

By Mark Montemayor

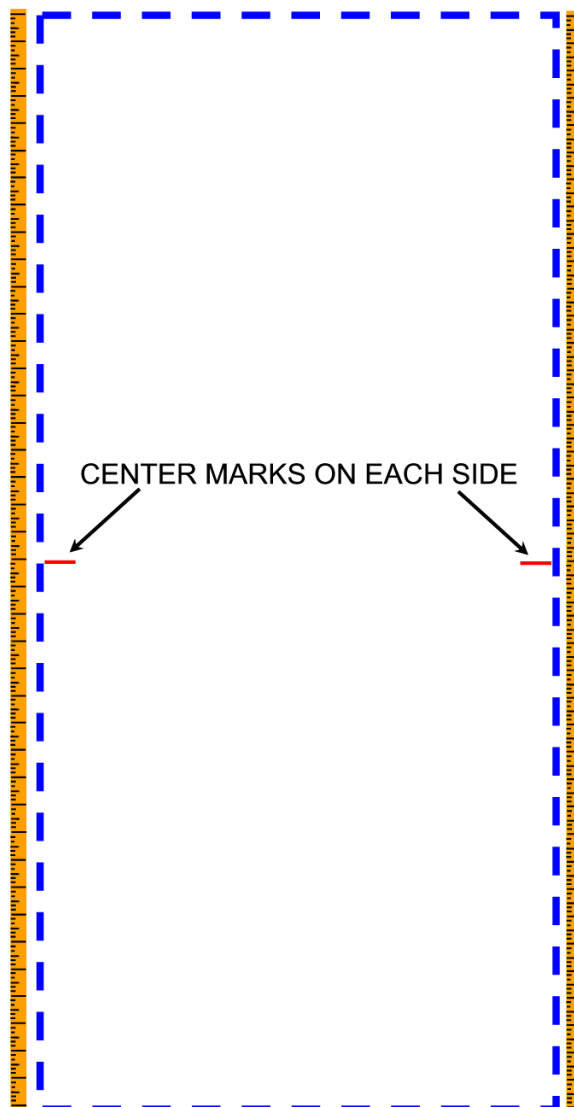
February 2014

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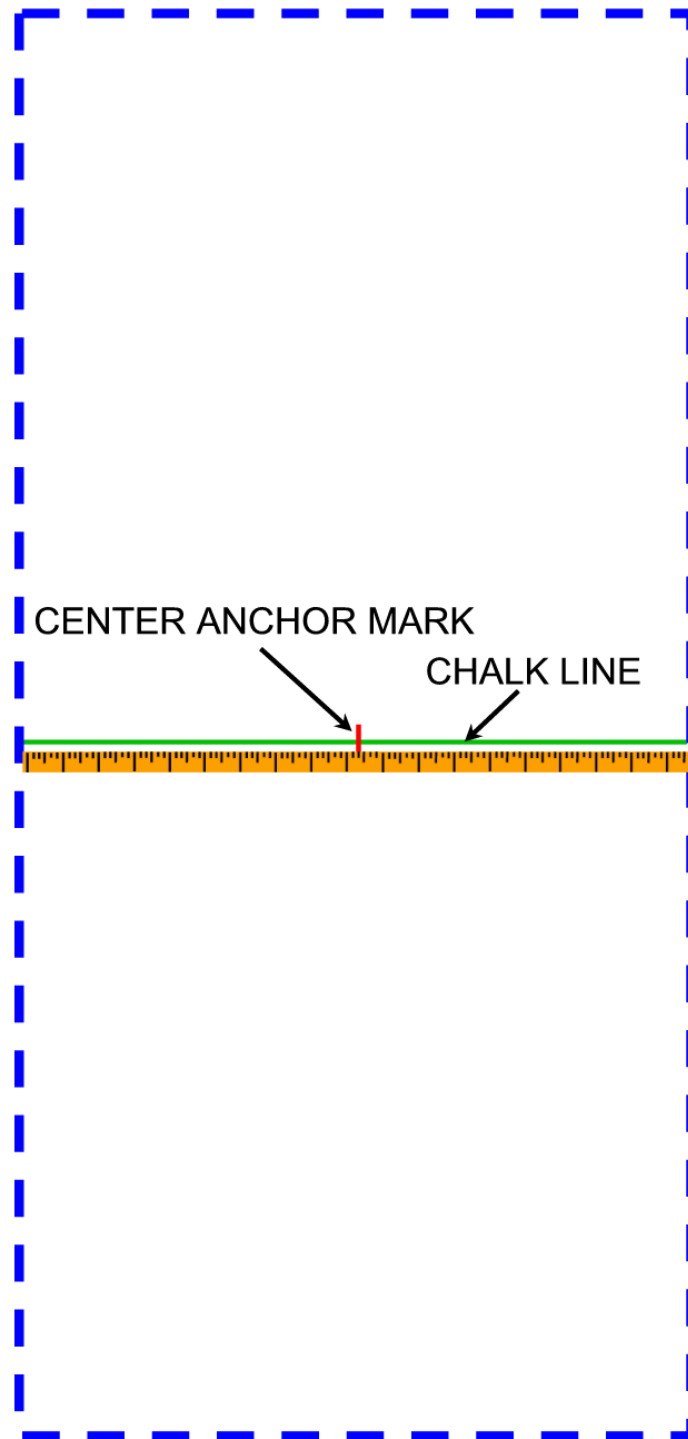
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HOW TO INSTALL TENNIS NET POSTS

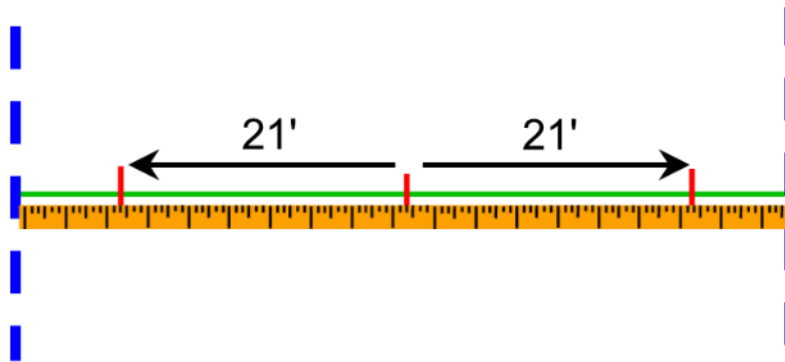
MEASURE AND LOCATE THE NET LINE: The first task is to locate the net line. The line should be at the exact center of the length of the court. A court measuring 120 feet in length would have a net line of 60 feet when measured from either end. For convenience you should have a 150 foot tape measure. As shown in the illustration below stretch the tape measure from end to end, along each side of the court, and make a mark with a crayon or piece of chalk at the center of each measurement. If the court was laid out and built accurately the two center measurements will be close to the same.



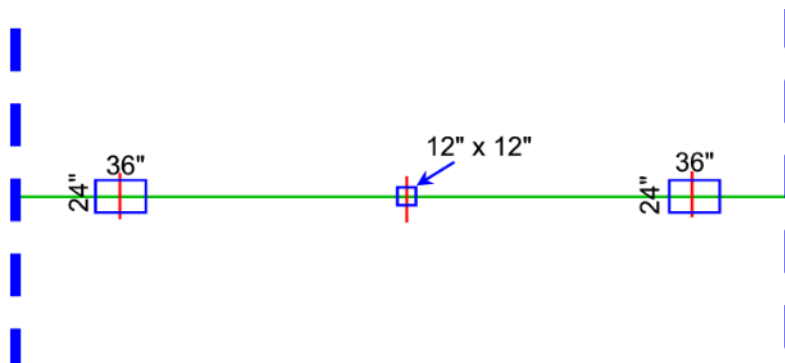
LOCATE THE NET POST AND CENTER ANCHOR FOUNDATIONS: Strike a chalk line from one center mark to the other and measure across the court to find the center. Make a mark at the center point. This will be the center of the center anchor foundation.



MARK THE CENTER OF THE NET POST FOUNDATIONS: From the center anchor mark measure 21 feet in either direction and make a mark. These marks represent the center of your net post foundations.



MARK FOR THE CUTS OF YOUR NET POST AND CENTER ANCHOR FOUNDATIONS: Using the intersection of the center marks and the chalk line as your center reference point, measure and mark a 24 inch by 36 inch box for each net post foundation and a 12 inch by 12 inch box for the center anchor foundation. Make sure to extend your center marks well beyond the edges of the boxes. You will need to use these measurements when setting the post sleeves and center anchor in concrete.



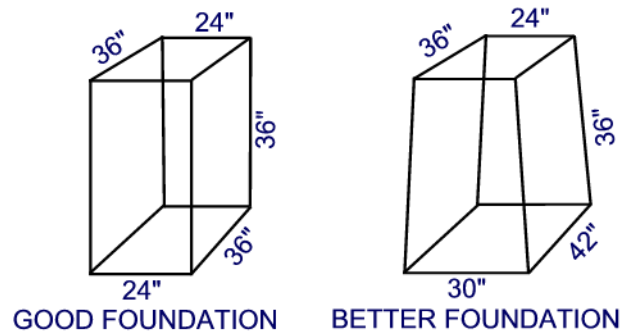
CUT OUT THE ASPHALT OR CONCRETE: It's now time to cut out and remove the asphalt or concrete for the foundations. A gas powered masonry cut-off saw is best for this job. They are usually available at most equipment rental stores. It is possible to use a skill saw, with a masonry blade, to cut asphalt, but it will take more time and you should be prepared to burn through a few blades. You can't use a skill saw on concrete. It is too thick and hard. You will also need a jack hammer to break up and remove the concrete pieces after cutting. A spade or a pry-bar is all that is typically needed to lift and remove the asphalt pieces.

The next graphic shows a typical cut-off saw with a diamond impregnated blade. Most equipment rental stores charge for the wear on the blade plus the hourly rental fee. Unless there is no other option, steer clear of a rental store that insists on you purchasing a new blade. Diamond blades are expensive and you should only use a fraction of it even if you are cutting concrete. It is also a good idea to have someone manning a hand

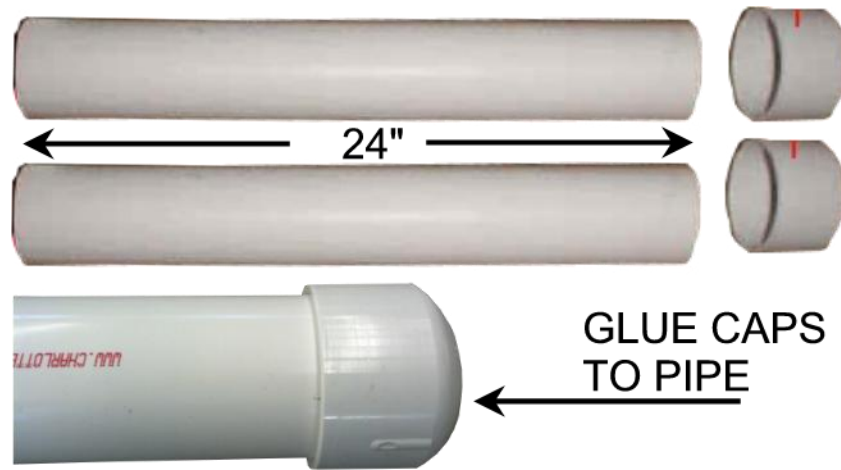
blower while you cut. The reason will be obvious once you start cutting. Make sure to blow or wash all residue created by the cuts before it rains. Once it gets wet and dries it is much harder to remove and it can cause adhesion problems for the coatings if not removed from the surface.



DIGGING THE FOUNDATIONS: After the asphalt or concrete pieces inside the cuts are removed, dig the centre anchor foundation to a 12 inch cube and the net post foundation to 24 inches wide X 36 inches long X 36" deep. The 36" length should be parallel with the net line. Make sure to maintain the foundation dimensions all the way to the bottom. The sides should be straight down, or even belled out a little, making the bottom dimension a little greater. A properly tightened net exerts over 600 pounds of pressure on the net posts 24/7. A net winched too tight can double that. So don't skimp on the foundations.



PREPARING THE NET POST SLEEVES: It is standard practice to set sleeves for the net posts in the concrete, allowing you to remove the net posts from the court. Tennis courts are often used for other functions such as, Hot Wheels tracks, basketball courts, and platforms for wedding receptions. Net post can get in the way so they should be easy to remove. If the net posts ever bend from over-tightening of the net, or if they are damaged for any reason sleeves will facilitate easy replacement. Sleeves can be included in your new set of posts, but are relatively expensive, and are not as strong as the ones you can easily make. To make your own sleeves, start by cutting two pieces of 3" schedule 40 PVC pipe 24 inches long. Make sure the pipe is Schedule 40 (SCH 40 may be stamped on the pipe). You may have to purchase 5 or even 10 feet of pipe, but PVC is cheap. After you have the two 24" pieces, glue a cap to one end of each piece. They are now ready to set in concrete.



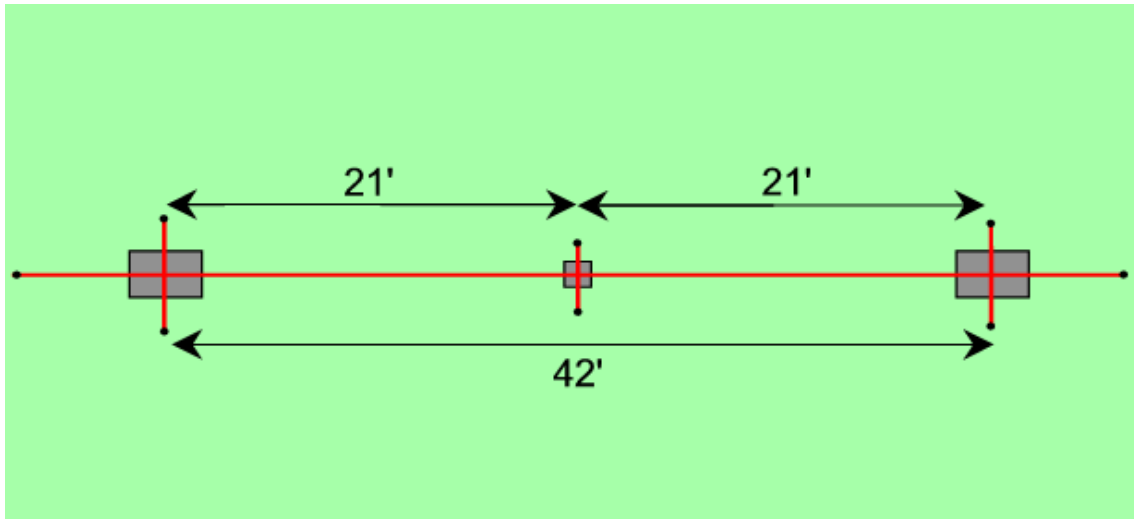
FABRICATING A CENTER ANCHOR: We sell prefabricated center-anchors ready to set in concrete. They last for years but eventually rust and break. If you want to install an anchor that will be around for a couple of generations follow these instructions. It may cost a few dollars more, but once installed you can forget about it for the rest of your life. You will need the following items:

1. 1 - 6" X 1-1/4" galvanized threaded nipple.
2. 1 - 1-1/4" galvanized threaded cap.
3. 1 - 1-3/4" X 1/2" stainless steel bolt.
4. 1 - 1/2" stainless steel lock washer.
5. 1 - 1/2" stainless steel nut.
6. 1 - 1/2" self-tapping drill bit.
7. 1 - Drill

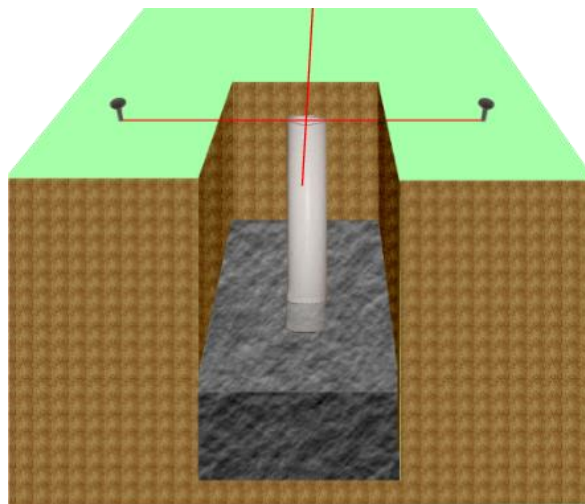
Drill two 1/2" diameter holes, on half inch down from the top edge of the nipple so that they intersect its diameter. Slide the bolt through and attach the lock washer and nut. Tighten well. Screw the cap on the other end of the nipple. The cap acts as an anchor, because it protrudes out from the bottom of the nipple, preventing the anchor from slipping out of the concrete over time. You now have a center anchor built like a tank. It is at least 4 times heavier and thicker than any prefabricated anchor on the market. Below is an illustration of what it should look like.



LAYOUT THE STRING LINES: It is important to stretch string lines to use as reference points for your net post sleeves and center anchor. In order to get the string lines tight use a nylon string that has some stretch to it. As shown in the graphic below, stretch a string from one side of the court to the other on top of the chalk line you marked to get your net line. Anchor it at each end with nails if your surface is asphalt. If you have a concrete court, drive wooden stakes or steel spikes into the ground at the edges of the court. Stretch strings across the foundation cut-outs using the marks you made in the beginning. If you can't find them, measure and mark them again. The intersection of the long string line and each of the cross strings indicate the centers of the center anchor and each sleeve

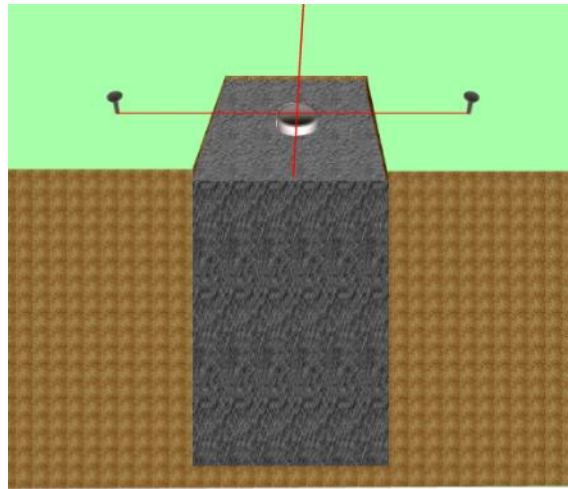


SETTING THE CENTER ANCHOR AND SLEEVES IN CONCRETE: The secret to stress free sleeve setting is to only fill the foundation hole about one third of the way full with concrete and then position and plumb the sleeve. Use the strings you set in the last step to position the anchor and sleeves and a small (9") torpedo level to plumb the sleeves. Remember, the net posts will only be as plumb (perfectly vertical) as your sleeves, so check them with the level in at least two places at right angles from each other. You can't check them too much. Also, make sure the sleeves and the anchor are touching the strings. This will ensure they are exactly flush with the court surface. Once the sleeve is positioned and plumbed perfectly, let the concrete begin to firm up before filling the remainder of the hole. This will prevent the sleeve from moving out of position as you fill the hole with concrete. Keep checking the sleeves for plumb and position as you are filling the holes.



FINISH FILLING THE HOLES: After the initial 1/3 of the concrete poured is very firm, you can add the rest of the concrete. It is best to shovel it in to prevent movement of the anchor and sleeves already set. Frequently check the sleeve's plumb and position as you add the concrete.

If your court is asphalt, leave the concrete in the foundations down from the top of the court approximately 1" to 1-1/2" and fill it in later by compacting cold patch asphalt flush with the surrounding surface. This will hide the foundations better and reduce cracking around the edges. You can find the cold patch asphalt at any builders supply and a plate compactor can be rented. If you don't want to rent the compactor you can use a hand tamp but be prepared for a workout. You have to tamp the asphalt very hard for good compaction. If you have a concrete court, pour the foundations all the way even with the surface of the court.



That's it. You have net post and center anchor foundations that will be in place until they are excavated or jack-hammer out. Your net posts may bend if they are grossly over tightened or they may eventually rust away, but your foundations will never budge a fraction of an inch.