

STEP FRAMEWORK FOR TENNIS

This guidance provides a framework for organisation and differentiation. It gives examples of how tennis activities and practices can be organised and adapted to meet the needs of all learners.

By using the STEP framework for organisation, you can maximise the space, find the right level of challenge in your task, select appropriate equipment, and keep people active and engaged.

By using the STEP framework for differentiation, you can tweak different elements to make an activity easier or harder.

STEP

SPACE

Where is the activity happening?

Organisation:

- Indoors or outdoors?
- What type of playing surface?
- How much space is around the court?
At the back? To the side?
- Are there any hazards to avoid?

In group coaching sessions, when trying to keep all players active and engaged, it's important to use all available space. This means having several stations on court, including feeders, hitters, and catchers/ball collectors. With lots of players it could also mean introducing off-court stations, e.g., players shadowing the hitter, and an area for working on movement or skills, these could be moving through a ladder, playing floor tennis or aiming at targets.

Differentiation:

- Make the space larger, smaller, wider, narrower.
- Introduce target areas, recovery zones.
- Make the net/barrier tape higher or lower.

The most important element is success – players need to experience it to enjoy the session. If players are not appropriately challenged, i.e., an activity is too hard or too easy, they may lose interest. Changing the space in which an activity is taking place is a great way of controlling the challenge.

TASK

What is happening?

Organisation:

- What is the activity?
- If it involves hitting a ball, is it drop fed, hand fed, racket fed, rally fed, or in a game?
- How much time is allocated for each player?
- Is the activity done individually, in pairs, or in groups?
- Are all players doing the same activity?

Differentiation:

- Change the objective, e.g., make the process the key objective.
- Change the rules or scoring, e.g., award more or less points for different elements, like recovery = extra points.
- Feed differently to increase or reduce the challenge, e.g., change a rally feed to a drop feed.
- Allocate more or less time for some players, or all players.
- Give different players a different activity, or different focus, e.g., player 1 is hitting whilst player 2 is hitting with recovery.

Sending and receiving:

- Roll or Throw (underarm or overarm) with hands
- Use a racket to roll the ball
- Use a racket to hit the ball
- Splat the ball when rolled then roll back
- Catch the ball then place on floor and roll back
- Catch the ball then self-feed and hit back
- Tap the ball up to self, let it bounce, then hit back
- Hit the ball straight back

EQUIPMENT

What is being used?

Organisation:

- What do we need for the planned activity?
- Do we have what we need?
- If not, how can we adapt the activity or the equipment?

Differentiation:

- Racket hands, Hit Mitts, rackets with short handles and large hitting areas, gradually building up to use rackets with longer handles (19", 21", 23") when ready.
- Balloons, beach-balls, bean bags, fluff balls, softer balls, harder balls, larger and smaller balls.
- Consider using brightly coloured balls or balls with bells inside to assist pupils with visual impairment.
- Gradually build up to using red balls when ready.

PEOPLE

Who is involved?

Organisation:

- What is the age and stage of the players?
- Are there any additional needs or considerations?
- How many players are there in total? In each coaching group?
- How are the players working? Individually, in pairs, or in groups?
- Where are the parents/guardians/other coaches located? We don't want balls being hit in that direction!

Differentiation:

- Working individually is easier, but less social, so ideally players will be doing activity in pairs but with some individual activity within.
- Working in large teams can be difficult for lower ability players.

Using STEP to climb the ladder:

- Players aim to climb the ladder
- Players sometimes go up, or sometimes go down

