



Anatomy of a modern shot – The hitting and recovery phases

Modern tennis, like its conventional predecessor, has many fundamentals – or commonalities – that if properly recognized and understood, make the modern game more effective and enjoyable for teachers and players alike.

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First, it is important to differentiate between a “*commonality*” and a “*specific difference*” in playing styles among individuals.

Commonalities are broadly accepted principles that apply to almost every modern player. The best example may be the correct technique for hitting loaded, open-stance forehands and backhands and how a player loads the outside leg, explodes into shots with kinetic energy and lands on the most appropriate leg for maximum recovery.

Specific differences are numerous among players and may include a player’s style or flair, which should be distinguished from his more general hitting process. For example, while Hewitt and Kuerten have *commonalities* in their shot-making, they may differ in minute specifics such as how they hold their grips or finish a shot with a particular wrist wrap. Roddick’s abbreviated serve can be considered as a *specific difference* from most other players.

So, while there are numerous minute differences to players’ styles that might be confusing at first glance, we can find and must study primarily the many commonalities that are key to modern shots and are similar among all players and the way they strike the ball.

We will explain these keys to modern shots as we delve further into the final seven components of the anatomy of a shot – starting with No. 5, shot selection, in the hitting phase, and continuing through the recovery phase.

hitting phase

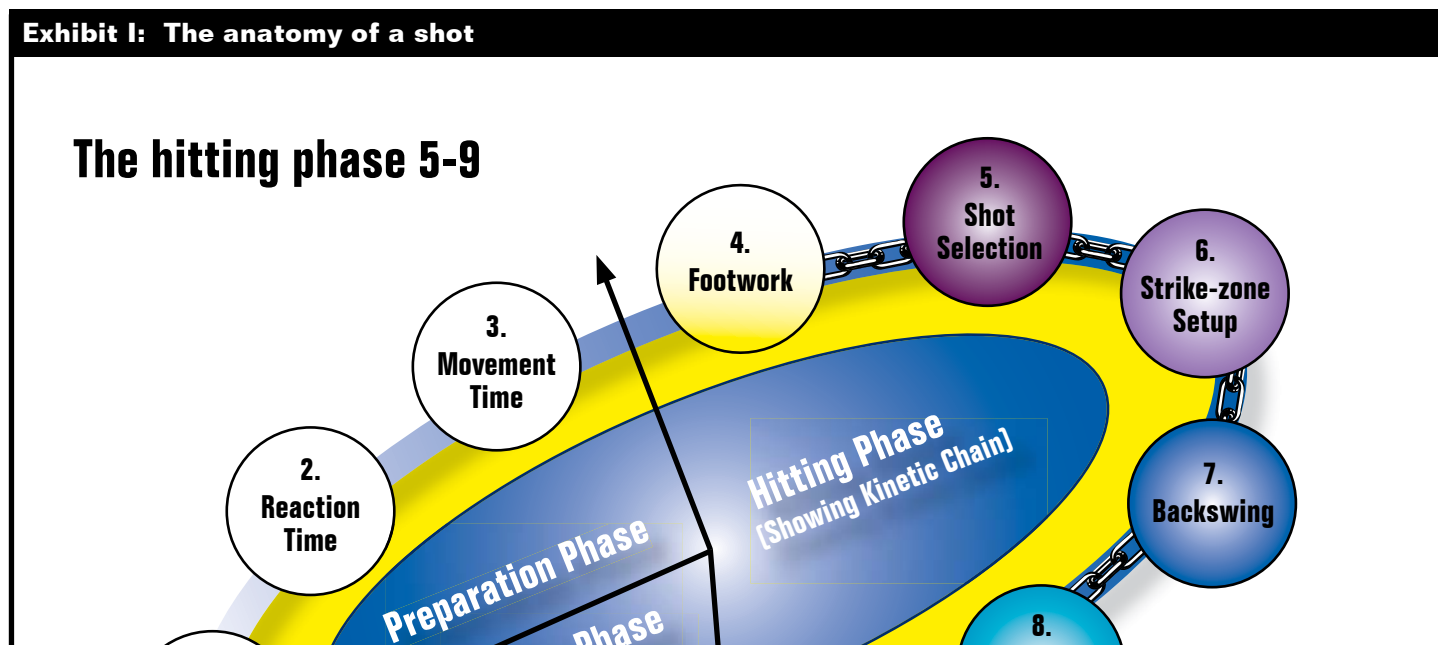
Exhibit I below is the place to start. It illustrates many different processes that are happening both continuously and

simultaneously. The components without color have been covered in the previous inserts. Out of necessity, we discussed footwork as part of the hitting phase of a shot, but the graphic shows the obvious with the yellow component disc – **that footwork is an integral part of all three shot phases.**

Similarly, the kinetic chain (symbolized by a chain linking the seven components) appears throughout the hitting phase and into the first component of the recovery phase (seen below in Exhibit I). The kinetic chain is the sequential coordination of body segments (feet, legs, hips, trunk, shoulders, arm and wrist) to achieve more force than would be possible if the player omitted any of the segments.

This increased force is the advantage of angular momentum over linear momentum. We repeatedly use the term “**load – explode – and land**” to explain the basic mechanics of modern groundstrokes as hit by experienced players. Loading the outside leg for a groundstroke provides the axis around which the core and arm rotate, generating angular momentum (see Exhibit II). When demonstrating this concept to less experienced players, the teacher may more appropriately demonstrate a load – rotate and weight transfer skill.

The process of loading, exploding and landing happens throughout the hitting phase. Loading occurs during the backswing; the explosion into the shot happens as the body uncoils into the forward swing; and the landing is part of recovery. These concepts are explained in more detail in the following of shot anatomy.



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