

Practice Routines

For players wanting to practice Gateball, try these routines. Some routines can be best completed with another player.

Exercise 1 - Making Gate 1

- Set up a Gate on the lawn with two markers (such as Croquet corner markers) at 4 metres in front and 4 metres behind the Gate
- From a marker, make the Gate with all ten balls (after some practice, you should successfully make the Gate with at least 8 of the 10 balls)
- Collect the balls and from the marker on the other side of the Gate, repeat the exercise.

Exercise 2 - Sparking

- As a variation, instead of stroking the balls, spark the balls through the Gate to practice sparking and to improve sparking direction.

Exercise 3 - One Ball

- If the Gateball court is set up, play one ball through all Gates and onto the Goal-pole (similar to the one ball croquet practice routine). A score of 7 is good; a score of 4 is perfect!

Exercise 4 - Gate-making Techniques

- Place all 10 balls around a gate within 2 metres at random
- Practice double Touches, Gate and Touch, and sparking through the Gate depending on how the balls are lying.

Exercise 5 - Play Yourself

- Set up a Gateball court
- Play all balls in order
- Concentrate on solving the strategy situations that develop for both red and white teams
- Use this practice to develop opening strategies for various situations
- Test and improve strategies using practice play.

Exercise 6 - Cross Court Sparking and Ball Placement

- Spark all balls across the court (from the court boundary near Gate 3 to the court boundary near Gate 2)
- Practice sparking the balls to as near to the boundary as possible
- Repeat the exercise but this time, simply hit the balls across the court to as near to the court boundary as possible.

Proficiency in these strokes is essential for strong tactical play.

Exercise 7 - Sparking Accuracy

Two players stand apart about 4 metres. Player 1 places the head of the mallet at right angle to Player 2 who then tries to spark balls onto the mallet head. This routine develops sparking direction accuracy.

Exercise 8 - Double Touch

Using three balls, practise setting up the balls to allow a double touch. A Double Touch is a difficult stroke and the set up requires considerable practice.

Competition Practice Schedule

For players, let the captain worry about the team tactics. You need to concentrate on accurate strokes and sparks. Commence this schedule 3 months before the date of the tournament.

Here are the practice exercises:

Practice 1 - Cross Court Sparking and Ball Placement

- Spark all balls across the court (from the court boundary near Gate 3 to the court boundary near Gate 2)
- Practice sparking the balls to as near to the boundary as possible
- Repeat the exercise but this time, simply hit the balls across the court to as near to the court boundary as possible.

Proficiency in these strokes is essential for strong tactical play. **These strokes and sparks are critical.**

Practice 2 - Making Gate 1

- Set up a Gate on the lawn with two markers (such as Croquet corner markers) at 4 metres in front and 4 metres behind the Gate
- From a marker, make the Gate with all ten balls (you should successfully make the Gate with at least 8 of the 10 balls)
- Collect the balls and from the marker on the other side of the Gate, repeat the exercise.

Practice 3 - Sparking

- As a variation of Exercise 2, instead of stroking the balls, spark the balls through the Gate to practice sparking and to improve sparking direction.

Practice 4 – Sparking to the Court Boundary

- From a point 2 metres from the court boundary, spark balls to a position close to the court boundary.

This is a very gentle spark requiring just the right amount force with the stick. For accuracy, try placing the toe of the shoe on the stoker's ball. You will then be able to see that the balls are touching – critical to accuracy in this spark.

Practice 5 - Double Touch

Using three balls, practise setting up the balls to allow a double touch. A Double Touch is a difficult stroke and the set up requires considerable practice.

Practice 6 - Gate-making Techniques

- Place all 10 balls around a gate within 2 metres at random
- Practice double Touches, Gate and Touch, and sparking through the Gate depending on how the balls are lying.

Now the Practice Schedule:

Practice Number	Practice Weekly - Week Commencing					
	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6
1 – 10 mins						
2 – 10 mins						
3 – 5 mins						
4 – 5 mins						

Practice Number	Week Commencing												
	Week 7 Practice twice a week		Week 8 Practice twice a week		Week 9 Practice three times a week			Week 10 Practice three times a week			Week 11 Practice three times a week		
1 – 10 mins													
2 – 10 mins													
3 – 5 mins													
4 – 5 mins													

Mark off the table above to keep track of your practice program.

For extra practice, use Practice 5 and Practice 6.

When two players are practising together, in addition to the Practice Routines, play a game of Gateball Singles. Players toss to decide the choice of balls, then each player plays all 5 balls in order.

Remember, Practice Drills are a sure way of improving your Playing Skills