

First serve

“Hitting a serve is unique because it’s the only time in tennis when you can play a shot without having to react to what your opponent has done with the ball. You’re in charge, so use the opportunity to take control! Generally speaking, the most difficult part of the serve is co-ordinating your upper and lower body, but if you practise hard you’ll soon see big improvements.”

Bob Brett

Great Servers

Andy Roddick is the biggest in the business while Roger Federer has the ability to put the ball exactly where he wants with great variety and disguise. The Swiss star can hit different types of serve from the same ball toss to keep his opponents guessing.

Bob Brett

BOB SAYS

- 1 Use a grip somewhere between a Continental (or Chopper grip) and an Eastern backhand grip. The Continental grip is just like how you would hold a hammer. To find an Eastern backhand grip start with a Continental grip and move your hand a quarter of a turn to the left.
- 2 Make sure you’re balanced before you start the stroke. Your weight can begin on the front or back foot, but I prefer the back foot as it allows for a simpler motion and better timing.
- 3 Your arms should work together and be co-ordinated throughout the action. Try to develop a consistent and straight ball toss, keep your head up throughout and make contact in front of your body. Don’t let your upper body collapse!



TRY THIS AT HOME!

Stand on the baseline and try to throw a ball long and high over your opponent’s baseline without it bouncing. Repeating this will help you develop a good service action.



1. Mark is perfectly balanced, with his hands together and feet in line pointing towards his target area.



2. His weight has moved onto his back foot, his arms start to drop down in sequence together and begin to separate.



3. As Mark’s left hand starts to rise his head begins to tilt backwards, anticipating the position of his ball toss.



4. With his left arm straight (but not stiff), he starts to rotate his shoulders and begins to transfer his weight onto his front foot.



5. Mark has released the ball and his left arm is perfectly straight. His shoulders have tilted slightly so he can get under the ball.



6. He arches and drops the racket behind his back ready to accelerate upwards while driving off the ground with his legs.



7. Look at that perfect contact point! He meets the ball at the highest possible point, in mid-air and just inside the baseline.



8. He continues to watch the ball after contact and lands inside the court ready to take advantage of his opponent’s return.