COOPERATIVE BASELINE DRILL

This is one of the best drills for brand-new players. You do this with both players standing at the baseline and gently rally the ball back and forth, aiming for consistency rather than speed. It will help you improve your smooth swings, keep the ball in play and improving your forehand and backhand control. It builds hand-eye coordination and teaches you to control the paddle face, which is essential before moving closer to the net.

CROSSCOURT GROUNDSTROKE DRILL

Instead of hitting straight ahead, players rally diagonally from corner to corner. How it works: Player A hits crosscourt, Player B returns crosscourt - Continue without switching sides This helps because crosscourt shots give you more margin for error and are commonly used in real games, making this a practical beginner drill. Then switch sides. You can do this while both are at the kitchen line, and another when both are at the baseline, both are important skills to have.

DINKING DRILLS

A Straight-On Dink Drill is where both players stand at the kitchen line directly across from each other. Gently dink the ball back and forth without stepping into the kitchen. Focus on: soft hands, controlled paddle angle and letting the ball bounce. Once you get to the point where you are missing very few, try to move the other player around a bit from side to side. Crosscourt Dinking Drill is where players stand diagonally across from each other at the kitchen line. Crosscourt dinks travel farther and higher over the net, giving beginners more forgiveness while learning control.

SERVING DRILLS

Serving is the only shot you fully control, making it a great place to focus early practice. Place targets (cones, towels, or water bottles) in the service box. Serve 10 balls and try to land as many as possible near the target in order to build confidence and consistency without worrying about power. Deep Serve Drill is a good one where the goal here is depth, not speed. Aim every serve toward the back third of the service box. Deep serves push opponents back, giving you more time to get to the net.

DEEP RETURN DRILL

Have one player serve while the other focuses only on returning deep. Focus on: height over the net, depth to the baseline and very controlled swings. A deep return keeps your opponent back and allows you time to move forward to the kitchen line.

RESETTING DRILL

Have one player drive the ball at the other who is at the kitchen who will hold their paddle at a 5 (softer, number is out of 10 which would be holding it very tight) and block the ball but send it back to the other side softly, ideally as a dink barely over the net. This skill is very important to slow down the play when you are in a hands battle or playing with players who only want to hit hard. Typically those who know how to play a "soft game" will prevail over slammers.

SOLO PICKLEBALL DRILLS

Try a wall practice drill where you hit forehands and backhands against a wall trying to not let it hit the ground. This improves consistency, builds muscle memory and is great for quick practice sessions. Use a ball and bump it on your paddle again and again and again but then the 3rd time soften your grip and allow it to rest on your paddle to practice control and essentially resetting the ball. You can also practice swings without a ball to get your motion correct.