

PICKLEBALL KITCHEN RULES CHEAT SHEET

The Essential Non-Volley Zone (NVZ) Reference & Dispute Resolver • [PickleballScope.com](#)

NVZ DEPTH 7 Feet from Net (Both Sides)	KITCHEN LINE 2" Line is PART of Kitchen	MOMENTUM RULE Follow-Through Counts (Rule 9.B)	BOUNCE FIRST 100% Legal to Step In & Hit
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1. THE 4 CORE KITCHEN TENETS (OFFICIAL USA PICKLEBALL RULE 9)

1. No Air Volleys Inside NVZ Rule 9.A	You can NEVER hit the ball directly out of the air while any part of your shoes, body, apparel, or paddle is touching the kitchen surface or the painted line.
2. The Kitchen Line is IN Rule 9.A.1	Unlike tennis where boundary lines are 'good', in pickleball the 2-inch kitchen line is part of the NVZ. Touching it even by a millimeter during an air volley is an instant fault.
3. Momentum Carries the Fault Rule 9.B	Hitting behind the line is not enough. If your forward momentum causes you, your shoes, hat, sunglasses, or paddle to touch the NVZ on follow-through, it is a fault.
4. Bounce = 100% Legal Entry Rule 9.C	You can enter, stand, and play inside the kitchen at any time if the ball bounces first! You must re-establish both feet outside the NVZ before hitting another air volley.

2. ON-COURT DISPUTE RESOLVER: 10 COMMON SCENARIOS (RULE CODES)

Real-Match Scenario	Official Ruling	USA Pickleball Rule Code & Why
Toe touches the 2-inch kitchen line while hitting an air volley	FAULT	Rule 9.A: Kitchen line is legally part of the NVZ. Any contact is a fault.
Hit an air volley, ball bounces twice for winner, then you stumble into NVZ	FAULT	Rule 9.B: Momentum continues until player regains complete balance.
Opponent dinks short, ball bounces in kitchen, you step in and hit a soft dink	LEGAL	Rule 9.C: Completely legal to enter and play once the ball touches the surface.
Paddle, cap, or sunglasses fall into the kitchen during or after a volley	FAULT	Rule 9.D: Apparel or equipment touching NVZ during volley is an infraction.
Reaching paddle across net / NVZ airspace to hit a volley (feet firmly behind line)	LEGAL	Airspace is neutral. Only physical court contact creates a kitchen foot fault.
Jumping backward out of the kitchen and striking an air volley while mid-air	FAULT	Rule 9.D: Both feet must be grounded outside NVZ before striking a volley.
Partner stands inside kitchen while you hit an air volley behind the line	LEGAL	Partner's position is irrelevant as long as they do not touch you during the shot.
Partner grabs your waist or shirt to keep your momentum from falling into NVZ	LEGAL	Partners may physically restrain each other as long as the saver is outside NVZ.
Executing an Erne shot by jumping outside court sideline to volley at net	LEGAL	Rule 9.H: Area outside court sidelines is not part of the NVZ.
Ball bounces in kitchen, spins back over net, you reach over net plane to hit	LEGAL	Rule 11.I: Permitted to cross net plane if ball bounced on your side first.

3. ADVANCED TACTICS & 3 ROOKIE KITCHEN HABITS TO BREAK

The Erne Shot (Rule 9.H) Anticipate cross-court dinks. Jump or run around the kitchen sideline, plant both feet outside the boundary, and smash the airborne ball directly at the net cord. 100% legal!	The 3-Inch Safety Buffer Never stand directly on the kitchen line. Position your ready stance 2 to 3 inches behind the line. This prevents accidental toe faults when reacting to fast chest-high attacks.
The ATP Shot (Around The Post) On wide, angled dinks that bounce outside the sideline, you can strike the ball around the outside of the net post inches above the ground into the court without clearing the net.	Drop Step, Never Backpedal When lobbed or pushed off the kitchen line, turn your hips 90 degrees and crossover step. Never backpedal on your heels, which causes dangerous falls and lost balance.

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