Section III
Grips
Grips

There are several grips that tennis players may use, and it is a fact that tournament players constantly make grip adjustments during the course of play. Grips may vary because of the type of shot to be hit. For example, the serve, volley and overhead are appropriately hit using a continental grip. The forehand and backhand use anywhere from an eastern to full western grip.

It is acknowledged that the grip of the racquet is the foundation of all tennis shots. How you hold the racquet influences the angle of the racquet face, where you meet the ball in relationship to your body, and especially what happens when the impact between the ball and racquet occurs.

The four basic grips – continental, eastern, semiwestern and western – all have advantages and disadvantages. A professional teacher should be fully acquainted with the advantages and disadvantages of all grips. This knowledge aids in analysis of a student’s form and results. A student may be frustrated at a certain level of play or on a particular shot because the nuances of racquet work required are unavailable or awkward with the grip used.

It is, therefore, imperative that both teacher and student recognize that grip selection is flexible, depending upon the style of the teacher and the grip he or she feels is most appropriate for the student’s development. A grip selection may be awkward or uncomfortable initially; the student must be encouraged by the teacher and persuaded that with practice and work, the desired result will be achieved and the grip will feel more natural.

A grip change may be the most difficult thing for students to incorporate into their games. They must want to make the change in order for it to be successful.
Analysis of grips

- Index finger
- Underside of base knuckle
- Heel
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Grips

Key

| 1. Top panel | 3. Right vertical panel | 5. Bottom panel | 7. Left vertical panel |
| 2. Right top panel | 4. Right under panel | 6. Left under panel | 8. Left top panel |

Eastern forehand grip
end view (right-handed)

Heel of hand
Panel 3

Base knuckle index finger
Panel 3

Grip advantages and disadvantages

**Advantages**

1. Easy to generate power
2. Waist-high balls
3. Adaptable to different surfaces
4. More support
5. Topspin
6. Good for beginners since it promotes good contact

**Disadvantages**

1. Requires a grip change
2. Weak on slice
3. Low volley
4. Finesse and touch shots
5. Difficult to hit high balls

Other important points

- Contact point in front of the body with a vertical racquet face.
- Often referred to as the “shake hands” grip.
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**Key**

1. Top panel  
2. Right top panel  
3. Right vertical panel  
4. Right under panel  
5. Bottom panel  
6. Left under panel  
7. Left vertical panel  
8. Left top panel

**Eastern backhand grip**

**Heel of hand**
Panel 1

**Base knuckle**
Panel 1  
(top level)

**Grip advantages and disadvantages**

**Advantages**

1. Easy to generate power  
2. Waist-high balls  
3. Adaptable to different surfaces  
4. More support  
5. Topspin  
6. Good for beginners since it promotes good contact

**Disadvantages**

1. Requires a grip change  
2. Weak on slice  
3. Low volley  
4. Finesse and touch shots  
5. Difficult to hit high balls

**Other important points**

- Contact point is slightly in front of the body with a vertical racquet face.  
- This grip calls for a definite change between forehand and backhand positions.
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Grips

**Key**

| 1. Top panel | 3. Right vertical panel | 5. Bottom panel | 7. Left vertical panel |
| 2. Right top panel | 4. Right under panel | 6. Left under panel | 8. Left top panel |

**Continental grip**
end view (right-handed forehand)

![Diagram of Continental grip]

**Grip advantages and disadvantages**

**Advantages**

1. Low balls
2. Slice
3. No grip change
4. Adaptable to different strokes
5. Degree of versatility
6. Topspin on serve
7. Late hit on forehand side
8. Good serve and volley
9. Good for hit touch shots

**Disadvantages**

1. High balls
2. More difficult to generate topspin than eastern grip
3. Requires good timing

**Other important points**

- Contact point is just as far in front of the body as with the eastern grip. However, the player must learn to adjust the racquet face with his or her wrist in order to hit flat or topspin shots.
- Tennis teachers recommend this grip for netshots where there is little time for grip change.
- Should be used on the serve, this grip makes it easier to hit a slice.
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Grips

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Top panel</th>
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<td>4. Right under panel</td>
<td>6. Left under panel</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Semiwestern forehand**
end view (right-handed)

**Heel of hand**
Panel 4

**Base knuckle index finger**
Panel 4

**Grip advantages and disadvantages**

**Advantages**

1. Topspin
2. High balls
3. Disguise
4. Passing shots
5. Power

**Disadvantages**

1. Low balls
2. Underspin
3. Major grip change to backhand
4. Serve
5. Low volley

**Other important points**

- Contact point for the semiwestern grip is more forward of the body.
- This is the grip that most of today’s competitive players are using for a number of reasons.
- In this grip, the inclination of the hand is toward the western grip. Many players prefer this grip because of the comfortable feeling of the hand behind the racquet.
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**Key**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Top panel</th>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Full western forehand**

![Graphical representation of full western forehand]

**Heel of hand**
Panel 5

**Base knuckle**
Panel 5

**Grip advantages and disadvantages**

**Advantages**
1. Topspin
2. High balls
3. Disguise
4. Passing shots
5. Power

**Disadvantages**
1. Low balls
2. Underspin
3. Large grip change
4. Serve
5. Low volley

**Other important points**

- Contact point is very early and preferably higher than your waist.
- This grip closes the face of the racquet and is used for exaggerated topspin and groundstrokes where contact is preferably made in front of the body.
- Some players who use the western grip for forehands keep the same grip for backhands, hitting the ball with the same face of the racquet.
Two-handed backhand

There are a variety of combinations of right-hand and left-hand grips used to hit the two-handed backhand. If one does a thorough analysis of today’s players, you will see that there are predominately three two-handed backhands used and these are described below. There are other combinations for the two-handed grip, and you as a teaching professional must decide the application and efficiency of each variation.

Use the diagram below along with the description of the three main grips to allow for a more thorough understanding.

1. Right-handed continental (2-2) Left-handed eastern forehand (7-7) (Diagram 1)
2. Right-handed eastern forehand (3-3) Left-handed eastern forehand (7-7) (Diagram 2)
3. Right-handed eastern backhand (1-1) Left-handed eastern forehand (7-7)

Diagram 1

Diagram 2

Grip advantages and disadvantages

**Advantages**

1. Power
2. Topspin
3. Sharp angle
4. Disguise
5. Helps tennis elbow
6. Early success – confidence
7. Gives support

**Disadvantages**

1. Weakness at net
2. Difficult to slice

**Other important points**

- The contact point for the two-handed player is closer to the body than the eastern one-handed player.
Grip Exam

Tester’s name (please print)

Name________________________________________ Division____________________________
Date____________________________ Testing site_______________________________________
Grip Demonstration__________ Section I ________ Section II_________Final rating__________

I. Grip advantages and disadvantages

1. List four (4) disadvantages of the CONTINENTAL GRIP – worth 2 points
   A. ____________________________  
   B. ____________________________  
   C. ____________________________  
   D. ____________________________  

2. List three (3) advantages of the CONTINENTAL GRIP – worth 1.5 points
   A. ____________________________  
   B. ____________________________  
   C. ____________________________  

3. List two (2) disadvantages of the TWO-HANDED GRIP – worth 1 point
   A. ____________________________  
   B. ____________________________  

4. List two (2) advantages of the TWO-HANDED GRIP – worth 1.5 points
   A. ____________________________  
   B. ____________________________  
   C. ____________________________  

5. List four (4) disadvantages of the SEMIWESTERN GRIP – worth 2 points
   A. ____________________________  
   B. ____________________________  
   C. ____________________________  
   D. ____________________________  

6. List four (4) advantages of the FULL-WESTERN GRIP – worth 2 points
   A. ____________________________  
   B. ____________________________  
   C. ____________________________  
   D. ____________________________  

7. List four (4) disadvantages of the EASTERN GRIP – worth 2 points
   A. ____________________________  
   B. ____________________________  
   C. ____________________________  
   D. ____________________________  

Total points for Section I (12 points maximum)
# Grip Exam continued

## II. Demonstration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grip</th>
<th>Circle one</th>
<th>If failed, list grip demonstrated</th>
<th>Worth 1 point each</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two-handed grip (lh)</td>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>Fail</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-handed grip (rh)</td>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>Fail</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern forehand grip</td>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>Fail</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-western grip</td>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>Fail</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Fail</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Fail</td>
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<td>Total grips successfully</td>
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## Reference points

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grip</th>
<th>Base Knuckle Reference Point</th>
<th>Reference Point given</th>
<th>1/2 point each</th>
<th>Heel of Hand Reference Point</th>
<th>Reference Point given</th>
<th>1/2 point each</th>
<th>Circle one</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-Western grip</td>
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<td>Total points</td>
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Total reference points ___________________ Total of grip demo & reference points ___________________

### Scoring scale:

- **Elite**
  - Properly demonstrate all **seven grips**, score at least **11.5 points** in Section I and 14 in Section II
- **Professional**
  - Properly demonstrate **five grips**, score **8.5 points** in Section I and 12 in Section II
- **RC**
  - Properly demonstrate **four or fewer grips**, score **6.0 or below** in Section I and below 10 in Section II.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of person scoring (please print)</th>
<th>Grip demonstration</th>
<th>Section I score</th>
<th>Section II score</th>
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Signature of person scoring ___________________

### Final rating

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