Serve:

BALL TOSS DRILL

I learned this simple toss drill from the late Mr. François Savy, head pro when I first knew him at the Altamira Tennis Club in Caracas, Venezuela, and later at the Tamanaco Intercontinental Hotel in Caracas where now his daughter Françoise holds court.

The toss arm needs to be smooth and not herky-jerky, yet lift completely and continue moving smoothly after releasing the ball. Mr. Savy had me fill a triangular paper cup you find at a water cooler two-thirds full of water and hold it in my toss hand as if I were to take a drink. With the racket in my other hand I would practice the down together, up together motion while shifting my body weight, and the idea was not to spill any water out of the cup. Of course the water would jump out of the cup as I raised it, and later I learned to **smoothen** my upward lift and how to keep the arm straight without spilling. You can do this drill holding any small cup in any manner. [My cup is half filled here, and luckily water didn't spill. Goes to show you muscles and tendons do "remember."]

A second toss drill, common to every pro, is to place a racket on the court next to the toe of your

front foot. The handle touches your toe and the strings point out almost perpendicularly to the net, slightly off to the side. This one you practice with a racket in your hands, and when you practice "down together, up together" and release the ball you hope the ball lands on the strings of the racket in front of your foot.

The very first toss drill for anyone is to simply lift the tennis ball out of your hand and, keeping the arm up and extended straight, you catch the ball. Keeping the arm up and straight.

You can practice lifting the cup of water or tossing the ball out of your hand while at work, seated or standing, telling interested parties if your boss practices his/her putting in the office you don't see why you shouldn't be able to practice your service toss. I'll back you up.