

## Create Your Own Practice Programme

Ideally you should be the best judge of your own game and the parts you will need to practise to improve your play. This chapter will help you to devise your own practices using a combination of the individual strokes described in chapter 9.

### DEVISING YOUR OWN PRACTICES

#### Practise Your Strokes and Action Phrases

In a game you perform your strokes as part of an action phrase (see Fig 6, page 18) in which your approach travel phase to the hitting position is linked to your recovery travel phase into position to cover your opponent's probable replies. As your rallies in singles and doubles are made up of action phrases you should aim to practise your strokes within an action phrase.

You can however, and it is usual to do so, first practise a stroke by extracting it from a particular action phrase and practise it on its own to develop your technical or tactical skill. To do this you would stand in the appropriate hitting position and then keep practising until you had *grooved* the stroke so that you can hit the shuttle accurately and with consistency. When you are satisfied with it then you should add the travel phases before and after the stroke and practise the whole action phrase. Alternatively you could practise the stroke within the whole action phrase from the outset. The choice is yours and will depend on what stage you are at in your practice.

#### From Single to Combination Stroke Practices

The practice routines in this chapter lead you to combine several strokes to make your practice more *complex*. You will find that your practices will range from *easy to difficult* and *simple to complex*, depending on the number of strokes

you decide to use within a practice. In a complex practice, for example, you may decide that you want to practise a clear followed by a net return followed by a scissor jump cross-court smash from your backhand rearcourt. See Figs 48 (a), (b) and (c).

If you use the recommended procedure and know how to practise individual strokes you should find it easy to devise your own practice routines. You should learn how to do this so that after taking part in formal competition you can create specific practices for different aspects of your game. I have already explained the procedures in chapter 5 (pages 29–38) for technical and tactical skill practices but I will remind you of them again. They consist of a number of progressive stages.

#### TECHNICAL SKILL

The focus here is on your **SELF** and how you do what you do.

**STAGE 1:** Practise to develop the 'feel' of the stroke.

**STAGE 2:** Practise to develop your accuracy.

**STAGE 3:** Practise to develop your consistency.

**STAGE 4:** Add the travel phases to practise the stroke as part of an action phrase.

**STAGE 5:** Add the element of *uncertainty*.

#### TACTICAL SKILL

The focus here is on the **OTHER** player and what you can make them do.

**STAGE 1:** Decide on the game situation and the action phrase.



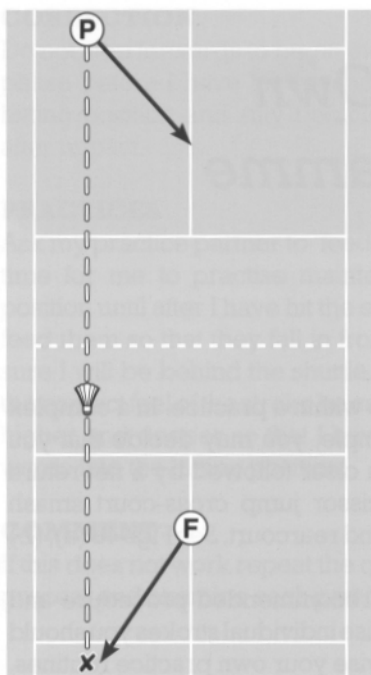


Fig 48 (a)  
P clears.

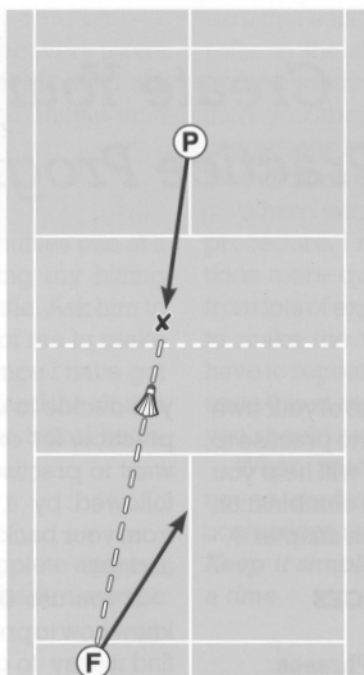


Fig 48 (b)  
P travel to Fc.

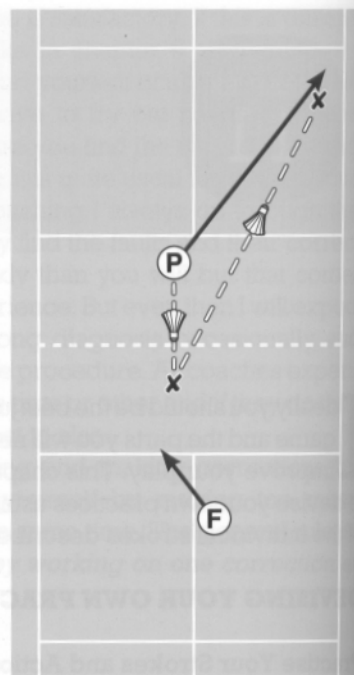


Fig 48 (c)  
Plays net reply and travels to RC to smash lob from F.

**STAGE 2:** Decide how you will start the practice and end it.

**STAGE 3:** Develop the practice by adding more action phrases.

**STAGE 4:** Increase the degree of difficulty.

**STAGE 5:** Add the elements of *uncertainty and competition*.

#### Make Use of the Practice Procedure

In a tactical practice it will be necessary to follow the procedure as written whereas in technical practice you do not have to go through the procedure from stage 1 to stage 5 each time you practise a stroke. It depends on the stroke and what you want to improve.

You could begin at stage 1 and practise the 'feel' of the stroke if that is what is needed, or begin at stage 5 and add some uncertainty into the practice. You may even begin at stage 1 and, from there jump straight to stage 4, or begin at stage 4 and go back to stage 1 to make some minor correction. It

is entirely up to you how you move around in these stages.

#### Decide on your Practice Aims and Standards

In a technical practice there are three main aims which are synonymous with the standards you should achieve. These are:

- fluency and ease of performance of your actions
- accuracy
- consistency.

These aims apply even when you add the *travel phases* and *uncertainty* at stages 4 and 5. The addition of these two stages should not affect your aims. If you cannot achieve these standards in the later stages then you should go back to stage 1 perhaps and make whatever corrections are necessary.

In a tactical practice your aims will be related to achieving the standards of *effectiveness* and *consistency* in using your strokes as building shots or attempted winning shots.

### Set Practice Targets and Measure your Success in Practice

It is pointless to practise without knowing whether or not you are improving as a result of your practice. You should have some way of measuring your improvement. This is quite easy to do.

Let's continue with your forehand clear as an example and assume that in practice your accuracy only has a success rate of 50 per cent, five out of ten. Obviously this is not good enough so you decide to improve it. You decide on the **realistic** target of 70 per cent success rate, seven out of ten.

As you usually repeat things to get them right in practice, you can now organise your practice into a set number of repetitions. Sets of ten repetitions will measure your improvement. Complete one set of ten repetitions and record how many times you were accurate. If you only get six out of ten accurate, 60 per cent success, then do another set of ten repetitions and count your score again. Keep doing this until you achieve your target of seven out of ten, 70 per cent success.

If you do this easily then it could be that you are better than you judged so do another set and try to achieve 80 per cent success.

If you can improve your success rate in stages 4 and 5 then you should show an improvement in competition. This will in turn increase your confidence and with it your chances of winning.

### Develop Your Technical Practice and Extend Yourself

It is sensible to make your practices more demanding. This will force you to extend yourself and help you to improve your standard of play. There are several ways of doing this:

- *Increase the number of repetitions you do* (the amount of practice). If you have been doing ten repetitions of your forehand clear then keep increasing this until you can do fifty repetitions. This will place demands on your concentration, determination and fitness.
- *Increase the speed at which you practise*. If you have been practising the standard clear in an action phrase then ask your practice partner to hit attack clears to give you less time to get into position to hit your clear. This will also place extra demands on your concentration,

determination, fitness and body skill.

- *Increase the distance and height that you jump*. If you are practising jump smashes then practise jumping higher or further to hit the shuttle. This will place extra demands on your fitness as well as your body skill.
- *Add the element of uncertainty*. Ask your practice partner to play dropshots as well as the attack clear so that you cannot anticipate the clear and cheat yourself by starting early.

### Fitness

The harder you practise the fitter you must be. If you increase your work rate (*the intensity*) in the practice and increase the quantity (*volume*) of work then you will need to be fit. The work itself will help to make you fitter but this should be in addition to any fitness training you are doing.

### Mental Attitude

Good-quality practices will also help to develop some aspects of your mental attitude. They will help to develop concentration in keeping your focus on the practice, determination to get a specific part of your game right, self-discipline which will help you to maintain regular practice, regardless of whether or not you want to do it, and self-confidence which will grow with the knowledge that you can do the work and achieve good standards of play. You can read more about mental attitude in chapter 15.

### Devise Your Own Practices

You should now be able to make up your own practices. To help you further I have devised a practice form which you can photocopy and use to make up practices when you need them. See page 116.

*The practice form* has an explanation written beside each heading. I have provided an example of how I would use it to work out a practice for the forehand lob. Once you have grasped the idea make some copies of the blank practice form and devise some practices for yourself.

Once you get into the habit of practising in this organised way you will find that you won't need to use the practice form. In the meantime it should help you to practise successfully.



## STROKE PRACTICE FORM

<b><u>STROKE</u></b>	whatever stroke you need to practise.
<b>PRACTICE STAGE</b>	from 1 to 5 in the practice procedure stages.
<b>AIM(S) OF PRACTICE</b>	the standard you want to achieve when using the stroke: fluency, accuracy, consistency.
<b>TARGET SCORE</b>	success rate you want to achieve: percentage score or your score out of ten, e.g. 70 per cent or seven out of ten.
<b>HITTING POSITION</b>	from where you hit the shuttle, e.g. forecourt, midcourt or rearcourt.
<b>FEEDER'S POSITION</b>	where your practice partner stands to 'feed' shuttles to you.
<b>ACTION PHRASE</b>	the approach and recovery travel phases before and after you play the stroke. This will be illustrated on the court diagram.
<b><u>PRACTICE</u></b>	
<b>NUMBER OF REPETITIONS</b>	how many times you will perform the practice, ten repetitions, fifty repetitions.
<b>NUMBER OF SETS</b>	the number of times the agreed number of repetitions are performed, e.g. five sets of ten repetitions.
<b>INSTRUCTIONS</b>	inform the players how to do the practice.
<b>DEVELOPMENT OF PRACTICE</b>	in what ways you will develop the practice to extend yourself.

## STROKE PRACTICE FORM

**STROKE** *forehand lob*

**PRACTICE STAGE** *4*

**AIM(S) OF PRACTICE** *to improve consistency in playing the forehand lob.*

**TARGET SCORE** *80 per cent, eight out of ten.*

**HITTING POSITION** *forehand forecourt.*

**FEEDER'S POSITION** *forehand rearcourt.*

**ACTION PHRASE** *midcourt to forecourt and recover to midcourt.*

### PRACTICE

**NUMBER OF REPETITIONS** *ten.*

**NUMBER OF SETS** *five.*

**INSTRUCTIONS**

*P serves high, and takes up MC sides defence stance.*

*F drops to P's forehand FL.*

*P travels and lunges into the hitting position, lobs and recovers to centre MC into sides defensive stance.*

*F plays another dropshot.*

*Practice continues.*

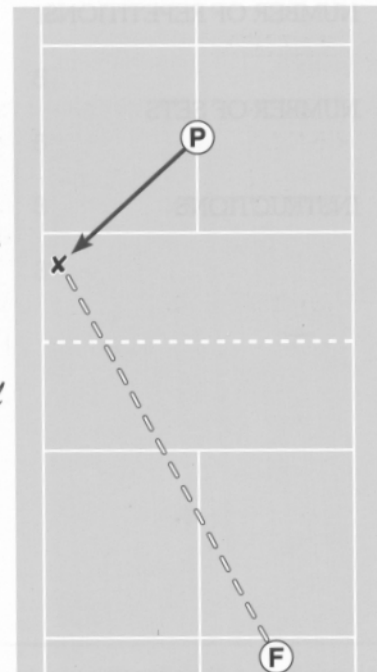


Fig 49

**DEVELOPMENT OF PRACTICE**

*add uncertainty by asking your feeder to hit the occasional clear to try to catch you out.*



## STROKE PRACTICE FORM

**STROKE**

PRACTICE STAGE

AIM(S) OF PRACTICE

TARGET SCORE

HITTING POSITION

FEEDER'S POSITION

ACTION PHRASE

**PRACTICE**

NUMBER OF REPETITIONS

NUMBER OF SETS

INSTRUCTIONS

DEVELOPMENT  
OF PRACTICE




### CREATING YOUR PRACTICE PROGRAMME

This is quite easy to do if you know what you want to practise. Let me remind you that you will practise to learn a new skill, to raise your standards in performing the skill, and finally to maintain your standards of performance. You should now know what strokes, and what aspects of your racket and body skill you should practise, so all you need now do is decide how much time you can allow for practice and then plan a programme.

This is simply a matter of listing your strokes on a practice programme form. You can devise your own form or if you prefer make use of the one I have designed below. I will use the following shorthand to make it easier to write the programme.

Rearcourt = RC

Forecourt = FC

Midcourt = MC

Forehand = fh

Backhand = bh

Now look at the practice programme form.

#### TECHNICAL PRACTICE PROGRAMME FORM

**NAME:** Tanya Groves

**DATES:** From: 5, 7, 93 To: 3, 8, 93

**DURATION:** 4 weeks

Stroke	Hitting Position	Feeder's Position	Practice Stage	Repetitions	Sets	Comments
fh clear	fh RC	bh RC	4	20	1	
fh clear	bh RC	fh RC	4	20	1	
bh clear	bh RC	fh RC	3	10	5	
fh smash	fh RC	Centre MC	3	10	5	
bh smash	bh RC	Centre MC	2	10	3	
fh fast drop	fh RC	fh MC/FC	3	10	3	
fh check smash						
bh block						
bh lob						

*Add other strokes as you choose*

I think you should have the idea by now and will be able to complete your own practice programme form. The **Comments** column is for you to write any notes about what you want to improve or how you want the feeder to feed or introduce **uncertainty** if you are doing a Stage 5 practice.

An important consideration in practising is not to waste time. If you plan your programme carefully you won't waste time and if you raise your standards in practice you should become a better player in competition.

