

JUICING UP Your Serve & Serve Practice

by Ashley Hobson

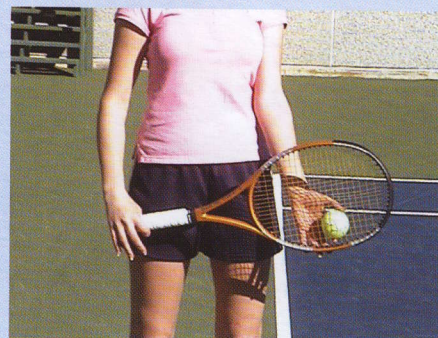
Ashley is a law school grad and veteran coach with national coaching experience. He has been a Davis Cup Captain, Fed Cup Coach, ATP, WTA and ITF Coach in more than 60 countries. He directs his own tennis academy in Atlanta, Georgia. You may contact Ashley through his website at www.hobsonstennis.com

The quality of your first shot very often determines the quality of your point, therefore having a good serve and return is of the greatest importance at the advanced level. By working on the following 10 aspects of the serve, you will improve your students' fluidity, balance, power, accuracy and enhance the kinetic link principle on the serve.

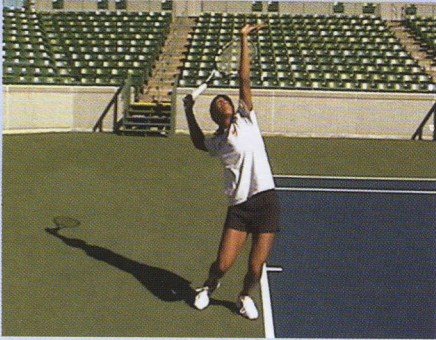
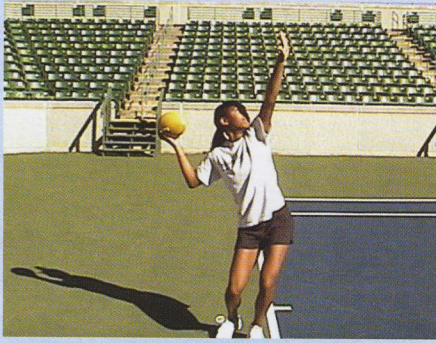
1. Two fingers first - allows the important top two fingers to work, rather than the whole hand. Great way to warm up serves.



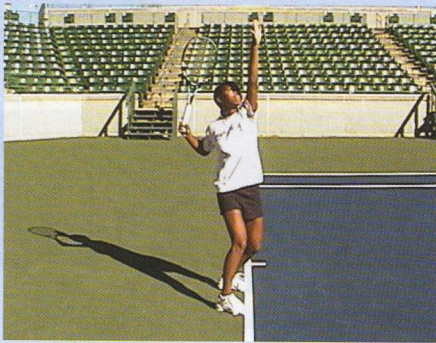
2. Relaxed and fluid - releasing the bottom three fingers allows you to have a relaxed wrist and arm on the serve - as the forearm muscles relax.



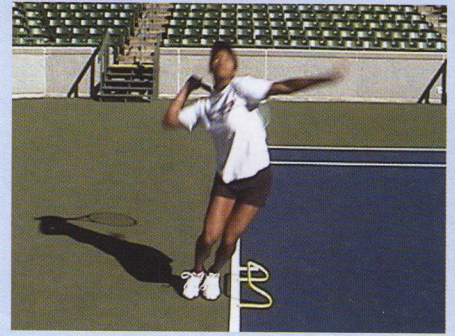
3. Power position - entails knee bend, weight on the back foot and shoulders, and shoulder and hitting arm are in the check position. Serve from this position to improve your power, or toss weighted footballs.



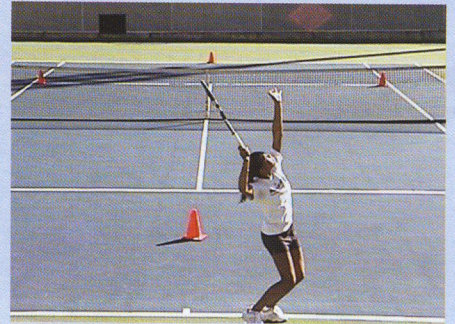
4. Rotation - Serve with both feet on the baseline facing the net so you get the feeling of rotating your hips and shoulders for the serve.



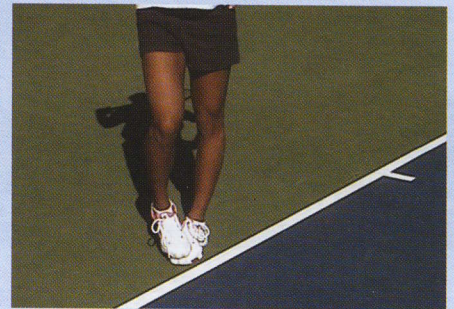
5. Leg drive - Serve and jump over a small hurdle to get the feeling of using your legs more on the serve.



6. Wrist - Using your wrist and upper arm only, serve into the four different target areas - short, long, left and right. This allows you to understand that your forearm and wrist determine where the ball goes.



7. Balance - Serve with your back foot on top of your front foot, which will improve your balance and toss on the serve (or fall flat on your face!).



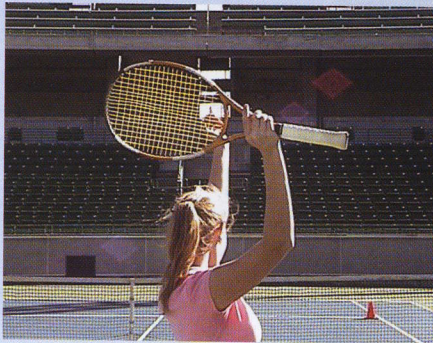
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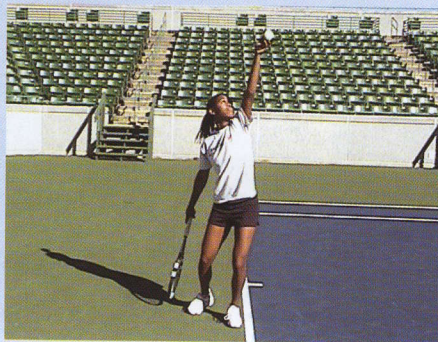
8. **Power** - Baseline to fence serves, alternating one in the fence then one in the court (maximum 20 and after warming up).



9. **Getting topspin easily** - Start with racquet as shown in the first picture and just "flip" your wrist (butt of racquet points to side fence and when you finish, it points to the other fence). This is an easy first step to showing the concept of topspin, as well as how the wrist works to get topspin.



10. **Racquet left behind** - Start with racquet at right leg and toss ball up without moving racquet arm, then accelerate to get to the contact point. Improves acceleration and power position.



When used appropriately, these drills will improve your student's serves and add a new dimension to your serve training.