



Grand slam



60 mins



Challenge yourself

# Ready to rally



## Aim of activity

Do you have what it takes to be a tennis champion? Try out these fun challenges and discover your inner tennis superstar!

## What you'll get out of it

- Explore the sport of tennis.
- Practise using tennis skills.

## What you'll need

- A large, clear space
- Balls, 1 per girl – see ‘Note to leader’
- Chalk or masking tape – enough for the length of your meeting space
- A bucket, 1 per 4 girls
- A picture of a tennis court (optional)

## Note to leader

For the Bucket, chuck it challenge, you’ll need one small ball per girl that can be thrown into the buckets you have available. The rest of the activity will need one ball per pair, and any sized ball will work – they just need to be able to bounce. The larger the ball, the easier it will be for girls to complete the challenges. This activity works best on hard floors.



WE DISCOVER, WE GROW  
Girlguiding



## Stay safe

When throwing balls take care not to hit anybody. If you're collecting a ball, look around to check you're not walking in front of anyone throwing.



## Before you start

On one side of your space mark a line across the entire width. Make sure there's enough space for everyone to stand behind it. Then for the Bucket, chuck it challenge place the buckets roughly 2m away from this line, evenly spaced out from each other across the length of your space.

## What to do

**1** Have you ever played or watched tennis before? Can you name any famous tennis players? Share what you know with everyone.

**2** There's more to tennis than hitting the ball with your racket. Players have a range of skills that use their mind and body to move and react quickly. When a tennis player's ready to start playing, they stand in the **ready position**. Strike your best pose! Don't forget your best game face too.

### Ready position

Stand with your feet shoulder width apart and your knees slightly bent. Hold your hands out in front of you as if you're holding a tennis racket, like the picture on the front of this card.

**3** Now you can stand like a pro, it's time to think like one! Let's practise using your **hand eye coordination**. This is when your eyes see the ball and your brain tells your hands where to go. You do this all the time without realising it, like when you grab your phone off the table.

Find a partner, grab a ball between you and find a space. Decide who's player one and player two.

**4** Face each other and each take one big step back. Everyone, get in the ready position. When your leader says 'Go!', player one bounce the ball in the space between you. Player two, you need to catch it and bounce it back. Can you do this ten times without losing the ball?

**5** Got the hang of it? Let's up the challenge. This time pass the ball to each other without bouncing it in the middle. Still easy? Try throwing and catching it with just one hand.

### Top tip

Make sure you keep your eye on the ball as it's coming towards you – it will make it easier to catch.

**6** Now you've mastered your ready position and hand eye coordination, let's practise your ball control. Your leader will tell you how to play the three challenges on the next page.



## Floor tennis

A **rally** is when players are hitting the ball between them without losing control of it. Get into pairs, grab a ball between you and find a space, standing in the ready position roughly 2m opposite each other. Whoever has the ball to start, roll it along the floor to either side of your partner. If the ball's coming towards you, stop it and push it back to your partner. That's a rally! Now, repeat this a few times, mixing up which side you're pushing it to. Can you rally without stopping the ball before pushing it back? Keep going and see how long you can rally with your partner without losing control of the ball.

## Bucket, chuck it

Everyone grab a small ball and get into groups of four. Stand one behind the other on the line across your space, opposite a bucket. You're racing the other groups to be the first to have your balls in your team's bucket. This will test your throwing skills, so don't worry if it takes you a few tries. When your leader says 'Go!', the first girl in each group will throw the ball underarm into the bucket. If you get yours in your bucket, cheer on your team mates. Then, the next girl in each team goes. The first team to get all of your balls in your bucket wins! Keep practising your underarm throw and have another round. How fast can your team complete the challenge?

## Figure of eight

Know your tennis courts from your football pitches? Ask if someone knows the layout of a tennis court and to describe it to everyone else. There are different ways you can hit a ball across the court. It's time to challenge yourself to hit **down the line** (straight) and **cross court** (diagonally).

In your pairs find another pair and stand in a square with one ball, with plenty of space between you. Whoever has the ball needs to throw it to the girl opposite them (down the line), who'll throw it to the next girl diagonally (cross court). This girl needs to then throw it down the line to the last girl who will throw it to the girl cross court from them. This will make it look like you're passing the ball in a figure of eight. Keep passing it like this until you've perfected it.

Once you've mastered this, keep it going whilst adding in a second ball and throwing at the same time. You could even add in a third and see how long your team can go without letting the balls drop!

## Top tip

Every time you don't have the ball, get back into the ready position. This is what tennis players do to keep their focus and balance.

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Come back together. How did you find those challenges? Which one was the hardest? Think about what skills you used in those challenges. You've used your body and mind in ways tennis players do to react and move across the court, which are all really useful skills in lots of sports.

## Take it further

Enjoyed this activity, LTA Youth is helping girls like you get into tennis – your leader can check out a [free training course](#) to help build your tennis skills.