




ACEing Autism CURRICULUM MANUAL

2021 Edition



ACEing Autism is on a mission for children with autism to grow, develop and benefit from social connections and fitness through affordable tennis programming, uniquely serving individual needs while filling a national void for this growing and worthy population.

Welcome to **ACEing Autism**

We are excited to share our updated 2021 Curriculum Manual with you. In an effort to enhance our participants' tennis skills and progression, we've expanded to include a total of 88 activities. The activities are listed in order of increasing difficulty.

Our goal is for our Program Directors to feel empowered and to use their experience and judgment when choosing the activities that are appropriate for their participants. How you prioritize your time may vary depending on the group you have. What is most important is that participants are being met at their current level.

As they progress, you should slowly increase the number of repetitions and the complexity of each activity. Keep in mind that uneven learning profiles are common among those with ASD. Skill progression is not always linear, so you may have a participant who requires more support with Hand-Eye Coordination than they do with Groundstrokes.

Visit the link below to view videos for each activity inside this manual:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLJiiz4sNU-aBxzBSA-4ogKyEmKdaMfdBk7>

As a reminder, tennis is just one of the areas of focus on the court. Throughout the hour-long clinic, you should also look for opportunities for participants to socialize with one another and get exercise. Whenever possible, look to pair participants together and have volunteers facilitate social interaction between them. If you see a participant hitting balls from the same place, try to get them moving!

Lastly, the 2021 update introduces a corresponding digital library for every activity. You'll find a brief (10-15 second) video for every activity listed in our curriculum. If you don't already have access, please reach out to the National Office.

Step 1 Warm-Up

Beginner Level

- March in Place
- Jog
- Touching Toes and Knees
- Arm Circles
- Side-Step
- Butt Kicks
- High Knees

Intermediate Level

- Walking on Toes and Heels
- Line Steptover
- Line Hops
- Frankensteins
- Jumping Jacks
- Lunges

Advanced Level

- Lunges with Rotation
- Carioca
- Planks with Shoulder Taps
- Broad Jumps
- Burpees



Step 2 Hand-Eye Coordination

Beginner Level

- Around the Body
- Roll the Ball
- Bounce Ball with Palm of Hand
- Juggle 1 Ball
- Toss and Catch

Intermediate Level

- Jacks
- Bounce and Catch
- Side-Step Toss and Catch
- Roll with Sole of Shoes
- Ball Pyramid

Advanced Level

- Alternating Dribble
- Toss and Catch with Step and Rotation
- The Steph Curry
- No Look Toss and Catch



Step 3

Racquet Skills

Beginner Level

- Balance Ball on Racquet
- Roll the Ball
- Walk the Dog

Intermediate Level

- Around the World
- Bounce on the Racquet
- Pass it
- Circular Press

Advanced Level

- Ball Pick Up (Racquet)
- Ball Pick Up (Foot)
- Egg Toss (Racquet)

Step 4

Volleys

Visit the link below to view videos for each activity inside this manual:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLJiz4sNU-aBxzBSA-4ogKyEmKdaMfdBk7>

Beginner Level

- Stationary Forehand Volleys (Racquet on Side)
- Stationary Forehand Volleys (Ready Position)
- Windshield Wipers
- Split Step and Volley

Intermediate Level

- Staggered Forehand Volleys
- Volleys with Feed from Service Line
- Forehand Volleys with Targets
- Stationary Backhand Volleys

Advanced Level

- Alternating Forehand/Backhand Volleys
- Close Out Volleys
- Alternating Windshield Wipers
- Overheads
- Alternating Volleys and Overheads
- Live Volleys from the Service Line



Step 5

Groundstrokes

Beginner Level

- Forehands (Tee Stand)
- Forehands (Drop Hit)
- Forehands (Racquet Back)
- Forehands (Ready Position)

Intermediate Level

- Forehands (Side-Step)
- Forehands with Targets
- Backhands
- Alternate Forehands and Backhands

Advanced Level

- Forehands (Topspin)
- Point Building
- Rally

Curriculum Manual - Serves

If ready to progress, you may introduce the serve to the participant. The serve is a stroke used to initiate a point in tennis. Here is a breakdown of the stroke in 5 steps.

Tip 1: Stance

As with all strokes, the participant should start from the ground up. In doing so, while standing sideways, look down and ensure their feet are approximately shoulder width apart. Then turn their front foot (left foot for right-handers, right foot for left-handers) so it is pointed towards the net post cross-court (right net post for right-handers, left net post for left-handers).

Tip 2: Toss

A consistent toss equals a consistent serve! To get the hang of it, a right-handed player can practice their toss by placing the butt end of their racquet on the ground in front of their left foot with their racquet pointed at one o'clock. Keeping their left arm (tossing arm) straight and thinking of their shoulder as a hinge (it's important for a consistent toss to keep the elbow straight). The player can toss their ball up so that it lands on the face of their racquet. The height of the toss should be slightly higher than the player can reach with the racquet in hand at full extension. And again, always envision yourself tossing the ball to one o'clock if you are right-handed and 11 o'clock if you are left-handed., practice all of the above but switch your feet and arms.





Tip 3: Throw Motion

A service motion is very much the same as a throwing motion—you are throwing your racquet at the ball. To practice a smooth motion, we suggest taking two tennis balls, one in each hand. (Keep in mind your already perfected stance and your one o'clock toss!) Toss your first ball at one o'clock and throw the second ball at the first ball. Try to throw the ball when your toss reaches its peak. Keep working at it until you can make contact multiple times!

Tip 4: Grip & Service Motion

The continental grip is when you pretend to shake hands with the racquet. It is the same grip that you would use when hammering a nail with a hammer. Practice the service motion without a ball and shadow the instructor's motion. If it is too difficult to learn the complete serve motion, have your participant start with the racquet behind their back in the throwing position. Practice a smooth serving, throwing motion with a relaxed grip. Try to whip the racquet through the air.

Tip 5: Contact & Follow Through

When serving, try to watch your racquet make contact with the ball. This will keep your head up and keep you standing tall. It will also encourage you to make impact with that ball at full height.



Serve Drills:

- Throwing the ball cross court into the service box to a partner who catches the ball.
- Toss one ball up and throw another ball at the first ball.
- With the racquet in the trophy position, toss a ball up and try to hit the ball with the racquet.
- Shadow serve motion without ball

Visit the link below to view videos for each activity inside this manual:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLJiiz4sNU-aBxzBSA-4ogKyEmKdaMfdBk7>

Step 6

Serve

Beginner Level (at service line)

- Ball toss
- Service Box Toss and Catch
- Shadow Motion

Intermediate Level (at service line)

- Toss One, Hit One
- Serves from Racquet Back

Advanced Level

- Serves from Baseline
- Serves with Targets
- Serves with Spin

Step 7

Games

Beginner Level

- Pancake
- Red Light, Green Light
- Land Mines (Throw)
- Four Corners Relay

Intermediate Level

- Caterpillar
- Alligator
- Freeze Tag
- Land Mines (Racquet)

Advanced Level

- Land Mines (Serve)
- Milkshake
- King of the Court
- Ping Pong
- Around the World





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