

4 Steps to Stop Hitting the Third-Shot Drop into the Net



Adjust Your Paddle Angle for Loft

Hold your paddle with a continental grip (like shaking hands). At contact, tilt the paddle face slightly upward (about 10–15 degrees) to create an arcing trajectory. Practice this grip and angle without a ball, mimicking the motion 10 times before hitting.

Takeaway: An open paddle face lifts the ball over the net with a soft arc, reducing net errors.

Bend Your Knees and Stay Low

Position yourself with your knees bent and your center of gravity low, about a foot lower than your standing height. This helps you swing upward through the ball. Practice 10 stationary third-shot drops from the baseline, focusing on staying low.

Takeaway: Maintaining a low stance promotes an upward swing, providing the ball with the height it needs to clear the net.

Use a Gentle, Controlled Swing

Avoid a hard swing. Instead, use a smooth, underhand motion, like tossing a Frisbee gently. Aim to hit the ball with 20–30% of your usual power, letting it float into the opponent's kitchen. Do 15 practice shots, focusing on softness.

Takeaway: A gentle swing prioritizes control over power, landing the ball softly in the target zone.

Aim for a High Arc and Deep Landing

Visualize a spot 3–4 feet above the net as your ball's peak height, and aim for it to land

within 2–3 feet of the opponent's kitchen line. Set up a target (like a towel) in the kitchen and hit 10 shots to hit it consistently.

Takeaway: A high arc and deep landing ensure the ball clears the net while staying unattackable.

Why this roadmap works: These steps break down the third-shot drop into manageable pieces—grip, stance, swing, and aim. Practice each step for 5–10 minutes per session, and you'll see fewer net errors within a week. For extra progress, film your shots to check your form.

Bonus tip: Pair up with a practice partner to feed you easy serves, making it easier to focus on your third-shot drop technique.

Bob Savar

Palm Beach County Pickleball News