

Backhand

“Although probably the most simple and natural stroke in the game, the backhand is normally most players’ least aggressive shot. The backhand tends to be used as a defensive or neutralising stroke where depth and control are essential. The single-handed backhand has potential for more variety, for example hitting with slice, the drop shot, approach shots and the volley, while the two-handed backhand (see opposite) is considered better for returning serve, hitting lobs, driving the ball or dealing with power.”

Bob Brett

TRY THIS AT HOME!

When moving to hit a backhand, right-handers should make their first step across to the ball with their left leg. This allows them to arrive at the ball earlier and means they can step forward into the court when they strike. If their first step is a cross-over step with their right leg it’s easy to catch the ball late and harder to recover quickly.

BOB SAYS

- 1 Use an Eastern backhand grip.
- 2 Use the non-racket hand to help take the racket back.
- 3 Turn your shoulders, keep your head perfectly still and transfer your weight onto the front foot, driving the racket up from underneath the ball.



Double-handed backhand

“While a single-handed backhand gives a player more reach and variety, a two-hander allows players to use their non-dominant hand to help with control and add a bit more stability and power. It also makes it a bit easier to take the ball early and on the rise – particularly on the return of serve.”

Bob Brett



1. Mark begins his movement to the ball by stepping across with his left leg. He begins his preparation by turning his shoulders and taking the racket back with his left hand.



2. His weight starts to transfer from his back foot to his front foot as he brings the racket forward. Getting his weight into the stroke will help increase power.



3. Mark plants his right foot as he prepares to strike. He is perfectly balanced – his head is still and on top of his right shoulder, which dips forward and under the ball.



4. He drops the racket head so it comes from underneath the ball. When he makes contact he will drive the strings up the back of the ball to create topspin.



5. Mark has made contact in the perfect position – out in front and not too close or too far away from his body – with his head perfectly still throughout the stroke.



6. He finishes with a perfectly balanced follow-through, with his racket above his wrist and his eyes tracking the ball.

Grip

The ‘bottom’ hand (your dominant hand) should be placed on the top of the handle with a neutral grip. The ‘top’ hand must be a little to the left of centre on top of the grip.

Movement

Your first step should be with your ‘outside’ leg (left leg for right-handers, and vice versa). This will help stop excessive cross-over of the right leg while moving to the ball which can block the hands, body and racket from hitting through the shot.

Swing

A right-hander’s two-handed backhand should be dominated by the use of the left hand – right-handers should try to imagine they’re hitting a forehand with their left arm. Take the racket back with the racket head above the ball (think of the swing as a C shape) then drop the racket head under the ball and bring the strings up the back of the ball by using the left hand to create topspin.

