

# HIT OUT OF ANY SITUATION

Contributed by isma  
Wednesday, 13 June 2007  
Last Updated Wednesday, 13 June 2007

During a match, you can count on getting some trouble sets-hopefully less than more. It's important to know that you can do something to get out of almost any situation that appears to be hopeless. Trap sets, off-the-net sets, too inside or too outside, a smart hitter can still get side outs and points on all those-or at least keep the ball alive, which should be your minimum expectation.

Â

## The Tool

A big part of my hitting career has been founded on tooling the block. Not blessed with a world-class jump or lightning arm, I look for chinks and holes, a weakness in the block that can be exploited. It doesn't take much. A deflected shot off a blocker's hand that goes down is just as valuable as a straight-down drill over the top of him. Sometimes more valuable-big blockers can get very frustrated by hitters constantly tooling them.

A common trouble set is one traveling too far outside. Faced with a solid block, there's not much open space, but the most effective shot is high and off the outside blocker's hand closest to the antenna. By aiming at his outside hand, just inside the antenna, you'll be amazed at how many times the ball will carom off him for a kill. This shot-as all the shots covered here-is effective from both sides.

## The Inside Slice

On an inside set against two blockers, a good attack-although sometimes risky-is to go for a hard crank inside the middle blocker's arms. You have to hit this shot hard and quick, hoping to get it under his inside hands-careful not to hit such an extreme cut that it lands out of bounds.

## The High Flat

One of the toughest sets to deal with is the one that drops almost on the net, within reach of the blockers' hands. This is the trap set. Some hitters just give up on this play, get roofed and return a sneer (or worse) to their setter. A smart hitter will give a maximum jump and extend as high as possible. Your spike won't have as much steam on it (normally this shot would waffle deep out of bounds), but you'll be surprised how many deflative kills you'll get off it. More importantly, it will frequently come back on your side, high and easy enough to get another swing at it, or you'll be able to recover your own hit (as in the photo below). Those types of smart plays win close matches.

## The Deep Corner

Hitting on the outside, you're going to get plenty of sets deep off the net-often resulting from digs and bad passes. On this set, an effective as well as safe shot is to aim for the opposite deep corner. By attacking high and deep, you may avoid the block completely for a kill in the corner-or possibly get a piece of the block resulting in a deflection. The good thing is that you're not going to get blocked straight down, losing the side out or point.

## The Sweet Spots

Hitting against a big two- or three-man block can cause a hitter to consider even a perfect set a "trouble set." The trouble lies in four to six giant hands placed in front of you, waiting to devour your attack. Take heart-there are ways out of this if you're cagey enough. First, always hit high in this situation. Low attacks are usually fatal. Next, you should know about the "sweet spots," which you should aim for. There are two kinds of sweet spots:

1. The seam, which is the space between two blockers' pairs of hands. Rarely are their two adjacent hands perfectly placed in conjunction with each other-often a blocker's one hand is lower than his partner's or turned a slightly different direction. This makes for a vulnerable spot.
2. The other sweet spot you can aim at is outside the multiple-block's farthest outside hands. This shot should be high and sharp; your aim is to hit it past the block untouched or to get a deflection off the blocker's outside hand.

You should practice looking for and hitting at these sweet spots. It takes a lot of work, but to become a great hitter, you'll be required to master them.

Â

[www.volleyballmag.com](http://www.volleyballmag.com)