

Footwork. It s *how* you get there.

Everyone talks about good footwork. But what does it mean? Having proper footwork means using the most efficient movement to put yourself in the best position to hit the ball. (“Best” meaning having the most options when you hit it.) Many players have extra wasted movement. Take a look at the video clip “Drop Step”. Even a small inefficiency in your movement could hinder your next shot.

Some players get themselves too close to the ball. I call this being ‘on top of the ball’. If you find your shots hitting the side walls when you don’t want them to, or you feel you are swatting the ball away from you belly, you could be too close.

Most players are better at moving one direction than another because of some mechanical error in their movement, often found in the ‘first step’. (Sometimes a bad habit results from a strength imbalance; one leg is stronger than the other.) Fixing this error will improve your court coverage, and your shots.

Try this. Stand in center court, facing the front wall with your feet slightly staggered. Do a drop step and shuffle, as shown in the video, to the left. The start in center court again, and drop step to the right. You’ve just moved in two different directions. They both should be quick, and balanced without wasted movement. When moving to a ball, your hips and shoulders should be equal distance away from the ball when you are ready to hit it. Good footwork is not just getting to the ball quickly, it’s getting to the ball properly.

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