

Try Mini Tennis



iChild has teamed up with ex-Wimbledon coach, Clay Iles, to show you how to develop early tennis skills in the under 5s.

Massive interest in Wimbledon each year, draws thousands of newcomers to tennis. The game offers such physical, social and mental benefits that many parents regard it as an ideal sport for their children.

In the past, this has often led to disillusionment, as the high bouncing ball made the game too difficult for young children. Mini Tennis, for three to ten year olds, has changed this. Introduced by the Lawn Tennis Association five years ago, its special soft balls, small rackets and court, encourage more children to take up tennis than ever before.

There are now over 800 clubs in the UK offering Mini Tennis programmes and 80,000 children take part. Some clubs offer Tots Tennis courses for children from as young as two.

15 tennis activities to try

- ① Throw the ball into the air. Let it bounce then catch.
- ② Clap once or twice before catching.
- ③ Throw the ball in the air one hand, catch with the other.
- ④ Throw in the air. Touch ground then catch.
- ⑤ Throw in the air, spin round, catch.
- ⑥ Try all the above with two balls.
- ⑦ Child faces away from you. Throw ball over their head, and then call '**one**', '**two**' or '**three**', for them to catch, after the ball has bounced that number of times.
- ⑧ Child runs with ball and stops quickly to throw ball, under arm and over arm into a target.
- ⑨ Throw the ball so your child can catch it after one bounce without moving. Then pitch it further up, so they have to move back to catch it. Then closer to you so that they have to run forward.



- ⑩ **Bellyache** – Throw the ball under arm to each other. You must catch it to one side. Call out 'bellyache' if the catcher holds onto the ball in front of body. Catcher then loses the point.
- ⑪ **Splat** – Roll the ball along the ground. They have to stop it by hitting down on it with the racket. Low bounce the ball for them. Stop it the same way.
- ⑫ **Sandwich** – Throw the ball. They catch it with hand and racket.
- ⑬ **Pass the parcel** – Without touching the ball, pass it to each other, racket to racket. Move round the lines of the court calling out their names, 'baseline, service line' etc.
- ⑭ **Ground rally** – Hit the ball along the ground to each other. Then hit it away from your child. Three passes wins a point. The same exercise but into a goal: one player attacking, the other defending.
- ⑮ **Palm up, Palm down** – Bounce the ball onto the racket. Catch the ball with the other hand. The same exercise, but let the ball bounce before catching.



Please remember to recycle this activity

