



Pre-contact phase

1. Defender is in ready position with **feet slightly wider than shoulders, weight on the front of the feet and shoulders forward**. The arms are bent in front of the body with the **palms facing up**. The defender is facing and reading the hitter.
2. Just before the hit, the defender drops their weight into the floor by doing a **split step**. This will allow the defender to react to the hit by either being in a stable position or by moving towards the ball.

The position is like the ready position but the feet are wider, the **knees are bent at a comfortable angle and they are in line with the toes**.

3. The defender sees the direction of the hit and **moves the body and arms toward the ball** without moving the feet. Having the weight on the toes will allow for forward and lateral movements, which will come from bending one leg and extending the other.

Contact phase

4. The **hands come together at point of contact** to create the platform. The arms are in front of the body and the shoulders are over the knees. A small bent in the elbows might be necessary to make sure the contact happens under the ball.

Post-contact phase

5. After the ball is dug, the **arms stay together** for a fraction of a second and the defender **follows through the defensive motion** with their body. Stopping the motion at the point of contact may result in low dig.
6. The defender recovers from the low position they were in, **stands up and gets ready to attack or cover**.

*Defense requires the player to be **intense** and **calm** at the same time. **Intense** because the ball can't touch the floor and because the player needs to be ready to do what it takes to get under the ball. **Calm** because controlling a ball coming at full speed requires a smooth touch. This contrast makes defense one of the most challenging skills to learn, but one of the most fun as well.*

