

# The Most Crucial Component to Every Tennis Player's Game | STACK



If you watch professional tennis players and wonder how they get to the ball so fast, you may need to work on your footwork. The most basic aspect of footwork training for tennis should be the **split step**, a move that's often missing from a beginning player's game. It gets you moving explosively from a bent-knee position, which is especially important for speed in tennis. The lower you can bend, the better.

The split step comes naturally from the ready position. **When you see your opponent about to strike the ball (whether a serve, ground stroke or volley), get into a**

**ready position and do a slight hop.** This will allow you to take an explosive first step toward the shot and really ratchet up your speed.

This video demonstrates the split step and reiterates the technique and its significance:

[[youtube video="dU6tm\\_gaqO4" /](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dU6tm_gaqO4)]

## **Split Step Drill**

You can practice this with your coach or partner—you don't even need a racquet.

- On the court, stand at the service line at ready position with your weight on your toes.
- Your partner stands on the opposite side of the net.
- Partner tosses balls to each side of the service boxes in random order.
- When you see a ball about to be released from your partner's hand, do a split step.
- As you land, take off with an explosive first step toward the ball and catch it.

As you get better at this drill, have your partner toss the balls faster. Make sure to split step before every toss. This will help you form a habit of split stepping, and you will get used to the quick reaction needed before your opponent hits the ball.

If you get to the ball faster, you will put more balls in play,

have more time to set up shots and give your opponent less time to react.

### **Read more:**

- [Tennis Split-Step Quickness Drill](#)
- [Missing Components of Most Tennis Training Routines](#)
- [Tennis Forward and Back Drill](#)

[cf]skyword\_tracking\_tag[/cf]