

Training Tips 1: The Importance of basics in badminton

Learning the basic skills of the game of badminton is a must for every player. The higher the level a player reaches, the more important will be his grasp of the basics. The basic tenets of badminton appear simple but one needs a long time to master it. Each skill has to be played, and drilled over and over again until a player has mastered it.

However, most people take basic skills for granted. They don't realize the importance of this part of the game because it is not very spectacular. They prefer to see players jumping all over the court and executing a smash.

The game of badminton is more than just that. Without basic skills, a player might never get a chance to execute a smash during the game at all. There are many basic components that a player should master in badminton such as footwork, strokes, grip and others.

One of the most important basic components is the footwork. Footwork allows a player to move around in the court easily.

Without footwork, one will be struggling to reach the next return that the opponent makes. The ways to master footwork is of course by practicing it. Footwork needs to be practiced by repeatedly performing the correct movements. Footwork drills can be drills such as shadow training. There is no point doing fast shadow training if the player's footwork is totally wrong.

While practicing shadow drills, try to stay on the toes or on the balls of the feet. The lesser sound the player creates in footwork, the better the footwork will be. With a correct footwork, the speed of the footwork can be increased.

Other than footwork, strokes and grips are also important components of the basics of badminton. To play good badminton, it is absolutely important to have the correct grips and strokes. If a player can't even hold the racket properly, he can hardly go any further with his game.

A poor or incorrect grip will limit the range of your strokes as well as reduce their effectiveness. It will also result in you using more arm and shoulder movements to execute your strokes instead of using your wrist. Without wristwork, your game will become predictable.

Basic skills will determine how much improvement can be made in a player's game. A player's improvement will be limited without good basics or foundation in badminton no matter how hard he trains. This is because although a player may train very hard, he still won't be able to improve because he is training with a wrong and weak foundation.

This situation is analogous to the construction of a building. Without a strong foundation to support the whole building, it will easily collapse anytime. The height of the building will be limited because the weak foundation can cause the building to collapse. Similarly players must master their basic skills first before thinking about other higher-level skills.

Sometimes when you find that there is something wrong with your improvement, you should go back to the basics.

Training Tips 2: The importance of warm up

Warm up is a must before any sport including badminton. The warm-up routine usually starts slowly and systematically and gradually involves all muscles and body parts that prepare the athlete for training and competition.

In addition to preparing the athlete mentally, warming up also has several physiological benefits. The importance of warm up prior to exercise cannot be overstressed. This is true even for a sport like bowling.

Warm-up raises the body temperature and prepares the muscles, nervous system, tendons, ligaments and the cardiovascular system for upcoming stretches and exercises. The chances of injury are greatly reduced by increasing muscle elasticity. Sports, especially badminton, can cause high possibility of injury if proper warm up is not done because badminton is a sport that needs constant fast movements.

The basic physical fitness needs for developing Badminton skills are strength in the upper arm and shoulders and endurance in the upper arm, shoulder and legs. Upper arm and shoulder strength will help the player to develop a better swing and reduce the risk of arm injury when players swing their arm for a smash.

A warmed up leg will help the player to move smoothly on the court and reduce the risk of injury. This is the sample of a proper warming up session for every player.

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Purpose</i>
Slow aerobic jogging	5 minutes	Heat Muscles
Stretching	10 minutes	Increase range of movement
Light shadow drills and strokes	10 minutes	Co- ordination preparation for training/completion.

Jogging

Jogging is the first exercise of a player's warm-up routine. Players begin warming the muscles by jogging slowly for 3-5 minutes. This circulates the blood through the muscles and the body, thus providing them greater flexibility for stretching.

A jog should start out slowly, and then gradually increase in speed to its completion; the sole objective of this phase of the warm-up is circulating the blood. The endurance ability of a player will be stable after a warming up jogging.

Stretching

Stretching is one of the most critical parts of the warm-up and a player's performance. A more flexible muscle is a stronger and healthier muscle. A stronger and healthier muscle responds better to exercise and activities, and helps to prevent player's injury. The more flexible the muscle is, the more aggressive movements that a player can do.

Light shadow drills and Strokes

Drills are progressions of learning that start at a low ability level, advance to an intermediate level and, finally, reach a high ability level. A light shadow drill will help the players to get used to the court's length and width and also the floor condition.

Light strokes also help players to get the feel of the shuttle and to get used to the court conditions and temperatures.

The Cool-Down

After the training session, cooling down sessions should be conducted as well. Cooling down is as important as the warm-up, however it is often ignored. Abruptly stopping an activity may cause pooling of the blood and retard the removal of waste products from the athlete's body.

It may also cause cramps, soreness and other problems for players. The cool-down gradually reduces the body temperature and heart rate, and speeds the recovery process before the next training session or competitive experience.

The cool-down is also a good time for the coach and player to talk about the session or competition. Warming down session can be done like:

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Purpose</i>
Slow aerobic jogging	5 minutes	Gradually reduces heart rate and body temperature
Light stretching	5 minutes	Removes waste from muscles

Training Tips 3: Benefits from the Half Court Singles Game

Playing half court singles can bring lots of benefits for a badminton player. You can have fun while improving your game.

Half court singles game improves a player's basic skills and footwork and increases one's endurance level as the rallies are generally longer. Let's go through in detail the benefits and reasons involved.

Gain a better and faster footwork by playing the half court singles. This is because the area of the court in this game is much smaller than the full court singles game. From a smaller court, you can concentrate more on the basic footwork.

The footwork needed is the back to front and front to back movement. A front back footwork is considered as one of the most basic footwork in badminton. It will definitely improve your follow-up aspect after a smash.

When you are already comfortable in your footwork in this game, you can easily learn the more advanced footwork that is required in the real full court game. Half court singles game can also improve your consistency because only the simple shots are needed in the smaller court.

The simple shots are easier to produce but at the same time it is also important to every badminton player as it forms the foundation to play bigger and harder shots. You just have to hit all the shots straight including the lob, drop, smash and the net shots. Unforced errors can definitely be reduced in the half court singles game because players just need to master their basic shots.

So now you're hitting more accurate and consistent shots, and your footwork is better. A strange thing is about to happen. Your stamina is going to increase. Rallies in half-court singles tend to be longer. Both players usually hit the so-called "high percentage" shots.

For example, shots that are more likely to stay in and keep the rally going. This translates into longer rallies, particularly of the front-back varieties. Lots of clears followed by drop shots, net play, and then more clears to hang in there to win the game.

It is unlikely to become bored or tired because it's fun and competitive. Instead, your focus level, stamina and endurance would improve. The benefit of better footwork, improved accuracy, and higher stamina is that when you smash, these factors help you to maximize the effectiveness of your shots.

By getting your feet and body into the correct position, and by hitting a clean, crisp stroke that you know will be more accurate, your smashes tend to become stronger and more effective.

Also, in order to conserve energy, you will learn how to use smashes sparingly, usually only when the opportunity arises (a weak clear by your opponent, or you see they are slightly out of position, etc.).

Because of the smaller court, you would be able to anticipate and return your opponent's smashes. Since all smashes in half-court singles are straight and direct, you will be able to concentrate on pure defense rather than diving all around to retrieve them.

And, if you're going to win the rallies, you'll soon find yourself retrieving those smashes. You have 3 options - either clear the shuttle deeply, drop it, or drive it back straight at the smasher. I favor the latter, because someone who has just smashed has some forward momentum that can be used against him to elicit a weak return. So, if you want to improve your game and have fun in the process, play half-court singles.

Training Tips 4: Badminton Training Using Squash Racket

Badminton is a great game to play, really enjoyable and it is also a good exercise. Some of us play badminton for fun, during their leisure time while others take it more seriously, and go for badminton training.

There are many different types of ways to train up your badminton skills. Today, I am going to focus more on training up your power. There are many ways to increase the strength of a badminton player's shot. One of the most common ways used is by training with a squash racket.

Why use a squash racket? Well the answer to that question is simple...

The grip size of the squash racket is similar to that of a badminton racket, unlike the tennis racket where its grip size is a little different to that of the badminton racket. Using a squash racket for training will make a player's smash stronger.

To illustrate this, Martial Art students will tie something heavy on their legs, like stone, metal or sandbags while they train as this will help them to produce and execute a more powerful kick.

The squash racket training works in the same way as this. Using a squash racket also trains a player's wrist to be more flexible.

As the grip size of the squash racket is similar to the grip size of the badminton racket, players can do many exercises involving wrist work such as wrist rotation, backhand, forehand, drive and etc... If a player uses a tennis racket to do this, it will make their wrist stiff because of its thick grip.

The squash racket training is also part of a badminton player's warm up. Normally, most players will take a few swings on the squash racket as a warm up before stepping onto the court. By doing this, you will feel that the badminton racket is much lighter and easier to swing during trainings and even competitions. It will give you a slight advantage.

When a squash racket is used for training, it will not stiffen a player's wrist. By doing other weight trainings, players wrist might become stiffer if it was done too many times or too often. However, players can do the squash racket training everyday without the fear that their wrist will become stiff as it is like training with a heavy badminton racket.

It also prevents players from injuring their wrist as by doing this training, a player's wrist not only gets stronger, but also more flexible. But if you are just starting out on the game, it is not advisable to train with the squash racket right away because it can cause injury.

This is because you might not be used to the heavy weight of the squash racket. Well, I am sure that this will help you in your game, and all the best in your badminton career.

Training Tips 5: Training Outdoors

Training indoors gives only limited benefits to players. Adding outdoor training methods to your training regime can strengthen you mentally and physically in order to become a better player. Jogging is one such outdoor training method, which can be easily practiced by all. Jogging in the morning sun confers good benefits on a player, which cannot be obtained in a badminton court.

Why is that so? Well, outdoors jogging will not only make you physically and mentally tough, but it will test your determination to become a champion and sustain pain like the heat from the sun. As the saying goes, "No Pain, No Gain". The physical and mental demand is very high in this regime, and this will strengthen your mental toughness to finish the course in the uncomfortable zone.

You can use this physical and mental toughness to advantage against your opponent in a taxing rubber game. Mountain biking is another good outdoors exercise you can do to strengthen your legs. Cycling uphill not only makes a player's legs stronger, but it also produces a better and a faster footwork and increases the duration a player can stand in the court.

Mental toughness is also needed in mountain biking so that a player can push himself or herself to complete the specific distance that the coach has set. Mountain biking can also strengthen players' knees. As you pivot on the knees quite often in badminton, strengthening them can prevent knee ligament injuries.

Another good outdoor training is rock climbing which can strengthen the upper body and grip. A strong upper body is needed in rock climbing in order to pull your body up. Developing a strong upper body, especially shoulders and triceps muscle, can help you execute more powerful shots such as badminton's most famous stroke, the jump smash.

Rock Climbing also helps you overcome fears. This mental toughness stands you in good stead at crucial points in major tournaments. I would say swimming is another good outdoor activity. It can improve your stamina and upper body strength.

You consistently breathe in and out during swimming and hold your breath during different strokes and this improves your lung capacity. As a badminton player, this prevents you from running out of breath as you reach for your opponent's shots.

In swimming you can learn many types of breathing exercises such as blowing bubbles as a warm up before a taxing lap. Swimming also strengthens your upper body, especially the arms and shoulders, as you constantly labor against the flow of the water. This upper body strength helps you produce powerful shots in badminton.

Stair- climbing is a training method I highly recommend to help increase your concentration levels. If you miss a step you would probably get seriously injured. You will also gain a high amount leg power and speed. Malaysian badminton players often use these methods to improve their agility and leg strength.

The most recommended venue for stair- climbing in Malaysia is Batu Caves where most athletes train to improve their stamina and leg strength. Chinese badminton players too use stair- climbing exercises very often.

Every player in the Chinese national team starts his training with mountain- climbing as a daily routine. This is why Chinese players are well- known for their physical fitness. So can you, if you believe you can!!

Players can do shadow badminton drills using a tennis or a squash racket. Shadow badminton drill need not necessarily be done in a proper indoor badminton court. It can be done outdoors such as in the backyard of your house, in the park, in the basketball court etc.

To quote a perfect example, back in those days when there were not many indoor badminton courts, the legendary Datuk Eddy Choong used to do shadow training on open grass lawns. This helped him improve his balance and footwork and develop his powerful legs.

The European players called him the "Jumping Jack" on account of his strong legs on which he would bounce electrifyingly all over the court to take his shots at unbelievable speeds and at steep angles.

They even went so far as to cut his shoes to check for any springs that helped him jump from his puny height of 5 ft 2 in.

Sprinting uphill is another good outdoor exercise. It can increase players' stamina because players spend more energy than during normal sprinting. It can also increase leg strength, speed and mental toughness.

With this, the 5 best training tips comes to an end. We hope you can implement all these tips on your training as it will surely bring better results to your game.

But if you are looking to raise your game to the next level in a short period of time, come join my 7 Days coaching holiday program in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. It will be something different.

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