

TEACHING YOUNG TABLE TENNIS PLAYERS HOW TO HOLD THE RACKET

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Abstract:

Present article is devoted to the how to hold the racket, the importance of holding the racket during the game and some mistakes to hold the racket and effective tips and steps of teach them.

Keywords: basic grip, wrap around the handle, creating a secure grip, hand placemen, comfort and adaptation

As we know, teaching young table tennis players how to hold the racket properly is essential for developing good technique and control. Here are some steps and tips to effectively teach them the correct grip:

- 1. Basic Grip:** Start by teaching the basic shake hands grip, which is the most common grip in table tennis. Here's how to do it:
 - The player holds the racket handle with the palm facing the table.
 - The index finger is placed on the backhand side of the racket, slightly separated from the other fingers.
 - The remaining fingers wrap around the handle, creating a secure grip.
 - The thumb rests on the rubber side of the racket, providing stability and control.
- 2. Hand Placement:** Emphasize the importance of proper hand placement on the grip. The player's hand should be relaxed, and the grip should be firm but not overly tight. Encourage them to avoid gripping the racket too tightly, as it can limit wrist flexibility and hinder stroke execution.
- 3. Finger Positioning:** Guide the player to position their fingers correctly for better control and flexibility:
 - The index finger should be placed slightly apart from the other fingers, allowing for more wrist movement and maneuverability during strokes.



- The middle, ring, and little fingers should wrap around the handle comfortably, providing stability and support.

4. **Comfort and Adaptation:** Ensure that the grip feels comfortable for the player. Everyone's hand size and shape are different, so some variations in grip may be necessary for individual players. Allow them to experiment with slight adjustments to find a grip that feels natural and allows for ease of movement.

5. **Visual and Verbal Cues:** Use visual and verbal cues to help players understand the correct grip. Show them demonstrations of the grip and describe the key elements step by step. Use simple and clear language to explain the positioning of the hand, fingers, and thumb.

6. **Repetition and Practice:** Like any motor skill, developing a proper grip requires repetition and practice. Encourage players to spend time holding and getting comfortable with the grip outside of actual gameplay. Incorporate grip exercises and drills into their training sessions to reinforce the correct technique.

7. **Individualized Guidance:** Provide individualized guidance and feedback to each player. Observe their grip closely and offer specific instructions for improvement. Correct any deviations from the proper grip and address any issues they may be experiencing with control or technique.

The coach must be patient and supportive during the teaching process. It takes time for young players to develop muscle memory and become comfortable with the proper grip. Encourage regular practice and reinforce the importance of maintaining the correct grip throughout their table tennis journey.

When young players are learning how to hold the racket in table tennis, they may make some common mistakes. Here are a few examples of mistakes that young players often encounter:

- **Gripping the racket too tightly:** One common mistake is gripping the racket handle too tightly. This can lead to tension in the hand and wrist, limiting fluidity and flexibility in strokes. Encourage players to maintain a firm but relaxed grip to allow for better control and maneuverability.

- **Incorrect finger positioning:** Young players may struggle with placing their fingers properly on the grip. They might wrap their fingers too tightly around the



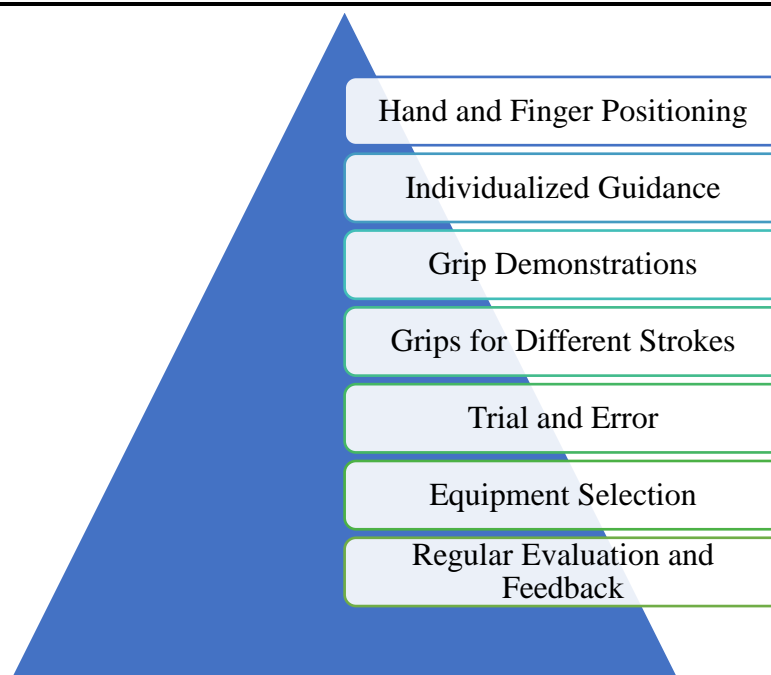
handle, preventing free movement and flexibility. Emphasize the importance of keeping the index finger slightly separated from the other fingers, allowing for better wrist action during strokes.

- Holding the racket too high or too low on the handle: Another mistake is holding the racket too high or too low on the handle. Holding it too high can limit reach and control, while holding it too low can restrict wrist movement and power generation. Teach players to position their hand comfortably on the grip, with a balanced placement that allows for a full range of motion.
- Inconsistent grip pressure: Young players may struggle with maintaining a consistent grip pressure throughout their strokes. They may inadvertently tighten or loosen their grip during different phases of the stroke, leading to inconsistency in ball control. Encourage players to practice maintaining a consistent grip pressure throughout their shots.
- Lack of adaptation to hand size and shape: Each player has a unique hand size and shape, and some young players may find it challenging to adapt to the standard grip. They may need to make slight adjustments or find variations that suit their hand better. Provide guidance and support to help them find a grip that feels comfortable and allows for optimal control.
- Neglecting to maintain the grip during play: Some young players may forget to maintain the correct grip while playing. As they get engrossed in the game, they might revert to an improper grip or make adjustments that compromise their technique. Remind them to be mindful of their grip and reinforce the importance of consistency and control.

It's crucial to address these mistakes early on to prevent the development of poor habits. Provide clear instructions, demonstrations, and individualized feedback to help young players overcome these challenges and develop a solid foundation in their racket grip technique. Regular practice and reinforcement of correct grip habits will help them improve their control, technique, and overall performance in table tennis.

Adapting the grip to a young player's hand size and shape is important for comfort, control, and optimal performance in table tennis. Here are some effective ways to help young players make adjustments and find a grip that suits their hand:





Hand and Finger Positioning: Start by ensuring that players understand the basic principles of grip and hand positioning. Teach them the standard shake hands grip, but emphasize that slight variations are acceptable to accommodate their hand size and shape. Encourage them to experiment with finger placement and find a comfortable position that allows for flexibility and control.

Individualized Guidance: Provide individualized guidance and observation to each player. Observe their grip closely and identify any areas where adjustments can be made. Offer specific instructions and demonstrations tailored to their hand size and shape. For example, if they have smaller hands, suggest placing the fingers slightly closer together or using a modified grip that provides better reach.

Grip Demonstrations: Show players examples of different grip variations used by professional players with similar hand sizes. This can help them visualize and understand that there is flexibility in grip technique and that they can adapt it to their own needs.

Grips for Different Strokes: Highlight that grip adjustments can also vary depending on the stroke being executed. For example, a player might slightly alter their grip for forehand and backhand strokes. Teach them how to make subtle adjustments within the standard grip to optimize control and power for different shots.

Trial and Error: Encourage players to experiment with different grip variations during practice sessions. Allow them to try out various finger placements, thumb

positions, and grip pressures to find what feels most comfortable and effective for them. It may take some trial and error, but this process will enable them to discover a grip that suits their hand size and shape.

Equipment Selection: In some cases, equipment modifications can help young players adapt their grip. For players with smaller hands, using a racket with a smaller handle size or using grip tapes to modify the handle thickness can provide a better fit. Consult with a knowledgeable coach or equipment specialist to explore suitable options.

Regular Evaluation and Feedback: Continuously monitor and evaluate the player's grip as they progress. Provide regular feedback on their grip technique, addressing any deviations or areas for improvement. Make adjustments as necessary to ensure they maintain good form and adapt their grip as their hand size and shape change over time.

In conclude, finding the right grip is an ongoing process, and it may evolve as the player grows and develops. By providing individualized guidance, encouraging exploration, and offering feedback and support, you can help young players adapt their grip to their hand size and shape, leading to improved comfort, control, and performance in table tennis.

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