

Forehands: From “Whip” to “Rafa”

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Introduction: In Modern Tennis, “Whip” forehands, topspin lobs, and the “Rafa” forehand have become common parts of the game. This handout will provide some ideas of how to promote learning these valuable skills.

PHASE 1: Learning to work with paired hands

Step 1: Position at service line with racket as shown (Fig. 1)

Step 2: “Bump” ball over the net and finish with the arms as shown (Fig. 2).

NOTICE: The hands are working TOGETHER!

Step 3: Bring racket and hands to VERTICAL with forearms HORIZONTAL!
(Figure 3: Front view) (Figure 4 : Side view)

Step 4: Once above learned, finish with hands tilted slightly back (Fig. 5)



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4



Fig 5

PHASE 2: “WHIP” FOREHANDS--Balls “on the rise”

Stand near the center mark of the baseline and stroke low balls with the “whip” technique from Phase 1. (Figures 6 and 7)



Fig. 6



Fig. 7

**NOTE: The stroker does NOT straighten his legs as he hits.
He STAYS DOWN on the ball.**

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(Continued)

TOPIC 3: WHIP FOREHANDS—From the corner

SITUATION: Opponent has hit a low, wide ball to your forehand.

RESPONSE: Move quickly to the corner and use the “WHIP” technique .

- KEYS:**
1. RUN “THROUGH” THE BALL
 2. KEEP YOUR HEAD DOWN!
 3. Have the hands work together!
 4. FINISH WITH THE HANDS WAIST HIGH!!!



Topic 3

TOPIC 4: TOPSPIN LOB TECHNIQUE

SITUATION: Opponent has hit a wide ball to your forehand and you want to attack with an offensive lob. (OVER HIGH BACKHAND)

RESPONSE: Move quickly and use the “WHIP” technique .

- KEYS:**
1. RUN “THROUGH” THE BALL
 2. KEEP YOUR HEAD DOWN!
 3. Have the hands work together!
 4. FINISH WITH THE HANDS ABOVE YOUR CHEST!!!



Topic 4

TOPIC 5: Introducing the “RAFA” FOREHAND

STEP 1: At service line, repeat Figures 1 and 3/4 from Phase 1. (Fig. 8)

STEP 2: ROTATE THE FOREARM AND CATCH THE RACKET WITH THE OTHER HAND. (Fig. 9)



Fig. 8



Fig. 9

GOOD NEWS! The “RAFA “ will produce sharply “dipping” shots!
BAD NEWS! “RAFA” forehands tend to land at the SERVICE LINE!