

Like the common expression “X marks the spot” we created our X-Spots in two sizes to help add more fun and variety to drills and games in all sports and movement activities. Use your own creativity or borrow some of the ideas on this page. Simply adjust the exercises to the age and skill level of the individual athlete or to the group being trained. For sports like tennis, we used “Stoplight Colors” like many of our other shapes’ packages to help guide players towards moving forwards to finish points. For that purpose, lay them out along the sidelines with red signifying the zone where players hold steady and compete with some defense, yellow as the decision-making area, and green as the “go zone” to be aggressive and close out points.

1. **TIC-TAC-TOE:** Play Tic-Tac-Toe using a set of our X-Spots along with regular spots or donuts. Have children compete for various class opportunities. For example, have two young players play Tic-Tac-Toe instead of a spin of the racquet to serve. The point is to add fun and excitement to any activity. To keep the Tic-Tac-Toe game short, allow only 3 seconds for each move. That way, the whole game of Tic-Tac-Toe will take no more than 30 seconds.
2. **X-JUMPS:** Use the X pattern for footwork drills since there are four areas to jump into around the X. Jump with one foot or two. The coach can blow a whistle to make the athletes change their movement direction. For individual or group competition, count how many consecutive jumps are made in 30 seconds. Just pair the athletes and have one count for the other. The coach calls out start and stop.
3. **KNOW YOUR COURT:** Use the X-Spots to teach court position and movement. An “X” is the universal language to show that a position or location is being identified.
4. **QUICK DECISIONS:** To help athletes with quick decisions and direction changes, lay out X’s and O’s in an area about the size of ½ a tennis court. A partner or coach calls out “X” or “O” and the athlete has to run to and touch one of those shapes. Perform this exercise in 15- or 30-second increments.
5. **WHISTLE WHILE YOU RUN:** Just like the previous drill, help athletes with quick decisions and direction changes by spreading out X’s and O’s in an open area. A partner or coach blows a whistle once for “X” or twice for “O” and the athlete has to run to one of those shapes. Perform this exercise in 15- or 30-second increments.

6. **AGGRESSIVE SINGLES:** On a tennis court, put an “X” on the center service line half way between the net and the service line on both sides of the net. Play bounce-hit games to 11 or 15 points. Each point won counts as one point for that player, except that three points are awarded to the player who touches the “X” with a foot or their racquet before hitting a finishing shot that wins them the point.

7. **AGGRESSIVE DOUBLES:** On a tennis court, put an “X” in the middle of each of the four service boxes. Start with all four players behind their baselines and play bounce-hit points until one team wins 15 or 21 points. Each point won counts as one point for that player, except that three points are awarded to the team whose member touches the “X” with a foot or their racquet when their next shot wins them the point.