



## Basic Table Tennis (Ping-Pong®) Rules (Singles)

1. All games are played to 11 points. Games are not played to 21 points anymore.
2. Matches are the best of any odd numbered games (3 of 5, 4 of 7, etc.). Agree on number of games before you start the first game of the match.
3. To start, flip a coin (do not "PING" for serve). The winner chooses to either serve or receive first, or pick which end of the table to play at for the first game. The loser gets the remaining choice.
4. Alternate serves every 2 points until the end of the game or the score reaches 10-10 (deuce). At 10-10, alternate serves **each** point until one player is ahead by 2 points and wins the game.
5. The first server of one game becomes the first receiver of the next game.
6. Switch ends of the table at the conclusion of each game. If the match goes to the last possible game (e.g., game 5 in a 3/5 match), switch ends when the score first reaches 5.
7. To perform a legal serve:
  - a. Hold the ball in the **stationary open** palm of the toss hand. The ball is to be held **behind** the endline of the table and **above** table level. The ball is **not** required to be within the boundaries of the sidelines. The ball must remain visible to the opponent throughout the entire service (no ball hiding).
  - b. Toss the ball straight up a minimum of 6 inches (no maximum) and strike it **as it falls**. If you fail to make a good serve after you've tossed it, you lose the point, even if you don't contact the ball.
  - c. After the server contacts the ball, the serve must first contact the server's side of the table, clear the net without touching it, and land **anywhere** on the opponent's side.
  - d. If the served ball hits the net and falls back on the server's side, or off the side, the point is lost. But if the served ball contacts the net and falls onto the opponent's side, then the serve is called a "Net" and is re-served. There is no limit to the number of consecutive "net serves".
8. The ball must bounce only once on the receiver's side before being hit back by the receiver. From that point on, all returns must pass directly over or around the net assembly and land on the opponent's top surface. A return touching the net or its supports is still in play. Returns striking anything other than the net or the opponent's playing surface are out of play.
9. If a player obstructs the ball by touching it before it has a chance to land on the player's side of the table, the point is lost, except if the ball is obstructed while returning a serve, in which case, the rally is a let and is re-played.
10. A ball striking the **top edge** of the table is good, but a ball striking the **side** is not good.
11. Returns rebounding **directly** off the racket hand or any part of the racket are still in play. Returns struck by **both** hand and racket, or hand with no racket, or racket not in a hand are lost points.
12. A player touching the table with their free hand during a point loses the point. A player touching the net or moving the table (even accidentally) during a point also loses the point.
13. A player cannot strike the ball twice successively (a "double hit").
14. Call a "let" and play the point over, if there is a disturbance during play (someone walks into the court, a stray ball rolls into the court, etc.).
15. If both players can not agree on a call, the call is to be made by the player on the side to which the ball was directed. (This is not an actual rule, but an accepted convention for playing non-umpired matches.) When an umpire is present, the umpire makes all calls.

**These are the basic rules of table tennis. More complete and advanced rules can be found on our website.**

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