

FOCUS► **STRIKING WITH SHORT IMPLEMENTS (SIDEARM PATTERN)**

Subfocus► **Force, Space Awareness**

Grades 3-5

Standard 1

The physically literate individual demonstrates competency in a variety of motor skills and movement patterns.

Grade-Level Outcomes

- Strikes an object with a short-handled implement, sending it forward over a low net or to a wall (S1.E24.3a)
- Strikes an object with a short-handled implement while demonstrating three of the five critical elements of a mature pattern (S1.E24.3b)
- Strikes an object with a short-handled implement while demonstrating a mature pattern (S1.E24.4a)

Readiness for the Following:

- Strikes an object with a short-handled implement, alternating hits with a partner over a low net or against a wall (S1.E24.4b)
- Strikes an object consecutively, using a short-handled implement, alternating hits with a partner over a net or against a wall in either a competitive or cooperative game environment (S1.E24.5)

Critical Elements for Striking With Short Implements

- Racket back in preparation for striking.
- Step on opposite foot as contact is made.
- Swing racket or paddle low to high.
- Coil and uncoil the trunk for preparation and execution of the striking action.
- Follow through for completion of the striking action.

Lesson Objectives

The learner will:

- Strike a ball with a racket using a side-arm striking pattern, sending the ball forward to a wall
- Strike a ball with a racket with selected critical elements
- Strike a ball with a racket, side-arm pattern, performing consecutive hits to the wall

Safety Concerns

- Ensure that students have spatial awareness for striking and retrieving balls.
- Ensure that wall space is adequate for sidearm striking.

Materials and Equipment

- Short-handled rackets, one per student
- Small high-density foam balls, one per student
- Low-compression tennis balls, one per student
- Tape line on wall, height of 3 to 4 feet (90 to 120 cm)
- Tape line on floor, approximately 10 feet (3 m) from wall, optional

Introduction

In previous lessons, you practiced volleying with emphasis on a flat surface for contact. You also practiced striking with paddles and rackets to send objects upward in self-space. Today, we will take those skills to a higher level—striking with a racket to send a ball forward to the wall and over a net. Personal space will become larger as you move to be always in position to strike the ball; challenges will increase as you attempt consecutive hits.

LEARNING EXPERIENCE: READINESS FOR STRIKING

The Grip

Students stand in a circle, and a racket is on the floor in front of each student.

When you first practiced striking with a racket, we discussed the importance of the correct grip. The grip will be very important today as you begin striking balls to the wall. Pick up your racket and do not move your hand from that position. Yes, it feels strange, but it will be correct when you begin sidearm striking to the wall.

Check students' grips. Remind them to recheck their grip anytime throughout the lesson by placing the racket face down on the floor, picking it up, and not moving the hand from that position.

Sidearm Striking (Foam Balls)

Position students around the perimeter of the work area, each facing the wall and 5 to 6 feet (150 to 180 cm) from the wall, with a racket and foam ball on the floor beside each student. Demonstrate as you introduce the striking skill.

In our previous work on striking with rackets, you practiced sending the ball upward; the striking pattern was back to front and up. Today, the striking pattern will be back to front, but in a side pattern. Ready position will be side to target.

- Students practice back to front swing of arm using underhand striking pattern two to three times; they practice back to front swing of arm, sidearm pattern, without rackets.

LEARNING EXPERIENCE: SIDEARM STRIKING TO THE WALL

You are now ready to strike the ball to the wall with the sidearm pattern.

After students pick up rackets and balls, position each in a ready position side to target with shoulder toward the wall.

Safety Check: Enhance safety by grouping right-handed students together and left-handed students together, as opposed to random placement.

- Students perform single hits to the wall: They drop, hit, bounce, retrieve, and wait for the signal. Allow several minutes of practice and exploration of sidearm striking for students to discover the importance of the grip for the angle of racket and the force needed for the ball to return to their personal space with one bounce.

Cues: *Side to target. Racket back. Sidearm swing. Control the force.*

Note: These two components—correct grip and side to target—are critical to the sidearm striking pattern. Students at all grade levels need focused practice for mastering the critical elements of the striking pattern.

- Students strike the ball for contact just above the tape line on the wall, performing single hits on your signal.
- Students practice single hits independently. (Observe for class and individual remediation and reteaching.)
- Students continue striking with single hits, emphasizing correct grip and side to target in preparation. Introduce follow-through with arm extended toward target or wall.

Cue: *Extend the arm, extend to target.*

- Have students “freeze” the follow-through, checking to see whether they extend the striking arm toward the wall.

- Challenge students to choose a block or spot on the wall and aim just for that spot.

When you think you can do five perfect single hits (racket back in preparation, side to target, follow-through), ask your neighbor to observe your hits and give you feedback—positive comments and suggestions for improvement.

LEARNING EXPERIENCE: INCREASING THE DISTANCE

Students begin single sidearm hits at a distance of 5 to 6 feet (150 to 180 cm) from the wall.

Cues: Side to target. Racket back. Follow-through extension.

- When students can complete five single hits with the ball hitting the wall just above the tape line and bouncing one time in front of them on the rebound, have them take a giant step backward and repeat the practice of single hits. When they are again successful for five hits, they take another giant step backward. (No distance greater than 10 feet [3 m] from the wall.)

As distance increases, one new critical element becomes very important: swinging low to high.

Cue: Low to high.

Peer Assessment

Students choose distance for personal best and ask neighbor to observe the striking pattern—no closer than 5 feet (1.5 m), no greater than 10 feet (3 m).

Teacher Assessment

Observe striking pattern at distance selected by student. Focus on critical elements and do formative assessment for individual feedback.

LEARNING EXPERIENCE: CONSECUTIVE HITS

Students return to original positions, 5 feet (150 cm) from the wall. Striking the ball with the sidearm pattern, they attempt two consecutive hits: bounce, hit, bounce, hit, catch.

Cues: Side to target. Bounce, hit, bounce, hit.

Sidearm striking on preferred side only requires accuracy to the wall and moving feet to be in position for the striking action. Use quick feet and control force. Don't forget: opposite foot forward, watch the ball!

Grades 4, 5

- When successful with two consecutive hits, students can try for three, four, or five.
- Challenge students to set a personal best for consecutive hits. Ball must contact wall above tape line and bounce one time between hits.

LEARNING EXPERIENCE: READY, TURN (GRADES 4, 5)

Have students place balls on top of rackets, which are placed on floor beside work area. With all students facing the same direction, demonstrate the ready position of facing the target (wall) and turning to execute the striking motion. Have students practice several times without rackets.

Cue: Coil and uncoil (coil as racket arm extends backward, uncoil as racket arm swings and extends toward the target or wall).

- Return to challenge of performing two consecutive hits. Have students bounce and hit with side to target for the first striking action (uncoil), complete the striking action facing the wall, and immediately turn side to target in readiness for the second contact (coil). Increased distance from the wall will give students more time for the turning action.

Note: Sidearm striking pattern for third graders is complete with two consecutive hits and three of the five critical elements in performance. Students in grades 4 and 5 are ready for complexity of readiness with turn and greater number of consecutive hits. Developing a mature pattern for sidearm striking requires multiple opportunities for deliberate, focused practice.

LEARNING EXPERIENCE: SIDEARM STRIKING

If your school has an outside brick wall (no windows) with a concrete sidewalk or pathway adjacent to the wall, this work area is an ideal setting for students to practice the single and consecutive hits with tennis balls. Feedback about control of force is immediate because students want to practice striking rather than chasing balls.

Assessment

Conduct formative assessment of critical elements.

Closure

- What was the focus of our lesson today?
- What new skills did you practice?
- What is the same and what is different about underhand and sidearm striking?
- Model as you ask students to explain the critical elements of sidearm striking.

Reflection

- Do students have a functional understanding of the correct grip for sidearm striking?
- Are they making progress in mastery of the critical elements of the sidearm striking pattern?
- Can they control force to match distance for a bounce in front?
- Do students in grades 4 and 5 see the transfer of critical elements between skills, such as opposite foot forward, watching the ball, extension for follow-through, and so on?