

SquashRocs – Areas & Skills

Squash can be broken down into 3 basic areas / skills, as outlined on the other side.

Whenever you are practicing (doing a drill) for squash, as well as doing the drill, you should have in mind some area or skills that you wish to work on.

As each area of your game develops, they can be brought together in your match play to raise your overall playing level – your only as strong as your weakest link?

Levels of Play

Depending upon your level of play and your opponents, you may feel the following when playing a match:

level 1: hit the ball and wait for next shot – reacting to opponent

level 2: able to place your shot and get back into a good position – keeping up with opponent

level 3: strategic shot selection, easy movement, planning, thinking ahead – controlling opponent

The aim of all the areas and skills is to build up your game into playing at level 3.
ie. being in control.

The main goal that will enable you to achieve level 3 is to maximize your time on the ball, by :-
be in **good position** so that you can **move quickly onto the ball** and **be stable, prepare your shot early** with **optional hold**, then **execute your shot** and move off the shot and **back into position**.

Physical Training

Squash Fitness consists of Speed, Endurance, Strength and Mobility. The best forms of physical training for squash are short duration, with fast and explosive movements and high in agility.

Just 30 seconds of maximum effort in a physical drill is enough, one minute would be a long time.

Endurance is also important, so the occasional long run (of a mile or more) is useful.

Mental Toughness

Always make your best effort to get any ball back, making your opponent have to play one more shot can apply pressure to them, shows them that you won't give up – **they may start making mistakes**.

1) Technical

Grip – like pulling on a rope, spread your fingers, open racket face (bottom edge leading)

Posture – shoulders side on to ball, 90 degrees to shot direction (be facing the side/back walls)

Preparation – racket/wrist up early (make time), head high & open, **'threaten the ball'**

Hold – to stop your opponent, break their movement, rhythm and flow

Swing – fast head speed, open face, cut, snap wrist, like skipping a stone/throwing a frisbee

Contact point with ball – just in front of your 'hitting arm' shoulder, is your 'hitting/power zone'

Aiming – use of 'second ball' to control direction and accuracy of shot

2) Tactical

Shot selection options :-

- hit **away** from your opponent – hit into space

- keep the ball out of the middle of the court – **second bounce at the nick**

- hit to a different 'quarter' of the court than your last shot – use of diagonals, make them run

- hit behind opponents movement – stop and turn them, **'send them back'**

- if your under pressure and need time for yourself to recover the T, use height in your shot

To get depth/past opponent, your shot has to have at least one of: width, height, pace or deception.

3) Positioning & Movement

while in the T area – follow the ball and watch opponent, use a 'floating split step' or 'stepping in'

from the T, try to be one step towards where the ball is, as your opponent is making their shot

fast initial steps to ball, so can arrive more slowly, balanced and stable for your shot

final approach to ball: left foot, right foot lunge and pivot – positioning yourself appropriately to the ball (so it's in your 'hitting zone') with your feet aligned and ready to move back to the T

play your shot and blend that into moving off the ball – push off your leading leg (the lunge) and use momentum from your shoulders to move off of the shot and back towards the T, **'follow the racket'**

The 3 key elements of your shot :-

- shot selection – **away**, etc... see Tactical

- shot quality – second bounce at the nick

- shot execution – **hold**, to stop your opponents movement and confuse/deceive them

Along with good movement and positioning – is the game of squash !!!