placement
- 🧠 Partner communication

Drilling Plan

#	Time	Drill	Type	Style	Minutes
1	00–05	Figure-eight pattern	Warmup	Warmup	5
2	05–15	Outside crosscourt dinks	Mechanic	Cooperative	10
3	15–25	Center versus wide dinks	Mechanic	Cooperative	10
4	25–35	Wide and Slide	Tactic	Competitive	10
5	35–45	Speedup and reset	Mechanic	Rally Game	10
6	45–60	2-on-1	Strategy	Rally Game	15
	60–150	Rec Play	All of the above	Competitive	90

Getting started

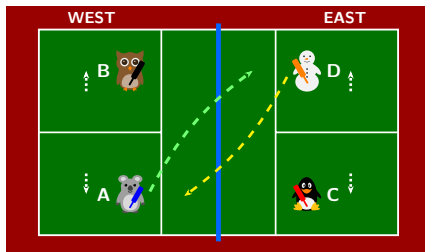
- 🧠 **Court assignments** We'll give you a number when you arrive at HVP and will use the numbers to assign you to courts. You'll rotate courts every 2 drills to get to mix up partners and opponents. Some of the drills will also have you rotating within the court.
- 🧠 **Keep things moving** We'll blow a whistle or otherwise notify you when it is time to switch drills or courts.
- 🧠 **Scorekeeping** For the first three drills we are just counting consecutive successful dinks and we aren't keeping score in drill four. For drills five and six we'll use rally-start rules where the winner of the previous point gets to feed the next one. Each team alternates its feeder for each point they start. Don't rotate positions after a score since we'll swap positions after each (short) game in those drills.



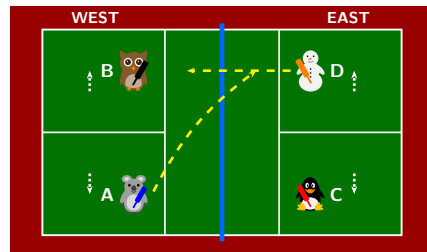
1. Figure-eight warmup

00–05 min

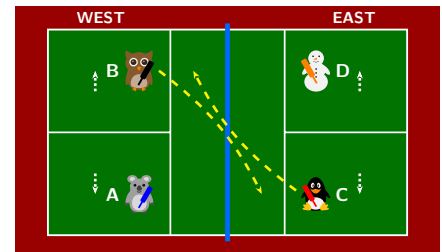
The idea. Get everyone moving and see which court can build the longest streak of consecutive (good) dinks.



1. A feeds D. D's first return goes crosscourt to A.



2. A's first return goes to D. D then goes straight to B.



3. B and C start crosscourt too. Each player then alternates.

Set up. All four players at the kitchen line with one ball. A feeds D softly crosscourt to start the warmup.

1. The first time you receive a ball you must dink cross court
2. After the first cross court dink you can either continue cross court or dink up the line
3. After three cross court dinks you must dink up the line (and then the person across from you must dink cross court)

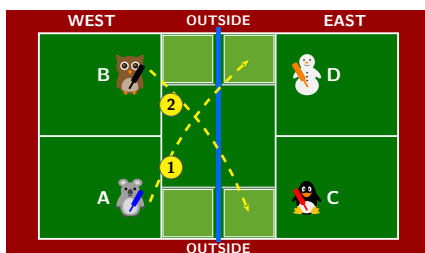
Drill notes: After each dink, move laterally and reset your position. Count the number of consecutive dinks on your court.

Timing and switches. After 2 minutes swap sides with your partner (so if you were on the right now you should be on the left and vice versa).

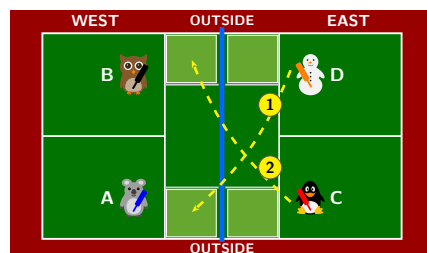
2. Outside crosscourt dinks

05–15 min

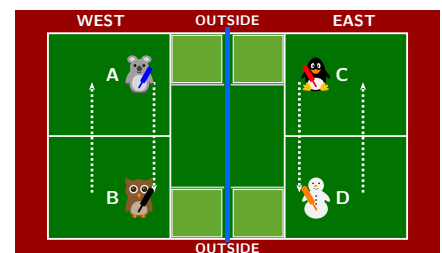
The idea. Build a consistent crosscourt rally with your practice partner.



1. Two balls: A–D and B–C. Dink into the outside lanes.



2. Return crosscourt. Count your pair's longest soft rally.



3. Stop; secure both balls. Swap lanes and keep A–D / B–C.

Set up. Two balls: A/D and B/C. Divide each player's kitchen half lengthwise while aiming for the outside five-foot box, safely inside the sideline.

1. Start cross court feeds a moment apart. Both pairs dink crosscourt at once. Move and recover after each shot.
2. Count non-attackable dinks in the outside box. Misses or dead ends that pair's streak.

Drill notes: Start cooperatively with fairly flat dinks to get in a rhythm. In the second 5 minutes, vary the spins on your dinks to practice identifying and neutralizing attacks.

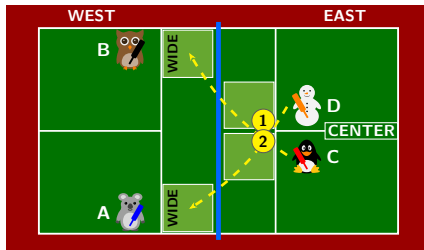
Timing and switches. Rotate sides with your partner every two minutes.



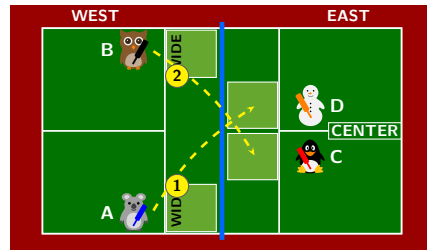
3. Center versus wide

15–25 min

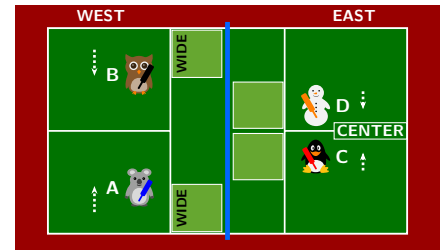
The idea. Get used to moving for the ball and recovering between shots.



1. East starts near center and sends both balls wide.



2. West dinks back to center. Each pair uses its own ball.



3. Recover after each shot. Move out again to meet the reply.

Set up. Two balls, A/D and B/C. C/D start EAST near center; A/B start WEST wide. Each player keeps their own half.

1. East feeds/dinks crosscourt WIDE; west returns crosscourt CENTER. Let the balls bounce.
2. Wide players recover a small step toward middle, then move out for the next ball. Center players adjust and recover too.
3. Return to a balanced position between shots.

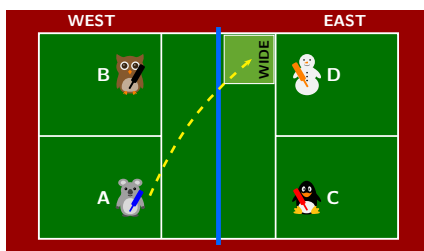
Drill notes: In the middle of a cross court rally, dinking to the center can be a nice way to reset the point and get yourself some time. From the other side, getting used to hitting these dinks out of the center back out wide is a great way to keep your opponents off balance.

Timing and switches. After 2 minutes rotate clockwise around the court to a new position. The same spots on the court remain in the center vs.outside.

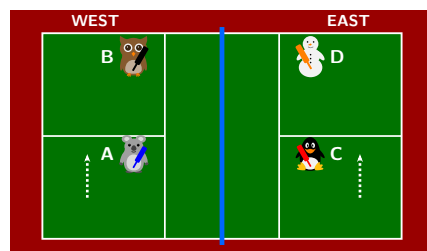
4. Wide and Slide

25–35 min

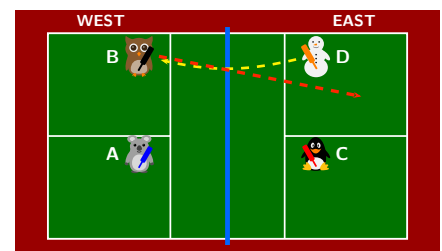
The idea. Intentionally move an opponent wide while you and your partner move together to try to setup a center putaway.



1. A dinks wide to D and gets ready to move.



2. A closes middle; B covers line. C also closes middle.



3. High reply to B? B may attack. Low reply? Keep dinking.

Set up. One ball with everyone starting at the kitchen line. The feeding side is the aggressor, trying to setup a popup or weak ball to attack.

1. To start A feeds to D and D dinks back crosscourt to A
2. A then dinks aggressively wide to D, then pushes towards the middle and closes the seam.
3. B protects the immediate line/angle and counter.
4. Both A and B are looking to hit a put away off of D's return. If D hits a good crosscourt dink, reset and try again.
5. For the first two rounds per feeder cooperate by having D hit an attackable shot off the wide ball. After that D can play more assertively and play it out as a live ball.

Drill notes: The most important part here is communication and positioning. Let your partner know you are dinking wide so they can slide further to get you space to take aggressive shots in the middle.

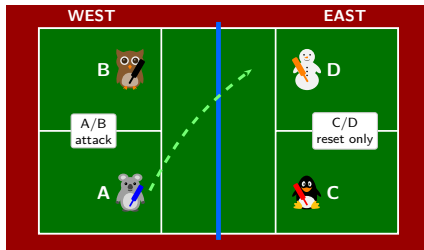
Timing and switches. Have each player feed four balls in a row and then rotate. Swap sides with your partner after 5 minutes.



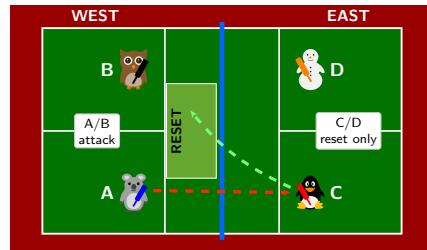
5. Speedup and Reset

35–45 min

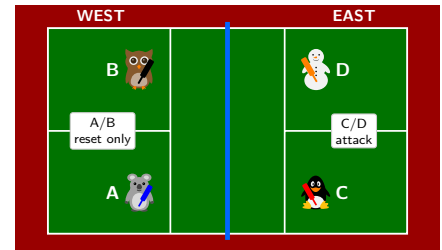
The idea. Choosing the right balls to speed up and mentally preparing for resets.



1. Soft kitchen feed. A/B attack; C/D reset only.



2. A speeds up; C resets softly into A/B's kitchen. No counters.



3. Game over: secure the ball, then switch roles for the next game.

Set up. One ball with everyone starting at the kitchen. To start with A and B are the attackers, while C and D try to reset only. Play out rally games to 6, starting with a soft feed crosscourt. After the feed bounces the balls is live.

1. Attackers speed up with control, looking for opportunity to hit winners.
2. For the Resetters the goal is to get the ball back in the kitchen off of each speedup.

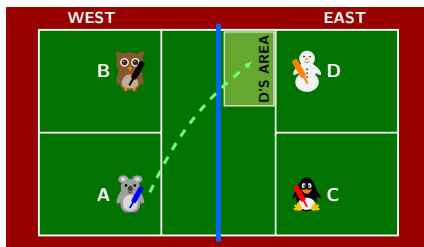
Drill notes. Whoever wins the rally gets one point. The resetters get one bonus point if they win on a ball that bounces in the attackers kitchen (either a winner or an attacker error). Attackers get two bonus points for a speedup winner. Attackers lose one point if they make an error on a speedup (hit it out or in the net).

Timing and switches. Rotate partners and switch roles (attack/reset) after each game to 6.

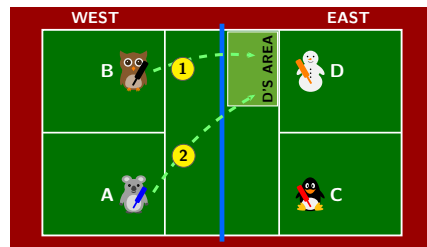
6. 2-on-1 Targeting

45–60 min

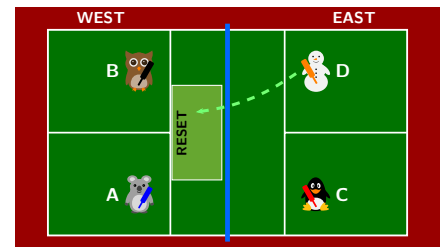
The idea. Use positioning to support your attack on the weaker player.



1. Soft setup to D; the feed is not contact 1.



2. Two successive A/B contacts go safely to D. C stays ready.



3. After contact 2, call "open." All four can use the court.

Set up. One ball with everyone starting at the kitchen. First target D: A attacks crosscourt, B attacks up the line, C stays available for reachable balls on their side, and D defends.

1. A starts by feeding to D.
2. A and B direct at least their next TWO shots at D.
3. D tries to reset wide or to the middle. C helps by dinking cross court when they get a ball and trying to get engaged in the middle.

Drill notes. Attacking the weaker player is a common idea in competitive play but not something we often practice intentionally. The big thing to focus on in this drill is using your positioning to put pressure on the targeted player. You don't need to go for the win immediately if you know you are going to be able to eventually force up a weak ball with consistent pressure. For the defensive side, the key is to focus on hitting unattackable balls while under pressure and to get the pattern involved by moving the returns around.

Timing and switches. Rotate positions after each game to 5. Always keep attacking whichever player is in position D (so the attacking team is the other side).

Diagram key: yellow = ordinary shot; green = feed or reset; red = attack; white dotted = player movement.

