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## The Overhead

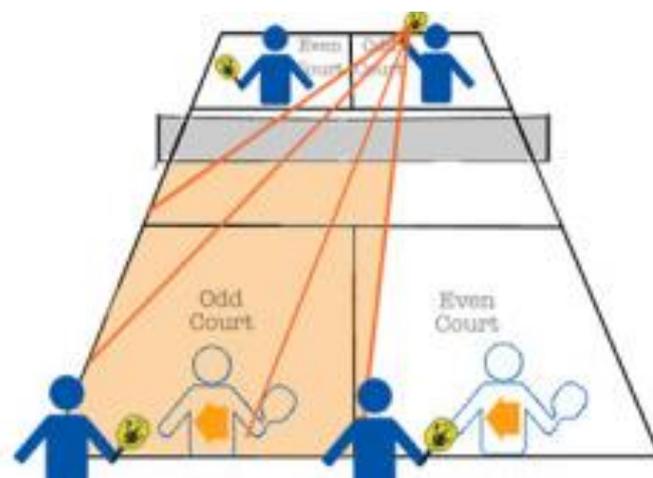
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Play Tips

The overhead smash is considered one of the most aggressive shots in pickleball. It is an offensive shot that's carried out by hitting a high ball with force towards the feet of your opponent. Typically, the overhead smash is used as a return of an opponent's lob shot—generally speaking, a bad lob. You only want to deploy the overhead smash when you know that the ball will make contact with the sweet spot on your paddle. This means that it should only be used when the ball is high enough over your head that you can reach it with a full arm extension.

**How to hit the overhead smash?** Here's a checklist on how to correctly carry out the overhead smash.

- Your first move is to step back with your dominant foot. You want to be standing sideways, perpendicular to the net. You want the ball to be in front of your body when you hit it. You don't want the ball behind you or over your head. It may take more than one step to get into the correct position on the court.
- As you step back, raise your paddle up to forehead level. To remain in balance, you will want to extend your paddle over your head at full extension so that your arm and elbow are straight. Also raise your non-dominant arm as well. Point at the ball with your non-paddle hand. It enables you to track the ball and ensures your forward shoulder remains raised.
- Once you're in position, make sure that the ball is in front of you and as high as possible before making contact. From there, shift your weight from your back foot forward to your front foot as you make contact with the ball with a downward trajectory. To do so, make sure that your wrist flicks down upon contact with your paddle and the ball. The pace comes from the wrist snap!
- As in every shot, it is important to select a specific target. Resist the temptation to look over into the other side of the court until after you've hit the ball. Your opponent's whereabouts should be of secondary concern to you. Keep in mind, the middle is always good! Don't get too excited and swing overly hard in an unnecessary effort to put the ball away with a thunderous hit. When swinging with extra force, you jerk your head down and dump the ball in the net. On overheads, your head must remain up when you hit the ball.

When the opponent in the odd court is hitting an overhead, you and your partner should shift to your left.



[Click to watch Mark Renneson's How to Hit Quality Overheads](#)

[Click to watch Deb Harrison's How to Hit an Overhead](#)

Backpedaling to carry out an overhead is not only dangerous, but it could also set you up for failure!