

Grand slam



60 mins



Challenge yourself



Aim of activity

You don't need a racket to build up your tennis skills. Try out these fun challenges and see if you've got what it takes to become a tennis pro!

What you'll get out of it

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

What you'll need

- A large, clear space
- Tennis balls, 1 per pair
- Beanbags, 5 per team – see 'Note to leader'
- Masking tape or chalk

Note to leader

For the Noughts and crosses challenge, the group will need to split into two teams. Each team will need a set of coloured beanbags which are unique to them. This is so they can keep track of which beanbags are theirs. If you don't have beanbags you can use other items such as balls or pegs.



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.



3 Now you've got the hang of how to stand, let's practise our ball control with a **rally**. This is when players hit the ball between them without losing control of it.

Get into pairs, grab a ball between you and find a space, standing roughly 2m opposite each other.

Before you start

Mark out a noughts and crosses grid on the floor of your space, using the masking tape or chalk. The squares need to be large enough for a beanbag or similar object to be thrown into them. Take two steps back and mark out a throwing line next to the grid to stand on.

What to do

1 Have you ever played or watched tennis before? Share one thing you know about tennis with your unit. Maybe it's showing off a tennis move or naming a famous tennis player. It's time to turn you all into sport stars!

2 First thing's first, let's stand like a tennis pro. To show you're ready to play tennis you get into the **ready position**. Find a space and strike your pose.

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.

4 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 without losing control of the ball.

5 Now you're in the zone, it's time to practise some tennis skills with these three fun challenges. Let's see if you've got what takes to make it to a grand slam!

Line up

In groups of four, grab a ball and all stand 1m apart from each other, facing the same way as though you're shoulder to shoulder. Decide who'll start. Hold the ball with both hands and throw it sideways along the line to each other, like a rugby pass. When you throw the ball, direct it by twisting your body towards the person you're throwing it to, making sure your feet stay on the floor. Once the ball reaches the end of the line, roll it along the floor back to the start of your line and play again. Can you speed it up? See how quickly you can get the ball back to the start!

Keep playing, swapping the positions you're standing in so you each have a turn starting and finishing the rally.



Triples

It's time to think about your **hand-eye coordination**. This is where you use your sight and hearing to send signals to your brain, telling your body how to move. You do this all the time without realising it. Some people find it trickier than others so in tennis they might use bigger rackets and balls to practice with.

Get into groups of three with one ball and number yourselves player one, two and three. Players one and two need to stand facing each other roughly 2m apart. Player three - stand roughly 1m behind player two.

Player one – throw the ball to player two.

Player two – when you catch the ball, throw it over your shoulder behind you to player three. It doesn't need to a big throw, but be careful to not hit anybody.

Player three – throw the ball back to player one. Keep practising and see if you can get speedier as you get used to the moves. Swap positions and try again.

Once you've practised this a few times, see if you're feeling confident enough to add in a second and third ball. How long can you go without letting them drop?

Top tip

Finding it hard to throw it backwards? Stay calm! Turn your head when throwing backwards if you need to. Remember when you throw the ball, send your hand in the direction of your target. And when you're catching, watch the person throwing to you so you can spot where you might need to move to.

Noughts and crosses

Get into two teams. On the floor, there's a grid and a throwing line. Each team - line up behind the throwing line and choose a set of five coloured beanbags, making sure they're a different colour to your rivals' beanbags.

Decide which team will go first. When your leader says 'Go!', one girl from the first team needs to move up to the throwing line. Think about where you want your beanbag to land, use your eyes to focus on the square you want it to land in and throw your beanbag. Call out the square you want it to go into, for example 'Top left', and throw. If you didn't get it into the right one, don't worry. Collect your beanbag and try again until it lands in the right square. Go to the back of your line, then the next team, go! The first to three in a row wins.

Try it this way

Want to up the challenge? This time if your beanbag doesn't land in the box you called, your turn ends and you don't get the square. Can your team still make it to three in a row?

6 Come back together. Which challenges did you find easy or hard? Can you think about what skills you've used? You might not have been playing tennis, but you've all used your body and mind in ways tennis players do to react and move across the court.

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. If you're a young leader check it out yourself.