

# 30 ARTICLES ON HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR BADMINTON GAME



# 1. What to focus on for beginners

The good old saying "**You have to learn to walk first before you learn how to run**" applies to Badminton as well. I am going to focus on things to learn and to avoid for those who are starting in Badminton.

The things that beginners need to focus on are mainly the basics of the game. Learning the basic skills of the game is a must for every beginner and player who aspires to become a world-class player one day.

**One of the things that one should focus on is the grip.** If you can't even hold the racket properly, forget about everything else because it is absolutely essential to have the correct grip. An incorrect grip will limit the power of your shots as well as reducing the range of your strokes.

It will automatically translate into poor shot making as the beginner will end up using more arm and shoulder movements to execute the strokes instead of using the wrist. Players need to know how to adjust and change their grip in order to anticipate different situations such as forehand and backhand.

**You must also focus on the correct strokes.** It is highly recommended to ask your coach to demonstrate the correct technique of executing each stroke. The hitting action in Badminton should be similar to throwing a stone. Throwing a stone comes naturally as it is a very simple thing to do. However, the correct strokes should focus more on the wristwork. Your body rotation during the swing phase is also important to develop the correct stroke movements.

**Thirdly, footwork is another important aspect.** Good footwork along with racquet preparation allows you to move fluently and take the shuttle earlier and this allows for a greater variety of shots available to hit from any position. If you have a stable footwork, you won't stumble all over the court and get stuck in awkward positions. Indonesia's badminton queen Suzy Susanty has one of the best footwork that allows her to return every single shot of her opponent.

The most important question, of course, is how to last the entire duration of the game. **The answer is 'fitness'**. In order to gain the fitness level needed for competitions, you should train outdoors such as jogging, swimming or cycling. Doing footwork drills can also raise up your endurance level as well as improving the footwork. Every sports including Badminton needs physical toughness in order to sustain in the game.

Equally important for beginners, is to know the common pitfalls to be avoided.

One of them is to avoid wasting time in trying to learn all the trick shots. Stop learning all the fancy shots first before you master the basic skills. It may be very spectacular or exciting to see top players playing deceptive strokes to trick their opponent.

However, you need to reach a certain level of skill before learning all the beautiful trick shots. Beginners often execute these shots late thus losing the element of surprise and because of faulty footwork can't reply when the shot is returned.

Avoid strength training, as it will effect your strokes execution. It is not advisable to do strength training before mastering the basic skills. How do you rationalize putting strength behind your shots when you have hardly mastered the proper technique of executing the shot?

Beginners should **focus on the proper stroke technique** before they progress to develop the power of the shots in the correct way.

You will most likely waste your money buying an expensive racket while you are still a beginner. The extra money that many spend on the latest and the best racquet is far better spent on a good coach!!

I personally think one can't appreciate what a good racquet can do until one can perform all the basics with proper technique. Expensive rackets can't perform any miracles for players who don't have the ability to use them properly.

Remember to use the correct methods of training otherwise your room for improvement would be limited in Badminton.

## 2. 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 a player finds that there is something wrong with his improvement, **he or she should go back to the basics.**

## 3. Badminton Strokes

In order to play good badminton, it is absolutely important to have good badminton strokes. If you can't master even the basic strokes, your improvement will be limited.

The importance of mastering the fine points of the execution of each stroke cannot be overemphasized because it determines the way you play the game and your skill level.

The different badminton strokes can be classified as over- the- head, side- arm and under- arm strokes.

### **OVER-THE-HEAD STROKES**

#### **\*LOB**

The lob is considered one of the most defensive Badminton strokes. It normally lands the shuttle on or near the baseline.

The idea of this stroke is to get the shuttle high and far so that it will give the player time to recover to their position. Malaysia's legendary badminton player Eddy Choong had one of the best lobs in the game. The shuttle would travel 40 feet high and almost invariably fall right on the baseline.

#### **\*DROP SHOT**

The drop shot, as the name suggests, aims to drop the shuttle just in front of the net. The angle of this shot is important, as it will determine the quality of the drop shot. Most players use this to keep their shots simple, but it can be a very powerful weapon in the hands of some badminton players.

It is normally used to draw the opponent to the net to force a lift so you can go for the kill.

#### **\*THE SMASH**

The smash is the most aggressive stroke in Badminton. It is the stroke, which makes badminton the fastest racket game. The power, speed and sharpness of the stroke will determine the quality of the smash.

Doubles players normally lay more emphasis on the smash because power and speed play a major role in the doubles version of the game. The idea of the shot

is to get the shuttle to land on the opponent's court with great speed and power and thus kill the point.

The faster the shuttle reaches the floor, the better it is. Indonesia's Lim Siew King had one of the best jumping smashes of the game. To execute the perfect smash, one needs great wristwork and upper body strength.

### **\*FAST DROP SHOT**

The fast drop shot is also referred to as the "chop".

The idea of this shot is to put your opponent in a difficult or inextricable position, paving the way for your next finishing shot. The chop can be a winner in itself if your opponent is not fast enough to get it. The fast drop shot can also force your opponent to produce a weak return that allows you to go for the kill.

Malaysia's former top player Misbun Sidek had one of the best fast drop shots of his time. It was very effective in his hands as he could either put it accurately down the line or across court or open up a very wide angle to finish the point.

### **\*SHOOTING LOB**

The shooting lob employs more wristwork than the defensive lob. Properly executed, it can be a very effective shot as the stroke execution is precise and fast.

The idea is to get the shuttle past your opponent quickly making it fairly difficult for him to return as the shuttle would be well behind him and he would have to arch back in order to reach it.

It will produce the best results against an opponent who is not able to hit well on the move and who does not have good reflexes and movements. However, do not use this shot too often, as your opponent will anticipate it!

## **SIDE-ARM STROKES**

### **\*THE DRIVE**

The drive is one of the most common side arm strokes. It is normally used in doubles. The shuttle travels at a level just above the net. It can be a winner in itself, if is used effectively.

The drive is considered a low attacking shot. Although it is also employed in singles, doubles players use it more often as they prefer to keep the shuttle low even when they are on the defensive.

## **THE NET-PLAY**

### **\* NET SHOT**

At the net, you have a lot of shots to choose from. Most players prefer a tight net shot. The purpose of this shot is to draw the opponent to the front. Often players like to spin the shuttle at the net to make the shot even more difficult to return. The idea is to force the opponent to lift up the shuttle in return allowing you to finish with a smash.

Attacking singles players need to be highly skilled in net play. Indonesia's Taufik Hidayat has one of the most effective net shots, which often produces winners.

### **\* TAP**

Tap is the easiest net play skill to master. However, the opportunities for a player to tap the shuttle are few and far between in a game.

It often produces winners by itself. The shuttle normally goes down very sharp and fast because it is taken right in front of the net.

### **\* LIFT**

The idea of this shot is to allow a player to recover his or her position. It is just the same as the high service or the defensive lob. The shot will go up high and far from the net. It is also used to slow down a fast attacking player's game.

It is harder to lift up the shuttle if the shuttle is very close to the net. However, the wristwork plays an important role in this shot. If arm movements are used more than the wrist, the shuttle will, in all probability, overshoot the baseline.

## 4. The Badminton Serve

The Badminton serve is the most important and basic shot in the game of Badminton. Every rally and stroke starts from a service.

No matter how good a player is, he or she will have difficulty to win a game without a good quality serve. Service is becoming more and **more important in the modern game**, especially in doubles. It may determine the fate of the player's game.

There are 5 types of serve that every player should master which are the high serve, low serve, backhand serve, drive serve and the flick serve.

### The High Serve

High serve is mostly used in singles. A good high service must be high and lands in between the two baselines at the rearcourt. Malaysia's former legendary player Eddy Choong had one of the best high serve during his time. The shuttle would go up very high and very deep. When it came down, you had to stand at the edge of the rear court to retrieve it. If you smash, you would probably hit the feathers.

The high serve is **considered as a defensive serve** because it gives the player sufficient time while the shuttle is high up on the air. It will put you in a less vulnerable position. One of the advantages of this serve is that it forces your opponent back to the base line and open up his court.

### The Low serve

The low serve are used **when a player wants to attack**. Most attacking players in singles uses the low serve because they have to keep their shots low so that it will open up an opportunity for the kill. The low serve is also used when your opponent's attack is strong because they will have less opportunity to attack when you keep the shuttle low.

Doubles player often uses this serve to force their opponent to lift up the shuttle. Most of the experienced players use the low serve when the speed of shuttle is fast. It is also better for players to use the low serve when they are actually playing in an air conditioned hall with the drift effect as it will reduce the chances of serving the shuttle out.

## **Backhand serve**

Backhand serve **employs more wristwork** compared to the forehand serve. You just need to flick a little bit of your wrist in order to produce a low backhand serve unlike the forehand serve which players use other parts of their arm as well.

It can be a very effective serve as the stroke execution is fast. Players don't need to do much movement in order to produce a backhand serve. Top players such as Indonesia's Ricky Subagja and South Korea's Park Joo Bong do it so well. Before you can even blink, the shuttle has arrived.

The backhand serve is commonly used in today's modern singles game especially in Men singles. Most men singles players use this serve so that they will have more opportunities to play an attacking game right from the start.

## **The Drive serve**

Drive serve is one of the variations to the high serve and the low serve. This is an attacking serve that can be used in both singles and doubles. However, it is rarely used so that it avoids opponent to anticipate the serve.

Some players like to shorten their grip to gain more control over their rackets such as Indonesia's top player Chandra Wijaya and Sigit Budiarto. This service can be used when **your opponent's overhead position is unguarded**.

## **The Flick Serve**

The idea of this serve is to get the shuttle quickly past your opponent and give him less time to play his shot. The shot's options that can be returned by the opponents are limited. **It will produce the best results against an opponent that doesn't have good reflexes and bad concentration level**. However, do not use the flick serve too often as opponent will be able to anticipate it.

It is important for you to master the **badminton serve**. The lack of quality of your badminton serve may affect the improvement of your game.

## 5. 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.

Activity	Time	Purpose
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:

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

## 6. The Importance Of Agility, Fitness, Power and Speed In Badminton

The game of badminton requires 4 physical attributes. They are

- 1) **Agility**
- 2) **Fitness**
- 3) **Power**
- 4) **Speed.**

Possessing the above is very essential to improve your badminton skills. They are the foundation upon which a player's skill is built and without these, succeeding as a top-level badminton player is very difficult.

Sincere commitment, consistent hard work and sacrificing time are all needed to master the basics in badminton. Needless to say, once these basic skills are mastered, the chances of one becoming a good player are very high.

We will consider them one by one.

### **Agility**

Agility is the ability of a player to cover all parts of the court rapidly without losing balance during play. As badminton is the fastest racket sport, it is very essential to be agile. An agile player is always in position to face his opponent's shots.

If you lack in agility, it is very easy for the opponent to spot it, as you will have clumsy feet movement and the tendency to lose your balance. Agility not only helps to face the opponent's shot well, but also to execute a good and appropriate return shot.

Training methods available to Badminton players for improving agility are:

- 1) **Doing jumping rope**
- 2) **Leg agility exercises**
- 3) **Climbing up stairs**
- 4) **Jogging**

It is worthwhile to mention some specifics about jogging. Jogging should be done in small, fast steps, with toes landing first. Strong and flexible toes will improve your agility. It also helps to execute various shots without losing balance and improves your jump smashing ability. Agility is a basic requirement to increase your footwork speed in badminton.

## **Fitness**

Fitness is the ability of a player to survive the duration of the game. Forget about winning or losing, you have to last the entire game without retiring. That's where fitness comes in. Skill, deception and power are of no avail if you are not fit.

You get good footwork and fluent strokes only with high levels of fitness. It is because, with high fitness levels, you don't become fatigued which results in faulty footwork and wrong stroke selection.

Simply put, playing badminton without stamina is like going scuba diving without an oxygen tank. Divers in water can survive only a short while without oxygen; so also with badminton players without stamina.

Fitness can be assessed in terms of lung capability and body strength. As badminton is a physically demanding game you should be aware if you have the required stamina to last the entire duration of the game.

Also, stamina determines one's style of play. A defensive player who likes to play long rallies would require more stamina than a deceptive player who combines it with attacking play.

## **Power**

Power is another important attribute of a good badminton player. Power is the strength you pack into your shots. A player, especially in the men's section, needs power to produce fast shots. Modern players rely on power and speed to finish a rally quickly.

The ability to produce powerful shots depends on the strength of your body, especially the torso. Exercises that can improve the strength of the upper body are bench press and push-ups.

## **Speed**

Modern badminton relies heavily on speed. A player needs speed to move around the court faster and to reach the shuttle earlier. If you have fast footwork, you can meet your opponent's shots early and control your own shots well. It also allows you to select your shot wisely and to play your entire repertoire of shots.

Exercises such as sprinting or fast shadow drills can be done to increase the speed of a badminton player. Agility, fitness, power and speed are the most important fundamentals in badminton. Once you master all these 4 components, you can take your game to a higher level.

## 7. Jogging & Sprinting

The game of Badminton requires **lots of physical fitness and speed** to endure long rallies and tough matches.

Without the physical fitness, a player will have difficulties to keep up with the long rallies and the fast pace of the game.

So it is crucial to improve one's physical attributes when playing badminton by doing outdoor trainings especially jogging and sprinting besides other exercises like shot's perfection, weight training, drills, jumping and stretching.

If you are still not convinced about the importance of jogging and sprinting to improve your speed and endurance, consider the fact that a badminton match lasts from 20 minutes to 80 minutes without the sufficient time to rest during each rallies. If a player doesn't have the stamina and the endurance that is really required in Badminton, he can lose lots of points due to fatigue.

Jogging can also be considered as **part of the warming up sessions** for a player's badminton training regime and before a badminton match. It is normally done after the stretching. It helps to condition you to suit the badminton hall's environment because different hall has different types of environment.

It also helps to **settle down mentally and reduce the nervousness of the player** before the match begins. Top players normally jog around 5 minutes before his match starts in every tournament.

Other than used for the warming up sessions, jogging is also often used as part of the training sessions. The trainees normally do intensive jogging to raise their endurance level so that when they are in the game, they can sustain the tough and physically demanding side of things.

By consistently doing intensive jogging, it helps to strengthen your legs so that you can do more drills that capitalize more on speed such as fast shadow, shuttle control, multi shuttle drills and etc. Without the presence of the strong legs, you won't be able to play a high quality badminton game.

Jogging helps to strengthen the legs by consistently moving in a fast pace. **Uphill jogging is one of the most effective exercises to strengthen the leg's strength and endurance level.**

Your agility can also be improved. **Jogging helps to stabilize the footwork** so that players won't stumble all over the court to retrieve their opponent's shots. How often have you been in this situation whereby the shuttle has fallen a

fraction out of your reach even though you know it's going to land there? If you had been able to turn or move to the shuttle a bit faster, you could have reached it.

Jogging can be used as an addition to a player agility exercises such as skipping, hopping and etc. I would highly recommend you to jog in small and fast steps.

**Try to stay on your toes or on the balls of your feet while jogging.**

Sprinting in badminton is chiefly done to increase the speed of your court coverage. Many players have difficulty to keep up with the speed of the game due to the lack of speed itself. **By having speed, it can create an advantage by enhancing a player's anticipation.**

Anticipation is referring to a condition where the shots are unexpectedly taken much earlier. It has a high percentage of finishing the rally. Speed increases the footwork abilities to be able to anticipate shots.

In the modern Badminton games, speed plays a major role to win a game. Why is it so? Because most badminton players in the world goes for speed and power to win the game.

Speed and Power was introduced by Rudy Hartono of Indonesia which had won the All England title for the record of 8 times. Without the presence of speed, you will have difficulty to raise your game to another level.

The right way to do the sprinting is to sprint on your toes. It is good for the leg to have lesser contact to the ground so that players can create stronger legs.

Usually **sprinting is done at the end of the training program** so that the trainees can build up their mental strength when they sprint with exhaustion creating the best effect.

The very common method used by top player is sprinting up the hill. Sprinting uphill will strengthen the legs and raise their endurance level because it demands a lot of physical and mental fitness.

For the record there are some good example of Top players that often sprints up the hill such as Lin Dan (World Champion 2006), Mohd Hafiz Hashim (2003 all England champion), Lee Chong Wei (2006 commonwealth games champion) and other players as well.

All these jogging and sprinting methods will definitely improve your game and fitness. Most importantly, it will also bring your game up to the next level.

## 8. Physical Toughness

It is highly important for badminton players to be tough, mentally and physically. Other than having fast speed and sharp skills, **a player needs to have the physical toughness as well.**

Without it, players would not be able to win a competition or have an edge to win their opponents because he or she will have difficulties maintaining the performance of every tournament.

Physical toughness can be categorized in two aspects, namely strength and endurance. It can benefit players such as allowing the player to stay on the court for a longer period. Endurance and stamina plays an important role for players to stay longer in the game.

Without stamina, players will run out of breath easily in a long rally game. Once a player is exhausted, his/her opponent will be more confident to win the game because it is harder to beat a fresh player. **A player needs to be tough physically in order to stay fresh on the court all the time.**

With the physical toughness, the strength of the player can be increased. The strength is referring to the power of the hand and the legs in order to produce more powerful shots. Powerful smashes should be produce by a **strong upper body such as the shoulder, wrist, chest and also a strong lower body.**

Other than that, leg strength is also important for badminton players. Badminton players need to have strong legs in order to produce a better and faster footwork. A player legs will be worn out if he or she doesn't have the strength regardless of having a good stamina.

Once a player is physically fit, he or she can do more training drills to improve their game. With a good stamina and fit body, a player's duration on the court will definitely increase. Once a player can do so, he or she has the chance to train even longer.

A player who is weak physically won't be able to stay long on the court during their training due to the lack of fitness. Therefore, players in desire of more training would need a better fitness.

Once the physical fitness is there, a player can concentrate more on other aspects of the training such as skill, speed, power, and more. The player would not need to worry about his or her fitness hence other aspects can be focused on and developed.

**The lack of fitness can be an obstacle to a player's improvement.** It is important for a badminton player to be fit because the game of badminton is also known as the physical chess game.

A Player will have smaller chances to obtain an injury once he or she is fit. The injuries that can be avoided are like ankle twists or dislocated shoulders. Players can avoid a twisted ankle if they have strong legs and ankle. With a strong ankle, the player will have more moving abilities.

Dislocated shoulder is referring to a condition where the inner part of the shoulder endures pain due to the wrong strokes of players. A lot of players use more arm strength to smash which is a common mistake. With a strong shoulder or arm, players would not have their arm easily dislocated no matter how strong or how many times they smash.

**Physical toughness is considered one of the most important aspects in Badminton.** Without fitness, your improvement will be limited.

## 9. 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.

# 10. 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 physically 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.

# 11. Exploring Other Sports to Improve Badminton

In my opinion, badminton is one of the most beautiful sports in the world. You need to master a lot of aspects such as good skills, fast footwork, tactical knowledge, killing shots and a whole lot more to be a successful player.

Other than conventional training, you can also explore **other sports** to help the improvement in badminton by applying some of the aspects needed for these sports such as a high stamina, fast reflex, tough body and many more.

Playing **basketball** for example, can help improve your badminton game. Basketball players are normally tall and have fast reflex. You can gain a faster reflex because in the game of basketball, the ball moves from one place to another in a very fast pace. The reflex of basketball players can be applied so that you can reach the shot faster and earlier.

You can also apply the high jumping ability of basketball players so that you can produce a higher and steeper angled jumping smash. Another thing that we can learn from the game of basketball is it can make your wrist stronger because the technique of shooting involves the wrist muscles. You can gain a stronger wrist from the game of basketball and will produce more powerful shots.

Playing **soccer** can also help improve your game. Soccer players are known for strong legs and high stamina. You can apply the stamina of the soccer players in your game so that you will be able to stay longer in the court. You can also apply the strong legs of soccer players to improve your coverage on court.

Another thing that we can learn from the game of soccer is that they have fast reflex and quick feet. A footballer needs to have fast reflexes and quick feet in order to react to passes and dribble past players. You can apply this to your game and react to shots faster.

There are some top world class players in the past and present that use to play soccer before picking up the game of badminton such as Hafiz Hashim (All England Champion 2003), Ong Ewe Hock (Former World No.2), Taufik Hidayat (Olympic Champion 2004 and World Champion 2005) and Han Jian (World Champion 1985).

You can also learn something from the **swimmers**. Swimmers are known for their tough, well built and flexible body. Swimming helps build up your upper body and you can use that to produce more powerful shots especially smashes because every part of the upper body contributes to the power of the shots.

Swimmers also have one of the highest and strongest stamina among all the athletes. A fast 50 meter swim equals to 300 meter sprinting on the land. This is because our body moves much slower in the water than on land as we need to consume more energy to move fast in the water.

You can apply a swimmer's stamina to stay longer in the court. Swimmers also possess certain breathing methods in order to hold their breath underwater. This breathing method can help you control your breathing during a taxing game or while you are feeling fatigue.

You can also learn from the sports of **archery** because archers are known for their high concentration level. An archer needs to stay focus throughout their game because even a slightest bit of distraction can destroy their whole performance. You should apply this focus on your game as well.

You can learn a lot from **boxing** as well to improve your badminton. A boxer needs a fast reflex and agility to avoid attacks from the opponents. You need the agility and reflex of a boxer to go everywhere in the court to return the shots from the opponent.

Another thing that can be learned from the boxer is their hand position. Boxers need to consistently keep their hands up in order to defend their head from the punches of the opponent. Once they put their hands down, their opponent can just attack and punch the head easily in less than a second. You also should always keep your body and rackets up in order to defend or return opponents shots properly.

I would like to stress one last point about what we can learn from boxing. In boxing, one simple mistake could cost you not only the game but also potentially causing you heavy injury or even death.

In badminton, some players who make mistakes such as hitting the shuttle to the net would just laugh it off. In my humble opinion badminton players should be more **serious and focus** in order to improve their game.

You can try playing the sports mentioned above or any other sport and apply the things learned to your game. It will make a difference...sometimes more than you can imagine.

# 12. 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 increased 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.

# 13. Badminton Game: Controlling Your Breath

Most people take breathing exercises for granted. They don't realize the importance of controlling the breath because it is not very spectacular.

Actually, badminton is a game that requires a lot of physical and mental strength. To be able to sustain the highest level of fitness on court, you need to know how to control your breathing in the game.

Let's look at other sports as well. Other sports such as football, marathon, basketball and others also require breathing skills in order to sustain in the game. Marathon runners often control their breathing while they are running in the race. They inhale and exhale through their nose during the run.

The idea is to consume less energy because the amount of oxygen inhaled and the amount of carbon dioxide exhaled is less. This concept is commonly used by soccer players in order to last the entire duration of the game.

In training, you have to learn to control your breathing. Trainings sessions are usually tougher than normal competition. So, it will be an advantage to you when you know how to control your breathing even in tough situations. **To control breathing in badminton, you should breathe through your nose and exhale very slowly.**

Competitions can be very tiring and the temperatures are variable. Therefore, in most tournaments held in Asia, the venue is commonly air-conditioned.

It is absolutely imperative that players should know the right way to breathe so that they don't get exhausted easily. That's why even the most well trained athletes in the world sometimes fail in competitions held in cold climates or in an air-conditioned environment due to the wrong breathing technique.

Another advantage of controlling your breathing is it will save your energy. As I mentioned earlier, marathon runners consume less energy when they use their nose to breathe than when they breathe through their mouths.

Why is breathing through the mouth not advisable? The answer is simple. When you breathe through your mouth, the amount of oxygen as well as the energy consumed is a lot. **You will get more exhausted if you keep using your mouth to breathe.**

A good breathing technique will allow a player to sustain in tough matches and in all kinds of climatic conditions. Sometimes, you tend to breathe harder before an important match due to nervousness.

It is normal to be exhausted when one is nervous because the heart tends to beat faster. Before the start of the match, it is advisable to do some breathing exercises to relax yourself and to reduce your nervousness. It also helps to condition you to the temperature of the venue.

During tournaments in Europe and in air-conditioned stadiums, badminton players tend to tire faster due to low temperatures. Asian players normally experience this difficulty, as the temperatures are so different from their native countries.

In order to survive in all these varied conditions, you need to control your breathing. Most training camps in Asia use air-conditioned playing areas to help players get acclimatized to the playing conditions in Europe and indeed, the rest of the world.

Despite all these facilities, mastering the right breathing techniques is imperative and cannot be substituted. With the right breathing techniques, you can stay focused on the game and keep out all the distracting factors such as the temperature, muscle soreness etc.

The importance of right breathing techniques applies to the European players too, as it helps them to survive in the hot and humid playing conditions in Asia.

# 14. Badminton Training: Analyzing your Training

It is good for a player to train hard. But one of the common mistakes that are often made by trainees today is that they train blindly. Sadly, some of them don't even know what they are training for.

The game of badminton is not the same as running, marathon or other racing sports. The game is not only about physical ability but also skills and creativity. **In order to benefit from the training, you have to train smart as well as hard.**

Training smart refers to the quality of the training methods. For instance, some badminton players jog for 2 hours nonstop. In order to train smart, he or she should only jog for 30 minutes. But during the 30 minutes of jogging, he or she should give 120% in the run.

A smart training schedule must address and rectify your weakness as much as reinforcing your strengths. There is no point in following a training regimen blindly.

You have to make sure that your training programme helps to improve your game. The areas of the game that you are found lacking in, during tournaments, are exactly what you need to work on most in your training regime.

Your training regime and methods cannot be separate from competition. Essentially, it must tackle what you need most in the game.

Another common mistake that I have seen is the tendency to blindly follow the fad and copy the style of the current top players. It is good to idolize top players but don't get carried away by idol worship. It doesn't mean their game can work for you just because they are successful and you admire their game.

To determine which style of play to adopt, analyze your character and mental make-up. Your ability, skills and physical condition will play a big part in determining which style of play will consistently bring success.

Even coaches sometimes make the common mistake. They seem to impose their own style of play upon their wards. This is an easy enough error to commit and hence one that must be studiously avoided. The coach wields a strong influence over his students as they look up to him for guidance and learn the basic skills from him.

A good coach is one who analyzes his ward thoroughly and trains him in a style of play suited to his physical and mental make- up. He must improve upon areas of weakness and maximize his ward's strengths while allowing him to play his natural game.

**In the case of beginners, it is compulsory to learn all the basic skills and techniques of the game.** Once a player has achieved that, the coach can help him to shape his game without curbing his natural style of play.

Each player has his own special weapon. There is no player who is good at every shot. Badminton demands so many qualities from a player because there are so many variations in term of pace, skills and tactics.

For example, you can't expect an attacking player to have as much stamina, endurance and patience as a defensive player. Remember Misbun Sidek's chop, Ardy Wiranta's defence, Yang Yang's net play, Zhao Jianhua's deception and Lim Siew King's jumping smash? It shows that top players are outstanding in at least one area of the game.

Try to develop special skills and ability based on your mental characteristics and physical condition. But master all the basics before thinking about shaping up your game and developing special skills!!

# 15. The Smash & Details On How To Improve It

Smashes are not necessarily winners. A smash has to be sharp, steep, powerful and accurate as well. Beginners often think that smashing is the only way to win the game. But badminton is more than just that.

It requires a lot of physical and mental strength, good techniques and creativity as well. But a good smash is definitely a useful, if not an essential, part of a top player's armamentarium. Today, I am going to elaborate on how to improve your smash.

First of all, experience plays an important role in honing the effectiveness of one's smash. Most top international players had started badminton at a very young age and have been playing badminton for 15 years in some cases. They have been ceaselessly endeavoring to perfect each and every shot. It is no wonder they can execute smashes that can go over 160 mph (miles per hour).

**With experience come many little nuances that improve your shot quality.** These little nuances such as the angle, timing, wrist action and arm extension all come from rigorous training and tournament play.

The correct technique of executing the stroke ensures that you deliver a high quality smash. You have to make sure that you are getting the maximum energy transfer. You need to swing your racket and follow through correctly so that the shuttle doesn't go floating.

The contact area between the racket face and the shuttle has to be slightly in front of your body. Get behind the shuttle before executing this shot. Make sure your smash stroke is virtually the same as your drop and clear stroke, so you don't develop any bad habits and get caught out by your opponent.

If you want to perfect your smash, you need to spend a lot of time practicing the stroke. **Practice makes for perfection.**

One of the best ways to practice your smash is to engage in drills. The drill must be high on quality. For instance, you could smash as hard as possible while your partner tries to return it.

However, the smash drill must contain court coverage movements as well. The idea is to avoid falling into the habit of being stranded in one corner of the court after executing your smash. Including court coverage movements in your smash drill will improve your follow up instinct, allowing you to take advantage of a weak

return.

If you are above 15 years of age, it is advisable to do weight training. However, weight training must be done in many repetitions, rather than increasing the weights. If you overdo the weight training, it will make your body stiff and muscular which affects the flexibility of your movements in badminton.

Focus on upper body strength, but don't forget that abdominal muscle strength and your lower body strength contribute to the power of your shots as well.

**Badminton players need muscles that are wiry but strong.**

Once your standard smash is working well, you should focus more on the placement and accuracy of this shot. There is no point in smashing repeatedly if your opponent can return your smashes without breaking a sweat.

If possible, try to learn the jumping smash as well. Jumping smash bestows an advantage in the sense of angle and steepness of the shot thus allowing your opponent little time to recover and make a good return.

Angle and placement refinement will give you more edge than just raw power. While doing drills, try to produce not just a powerful smash but a steep and accurate one as well.

Well, I hope this will help to improve your game. Good luck.

## 16. Deception

One of the easiest ways to win a point is through executing a deceptive shot. A deceptive player is one of the toughest opponents to beat. Deception is normally used to slow down the pace of the game.

Nowadays it is very commonly use by players around the world. **China's Zhao Jian Hua was one of the most deceptive players of his time.** Today I am going to focus on how to develop deceptive skills in badminton.

To learn to deceive your opponent, you need flexible arm and wrist movements. One of the ways to deceive is to vary your racket swing. Try to play a delayed shot by swinging your racket back and forward fast.

Besides the dimension of time, you can also use the dimension of height. Even if you have the chance to hit the shuttle early, wait till it drops further and hit it a bit later. The idea is to keep your opponent guessing as to when and where you will play your shot.

You can also feint as if you are going to play the shot at 100 kmph (Kilometer per hour) and suddenly slow it down to 10 kmph. By varying your swing, your opponent might be caught off-balance, unable to retrieve the shot and this will create an open door for you to go for the kill. By deceiving your opponent, he will be caught flat-footed and you can upset his sense of timing and rhythm.

You can also use the body movements to fool your opponent by varying your court movements. This involves footwork, jumping and lunging to the shuttle earlier.

An example of a body movement that can trick your opponent is rushing to the net as if to tap the shuttle but stopping suddenly and just blocking it. This will catch your opponent off-guard with the sudden change of pace or burst of speed. **Deception is all about last minute changes of movements.**

Certain players like Zhao Jian Hua are very good at tricking their opponents by letting their body go one way and their racket and their shots the other way.

By changing the angle of the racket's contact with the shuttle can deceive your opponent too. Instead of hitting the shuttle square with the full face of the racket, cut or slice the shuttle at the last minute to change its direction.

The idea is to make it fall short of your opponent and put it beyond his reach and take him out of his comfort zone. While you can hit some shots earlier, bring

down your racket and play the shuttle at a lower contact point.

**Deception lays in the hand skills especially the wristwork.** To train your wrist to be deceptive, you can use a squash racket to get better resistance. Swing it using snappy and quick movements like the drive to improve your wrist strength. You need to allot just five to ten minutes a day to this exercise and it can be done at home anytime and it certainly helps.

By mastering the skills to trick your opponent, you can gain the advantage by ensuring that your clear/ drop/ smash and net shot/ flick come from the same basic form and movements. No matter what your skill level is, this will reduce the ability of your opponent to predict where you hit.

# 17. Ways To Analyze Your Opponent

The ability to improve the quality of your strokes and the ability to analyze your opponents' game comes mostly from experience and hours of practice. Some experienced players can hit shots to any part of the opponent's court even when they are out of position.

**This is possible only due to hours and hours of practice.** You should always practice the shots that you find most difficult again and again and it will soon become like a second nature to you.

Some players like to assess their opponents during the first few rallies so that they can analyze their opponent's weakness and strengths, speed of the shots and shot placements.

Depending on the opponent you are playing against, for example a tall and slow player, you should formulate a strategy with more drops and clears so that your opponent does not have the chance to use his height to attack. If you are up against someone shorter, try to aim for the six corners as fast as possible to take him out of his comfort zone.

**You must also start to analyze your own game. -The way you play.** For example, try to recall last few games you played, the number of times you employed the smash/ clear/ drop/ drive/ netting and the number and types of errors you made in that game.

Let us say your opponent realizes that the clearing shot is your favorite, and you don't care much for the drop shot or net play, he will be prepared to rush to the backcourt to smash your clearing shot. With this in mind, you must vary your game and employ all shots equally as circumstances warrant.

Don't be afraid or shy to try something new. Let's say most of the times your net return is a straight court return, you could try a crosscourt net return or a crosscourt clear to your opponent's backcourt. Sometimes it can be a winner.

One more tactic to pressurize your opponent is to hit to where you think will 'surprise' him or take him out of his comfort zone. Or you may choose a spot, which will force him to employ his "Weak shot".

There's no such player who doesn't have weaknesses; a good player can disguise his weakness very well. Lin Dan is an attacking player whose defense is

slightly weaker. But he employs the attacking style of play to compensate for his lack in defense so that not many people can beat him.

Train endlessly to improve weak shots and to fine-tune your strong ones so that in time you will be as good as most of the players that you look up to. A badminton player has to always remember to be very serious in doing the drill or shadow- training as though he or she is playing in a game.

And most importantly be confident and relaxed to produce good quality shots and **give your best in a game.**

# 18. The difference between Men & Women's game

Men and women's game have many differences. But why are they different? It is because of the difference in their physical ability, creativity, personalities and attitudes.

We will now enumerate and analyze these differences one by one.

The first difference is that **men's game consists of more power play than women**. Men are much stronger in terms of physical strength than women. Men's shots are much more powerful than women's.

In women's game, especially singles, the smashes that are executed normally can be returned. That is why they play such long rallies before closing a point. On the contrary, in men's singles, the smashes are generally decisive and kill the point instantly.

Sure enough, women's game concentrates more on strokes and deep angle shots. The number of shots taken to set up an attack is many more than in a men's game. **They often use their deep angle strokes as their powerful weapon**. But the quality of the strokes is as important in women's game as in men's.

Now I can sense that you are becoming more interested. Right, the next difference between men and women's game is that men are faster in terms of speed than women.

Try to compare the speed difference between men's singles champion and women's singles champion. You will find a lot of difference in the speed of their shots as well the speed of their on- court movements.

In the singles' game, men usually serve low while women favor the high serve. Men serve low so that they can force their opponent to lift the shuttle and thus bring their stinging smashes into play.

Women, on the other hand, serve high without fear of the shuttle being smashed. This way, they force their opponent to the baseline and start playing long rallies with their graceful skills.

Have you ever noticed that women's games are normally slightly longer than men's, especially in the doubles format? This is because women are patient and like to play longer rallies, unlike men.

Although men can sustain a much longer rally than women, they normally use this energy to kill the shuttle as fast as possible rather than prolonging a point.

As you can see, women's movements on court are much more graceful than men's. In terms of quality of strokes and nicety of placement too, women's game is better than men's. The only things that women lack in are speed and power.

As a corollary, the training methods adopted for male and female badminton players should be different too. This is because they have contrasting styles of play and different physical and mental ability to sustain in the game.

# 19. Badminton Training For Women

In the game of badminton, men and women have contrasting styles of play, and hence different types of games. This is true of other sports such as tennis, basketball, soccer, hockey and others as well.

Men tend to play more aggressively than women in all kinds of sports including Badminton. Due to the contrasting styles of play, the training methods for women in badminton need to be different from their male counterparts as well.

Women's game emphasizes more on **quality of strokes, graceful footwork and elimination of errors**. So, one of the important aspects to focus on is the quality of strokes.

The skills training that can be done to improve on the quality of strokes are shuttle control and multiple shuttle drills. The purpose of the training is to make the shots sharper and more accurate.

The footwork in women's game is more graceful than in the men's version. In the men's game, some of them tend to create their own footwork. The idea of creating the new footwork is to gain more speed because speed plays a major role in men's game.

Some will lunge in the big steps and some will shuffle with fast small steps to go for every shot. Women's footwork is usually more organized. Most women badminton players have a similar footwork.

Hence grace and smoothness of on- court movements should be more emphasized in the training. Indonesia's Badminton queen Suzy Susanty had the best footwork and court coverage of her time.

In today's women's badminton, especially in singles, the one factor that differentiates top players from the lower ranked ones is **creativity**.

Unlike in men's game, where speed and power mostly set players apart, it is important for a woman badminton player to play a smart game to reach the top. When it comes to physical ability, most women players are on an equal footing, it is the creativity, which set the top players apart from the pack.

Another aspect that plays a major role in women's game is the consistency of the shots. The consistency of shots in women's game is slightly better than that in men's.

Men tend to make more mistakes due to their impatience to finish the rally as fast as possible. In training women players, it is important to train them to play their shots consistently well, because their game normally is concentrated more on strokes and deep angle shots.

Most importantly, the physical training for women players should be less than their male counterparts. The goals for fitness level set for women should not be as high as in the men's circuit. So the quantum of training (number of sets) should be reduced and focus is laid on stroke making and court coverage.

The trainer must not push too hard on his women wards because the risk of injury is rather higher than men. Men's bodies are naturally tougher and they can undergo tougher physical training sessions without risk of injury.

Women, on the other hand, have a smaller body structure, and hence, are not as hardy as men. **In the game of badminton, women have a higher risk of knee injury and back problems.**

In conclusion, women's badminton is more about grace and skills. Women should, therefore, **do more quality trainings than quantity training**, as their physical abilities are different. The basic skills are very important to improve their game. This is because the women's game is highly concentrated on the shot quality and court coverage.

It is highly recommended for women players to do more of shadow badminton exercises with the whole dimension of the court for coverage and more shuttle control drills and reduce the amount of weight training.

## 20. Badminton Singles: Different Styles of Play

In the game of badminton singles, there are three main styles or patterns of play. The fast and aggressive style players, the deceptive stroke players and the straightforward, defensive style players.

For the **fast and aggressive style**, most of the shots played are smashes, fast drop shots and net shots, attacking lobs, more low services than high services, quick low pushes/flicks to the backcourt from the net and fast pace footwork on the court.

For the **deceptive stroke players**, there are more high services to the baseline than low services, the lobs are more angled and deep, the drop shots are deceptively played and they drop nearer the net.

The net shots are sharper and more deceptive but are not played as fast as the attacking pattern of play. Most of the strokes they play are deceptive strokes to trick and slow down their opponent.

Moreover, the defenses of players who play this style are usually better and more reliable. Their push shots to the back are more angled and deceptive. This pattern of play requires less smashes and the movements of deceptive players are smoother and steadier, with better court craft.

For the **straightforward and defensive style**, most of the shots are plain and simple as opposed to being deceptive. Most of the services are high and deep on to the backcourt. The net shots are not tricky but simple and very few cross-court net shots. The drop shots are sharp but not as fast as the attacking pattern of play.

In this playing style, the main purpose is to wear the opponent down by playing consistently simple effective shots, making very few mistakes. The players that are categorized in this type of play normally have higher and stronger stamina because they are used to the long rallies.

Nearly all top players play a combination of two styles with one style dominating, such as Zhao Jian Hua, combining effectively the attacking style with deceptive stroke play. Foo Kok Keong, Ong Ewe Hock and Ardy Wiranata played a straightforward, defensive style. They sometimes resort to fast attacking style.

Rudy Hartono was a fast attacking player. P. Gopichand is mainly a deceptive stroke player who sometimes uses the attacking style of play. Susi Susanti was a standard defensive and straightforward style badminton singles player.

Nowadays, many players like to play the fast attacking style which was introduced by Rudy Hartono with lots of jumping smashes and attacking lobs. Most of the aspiring young players of today also usually follow or try to imitate their idols or go with the trend because they believe that they can apply it to their badminton singles game to win matches.

You shall always remember that your idols are individuals too and if you want to be a champion like them, you must believe and have confidence in your individuality.

**To find out which style suits your badminton singles game, you can ask yourself a few questions such as:**

- \* Do I have a good temper and emotional intelligence to play this type of game?
- \* Am I the impatient aggressive type who takes risks? A temperament more suited to the attacking style.
- \* Or am I the hardworking type who enjoys winning opponents using long rallies? Temperament more suited to the defensive style.
- \* Or am I the patient player who loves playing a quality game and gets a lot of satisfaction in controlling the opponent? A temperament more suited to the deceptive stroke player.

**There are also a second set of questions that you can ask yourself such as:**

- \* Do I have the physical ability to play this type of badminton singles style?
- \* Does the strength to execute continuous sharp and very powerful smashes come easily to me?
- \* Am I physically too short to play the aggressive type of game, like giving me little time to cover the court well as compared to a tall player whose reflexes are just as fast as mine and their court coverage are better?
- \* I have lots of physical fitness and good mental toughness. How should I use them effectively?

**The third set of questions that you can ask yourself:**

- \* Do I have the ability to produce the shots to play this type of game?
- \* Are my shots mostly straightforward, consistent and deep or are they deceptive?
- \* What are my most potent strokes? The smash, the defense, the lob, etc?

It is important for you to discover yourself and your style of badminton singles play. Do not just follow or copy the trend or your idol's pattern of play. Only then can you develop your own style to the highest possible standard and challenge others.

# 21. Tactics & Training Methods for the new 21 points System

In the new 21 points system, a player needs to play differently from the traditional 15 points system because each mistake made in the rally gives one point away to the opponent.

**There are only two ways to beat an opponent.** One is to play a game similar to your opponent and be better at it than him. The other way is to find a strategy to counter your opponent's strong points until they no longer threaten you.

Playing badminton is like playing chess. You literally need to think on your feet before producing a shot to create a chance to kill the rally. In other words, you need to set up opportunities to execute the winning shot.

Moreover, with the new 21- point scoring system, you can no longer tire your opponent. Any well- trained athlete can last the whole game easily. Now, it is the game plan that plays a big part. You have to think of many different game plans to counter your opponent and win the game. You do not necessarily have to smash all the time.

There are two types of smashes. One is a pure hard smash intended to finish the rally and the other, a quick smash to create the opportunity to follow- up. The two need to be used judiciously in different situations depending upon your opponent's game.

There have been a few top players in the past and the present that have used the hard, powerful smash regularly. Lin Dan, Taufik Hidayat, Lim Swie King, Hafiz Hashim, Chen Hong were notable among them.

However, today's game heavily relies on speed and quickness and this is where the "quick" smash plays a big part. The "quick" smash can force your opponent to produce a weak return that you can kill easily. Players like Lindan, Bao Chun Lai and Peter Gade have a very effective quick smash that they can put accurately on the sidelines or cross-court.

The key point in receiving service is to use your strong point to attack your opponent's weak point. To do that, you must assess your opponent's overhead, drop shot, chop, smash, attack, defence and other strengths and weaknesses. To form such a tactical counter- play, you can follow some of these ideas:

- **Assess his style of play and his strengths and weaknesses** during the game or even before you step onto the court so that you will know how to counter- attack.

- **Observe how he plays against other players.** World-class players watch videotapes of matches of their opponents' game to find out more about their game.

- As former All England Champion Datuk Eddy Choong likes to say, **the game of badminton is alive.** Therefore, no one can tell you which is the best shot to play in any situation as the answer depends on your own ability, the position of both players (singles) and the strengths and weakness of both players.

- If your net play is good, capitalize on it by drawing your opponent to the net more often. Even then you must vary your returns. Sometimes move fast to the net but delay your shots. And this is where deception comes into play to disguise your shots.

Vary the speed and manner of the approach. Vary your timing in playing your shots. However, don't always play the shuttle too tight at the net. Cross the shuttle over the net at times. Tap it or push it to the baseline. By varying your returns, you retain the advantage by keeping your opponent guessing.

Learn from your mistakes. The difference between a good player and a poor player is that after making a mistake, he will know how to improve his tactic to play more effectively. A good player won't repeat the same mistake more than probably three times in a row.

A poor player can lose seven to eight points in a row or even the whole game without changing his game plan. The worst part is that he wouldn't even know why he lost, so he can never learn from his mistakes.

A good player should know which tactic to use in which situation. He/she should know how to adjust his /her game according to the circumstances.

**To improve your game or to take it to the next higher level you have to play and train in a smart way.** Every training drill that your coach has set-up, you have to apply it mentally in your game, so that you can adapt to different scenarios in the game and benefit from your training.

## 22. What it takes to be a successful Doubles Player

There are 3 types of DISCIPLINES in the game of Badminton: **Singles, Doubles and Mixed doubles.**

Singles is all about individuality ability.

Doubles is totally different, in that it is about combination with a partner. In order to be a good doubles player, one needs to have a good technique as well as good communication with his /her partner.

In order to train to be a good doubles player, speed is important. The game of doubles hinges a lot on speed as the shuttle moves very fast between the four players. A doubles player needs to have speed in side-to-side movements as well as hand speed. A doubles player that stands in front in the attacking position needs to have fast hand skills in order to intercept any shots.

Speed is very important because in doubles, a player can hardly lift up the shuttle in the game as in singles to maintain the attack position. In doubles you need to be in the attacking position to take advantage of the game. A good doubles player and his or her partner need to have hand speed in order to keep the shuttle steep and in control so that they can be in a good position to attack all the time.

Other than speed, a doubles player needs to have power as well. Power is needed to kill the rally because killing the rally in doubles is much harder than in singles. In singles, there are a lot of empty spaces for a player to kill the rally, such as to the left or right side of the opponent. A singles player can smash either to the left or to the right in order to make the opponent struggle to stretch to the side to defend.

The condition in doubles is totally different. Once the shuttle is lifted up for a player to attack, the opponents will split to the left and the right to cover the whole court. This makes it harder to kill the rally. A powerful smash is needed to break the strong defense of the opponent.

With a powerful smash, the opponent will struggle even though they can return the shot thus returning a weak return that creates an opportunity for the partner who stands in front to make a kill.

Power should be followed by good defense as well. Some players are good at attacking. But when it comes to defending, they may not be so hot. A good

defense is needed in the game of doubles because a doubles player can't be in an attacking position all the time.

If a double player's defense is weak, the opponent will be more confident because they have already caught on to the player's weak point. The weak point can be very obvious if the player is forced to defend a continuous attack from the opponent sometimes. So it is important that a doubles player should have speed, power and also good defence in order to be good in doubles.

Other than these three aspects, the most important aspect that is needed in a game of doubles **is co- ordination with your partner**. A good doubles pair should understand each other's game very well so that they can complement each other's game to be a good pair.

The most preferable pair is one in which both the players are about the same standard and also play the same type of game. For example the two may be good smashers. They can combine their smashing ability to create an even better smashing game when they combine to be a doubles pair.

A doubles player needs to understand his partner's movements and reflexes well so that he or she can cover the place that is not covered by the partner. In order to get this ability, the pair needs time to understand each other's game by partnering each other in more games.

Doubles is not as easy as one thinks. Doubles also can help to improve singles player skills in the control of their shots. Singles players can use doubles player ability to intercept and control the shots in singles game. The current top singles players that are former doubles players are Chen Hong, Xia Xuanze, Hafiz Hashim, Roslin Hashim and Wong Choong Hann.

## 23. Women in Mixed Doubles

The mixed doubles version of badminton is a very enjoyable game. It is one of the most unique events as it involves two different genders. The rules for this particular event are the same as the level doubles.

Both the male and female counterparts have an equally important role to play in a mixed doubles pair. Today I' am going to focus on the role of woman in this game.

Often not much attention is paid to the women in a mixed doubles game because the male player makes most movements on court. Actually, this concept is false because without the women, the men won't have the good opportunity to do the attacking.

One of the important roles that women play is **to set up shots for their partner to attack** and maintain the attacking situation. Men play the attacking role in the partnership because they are stronger physically than the women. The setting up in this game is as important because the doubles game in the modern Badminton scenario requires a lot of attacking play to win.

The net play in this game is also an important factor. Women normally cover the front areas near the net. In that case, it is they who handle the crucial net play and set up attacking shots for their male partners. They have to be agile in order to cover both the left and right sides of the forecourt.

In the mixed doubles game, female partners who face the returns to their partners' smashes and tap the shuttle in front of the net often finish rallies. It is very important as it takes the burden of following up to the forecourt after an attacking shot off the male players' shoulders.

Other than that, **the defense in this game is also crucial**. The women players need to have as strong a defense as the men. Why is it so? It is because both players need to be in defensive formation (side-side) whenever they lift up the shuttle just as in level doubles.

The opponent will normally attack the perceived weaker member of the opponent pair, the woman. To be a good mixed doubles player, it is essential for the woman to have a strong defense so that there are no weak links in the partnership. The male partner will have difficulty in defending if he is standing behind his female partner trying to cover for her weaknesses.

Women do not necessarily have to be at the front of the court. The situation

should determine the nature of the formation and depends a lot on their opponents' game plan too.

The rule is flexible in deploying the mixed doubles strategy in Badminton. When one tactic is not working, try another one. **Use your strengths in order to exploit the opponents' weakness.**

## 24. Coach and Players relationship

Coach and players need to have a good relationship to produce good results. Coach plays an important role in a player's career improvement. Players need to follow the coach's instructions and **give 100% commitment in any training program.**

The coach must respect the rights, dignity and worth of every human being and their ultimate right to self-determination. The coach must treat everyone fairly and equally, within the context of his or her activity, regardless of gender, ethnic origin, religion or political persuasion.

A coach needs to have a good qualification to bring a player to success. An unqualified coach often doesn't even know what he is doing while he is coaching. The quality of the training will be ignored and this causes a waste of time for both parties. A qualified coach can be defined as one who knows what the players need and train them according to their weakness and ability.

Every badminton coach needs to have commitment in his coaching. This means they must really want to help their players to be successful and not just look into the monetary prospects.

Sometimes a coach must be hard on the players by not giving them too much comfort. The coach must make sure that the players face difficulty and pain so that they can handle these kinds of situations in the tournaments.

For example a coach needs to keep pushing the players in training without giving them much time in the comfort zone. A coach that gives too much comfort in training to their players will cause the players to be immature and unprepared to handle difficult situations during their matches.

Players also play an important role in making the coach's job successful in improving their performance and self. Players won't go any further in their performance if they don't give 100% commitment to the game and training, even if they have the best coach in the world.

**Players also need to respect their coach as the coach respects him/her.** A coach deserves the highest respect, as he is the one who helps the player to gain knowledge and to realize his true potential. The player should obey every instruction given by the coach implicitly as they are designed to improve his performance.

As the coach gives full commitment to the game, the player should give even more commitment during training. This is because the player will reap the benefit

of his training in the game. The coach doesn't stand to lose anything if the player doesn't show commitment during training. But the player will suffer the consequences during the game if he doesn't give his all during training.

No matter how good your coach and his training protocol are, you will not progress far if you are not committed.

In order to maintain a good relationship with your coach, you must always be honest and, respectful and tell the coach everything such as your physical and mental condition on the day, any injuries etc., so the coach can create a programme for that day. Any problems that you have in training must be reported to the coach because he is there to help you solve the problem.

For instance, if you have any injuries, you should inform the coach. Your coach will know what to do so that you don't harm yourself more and will advise you on the appropriate treatment. This will hasten your rehabilitation.

If you give false information to your coach, you will lose the benefit of his wisdom and guidance. The coach himself doesn't have anything to lose if you fail to show commitment in training.

The coach and the player must have a good relationship in order to produce good results for each other. A conflict between a coach and a student will affect the results of the training. Players must respect the coach and give commitment to the program that is conducted so that the player and the coach can share the same goal.

The coach also needs to respect the player's right and give full commitment to improve his student's game. Both parties need to cooperate in order to produce results and share the same goal. If a player is successful, he will win the prize and get accolades and the coach will also gain reputation as a good coach.

## 25. Mental Toughness

Many Badminton players are good in the physical aspect but not tough enough **mentally**. A badminton player can have all the fitness, power, agility and skills but without the presence of mental toughness, he or she can be affected mentally anytime, anywhere.

Marathon runners are good examples. Normally most of the marathon runners reach their stamina limits in the last 12 KM over 42 KM. But their strong mental ability allows them to keep running at the same pace to finish the race. Some runners even increase their speed to finish the race although they are already exhausted.

Marathon runners call this method '**hitting the wall**', meaning pushing to the limit. Even the legendary Tan Yee Khan of Malaysia uses the method of 'hitting the wall'. This method should be applied by badminton players who aspire to go one step further in the game. Whether it is during the game or training, players should keep focusing and pushing their body to the limit.

A match could take a rather long time to end. A good badminton player or in other words an 'established badminton player' will not go down without a fight and should be able to keep their pace and the accuracy of their shots until the very last point in the game no matter how long they have played. This is where **mental toughness** plays a big role.

You can be a very skillful player and fit player but if you meet an opponent who has a much higher level of stamina and fighting spirits, you will very likely lose the match if without the ability to push yourself when you are exhausted. There are plenty of instances whereby players are not strong enough mentally and emotionally, lost focus because of tiredness and gave up easily in the game.

Sometimes you can be leading far ahead in the game like reaching game points or match points and you are already thinking about victory. This should not be a habit of a badminton player because you might lose the game if you meet a player with great fighting spirits. You maybe be leading 14-0 or 19-10 but no matter how far you lead, you still have to stay focus until the game is over.

A good case in point would be the game that featured Hafiz Hashim and Lee Hyun Il in the quarter finals of the 2006 DOHA Asian Games. Hafiz was leading 19-10 at one stage in the first set, but could not stay focus and lost the set 22-20 in the end. He could not recover from this set back in the second set and lost the tie. Lee Hyun Il showed his **mental toughness and fighting spirits** in this instance.

A good player should always possess the '**never say die**' attitude even if their opponents are leading by a huge margin just as Lee Hyun Il has shown in the Asian Games. Another good case in point would be the game in between Lee Chong Wei and Lin Dan during the Malaysia Open 2006.

Lin Dan was already leading 20-13 in the rubber game and this was a really difficult situation for Lee Chong Wei because one mistake is enough to cost him the match. But he handled the pressure well and showed a greater desire to win, slowly clawing back in to the game. Finally, he won that game 22-20 and surprised the whole world.

Mental toughness can also give you an edge like **focusing on the match** no matter what is happening around, keeping you calm and cool in the court. Having mental toughness is having a high EQ (emotional intelligence). Many incidents, good or bad, can happen during a match outside or inside the court. For example, players can be psychologically affected by bad line calls, umpires decisions or insulted by the audience.

There were cases of top players which were emotionally affected such as the case in one of the game which featured Taufik Hidayat in an Indonesian local tournament. He was insulted by an audience that directed harsh words at him. Taufik then runs up to the audience chair and confronted him.

During Thomas cup 2002 Finals in Guangzhou and 2002 Busan Asian Games he fell prey again to his emotionally vulnerability caused by the umpire's decisions and bad line calls which led him to lose the game. In the 2006 HK open, he walked out of a semifinal game against Lin Dan because of a bad line call. No doubt he is a very good player, but if he could just control his emotions a bit better, he can be one of the all-time greats.

In many cases, players without much exposure are easily intimidated by the situation on hand and were not able to play their usual game. Mental toughness is needed to overcome all the fear with a 'nothing to lose', 'give everything you got' mentality. When fear is overcome, the confidence will be there to win the game. You need to keep **thinking positively** in the game, no matter what happens.

Badminton players should be equally strong, physically and mentally. Mental toughness will determine your success as a **badminton player** and will help you attain consistent achievements.

## 26. Player's confidence

In the course of a game of badminton, **a player's confidence is critical** in deciding his form and his chances of winning. Without confidence the chance of winning a game is about 30% only.

By having a little dose of confidence the chances of winning may go up to 70%. Of course confidence alone is not enough; other components such as skills, tactics, speed, mental and physical stamina and fitness also count.

As a player, skills, tactics, speed, mental fitness etc. are very important. But with all that, to win a game the player must have some confidence in himself, which will bring out his skills further in the game. Without confidence, no matter how good his skill, tactic, footwork, fitness etc., he will still lose as he could not bring out the best of his skills in the game.

Confidence is also one of the factors why top players could lose or almost lose a game to players that are not as good as them. Lack of confidence may affect any players' game by judgment, skills, court coverage etc.

**To gain confidence one must gear oneself up for the match mentally**, but mental toughness alone may not help as it differs from confidence subtly, although related. A major difference is that mental toughness tells us to go for every shot the opponent makes but it doesn't tell us that the shot returned to us can be returned in the way we want it to be returned. This is where confidence comes in and helps in shot improvement.

One way of gaining confidence is to challenge players that are better than you by telling them that you can beat them. Even if you know that it is unlikely, it is worthwhile as long as it gives you the confidence to win or at least give your opponent a run for his money.

As time goes by your game and the quality of your shots will improve as you have nothing to fear even though you are playing against a much higher ranked player. That's why sometimes you see underdogs beat their much-touted opponents.

To cite an instance, the unseeded Hafiz Hashim beat the then world number one Chen Hong of China at the All England Championship of 2003. Another good example is that of Ronald Susilo of Singapore knocking out World Number 1 Lin Dan in the first round of The Olympic Games in 2004.

Another way of gaining confidence is **by taking one point at a time**, in other words going step by step, when you play with higher ranked opponents in a tournament or a friendly game. It is an easy method of gaining confidence, giving you mental strength.

To apply this method, do not think about winning the game, as you will lose confidence when you lose the lead in the game. You must take one point at a time and think about winning that point only. This way, you won't lose your confidence easily even if your opponent leads in the game.

When you are high on confidence, you are willing to take risks such as willing to play back a tight net shot from your opponent. A low confidence player will just push it back across the net or just lift it far back to the base line. However, a confident player will play back a tighter net shot to force an error from his opponent and that shot could be a winner itself.

In conclusion, a player should have confidence in himself to win a game or at least play well in a game. Therefore confidence is vital to players no matter what level he/she is in.

But never be over-confident, for it will certainly be your undoing. Confidence is good but over-confidence will certainly decrease the winning percentage to less than 25%.

# 27. How to Overcome Nervousness in Badminton

Before a badminton player begins a match, he or she may seem to be steady and calm. But as the time draws nearer to enter the court, nervousness begin to sip in and all of a sudden the player feels unconfident.

The time that was used for the strenuous hours of training suddenly seemed insufficient to take on their opponents. **Nervousness** begins to take over all emotions and players begin to tell themselves that they are going to lose a match which they have yet to begin.

Everything seems to be all going wrong at this point of time. But this is a normal behavior. It is perfectly normal to feel this way when a player is about to begin his first match in a competition, especially if it's the first competition that he or she is participating.

**Being nervous in a game can cost a player to lose it.** When a player feels nervous, he or she cannot be able to perform at his peak. Strokes cannot be delivered and unforced errors begin to happen. The heart beats faster than usual and players begin to feel tired very quickly compared to his normal training sessions.

All this are because of jittery nerves. Ever feel yourself in this position before? Well...there are a few things that you can do to reduce such nervousness in a badminton game.

1. **Do not give up** and don't tell yourself that you are going to lose when the game has not even started.
2. **Be confident in yourself.** Do not let the opponent's reputation instill fear in you. If he/she is more popular in the badminton circle, this should inspire you more to win him as you have no pressure at all because you are the underdog.
3. Prepare yourself mentally and think of what your strengths are the night before the competition. This is to boost your own confidence and let you focus on the strengths that you have to beat and overcome your opponent.
4. Always concentrate on the game and not what others say. Do not let others influence you by saying that it is impossible to win someone who is greater than you. **Nothing is impossible in this world.**
5. **Be determined** of what you want to achieve the moment you step into the court. Be sure of the goals that you want and work towards it!

6. Do something that you can relax to before the game starts. Such as listening to some music that can calm and soothe your nerves or laughing and joking around with your friends.

Sometimes being nervous inside a badminton court is not exactly bad. Not all bad things are bad as you can change negative influences to positive ones. It is the way you look at things.

Being nervous sometimes gives a person that extra adrenaline rush which can lead to their victory, but if a player is unable to manage those nerves and give in to it, half the battle will already be lost before it has even started.

Being nervous before a game is something everyone has to go through in life when they play their first competition. Cold sweat and cold palms are alright.

It is impossible to eliminate nervousness each time we step into the court for a match. To improve is not how you eliminate nervousness, but it is how well you **manage it** and how you **use it to help yourself**.

## 28. The Importance Of Exposure

Every Badminton player needs exposure to become a recognizable and established player. The amount of exposure a player has can determine his/her performance in a game.

Players without much exposure will not be able to give their 100% in the game because they will not know the real conditions in a tournament.

**With exposure, it will definitely reduce one's nervousness level in competitions.** Once a player feels less nervous and more relax in tournaments, he or she will be more confident and less pressured to play and win the game.

Being nervous is a natural thing for first time participants in tournaments. Badminton Players need some time and more exposure to make themselves comfortable in tournaments.

Players can also expand their creativity by gaining more exposure. Badminton is not just a physical demanding game it is also a mentally stressful game. A player would face tremendous pressure and needs to be mentally and physically tough in order to play a good game.

Badminton is also known as a physical chess game. Physical chess refers to playing chess using the strength of the body. Once players have the exposure, he or she will have the idea of a top player's game and will know how to set up tactics in order to pressure the opponent.

They will be able to make more creative shots and placements to pressure their opponent to win the game. **This can be called playing a smart badminton game.**

From exposure, players will be able to read opponents game more easily. From taking part in many tournaments, players will get the idea on how the opponents move and make shots. Players will be able to guess where his or her opponent will move and hit from the exposure and experience that they had gain.

This gives the player an edge to plan shots beforehand. The ability to read the opponents game cannot be coached but it has to be experienced by the players so that it will be drilled in their mind. It is important to expose players especially the younger ones in tournaments so that they will not repeat some silly mistakes in future tournaments.

**Having exposure will lead players to be wiser and will help them to obtain the right training method in order to train smart for tournaments.** Once a

player is wise, he or she will most probably be on the right track on their training to be a better player. A wise player will be able to differentiate the different methods in training.

Every player will face failures and setbacks in their badminton career. Players who are wise will be able to take the things positively and would not give up easily towards their goal.

It is important for a player to be wise in whatever decision that they are making because it may affect their future success. From exposure, player will be able to become more matured mentally because they are already used to the conditions of tournaments.

Once a player is well exposed, he or she will gain the reputation and experience. The reputation of players depended on the tournaments they have joined and their performance in it. Good performance would definitely boost their reputation and confidence.

Players with good reputation will always be respected from many parties including the other participants, the audience, or even the committee of a badminton association. It is very important for a player to be well exposed if they want to be a well recognized and an improved player.

## 29. Discipline and Success in Badminton

Excelling in any sport requires discipline, sacrifice, commitment, hard work, pushing oneself to the limits and enduring pain. **Discipline will determine how far a player goes.** Players should not rely on talent alone to bring success.

In order to be disciplined, players need to know how to manage their time wisely. They should know when to rest, when to go to bed and when to wake up, how long they should train each day.

Players who are still in school need to manage their time to study and train so that their performance in sports and studies will be equally good. Poor time management will result in an irregular training schedule and this will make a player lazy.

If you lack a proper guide, you must draw up your own training schedule working in factors peculiar to your own case. In the daily schedule, you should plan on regular sleeping hours and rest periods and when and how you should train.

Plans come to naught without action. This means you must follow your plan consistently. An inconsistent training schedule won't give the right results to a player who wants to succeed.

Players need to sacrifice their time, their favorite movie, their favorite pastime etc to be successful. Sacrifice means the will to give up something close to your heart to achieve success in your chosen field. The legendary boxer Muhammad Ali was willing to spend most of his time training to win the world championship. He was willing to let go his favorite pastime, favorite TV programme and wake up very early every morning to train just to achieve his dream. He often dared to take risks by challenging the best boxers of his time and got injured.

He hated every minute of the training. But he always kept telling himself, **“Don't you quit. Suffer now and live the rest of your life as a champion.”** This will to sacrifice your time and your favorite pastime should be applied to excel in sports including badminton.

Badminton players must be willing to toil for long hours in training, pushing themselves to the limits to be successful. These countless hours of training and sacrifice will go a long way in making a consistently successful player.

The father of Malaysian Badminton, Datuk Eddy Choong says that if a player wants to be a school champion, he needs to train one hour three times a week. If he wants to become a junior champion, then he has to train three hours three times a week. A player who wants to become a state champion should train five

hours, four times a week. To become a world champion, a player has to do much more.

The time spent in training refers to one's willingness to endure pain. If a player wants to be a champion, he must push himself to the limit and be willing to endure pain in the countless hours of training and games.

We can learn something from the legendary track champion Jesse Owens who said, "**It takes concentration and dedication to excel in sports.** There are always diversions, but if you want to excel in track and field events, or anything else, you have to be willing to make some sacrifices. That's where discipline comes in."

This piece of advice applies equally well to badminton players. Sacrifice is a must to excel not only in sports but also in life.

To excel in Badminton, here are 10 secret tips that will come in handy.

1. **HOW YOU THINK IS EVERYTHING.** Always be positive, think of success, not of failure. Beware of negative environment.
2. **SET YOUR DREAMS, TARGET AND GOALS.** Write down specific goals and CREATE a plan to reach them.
3. **TAKE ACTION.** Goals are nothing without action. Don't be afraid to get started. Just do it.
4. **NEVER STOP LEARNING.** Go back to school to study sports science or any subject that has a bearing on the game or read books on the subject. Get training and acquire skills.
5. **BE PERSISTENT AND WORK HARD.** Success is a marathon, not a sprint. Never give up.
6. **LEARN TO ANALYZE DETAILS.** Get all the facts, all the input. Learn from you mistakes.
7. **FOCUS YOUR TIME AND MONEY.** Don't let other things distract you.
8. **DON'T BE AFRAID TO INNOVATE, BE DIFFERENT.** Following the herd is a sure way to mediocrity.
9. **DEAL AND COMMUNICATE WITH PEOPLE EFFECTIVELY.** No person is an island. Learn to understand and motivate others.

**10. BE HONEST AND DEPENDABLE. TAKE RESPONSIBILITY.** Otherwise,  
Number.1-9 will not matter.

## 30. How to learn from failure

Every badminton player faces ups and downs in his career. Even the best player has his off- days and faces failure. Losing is part of the game in every athlete's life.

**What matters most is how you take the failure.** In order to be a successful sportsman, you must know how to face failure not just in sports but also in life.

Failure can make a player mentally strong. It can also teach us the quality of perseverance. On the other hand, failure can be very discouraging to some players and make them give up. This should not be the way for players who wish to reach greater heights.

A good player would never give up no matter how many times he fails. Failures teach us that players can't expect an overnight improvement. Even talented players need a long time to be successful.

Failures sometimes make us realize that the training program we are following is not helping us. We must improve on our training methods and be better prepared the next time.

More emphasis should be placed on the **quality of the training program** than the period of training. Once the right training program is identified, the quantity of the training can be increased according to the player's strength.

A better training program should give a much better improvement to the player as they can avoid the mistakes they made earlier. Thus failure becomes a learning experience.

Failure can be very discouraging. It depends on how the player copes up with it. One way to overcome disappointment is to think positively. Maybe you were not as experienced as your opponent and it is only normal to be beaten by a better player.

Maybe you didn't put your full effort or concentrate enough and could do better the next time. When you think positively, you will gain back your confidence and will train harder to perform better the next time.

Failure can make a player gain more maturity and experience. By losing a match in a competition, the player will have an idea of how it is in a real tournament situation. He would also have met many good players and learnt from their games.

The experience and maturity gained from a failure can make one more hardworking and wiser. From maturity, comes tenacity and a mature player will not give up as easily in the next game. He will also have an idea of how to train to be a better player.

Failure is part of the learning curve for any player. Players should face up to this reality and take failures in their stride. **Just as nothing comes easy, so also nothing is impossible in this world.**