

Both **faire** and **jouer** can be used to describe hobbies, such as games and sports. There are a couple of rules you can follow in order to know when to use each one.

### 1. **Faire** = “to do”, “to make”

**Faire** is an irregular verb. The following chart shows its present tense conjugation:

<b>je fais</b>	<b>nous faisons</b>
<b>tu fais</b>	<b>vous faites</b>
<b>il/elle/on fait</b>	<b>ils/elles font</b>

When **faire** is used with **de**, it means “to do a certain activity.” **Faire de** or **faire du** is used with any sport or activity that does not involve a bat, stick, club, or ball. Here are some examples:

**faire du ski** = “to ski”

**faire du cheval** = “to ride horseback”

### 2. **Jouer** = “to play”

The verb **jouer** is used with certain sports, games, and musical instruments. Here is its conjugation in the present tense:

<b>je joue</b>	<b>nous jouons</b>
<b>tu joues</b>	<b>vous jouez</b>
<b>il/elle/on joue</b>	<b>ils/elles jouent</b>

**Jouer + à** or **jouer + au** is used to express the idea of playing games and sports—more precisely all the sports that use a bat, club, stick, and/or a ball.

**jouer au foot** = “to play soccer”

**jouer aux cartes** = “to play cards”

**Jouer + de** or **jouer + du** is usually followed by an activity involving music.

**jouer de la flûte** = “to play the flute”

**jouer de la guitare** = “to play the guitar”

Because the French language evolves every day, people sometimes use **faire** in expressions that should use **jouer**. But you still need to learn the rule!

**Contractions**

When you put the prepositions **de** or **à** next to a definite article (**le, la, l', les**), the preposition changes based on the number and gender of the noun being described.

<b>de + le = du</b>	<b>à + le = au</b>
<b>de + la = de la</b>	<b>à + la = à la</b>
<b>de + l' = de l'</b>	<b>à + l' = à l'</b>
<b>de + les = des</b>	<b>à + les = aux</b>

Let's apply this principle. For instance, **le vélo**, when placed next to **faire de**, becomes **faire du vélo** (de + le = **du**) because **vélo** is masculine. Moreover, **les échecs**, when placed next to **jouer à**, becomes **jouer aux échecs** (à + les = **aux**).

Just remember to put the right ending on the verb and to add the correct preposition and activity to make a grammatically correct statement.

**Je joue au tennis et au volley, mais je ne joue pas aux échecs.**  
 "I play tennis and volleyball, but I do not play chess."

Note: Don't forget that every noun has an article in French, and that includes sports. You say **le basketball, le tennis, la natation**.