

TOTAL SOCCER CONDITIONING

VOLUME 2

A Ball Oriented Approach



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PREFACE

This is the second volume of a two-part book series that presents a completely ball-oriented approach towards conditioning for soccer. In the first volume, we identified all the fitness requirements of soccer such as speed, agility, power, strength and endurance; and provided numerous activities to target all the various components.

In this volume, we offer additional chapters to supplement the information presented in the first; and provide therefore, one of the most comprehensive sources of reference information on soccer conditioning.

In the **first Chapter**, we start by showing how traditional technical and tactical training drills can be optimized to enhance fitness.

The warm-up is an essential part of any training session and game preparation. In **Chapter 2**, we address the physiological benefits of a proper warm-up and present a variety of ball-oriented warm-up activities that can be used for training or as a part of your match-day preparations.

Chapters 3 identifies how technical and conditioning requirements can vary depending on player position and presents position-specific exercises and pattern-play activities to meet these demands.

Goalkeeper training, especially goalkeeper-specific footwork and conditioning drills, is quite often overlooked at the youth and amateur levels because coaches lack the specialized knowledge for this part of the sport. **Chapter 4** identifies the specific physical requirements of goalkeepers, and offers simple but effective exercises that will target these areas.

CHAPTER 1: OPTIMIZING TECHNICAL AND TACTICAL TRAINING EXERCISES FOR FITNESS DEVELOPMENT

In Volume 1 of *Total Soccer Conditioning: A Ball-Oriented Approach*, we provided a thorough set of ball-oriented exercises and drills that focus on a specific component of conditioning. For example, in the Chapter on **Strength Training**, we showed how lunges can be coupled with one-touch passing to enhance **lower-body strength**. As a second example; in the Chapter focusing on **Speed**, we described how a dribble and chase activity can be used to develop **starting speed** and **acceleration**. Overall, the exercises we presented in the first volume were meant to target only one component of soccer conditioning.

Designing exercises in such a way is important as it allows your players to concentrate fully on the specific component being targeted. There are times however, when coaches have minimal time for fitness training and therefore exercises structured to target multiple conditioning components may prove beneficial. The most relevant example occurs during the **in-season** where the main conditioning objectives are maintenance of fitness levels established during the off and pre-seasons. This can be difficult with twice-a-week practices or in weeks when there are multiple games.

In the first volume, we presented a detailed description of how all fitness components can be targeted in a 3-week rotational system to meet the conditioning demands of the **in-season**. For coaches with severe time constraints however, this can still be a challenge. To circumvent this problem, this chapter provides exercises that have been designed to train several components of fitness. In addition, we present a second approach to ball-oriented conditioning; that is, the optimization of **traditional** technical and tactical training drills to emphasize conditioning. The main priority of these exercises is to train a specific technique or work on match-related tactics. However, the intense nature of the drills allows maintenance of conditioning levels previously established. These exercises are particularly applicable to **in-season** practices where more emphasis is placed on tactical training exercises and match preparation and less time is devoted to specific conditioning drills.

(4 v 1) Possession and Sprint to Outside Cone

Conditioning and Technical Objectives: Develop i) short passing technique; ii) starting speed and acceleration; iii) cutting technique; iv) the ability to maintain possession using the proper angles and distance of support; and v) anaerobic endurance

Set-up and Directions: Divide your players into groups of five (4 attackers versus 1 defender). Set up a 10 yard by 10 yard playing area using four small cones. Instruct the players to stand inside the square. One of the attacking players should have a ball. Place a large (or different coloured) cone 5 yards from the centre of each of the four sides of the playing grid. These cones should be to the outside of the playing area (Figure 1.1a).

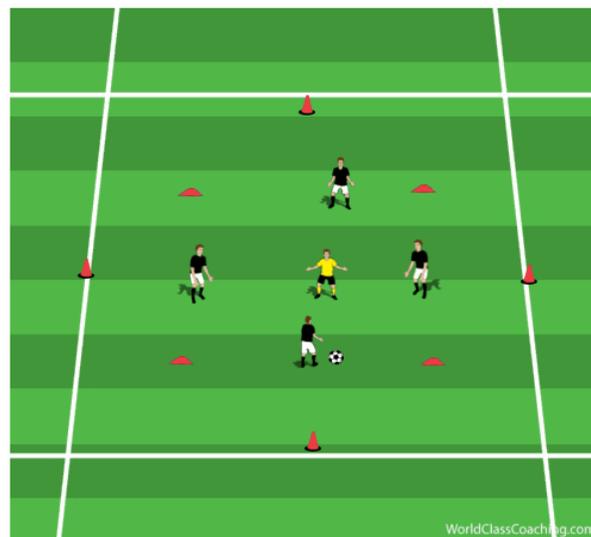


Figure 1.1a

Instruct the attacking players to play keep-away from the defender using a maximum of two touches. However, each time an attacking player makes a pass, they must sprint and touch the large cone on the outside of the grid that is closest to them before they can resume playing (Figures 1.1b and 1.1c).

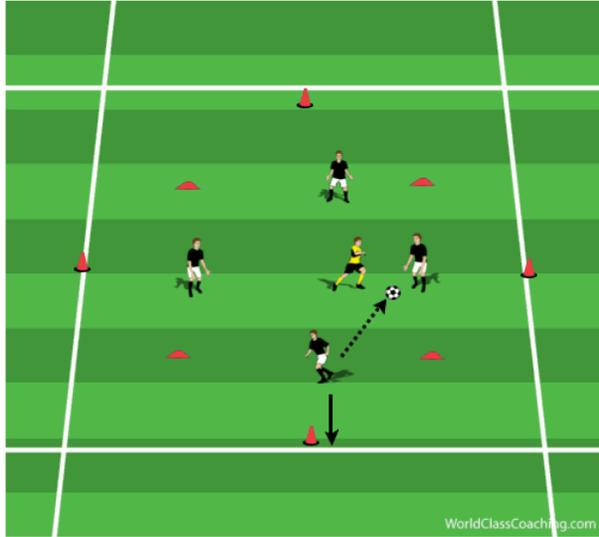


Figure 1.1b

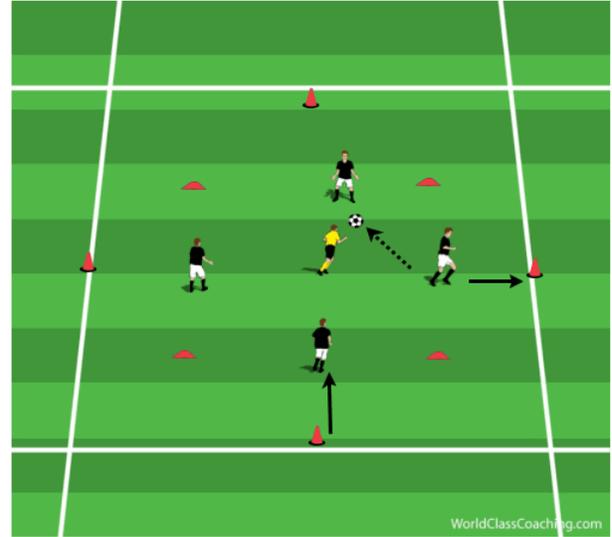


Figure 1.1c

Continue this sequence for 90 seconds and then rest for 3 minutes, ensuring that you switch defenders after each repetition. This gives a work-to-rest ratio of 1:2. Complete a total of 4 or 5 repetitions.

Coaching Points: After making a pass, players need to take off as quickly as possible using short, powerful steps. They must also maintain appropriate posture when accelerating to and from the cone.

Encourage the players to move the ball as quickly as possible but with quality passes. In addition, ensure that the players take their first touch in the direction they intend on playing their next pass to and keep an open body position.

Variation: You can vary this exercise by having the players perform different movements towards the cones such as rapid backpedals or side-to-side shuffles.

Progression: You can progress this exercise by having three attackers play against one defender or by limiting the attackers to one-touch.

1 v 1 to Lose an Opponent

Conditioning and Technical Objectives: Develop i) the ability to receive and make passes under pressure; ii) stop and go capacity; iii) the ability to rapidly change direction using cuts and other actions; and iv) anaerobic endurance

Set-up and Directions: Divide your players into groups of 6 (3 pairs). Set up a 10 yard by 10 yard playing area, using four small cones. Have one player stand at each of the four cones. Two of these four players should have a ball at their feet. The remaining two players will stand inside the playing grid: one will be the attacker and the other the marking or tracking defender (Figure 1.2a).

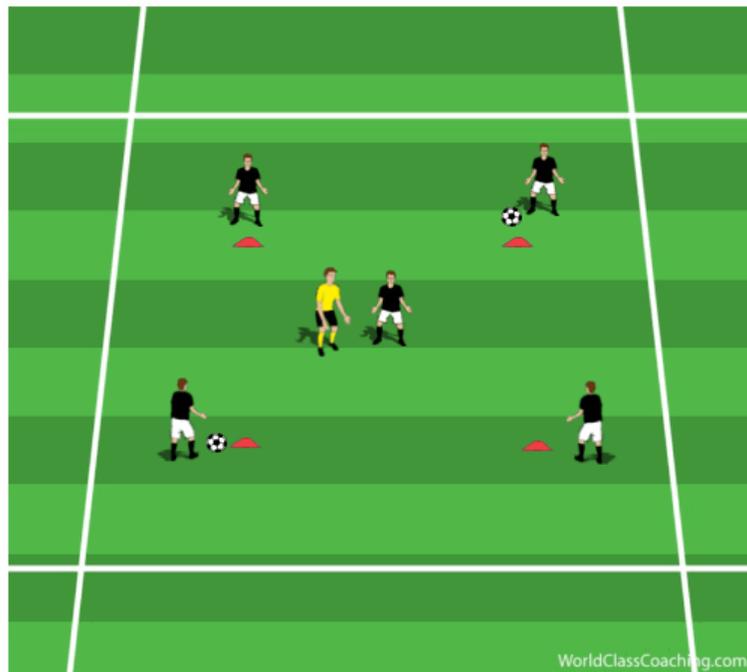


Figure 1.2a

The objective of this game is for the attacker to receive a pass from one of the two players with a ball and play it to one of the two players not in possession (Figure 1.2b and 1.2c). They are not allowed to pass it back to the player they received the pass from and they are limited to a maximum of two touches.

The defender must try and intercept the ball at any time without committing a foul. If the defender wins the ball, they simply return it to any player without a ball and the game continues. Reward a point for every successful pass completed by the attacker or for any interception made by the defender.

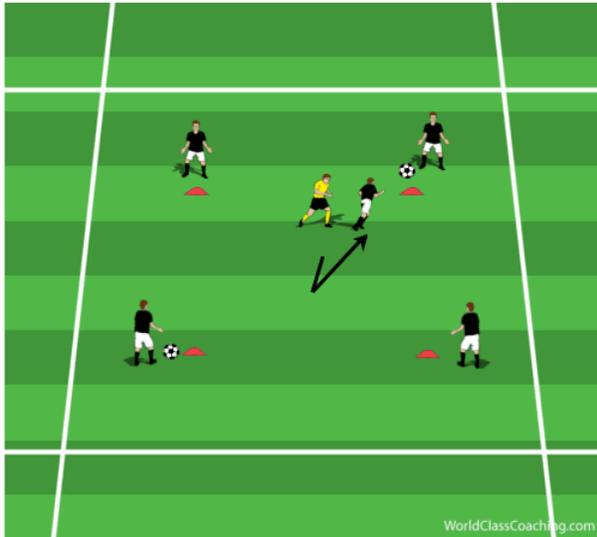


Figure 1.2b

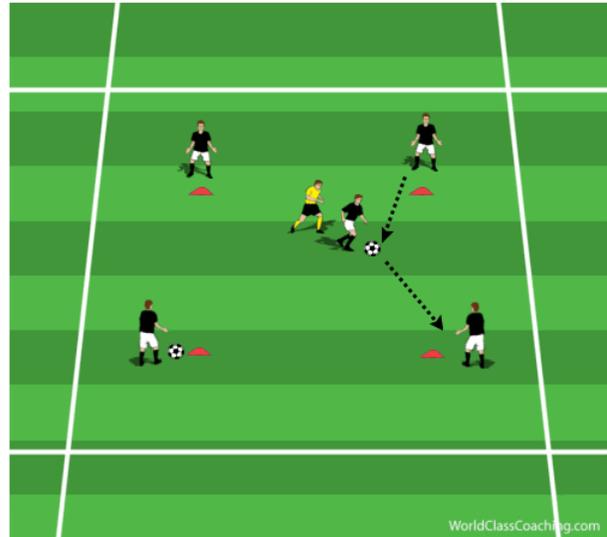


Figure 1.2c

Have each pair play for 90 seconds: 45 seconds as a defender and 45 seconds as an attacker. Switch working pairs after every 90 seconds but have all 6 players rest for 30 seconds at the end of each repetition. This works out to be a work-to-rest ratio of 1:3. Perform a total of 4 to 5 repetitions.

Coaching Points: Encourage the attacking players to use fakes and cuts in attempt to create space between themselves and the defender. All passes must be firm and to the feet of the player. Because the attacking player is limited to 2 touches maximum, they must adjust their bodies prior to receiving the balls so that their first touch is in the direction of the player they intend on passing to.

The defending player must maintain a low centre of gravity and take short quick steps while tracking the attacker. Fast and coordinated footwork is essential.

Encourage both players to work as hard as possible for the 90-second period.

Progression: You can progress this exercise by limiting the attacking player to one-touch or by instructing the players standing at the cones to give bounce passes or air balls.

1 v 1 with 4 Small Goals

Conditioning and Technical Objectives:

Set-up and Directions: Divide your players into group of two and two groups together. This exercise uses a 10 yard by 10 yard playing area. Set up four small goals (1.5 yards in width) using flags or cones in the centre of each side of the playing area. Have a player with a ball (the attacker) stand in front of any of the 4 goals with their partner (the defender) an arm's length away (Figure 1.3a).

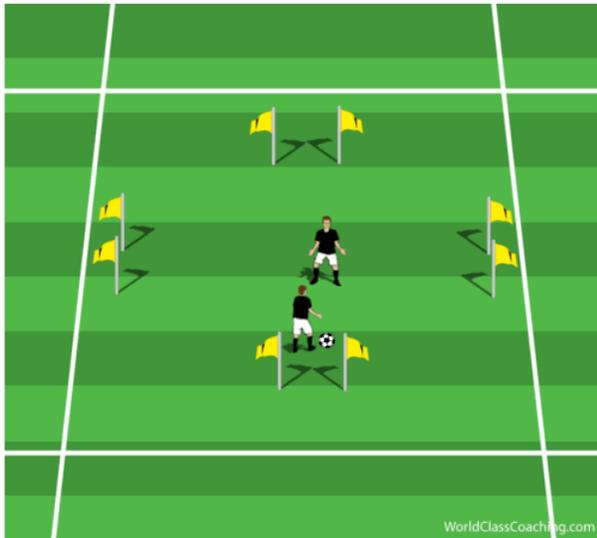


Figure 1.3a

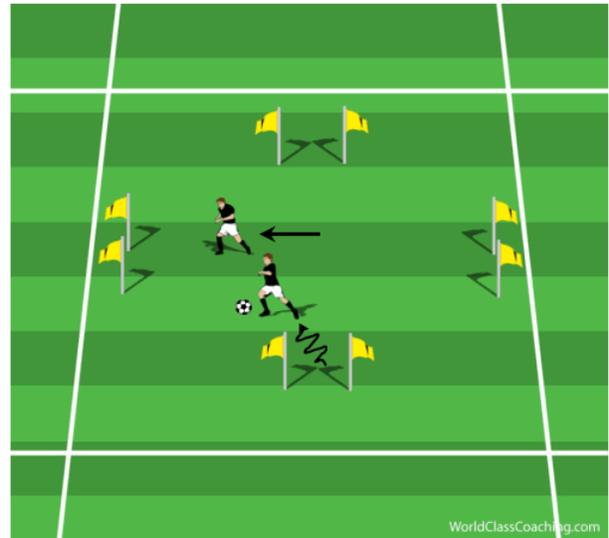


Figure 1.3b

The objective for the attacker is to dribble through any of the small goals (except for the one they are standing in front of) with the ball under control. The defender simply has to prevent the attacker from scoring (Figure 1.3b). The attacker must attempt to score as many times as possible but is not allowed to score in the goal that they last dribbled through. If the defender wins the ball or if the ball goes out of play, it is returned to the attacker.

Have the players work for 60 seconds switch roles and then continue for another 60 seconds (a total of two minutes). Have them rest for 4 minutes before performing the next repetition, which gives a work-to-rest ratio of 1:2. Direct the second group to go while the other group rests. Have each group perform a total of 4 to 6 repetitions.

Coaching Points: Encourage the attacking players to use a variety of fakes, turns and cuts in attempt to create space between themselves and the defender. The defending player must maintain a low centre of gravity and take short quick steps while tracking the attacker. Fast and coordinated footwork is essential.

Encourage both players to work as hard as possible for the 90-second period.

Backpedal and Sprinting Combo with One-Touch Passing

Conditioning and Technical Objectives: Develop linear acceleration and deceleration ability, anaerobic conditioning, as well as one-touch passing technique

Set-up and Directions: Place two small cones 2 yards apart and a large cone 10 yards from the closer small cone. All three cones should be in a straight line. Have a player with a ball stand at the large cone and a second player stand to the right of the small cone furthest away from the other player (Figure 1.4a). (Set up a station for each pair of players)

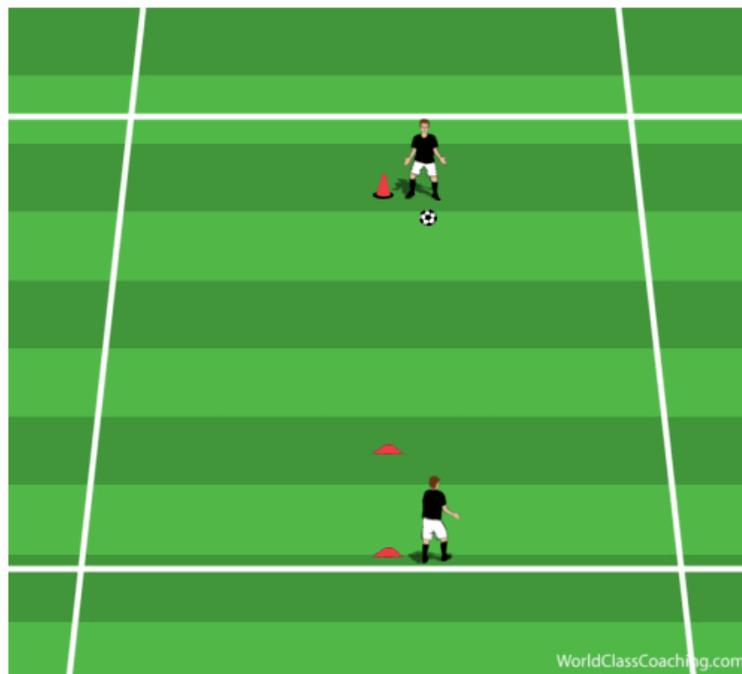


Figure 1.4a

Play is initiated by the player without the ball accelerating towards their partner who plays a ball for them to return with one touch (Figure 1.4b). As soon as they return the pass, the working player must rapidly backpedal towards the starting point. As they reach this cone, they must decelerate quickly and then accelerate forwards, this time to the left of the small cones, towards their partner and again receive and play a one-touch pass (Figure 1.4c). Continue this process for 60 seconds and then switch partners.

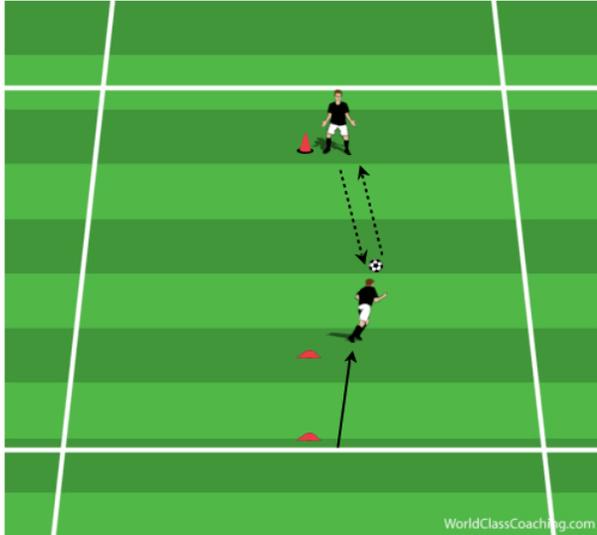


Figure 1.4b

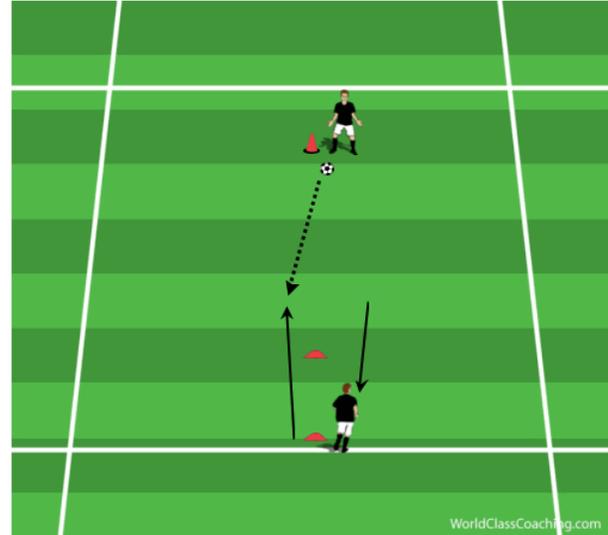


Figure 1.4c

(When on the right of the two small cones, the player must use his right foot to return the pass, and when on the left, they must use their left. This means the non-working player must provide quality passes.)

Coaching Points: Good posture and a low centre of gravity must be maintained at all times. When transitioning from backpedaling to sprinting forwards, initiate the deceleration process with leg closest to the cone, then plant and push the body forwards with the outside foot.

When accelerating forwards, the player must maintain good posture and use small, powerful steps. As they player is about to play the pass, they should decelerate quickly by taking shorter steps, and as the pass is played, they must use the supporting leg (non-passing foot) to propel them backwards.

When passing, the player should be compact over the ball with the supporting leg placed beside the ball. The player must adjust their body as they are about to make contact with the ball so that their hips are facing the target. The follow through of the passing leg should be towards the target.

Variation: You can vary this exercise by changing the type of pass (bounced, lobbed, etc.) played into the working player. You may need to give players with weaker technique two touches to start.

Progression: You can progress this exercise by having a defender start behind the working player who attempts to win the pass or tries to unbalance the player by applying slight pressure.

High-Intensity Conditioning Circuit

Conditioning and Technical Objectives: Develop i) starting speed and acceleration; ii) cutting technique; iii) anaerobic capacity; and iv) short passing technique.

Set-up and Directions: Divide your players into groups of 4 and set up the following station for each group. Place 2 small cones 2 yards apart, and have one player stand with a ball in their hands (player-1) behind one of the cones facing the other three players (players 2 to 4) that are standing behind the other cone (Figure 1.5a).

Set up three larger cones (A, B & C) 7 yards behind the cone where player 1 is standing. These three cones should be 2 yards apart and the middle cone (B) should be offset by 2 yards. Place a 4th large cone (D) 7 to 10 yards from Cone C (Figure 1.5a).

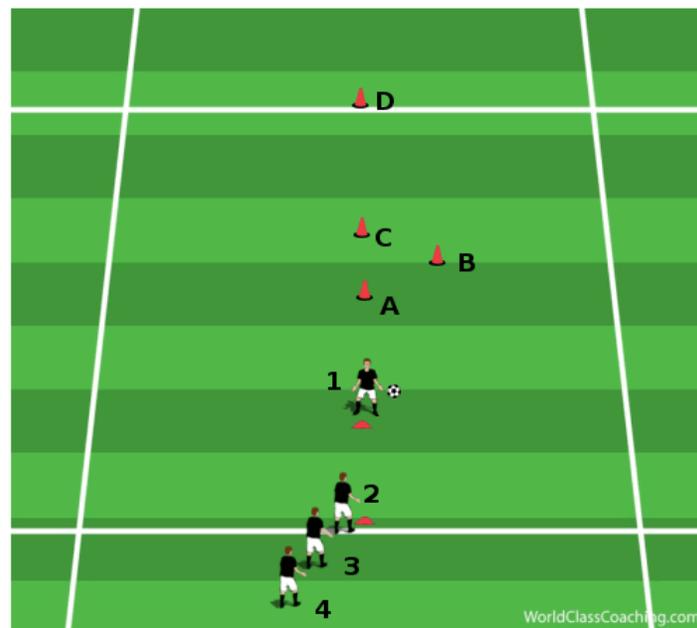


Figure 1.5a

The sequence starts with player-1 tossing a ball to player-2, who returns it with a side-footed volley using the right leg (Figure 1.5b). Player-1 tosses the ball to player-2 a second time who again returns it again with a side-footed volley, this time using the left leg (Figure 1.5c). This is repeated once. (So a total of four passes are completed).

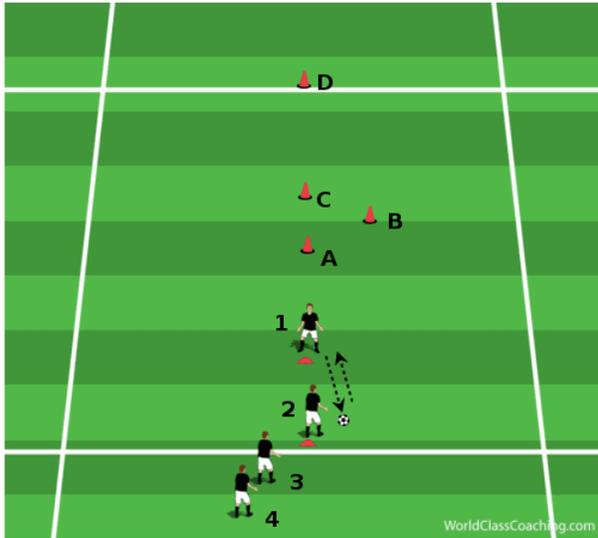


Figure 1.5b

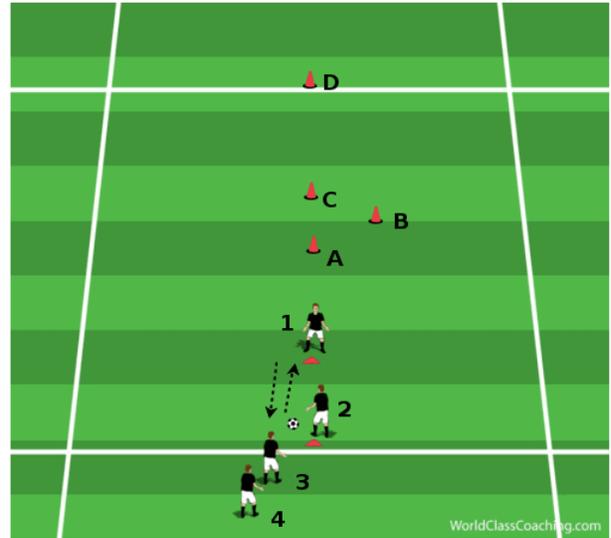


Figure 1.5c

As soon as the four passes are completed, player-1 turns and runs towards cone A (Figure 1.5d) where they cut and side shuffle right towards cone B. At cone B, they perform another cut and then side shuffle left towards cone C. As soon as they reach cone C, they accelerate and sprint towards cone D (Figure 1.5e).

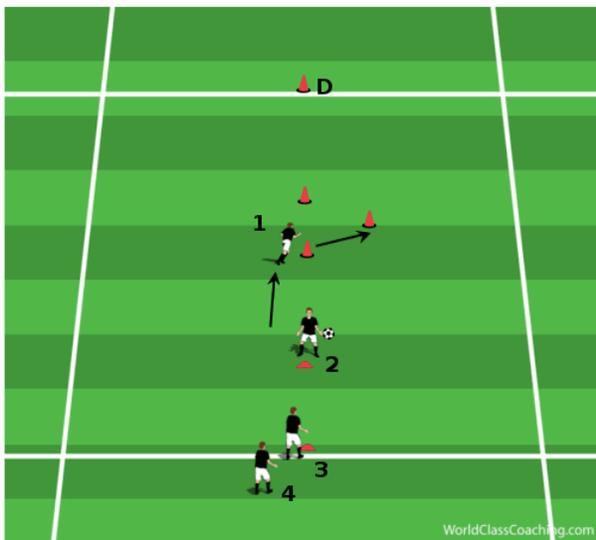


Figure 1.5d

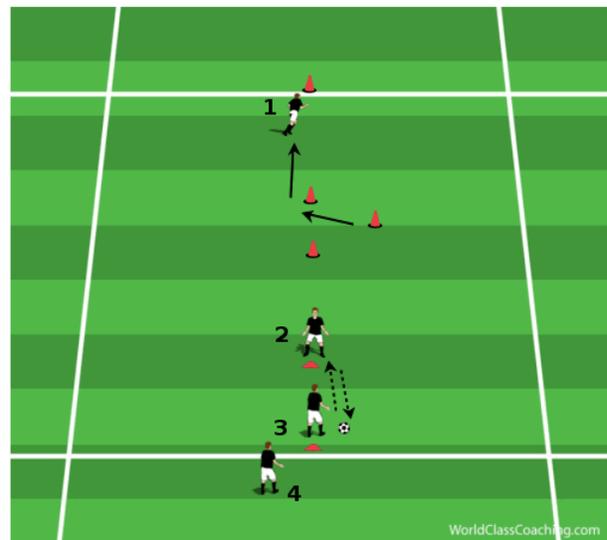


Figure 1.5e

Once player-1 reaches cone D, they must quickly job back and join the end of the line.

As soon as player-1 runs towards cone A, player-2 takes the position of player-1 and player-3 takes the position of player-2. Continue this cycle for 2 to 3 minutes and then rest for 3 minutes. Have your players complete 3 or 4 more cycles (resting for 3 minutes after every cycle) for a total of about 20 to 25 minutes.

Coaching Points: Encourage quality passes between the players: a soft first touch or volley is essential. Players should also be on their toes when passing.

When cutting (cones A and B) they should push off forcefully with the outside leg. When side shuffling, the feet are not allowed to cross each other, and the players should take small quick steps

Players must accelerate quickly at cone C using short, explosive steps. They should also keep the centre of gravity low and lean forwards slightly.

Variation: Ensure you switch the technical element after every 3-minute sequence. Consider doing i) volleys with the laces/instep; ii) control with the chest then volley; and iii) control with the thigh then volley.

Speed, Power and Agility Circuit

Conditioning and Technical Objectives: Develop i) ability to perform cuts at high speeds; ii) footwork and coordination; iii) explosive power; and iv) heading, one-touch passing and shooting technique

Set-up and Directions: This exercise requires the 18-yard box and the area just outside it for the playing area, and incorporates three different stations as shown in Figure 1.6a. Divide your players into three equal groups, and assign each group to an exercise station.

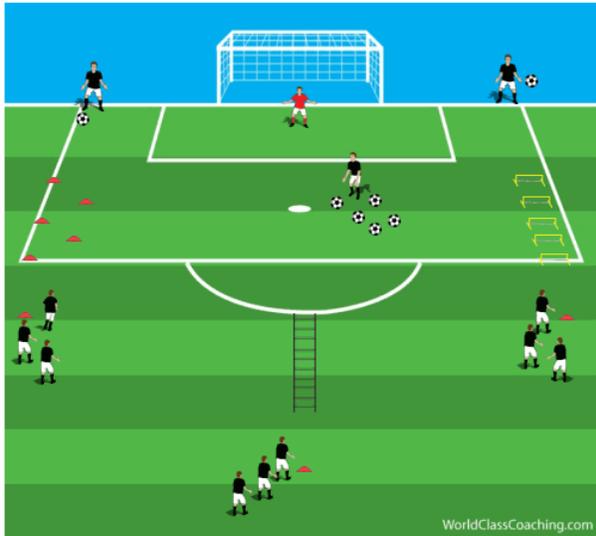


Figure 1.6a



Figure 1.6b

For **Station 1** (shown on the left side of Figure 1.6a), place a small cone 5 yards outside the box so that it is line with the top corner of the box. Have the group of players stand behind this cone. Starting at the top corner of the box; set up 5 cones so that they are 3 yards apart and off-set by 3 yards. Have one of the group members stand on the goal line with a ball at their feet.

When the coach is ready, have the player at the front of the cone run towards the first cone. As soon as they reach this cone, have them perform a cut and accelerate towards the second cone. Upon reaching the second cone, they perform another cut and accelerate towards the third cone. Have them continue this process until they have performed a cut at the 5th and final cone. At this point, they accelerate towards the player on the goal line that will play a pass for them to return with one touch (Figure 1.6b).

The player who has just completed the sequence takes the place of the player on the goal line and that player joins the end of the line.

Coaching Points: Emphasize good cutting technique and encourage the players to do the sequence as quickly as possible, but under control. Ensure quality (firm and accurate) passes from the players.

For ***Station 2*** (shown in the centre of Figure 1.6a), place an agility ladder in line with the centre of the goal so that the end of the ladder lies on the top edge of the D of the 18-yard box. Have a group of players stand behind a small cone placed 5 yards behind the start of the ladder. Have the coach stand beside the penalty spot with a supply of balls.

When ready, have the player at the front of the line run towards the ladder and then complete the ladder using a 1 foot per square pattern. As soon as they complete the ladder, the player must accelerate towards the coach who will play a ball in their path for them to finish on net with one touch (Figure 1.6b). Instruct the next player to go as soon as the player in front of them completes the ladder.

Coaching Points: Instruct the players to complete the pattern as quickly as possible while maintaining good running form. Foot contact with the ground should be very short and lite. Ensure you emphasize good shooting technique (part of foot, follow through action, etc.).

For ***Station 3*** (shown on the right of Figure 1.6a), set up a row of five hurdles, 1 yard apart, so that the first hurdle is on the top edge of the 18-yard box. Have a group of players stand behind a small cone placed 5 yards behind the row of hurdles. Have a coach stand on the goal line, in line with the hurdles, with a ball in their hands.

On the coach's signal, have the first player run towards the row of hurdles. When they are about 12 inches away, have them jump as far up as possible, so that they land in the space between the first and second hurdle. As soon as they land, they must immediately jump over the second hurdle and continue the process until they have cleared the 5th and final hurdle.

As soon as they clear the final hurdle, instruct them to sprint towards the coach who will toss a ball in the air for them to return with a jumping header. Instruct the next player to go as soon as the player in front of them clears the final hurdle (Figure 1.6b).

Coaching Points: The player should attempt to jump as far up as possible on each jump by explosively extending the ankles, knees and hips. Because these jumps are intended to be short response, the ground contact time between landing and subsequent takeoff should be minimal. Ensure you coach proper heading technique (eyes open, contact with the forehead, etc.)

Have the players work continuously at their assigned station for 1 to 2 minutes and then have the groups switch stations. Continue this process until each group has done each station twice. However, ensure the players rest for 90 seconds between each repetition.

OPTIMIZING SMALL-SIDED GAMES FOR CONDITIONING

Small-sided games (SSG) are an essential tool for the youth and amateur coach. As mentioned in Volume 1; SSG allow for more touches on the ball, simplifies the tactical environment, and yet incorporates all aspects of the game.

SSG should be a fundamental part of in-season training when the majority of time is devoted to match preparation using game-like activities. However, when most coaches include SSG into practice, they tend to structure them so that the SSG is the only exercise taking place. For example, you may see a coach set up a 4 v 4 (plus goalkeepers) SSG for their squad- which they have divided into 3 teams. Two teams will play while the other one watches on the side line. However, by making a simple adjustment such as instructing the third team to perform 1 to 2 sets of a footwork exercise while waiting, you are allowing your players to maintain the levels of foot speed and coordination attained during their off-season training.

If teams play games of 5 minutes, you can have the team on the side work for 2 minutes, which gives them 3 minutes of recovery before they start their next game. The following are a few examples of how you may optimize your SSG training to include some aspect of conditioning. The first two examples are when you have three (or more) teams. The third and final example is most appropriate when you only have 2 teams, (7 v 7 for example).

i) SSG with Agility ladder

This adjustment allows your players to work on their foot speed and coordination by completing one or more patterns of the agility ladder. Set up an agility ladder as shown in Figure 1.7a below. However, ensure that the ladder is at least 15 yards from the field. Instruct the players of the team(s) not playing to stand behind a cone placed 5 yards from the start of the ladder.

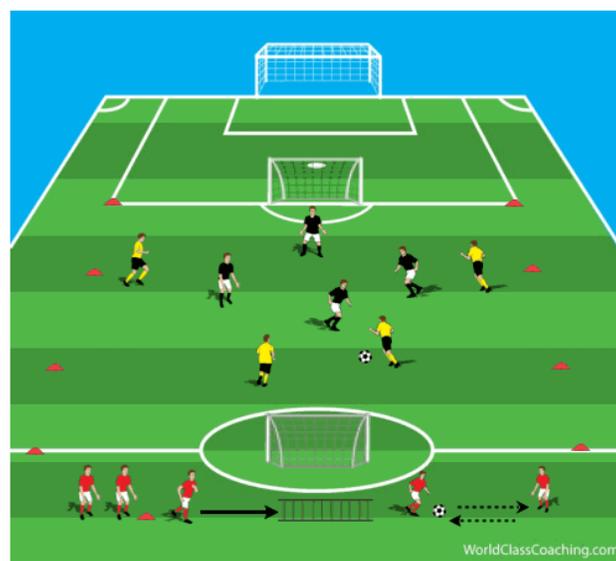


Figure 1.7a

When ready, have the player at the front of the line run towards the ladder and then complete the ladder using a 1 foot per square pattern (or any pattern of your choice). Have the next player in line go as soon as the player in front of them reaches halfway in the sequence.

Continue this sequence until each player has performed 5 to 6 run-throughs. You may choose to incorporate ball work (as shown in Figure 1.7a) or you can have the players focus solely on the ladder. You can also vary this exercise by choosing a different pattern on the ladder or by switching to any simple footwork exercise such as zigzag shuffles.

ii) Incorporating Plyometric Exercises into SSG Training

In this modification to your SSG, we have players performing a plyometric exercise that can facilitate a small group of players. Set up a row of four or five hurdles, 1 yard apart, as shown in Figure 1.7b below. Have the group of players line up behind a small cone placed 5 yards behind the hurdle.



Figure 1.7b

When ready, direct the first player to run towards the row of hurdles. When they are about 12 inches away, have them jump as far up as possible, so that they land in the space between the first and second hurdle. As soon as they land, they must immediately jump over the second hurdle and continue the process until they have cleared all hurdles in the row. Similar to the example described above, you may choose to include ball work (as shown in Figure 1.7b) or you may decide to have the players focus strictly on the jumping exercise.

Direct the next player in line to go as soon as the player in front of them reaches halfway in the sequence.

Have the players continue this activity until they have performed 5 to 6 repetitions. To vary the exercise, you can have the players jump laterally over the hurdles or you can have them switch to a single-leg takeoff and landing.

iii) Integrating Speed Endurance Training into SSG Training

This alteration is best used when you only have two teams for your small-sided activity. Have the teams play for the desired length of time (3 to 5 minutes for example). However, as soon as the coach calls time, have the players jog to a pre-determined start point, and then complete a full lap around the field being used for the SSG (Figure 1.7c).

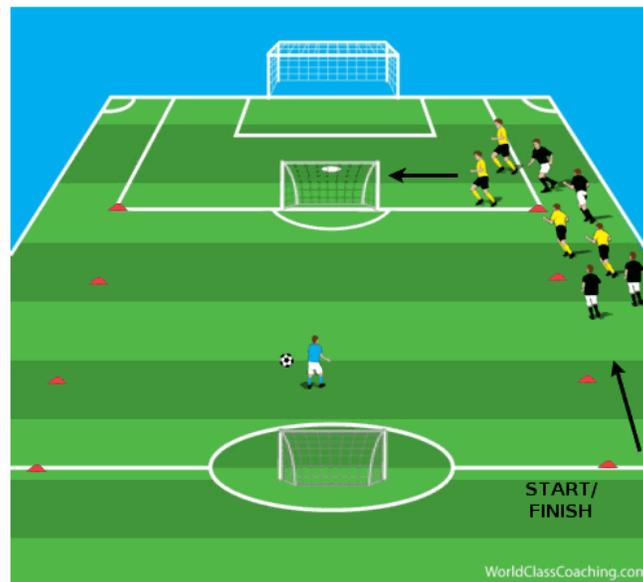


Figure 1.7c

Complete a sprint at the end of each short game, but ensure the players rest for at least 3 minutes before starting the next round. To vary this activity, you may choose to have the players sprint the length of field but jog the width.

CHAPTER 2: BALL-ORIENTED WARM-UP ROUTINES

The warm-up is an essential part of any training session and game preparation. In fact, most professional teams spend at least 45 minutes warming up for a match, where they perform activities such as light jogging, dynamic stretching, footwork drills and small-sided games. Although such a labor-intensive preparation is not recommended for all levels of competition, coaches should be aware of the importance of properly preparing their players for training or competition. A well-designed warm-up not only enhances the quality of performance but also lessens the chance of injury during training or match play. In addition to physically preparing the body, warm-ups also allow players to get psychologically prepared.

This chapter begins by briefly identifying the benefits of a proper warm-up and also describes the various components of a complete warm-up routine. In the subsequent sections, we describe *general* warm-up sessions for games and training as well as warm-up sessions based on a *specific training theme* such as individual and group defending; possession; combination play; and some element of technique such as passing or dribbling. The theme-based warm-up sessions are designed to introduce general coaching points that are likely to be addressed in greater detail during the technical drills and small-sided games later in the training session. Each (warm-up) routine will be approximately 15 minutes in length and will be interspersed with dynamic stretching.

BENEFITS AND COMPONENTS OF A WARM-UP ROUTINE

From a physiological standpoint, the purpose of the warm-up is to prepare the muscular, respiratory and nervous systems for more intense exercise. This is achieved by performing activities that will initiate certain biological responses such as increased core and muscles temperatures as well as increased blood flow to the working muscles. The end result is an elevated level of performance, which manifests itself in ways such as faster reaction times; increased rates of force production (power); more efficient movements; and increased oxygen delivery to the active muscles.

The warm-up should consist of *general* movements such as jogging or skipping, as well as *sport-specific actions*, which involve movements that resemble those frequently observed in the sport. In the case of soccer, such movements include rapid backpedals, lateral shuffles, short sprints and vertical jumps. The sport-specific component of the warm-up can also include technical actions such as dribbling and passing/receiving.

Another major component of the warm-up should be *dynamic stretching*. The purpose of stretching is to increase the range of motion around a joint and thus produce more efficient movement on the field. As mentioned in Volume 1 of the book series, stretching can be done using a variety of techniques, but the active nature of dynamic stretching makes it ideal for warm-up routines.

As the warm-up routine progresses, it should gradually increase in intensity. Importantly however, it should not lead to fatigue.

Warm-up Activity 1

Technical/Tactical Theme: Short passing; receiving with different parts of the body

Set-up and Directions: This activity uses half of a regular-sized field for the playing area. Divide your players into groups of two and give each group a ball. Have the player with the ball start on the side-line facing infield with the ball at their feet. The other player should stand 5 yards away facing their partner (Figure 2.1a).



Figure 2.1a

The player on the goal line starts with the ball at his feet and when ready, passes to their partner who stops it with one touch and then proceeds to backpedal (Figure 2.1b). As the first player makes the pass, they will run forward towards the stationary ball and make a one-time pass (without slowing down) into the feet of their backpedaling partner, who again stops the ball with one touch (Figure 2.1c).

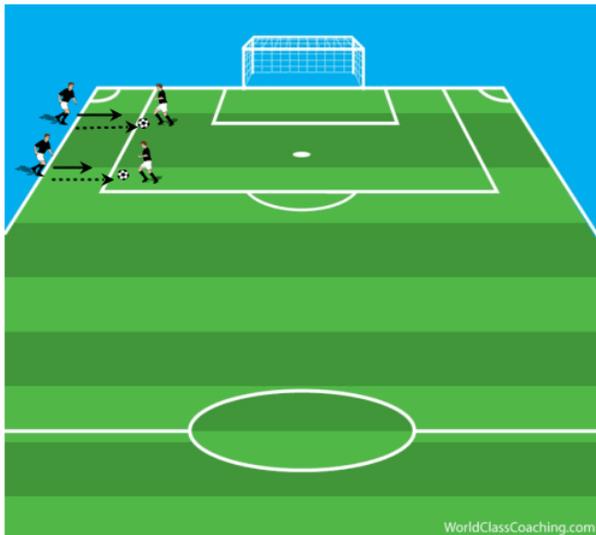


Figure 2.1b

Continue this process until the player who is backpedaling reaches the other side-line. At this point, the players will reverse roles and return to the initial starting points. This is considered one repetition. Do a total of four or five repetitions.

Progressions and Dynamic Stretches: For the first two repetitions, have the players perform at a pace that is approximately 50% of their maximum speed. Increase the intensity for each subsequent repetition until they are performing at about 90% of their maximum speed. You can also have the players perform a *jockeying-type* movement instead of backpedaling.

After each repetition, have the players perform two different dynamic stretches. This should take no longer than 90 seconds, and allows the players to recover from the previous sequence.

Variation: The first two repetitions should focus on short passing on the ground. For the last two or three repetitions however, you can vary the technical component of the exercise. For example, have the player on the goal line start with the ball in their hands. When ready, this player will toss the ball to the chest (Figure 2.1d) or thigh of the other player who controls and then volleys it back into the hands of their partner who has started jogging forward. As soon the player performs the volley, they will proceed to backpedal and ready themselves to receive another toss. (The ball is not allowed to bounce after the player receives it with his chest or thigh).

You can also have the players perform jumping headers as the technical element (Figure 2.1e).



Figure 2.1d



Figure 2.1e

Warm-up Activity 2

Technical/Tactical Theme: Shooting technique; individual dribbling; combination play

Set-up and Directions: This activity uses two thirds of a regular-sized playing field. Set up a 20 yard by 20 yard grid, 10 yards from the top of one the 18-yard boxes. Place a regular-sized goal on the edge of the centre circle in the other half of the field so that so that it is line with, and facing, the goal at the end of the designated playing area. Divide your players into 2 equal groups and give each player a number from 1 to however many are in each group (2 players will have the same number). Instruct your players to dribble around inside the 20 by 20 yard grid using small touches. Have a coach stand in the space between the goal and the dribbling grid on both sides of the pitch (Figure 2.2a)



Figure 2.2a

To initiate the exercise, the coach will call out a number. The two players with that number will dribble **as quickly as possible** from the playing grid towards the goal and then take a shot on net (Figure 2.2b). As soon as the shot is taken, have the player retrieve their ball and return to the square to continue dribbling. The coach will tell the players beforehand, which group attacks which net.



Figure 2.2b

Continue this for 90 seconds to 2 minutes (1 sequence/repetition) and then have the players rest for 60 seconds. This time frame should allow each player to get at least two attempts on net. Complete a total of 5 to 6 repetitions for the routine. To ensure the activity flows, the coach should call a different number as soon as the player is on their way back to the dribbling area.

Sport-Specific Movements and Dynamic Stretches: Encourage your players to perform a variety of movements such as turns and cutbacks while they are dribbling. You should also vary the speed at which they dribble. For example, have them dribble at a moderate pace and then accelerate into space every 10 to 15 seconds.

As before, have the players perform two different dynamic stretches after each repetition s.

Variation and/or Progressions: You can vary the shooting component of the activity after each 90-second repetition. For instance, have the player perform a wall-pass (Figure 2.2c) or an overlap (Figure 2.2d) with the coach before shooting. You can also vary the dribbling component of the activity by having the players perform a variety of skills or fakes (step-overs, etc.) while dribbling.



Figure 2.2c



Figure 2.2d

Warm-up Activity 3

Technical/Tactical Theme: Group Defending; game awareness; communication

Set-up and Directions: Divide your players into groups of three or four. For each group, set up a 25 yard by 25 yard playing area. Have your players stand in line with each other but 5 yards apart. They should be facing the same direction. Designate one of these players as the leader (Figure 2.3a)

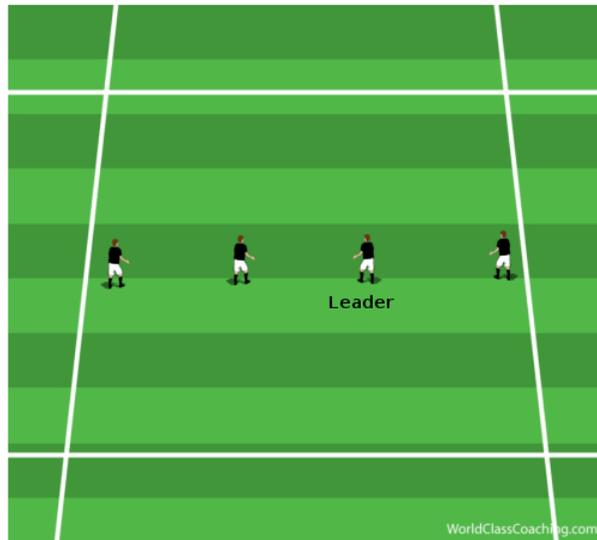


Figure 2.3a

The objective of the activity is for the players to follow whatever movement pattern the leader performs while maintaining their shape. That is, they must remain in a straight line and equidistant apart. The leader can choose to move directly forwards, diagonally forwards (Figure 2.3b), backwards (Figure 2.3c), or laterally (side-to-side shuffles); but only in these directions.

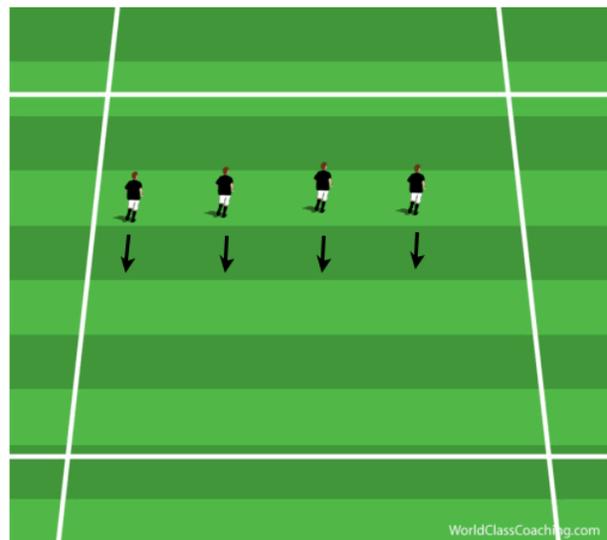
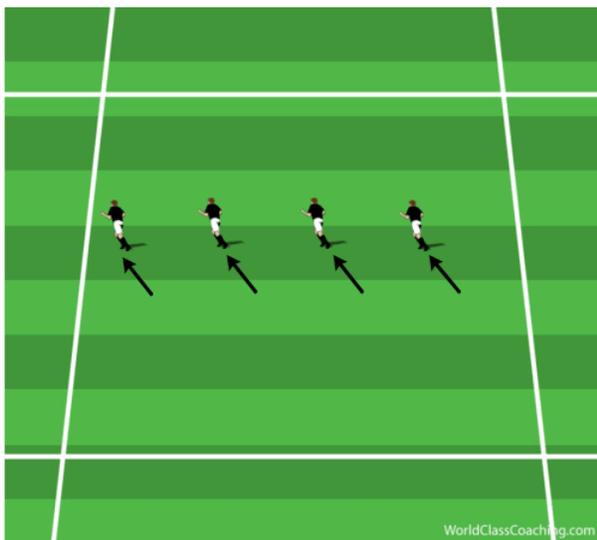


Figure 2.3b

Have the players perform this activity for 90 seconds and then rest for 90 seconds. Perform a total of 4 to 5 sequences, but switch the leader after each repetition. When moving, the leader should use terms such as *'slide right'*, *'slide left'*, *'drop'* and *'push out'*.

Progressions and Dynamic Stretches: For the first two repetitions, have the players perform at a pace that is approximately 50% of their maximum speed. Increase the intensity for each subsequent repetition until they are performing at about 90% of their maximum effort. You can also have the leaders incorporate a variety of jumps into the activity.

Ensure you include dynamic stretches for the major muscles groups in between each repetition.

Variation: For the last one or two repetitions, you can vary the exercise by giving each player a ball (Figure 2.3d). The objective remains the same; this time however, the players will be dribbling a ball as they move in the various directions. You may also choose to perform the entire warm-up using this variation.

Figure 2.3c

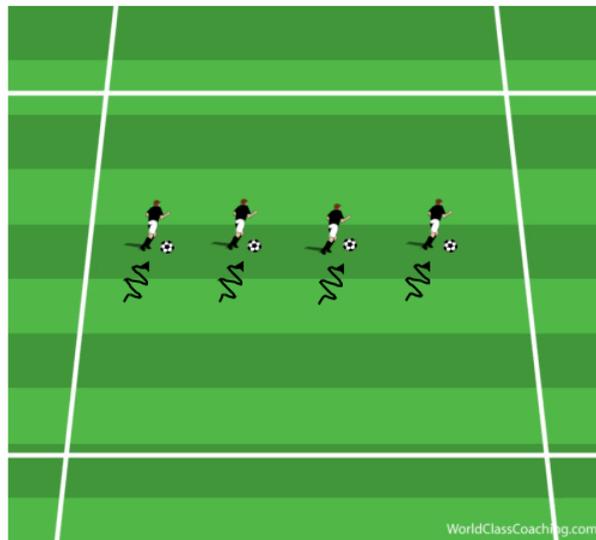


Figure 2.3d

Warm-up Activity 4

Technical/Tactical Theme: Long and short range passing; receiving

Set-up and Directions: This exercise uses the space between the 18 yard box and the halfway line for the playing area. Place a cone on the halfway line, approximately 15 yards in from the left sideline. Have a small group of players stand behind this cone. The player at the front should have a ball. Place a second cone on the top of the 18-yard box so that it is in line with the first cone. Have another few players stand behind this cone facing the first group of players. Place a third cone midway between the first two cones, but 20 yards in field. Have **one** player stand at this cone facing the group of players at the cone on the halfway line.

Set up another three cones that mirror the placement of the first three in the other half of the playing area, and place the rest of your players in the same manner (Figure 2.4a). You therefore have two groups performing the same passing pattern on both halves of the playing area.



Figure 2.4a

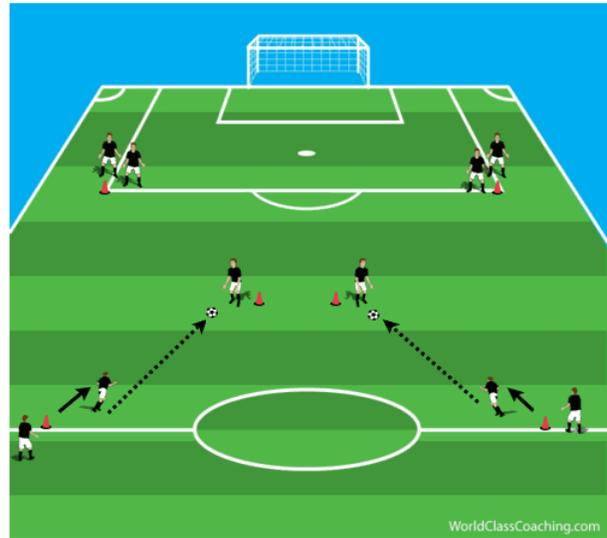


Figure 2.4b

Play is initiated by having the player at the front of the line at the first cone play a pass into the feet of the player standing at the cone in the middle. As soon as they make this pass, this player must follow their pass with a run and take the position of the person receiving the pass (Figure 2.4b).

The player who receives the pass must take a touch and then play a pass to the feet of the person standing at the front of the line by the cone on the 18 yard box. As they make the pass, this player must follow their pass and the join the end of the line at top of the playing area (Figure 2.4c).

The player at the top who receives the pass must take a touch and then play a long range pass to the player standing at the front of the line at the initial starting position. As before, the player will follow their pass and join the end of the line at this cone (Figure 2.4d).

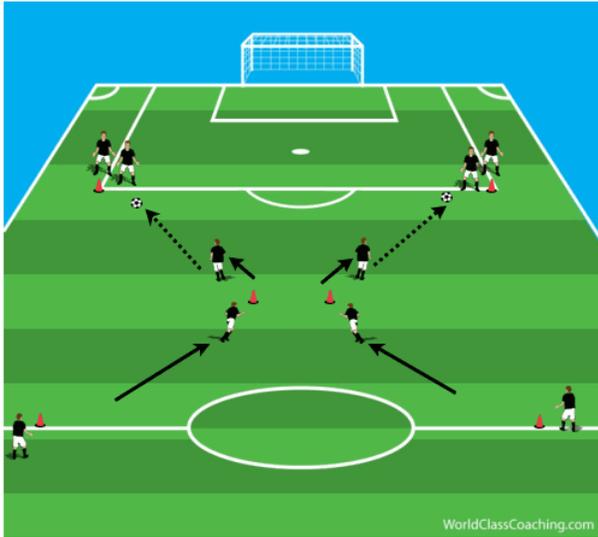


Figure 2.4c

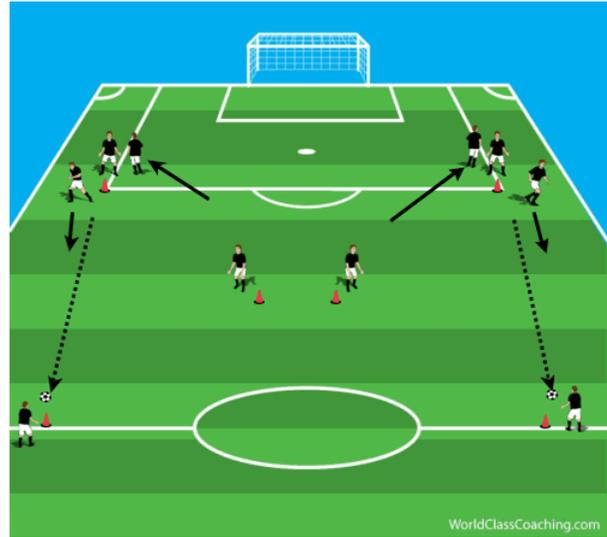


Figure 2.4d

Continue this passing sequence for 90 seconds and then have the players rest for one minute. Perform a total of 5 to 6 repetitions. After the players have gotten comfortable with the pattern, introduce a second ball for each group.

Sport-Specific Movements and Dynamic Stretches: After two or three repetitions, instead of having the players follow their pass with a run; instruct them to move to the next cone by ***shuffling***, ***backpedaling*** and finally by ***sprinting*** as fast as possible. In addition, after the players get comfortable with the pattern, have the players at the middle cone check away and then check back towards the pass (Figure 2.4e). The change of direction that precedes checking for the ball should be initiated by a performing a ***cut***, and should be done at speed.

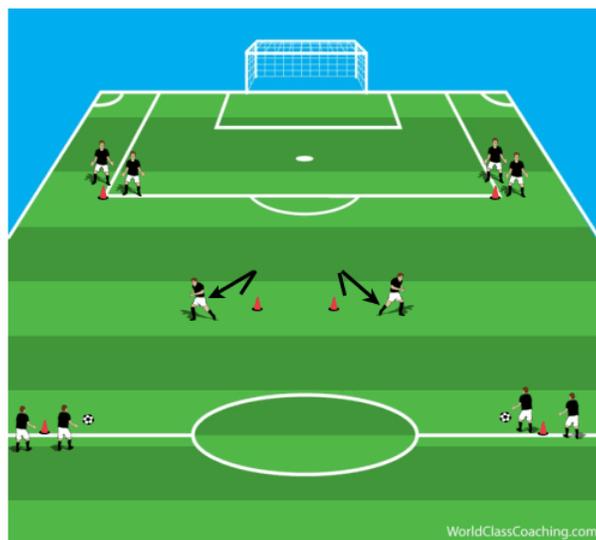


Figure 2.4e

As before, ensure the players perform two different dynamic stretches after each 90-second sequence.

Variation and/or Progressions: You can vary or progress this exercise in one of several ways. You can start by altering the way the players receive the ball. For example, have them start by taking their first touch using the outside of the foot. You can then instruct the player to take their first touch using the inside of the foot or with a half turn (middle player only).

You can also change the way the long pass is made. Start by having them drive the ball along the ground. You can then switch to passes being played in the air. This also challenges the player receiving the pass to use different surfaces of the body.

Warm-up Activity 5

Technical/Tactical Theme: General warm-up routine

Set-up and Directions: Divide your players into two equal groups and give each group a ball. The players in each group should form a circle and should be no more than 1.5 yards apart. Each group should be in the vicinity of the halfway line. Instruct each group to perform keep-ups. That is, the players in each group should pass the ball back and forth between each other without having the ball touch the ground (Figure 2.5a). Limit the players to three or four touches.

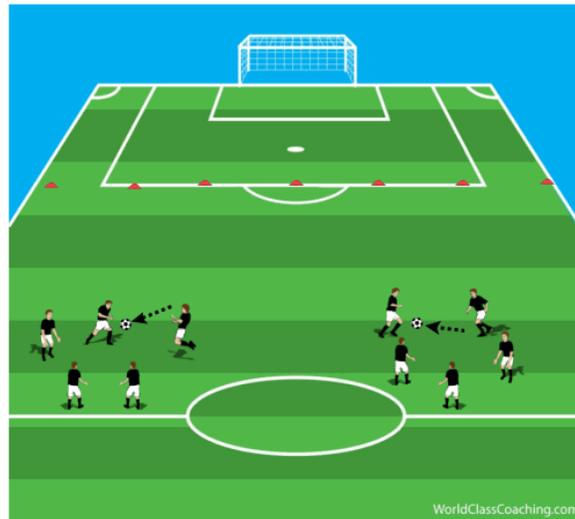


Figure 2.5a

Have the players pass back and forth without the ball touching the ground (group keep-ups) for approximately 60 to 75 seconds. After this time, instruct them to jog to the top of the 18-yard box and back (Figures 2.5b and 2.5c).



Figure 2.5b

As soon as they return to their initial positions, have them resume performing group keep-ups. Continue this cycle until you have performed a total of 7 to 8 repetitions.

Figure 2.5c

Sport-Specific Movements and Dynamic Stretches: For the first two repetitions, have the players jog to the 18-yard box and back. For each repetition thereafter, have the players perform a different type of movement. For example, instead of jogging, you can have them do ***high knees, butt kicks, backpedals and side-to-side shuffles***. For the last one or two repetitions, have them ***sprint*** at 85 to 90% of their maximum speed.

After the players have performed all of the required repetitions, have them perform a variety of dynamic stretches so that they target all the major muscle groups used in soccer.

Variation: You can vary this exercise by replacing group keep-ups with passes along ground, or keep away (one or two players in the middle) using a maximum of two touches.

Warm-up Activity 6

Technical/Tactical Theme: Individual dribbling, receiving high balls

Set-up and Directions: This exercise uses the space between the 18-yard box and the halfway line for the playing area. Set up a 20 yard by 20 yard grid, 5 to 10 yards in from the left touch line. Set up another grid, with the same dimensions, approximately 15 yards to right of the first one. The second grid should also be approximately 5 to 10 yards in from the closest (right) sideline. Give each player a ball and instruct them to dribble inside the playing grid on the left side of the field (Figure 2.6a)

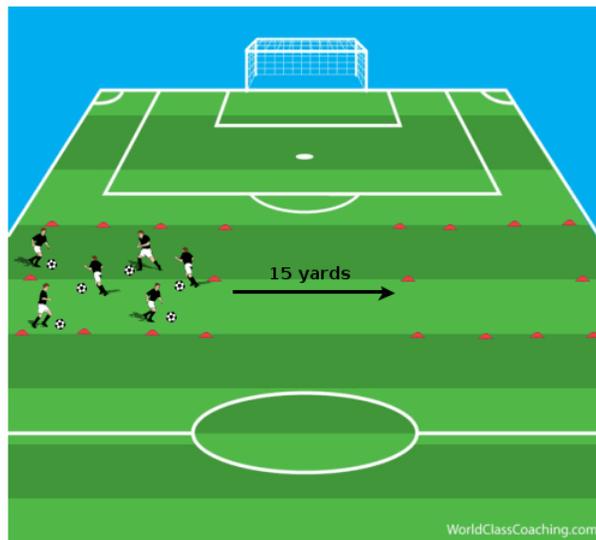


Figure 2.6a

Have your players dribble inside the grid using small touches while keeping their heads up. After about 60 seconds, instruct them to dribble as fast as possible, but under control, from the first grid to the second (Figure 2.6b).

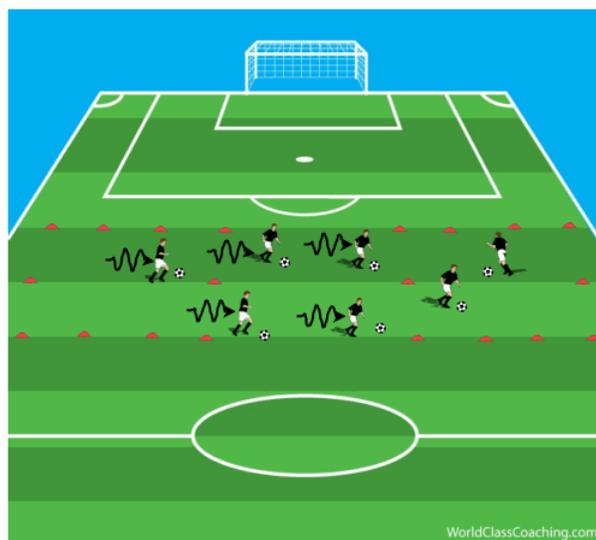


Figure 2.6b

When they reach the second grid, have them walk around for 60 seconds (which allows them to recover) and then instruct them to start dribbling again. After another 60 seconds, have the players speed dribble back to the grid where they started. As before, have them walk around for 60 seconds in order to ‘catch their breaths’. Continue this process for a total of 6 to 8 repetitions.

Progressions and Dynamic Stretches: After completing the first two repetitions, you can make this adjustment to the activity: before speed dribbling to the next grid, instruct the players to throw the ball a few feet above their heads and then bring it down under control using the top of their feet. As soon as they have controlled possession, they can then dribble to the grid on the other side (Figure 2.6 c).

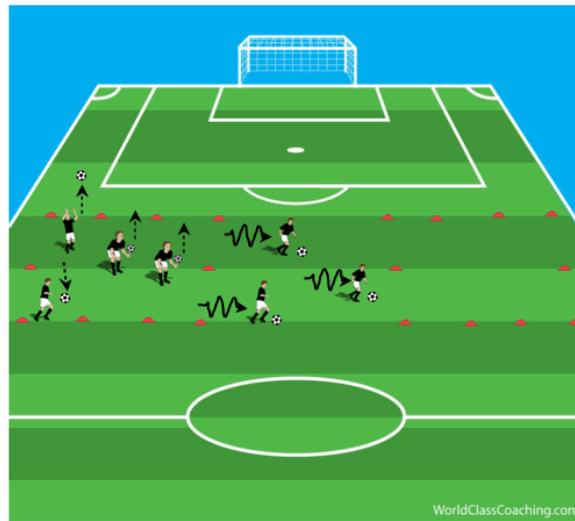


Figure 2.6c

The following is another progression you can make to the activity. On the coach’s signal, instead of speed dribbling to the next grid, have the players leave their balls and then *sprint* to the next grid and back (Figures 2.6d and 2.6e).

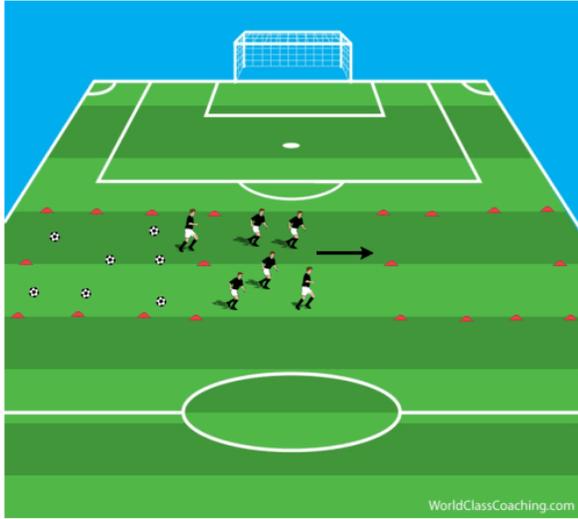


Figure 2.6d

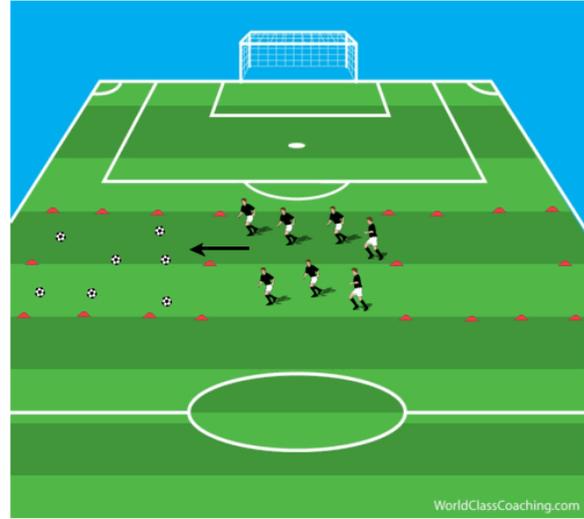


Figure 2.6e

You can also replace sprinting with *side-to-side shuffles*, *backpedals*, or any other soccer-specific movement pattern that is appropriate.

After the players have performed all of the required repetitions, have them perform a variety of dynamic stretches so that they target all the major muscle groups used in soccer.

Warm-up Activity 7

Technical/Tactical Theme: Possession; third-man runs, passing and receiving

Set-up and Directions: This exercise uses the space between the 18-yard box and the halfway line for the playing area. Set up a playing grid that is the width of the 18-yard box and that runs from the top of the 18-yard box to the halfway line. Divide your team into three equal groups and give each group a ball. Instruct your players to pass and move inside the playing area. They are only allowed to pass to players in their groups however (Figures 2.7a and 2.7b).



Figure 2.7a



Figure 2.7b

Continue this process for 90 seconds and then have the players rest for 60 seconds. It is important that you encourage them to make quality passes and to keep moving. As soon as they make a pass, they should be running into space. Complete a total of 5 to 6 repetitions.

Progressions and Dynamic Stretches: After the first two 90-second repetitions, you should progress the exercise. Consider making the following adjustments:

i) For this sequence, instruct the player who passes the ball to close down the receiving player as quickly as possible (Figure 2.7c). The player who receives the pass must take their first touch away from the direction of the pass and then dribble for a few touches before passing to another player.

The players are not trying to win the ball. They are simply closing down the person receiving the ball and then jockeying them until they pass. The objective is to teach players to take their first touch away from pressure.



Figure 2.7c

ii) For the second variation, the players are working on making a third-man pass. Have a player dribble around for a few touches. When ready, one of their team mates will check towards the ball for a pass to feet. As soon as he receives this pass, he must play it one time for one of the other group members who should be running into space (Figure 2.7d). The check towards the ball is a visual cue for the third person to start their run into space.

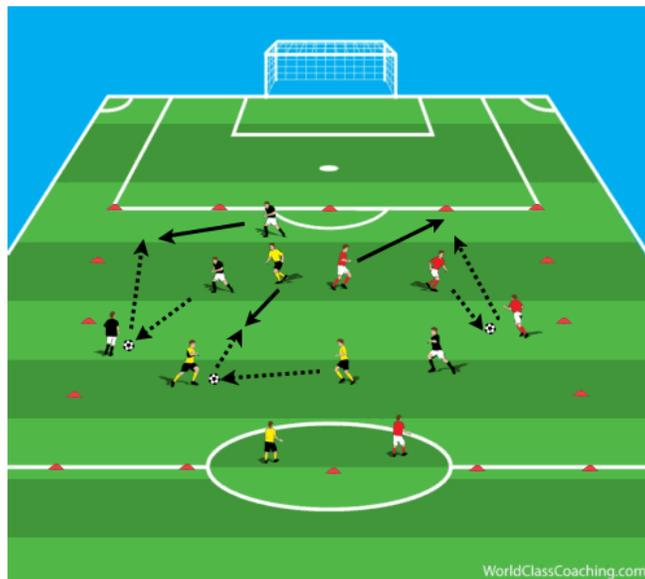


Figure 2.7d

After the players have performed all of the required repetitions, have them perform a variety of dynamic stretches so that they target all the major muscle groups used in soccer.

Variation: You can this exercise in one of several ways. You can start by altering the way the players receive the ball. For example, have them start by taking their first touch using the outside of the foot. You can then instruct the player to take their first touch using the inside of the foot or with a half turn.

You can also set conditions as to which players the person with the ball can pass to. For example, instead of having the players pass to persons in their group only, you can have them pass to players in one of the other groups as well. However, they are not allowed to pass to a player in the same group as the person from whom they received the pass.

CHAPTER 3: DEVELOPING POSITION-SPECIFIC CONDITIONING NEEDS WITH FUNCTIONAL TRAINING

All players, regardless of position, must be able to perform the basic technical actions (passing, dribbling, etc.) and have some level of fitness. However, it is interesting to note that the locomotive movements and skill requirements can vary greatly depending on playing position. Central defenders, for example, need to be very strong in the air and capable of heading great distances with accuracy. On the other hand, wingers need to cover a lot of distance, at pace, and be able to beat defenders and deliver accurate crosses.

To excel as a soccer player, especially at the more advanced level, you need some degree of *functional training* that addresses the different skills and tactical decision making needed for the various positions. The previous chapters have focused on developing general fitness and technique. In this Chapter, we present a variety of *position-specific conditioning exercises* that have been designed based on the specific physical and technical tasks that the player performs most frequently on the field. It is important that these exercises are done in the part of the field that the action being practiced is likely to occur during the game. They are especially suitable when you have an assistant coach that can work with the rest of the players not involved in the activity or when there are small turnouts at training.

POSITION-SPECIFIC FITNESS REQUIREMENTS

From a general standpoint, soccer players perform multiple locomotive actions that results in them covering an average distance ranging from 8 to 12 km per game. In addition, they are required to perform a number of non-locomotive activities and technical skills such as turns and one-touch passes. Quite interestingly, research using time motion analysis techniques show that the amount and type of action performed can vary greatly depending on player position.

For instance, in comparison to defenders, and to a lesser extent strikers, midfielders spend significantly more time performing high-intensity sprints and significantly less time standing still, which corresponds to a greater distance covered. In the case of defenders, they appear to perform the most backward movements such as backpedaling and backward jumps, as well as the most lateral movements such as side-to-side shuffles. Defenders also fall to the ground more often, which normally happens when they are attempting tackles or clearances and therefore are required to get up more quickly.

Remarkably, strikers encounter the most physical contact at high intensity, suggesting that strength and power development should be a major focus of the striker's conditioning program. Strikers also appear to perform higher amounts of braking movements at high-intensity, which emphasizes the importance of agility and balance for these players.

Position-specific differences also apply to the various technical requirements of the sport. For instance, midfielders appear to dribble more than any other position. They also perform the most amounts of

passes. Unsurprisingly, strikers take the most shots and attempt the most tricks. Strikers also use the chest and thigh to receive the ball more frequently than other positions; Chelsea's Didier Drogba immediately comes to mind. Lastly, defenders jump and head the ball most frequently and also seem to make the most amount of tackles. Table 3.1 summarizes some of the key conditioning and technical requirements for the various outfield playing positions.

It is clear that player position has an influence on the physical and technical requirements of the sport. As such, players of different positions could benefit from position-specific fitness exercises and this must be considered in the design of the conditioning program.

TABLE 3.1 Key Conditioning and Technical Requirements for Soccer Players Based on Playing Position

Player Position	Key Conditioning Requirements	Key Technical Requirements
Defender (Wide)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aerobic Endurance - Speed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 v 1 defending - Overlapping Runs - Crossing
Defender (Central)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lower Body Power - Strength 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Defensive Heading - 1 v 1 Defending - Long Range Passing
Midfielder (Central)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Anaerobic Endurance - Aerobic Endurance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Penetrative Passing - Dribbling - Receiving Under Pressure
Winger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Speed - Anaerobic Endurance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Speed Dribbling - Crossing
Striker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Acceleration - Power 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shooting - Receiving Under Pressure - 1 v 1 Attacking

Short sprints, Cuts and One-Touch Finishing

Target Position(s): Strikers and Attacking Midfielders

Objective: Develop anaerobic capacity, acceleration and cutting ability; as well as finishing technique

Set-up and Directions: This activity uses the 18-yard box as the playing area. Place a cone on the edge of the 18-yard box in line with the penalty spot (centre of the goal). Place another cone 12 yards from the goal line and in line with one of the two goal posts. Have the striker stand at this cone. The coach should stand on the goal line at the point where the 6-yard box intersects the line on the side opposite to where the player is standing. There should be a goalkeeper in net (Figure 3.1a).

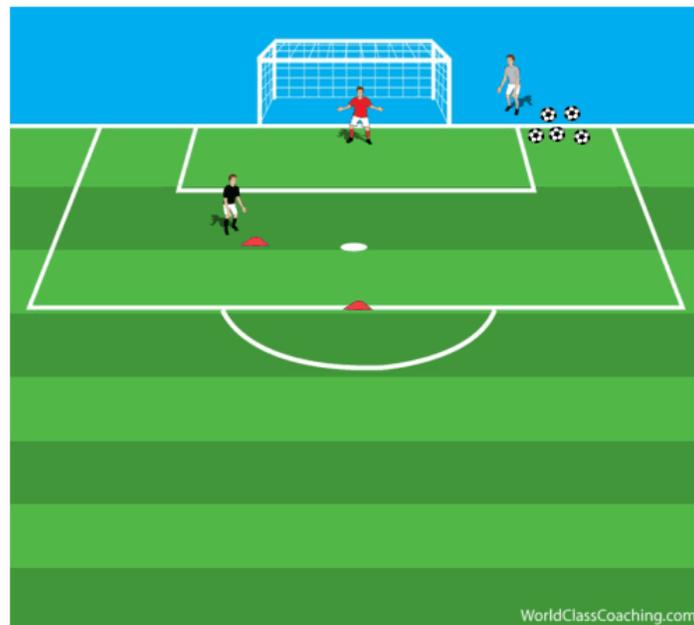


Figure 3.1a

When ready, the striker sprints to the cone at the edge of the box, performs a cut, and then sprints towards the coach (Figure 3.1b). As they make the cut, the coach will play a ball into them that they must finish on goal with one-touch (Figure 3.1c).

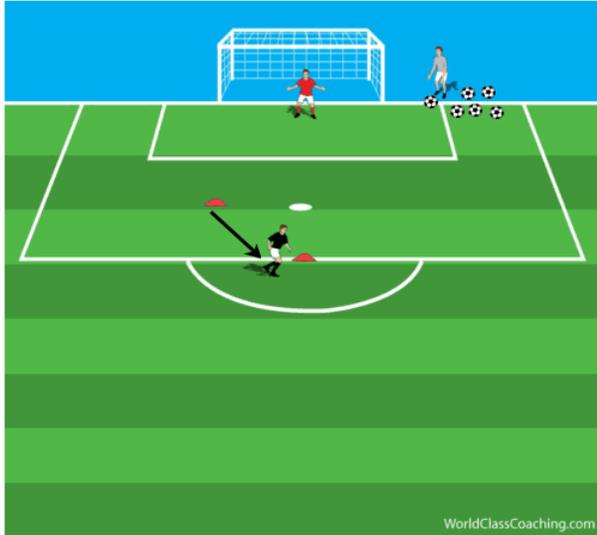


Figure 3.1b

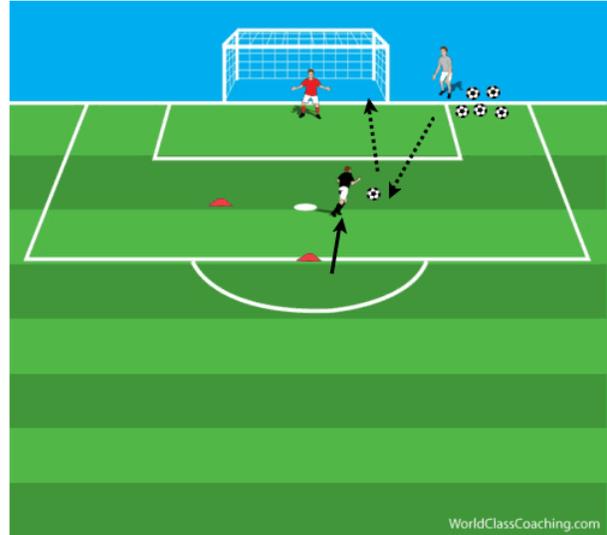


Figure 3.1c

As soon as they finish on net, have them jog back to the starting position and repeat the process. Continue this sequence until the striker has taken 6 to 8 shots on net (1 set) and then have them rest for 2 minutes. Perform a total of 3 to 4 sets.

Coaching Points: When sprinting to the cone at the edge of the box and after making the cut, the striker must accelerate as quickly as possible using short, powerful strides. Ensure they use proper cutting technique when they reach the second cone.

They must judge the weight and flight of the ball and choose the appropriate surface of the foot and force to strike the ball with. Regardless, they should be compact over the ball upon contact with it and follow through of the kicking leg should be towards the goal.

This activity is intended to be high in intensity so encourage your players to perform the activity with a high work-rate.

Variation: The coach should vary the way they deliver the pass: on the ground, bounced passes, lobbed balls, etc. You can also vary the starting position of the striker. For example, have them start lying face down on the ground or with their backs to the coach. Ensure that you perform the activity so that the striker starts from the other side of the 18-yard box.

Initiating Play from Midfield and Finishing from Crosses

Target Position(s): Attacking Midfielders/Strikers and Wingers

Objective: Develop speed dribbling, crossing and finishing ability, as well anaerobic capacity

Set-up and Directions: This exercise uses half of a regular sized playing field for the practice area. Place a cone 5 yards from the top of the centre circle so that it is in line with the centre of the goal. This is the starting position of your striker/attacking midfielder. Place a second cone 5 to 7 yards in from the left side-line so that it is in line with the first cone. This is the starting position of your winger. Set up another 2 cones in the 18-yard box as shown below (Figure 3.2a).

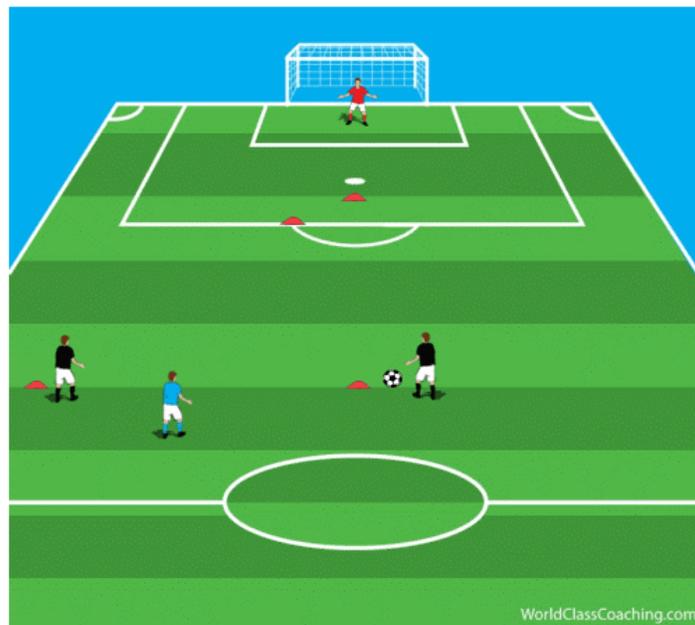


Figure 3.2a

Play is initiated by the striker speed dribbling towards goal and then playing a pass into the path of the winger who is sprinting down the left flank. As soon as the striker plays the pass they sprint towards the cone on the edge of the box (Figure 3.2b).

Upon reaching the cone, they quickly decelerate, cut right and make a curved run towards the far post where the winger should aim their cross (Figure 3.2c).

Note: The winger is only allowed 1 touch before playing a cross into the box

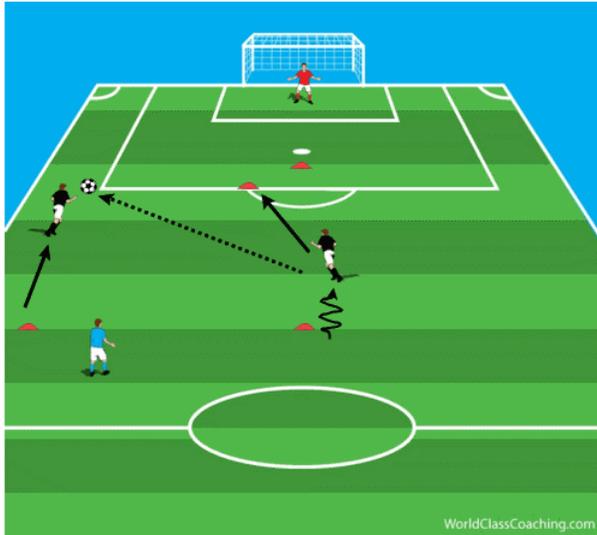


Figure 3.2b

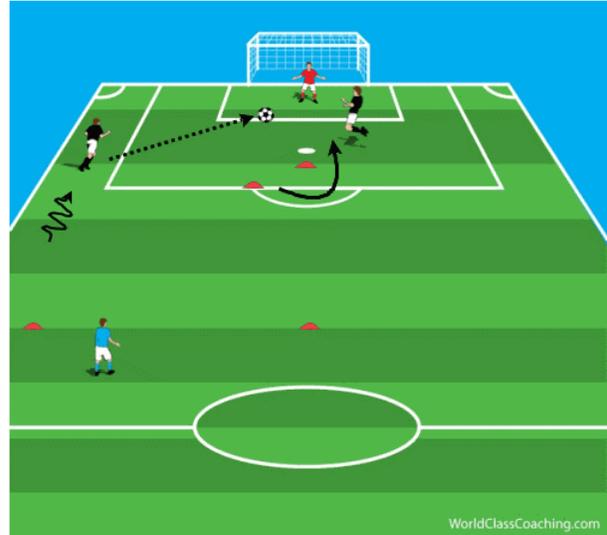


Figure 3.2c

As soon as the striker/midfielder makes their attempt on net, have both players jog back to their starting positions and repeat the process for a total of 4 to 5 repetitions (1 set). Have your players rest for 3 minutes and then do a second set, this time using the right side of the field.

Each repetition should last approximately 7 seconds and jogging back into place should take no more than 35 seconds. This gives a work-to-rest ratio of 1:5.

Coaching Points: Coach the quality (weight and accuracy) of the pass from the striker to the winger. The winger should not have to slow their run or receive the ball behind them. Coach the quality (weight and accuracy) of the cross as well.

This is a pattern play activity and involves no opposition, so you will have to encourage your players to perform the activity at game speed.

Variation: You can vary this exercise by having the striker make a curved run towards the near post instead. Their initial movement after making the pass to the winger would therefore be away.

Progression: You can progress this exercise by including a central defender who is responsible for marking and tracking the run of the striker. At this point, the attacker would be allowed to choose what run they want to make and the winger would have to respond accordingly.

Training Wingers and Wingbacks in 1 V 1 Situations

Target Position(s): Wingers and Wingbacks

Objective: Coach wingers and wingbacks technique and tactics in 1 v 1 situations on the wing while developing anaerobic capacity

Set-up and Directions: This exercise uses half of a regular sized playing field for the practice area. Place a cone 5 yards in from the right touch line and 10 yards in front of the half-way line. This is the starting position of your winger. Place another cone 5 yards from the top of the 18-yard box as shown below (Figure 3.3a). This is the starting position of your wingback. The coach should stand in the centre circle.



Figure 3.3a

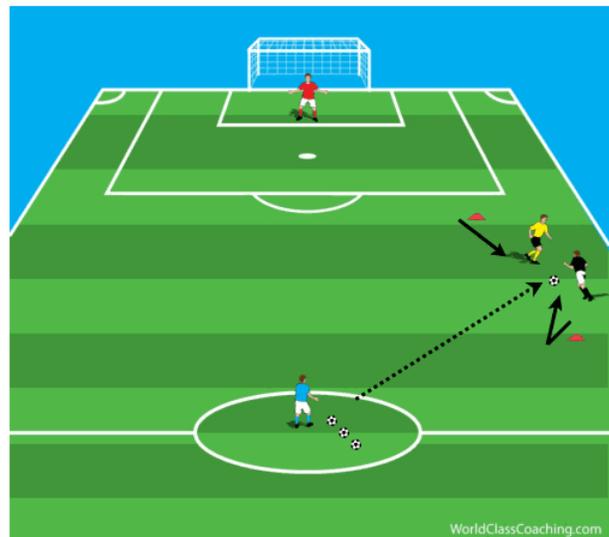


Figure 3.3b

Play is initiated by the winger checking towards the coach and then quickly changing direction to sprint down the wing. The coach then plays a pass in for the winger to run unto (Figure 3.3b). As soon as the ball is played by the coach, the wingback is allowed to move and should close down and apply pressure to the winger.

The winger should then attempt to either cut inside and shoot (Figure 3.3c) or dribble towards the goal line and play a cross into the box (Figure 3.3d).



Figure 3.3c



Figure 3.3d

Coaching Points: As soon as the ball is played, the wingback must accelerate and apply pressure using rapid, powerful steps. However, as they approach, they must quickly decelerate using smaller steps so as not to over commit (*speed of approach*). The defender should use proper jockeying technique when tracking the forward dribble of the winger and should attempt to tackle if the winger takes a bad touch or as they are about to shoot or cross.

The first touch of the winger is important and should be a soft one into space. The winger should dribble at speed using controlled touches and should attack the front foot of the defender. Encourage the winger to use fakes in an attempt to beat the defender.

Progression: You can progress this exercise to a 2 v 2 activity by adding a centre back and a striker who start in the positions as shown below (Figure 3.3e).



Figure 3.3e

1 V 1 to a Big Goal after Receiving under Pressure

Target Position(s): *Central Defenders and Strikers*

Objective: Coach defenders and strikers technique and tactics in 1 v 1 situations close to goal; improve the ability of the striker to receive under pressure; and develop anaerobic endurance

Set-up and Directions: This activity uses the 18-yard box and the area just outside it for the playing area. Have 5 to 6 players, with a ball each, stand 5 yards outside of the 18-yard box. They should be spaced equally apart. Instruct your central defender and your striker to stand at the penalty spot facing the players with the ball (Figure 3.4a).



Figure 3.4a



Figure 3.4b

Play is initiated by the striker who tries to evade their marker to receive a ball in space (Figure 3.4b). They can receive the ball from any of the players on the outside but must call in order for the ball to be passed. The defender must attempt to track the striker and is allowed to intercept the pass.

When the striker receives the ball from an outside player, they must attempt to turn and beat the defender in order to get a shot on net (Figure 3.4c).

As soon a shot is made or the defender wins and clears the ball, the striker must immediately look to receive a pass from a different outside player (Figure 3.4d).



Figure 3.4c



Figure 3.4d

Continue this process until the striker has received a pass from all outside players, which they attempt to shoot on net. This is considered one set. Have each pair of players do 3 or 4 sets, but ensure they rest at least 3 minutes between sets.

Coaching Points: The striker must use fakes and cuts in order to evade their marker. Good footwork and acceleration is essential. The attacker should also attempt to create enough space between themselves and their opponents so that they can receive the ball facing the goal. They should use fakes or speed in order to beat the defender.

The defender must attempt to stay as close to the attacker as possible when tracking. Good footwork and posture are required. The defender must also decide whether or not they can intercept the pass and must do so only if they are certain they will win the ball. They should not over commit and should attempt to tackle if the attacker takes a poor touch or when they are about to shoot.

Variation: You can vary the way the passes are played into the striker (bounced, lobbed, etc.). You can also vary the exercise by allowing the striker to pass the ball back to the player who he received the ball from in an attempt to draw the defender in and create space behind them. The outside player should be limited to one touch however.

Developing Anaerobic Endurance and Improving Defensive Heading Technique

Target Position(s): Central and Wide Defenders

Objective: Teach defensive heading technique and improve anaerobic capacity

Set-up and Directions: This exercise uses a third of the field for the playing area. Place a cone 10 yards outside of the 18-yard box in line with the penalty spot. This is the starting position of your defender. The coach should stand a few yards outside of the centre circle with a supply of balls. Have a second server (crosser) stand a few yards in from any side-line so that they are in line with the defender (Figure 3.5a).

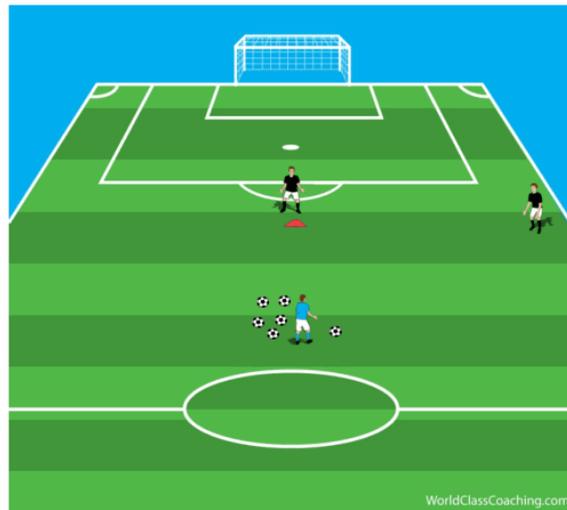


Figure 3.5a

Play starts with the coach playing a pass out to the second server. As soon as the pass is played, the defender should retreat towards the penalty spot (Figure 3.5b).

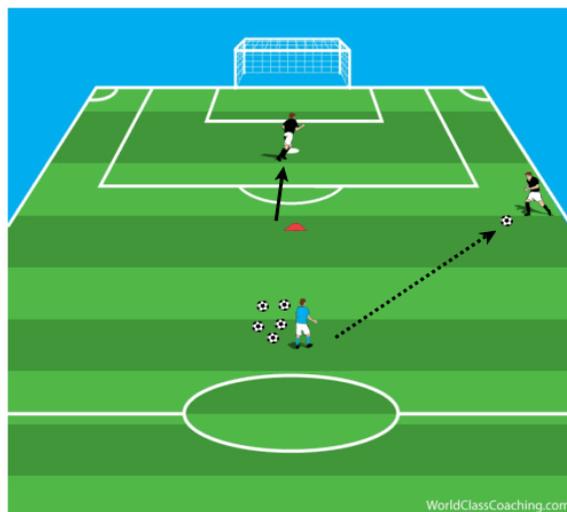


Figure 3.5b

As soon as the server receives the pass from the coach they should take a touch and play a cross towards the top of the 18-yard box that the central defender must clear by heading (Figure 3.5c).

Note: a cross is essential for this exercise to be successful.



Figure 3.5c

As soon as they make the clearance, have the defender run towards the cone (as they would in a game to push their defensive line up the pitch). When they reach the cone, the coach should play another pass out wide and the process is repeated. Continue this sequence until the defender has completed 6 to 8 clearances (1 set). Have them rest for 90 seconds and then perform another set, this time with crosses from the opposite side of the field.

Coaching Points: The defender should retreat towards the penalty spot as quickly as possible as soon as the coach plays the pass out wide. However they must keep their eyes on the ball at all times and maintain a body position open to the field.

The defender should judge the flight of the cross and attack the ball so that they can meet it with a jumping header. When jumping, they should use a one-footed takeoff; and when heading, they should attempt to make contact with the bottom half of the ball and try to head as far and wide as possible.

Progression: You can progress this exercise by adding another player anywhere in the field and instructing the defender to head the ball in the direction of this player. This adds an element of *accuracy* to the drill

Integrating Speed Endurance with Training Wingbacks to Overlap and Cross

Target Position(s): Wingbacks (Primary); Strikers and Wingers (Secondary)

Objective: Teach the wingback the visual cues of when to overlap; improve crossing technique; and develop speed endurance

Set-up and Directions: This exercise uses half of a regular sized playing field for the practice area and requires a striker, a winger and the wingback. Place a cone on the half-way line so that it is 15 yards in from any side-line (right in this example). This is the starting position of you wingback. Place a second cone 5 yards in from the same side-line but 10 yards down from the half-way line. This is the starting position of your winger. Place a third cone 10 yards outside the 18-yard box so that it is in line with the penalty spot (Figure 3.6a).



Figure 3.6a

Play is initiated by the wingback dribbling at speed towards the winger. After a few touches, have them play a pass to the feet of the winger who firsts fakes a run downfield and then checks back into space towards the dribbling wingback (Figure 3.6b).

With their first touch, the winger should play the ball infield and then dribble in the direction of the striker. This creates space on the flank for the wingback to overlap into. After dribbling a few yards the winger then plays a pass into the feet of the striker who first fakes a run towards goal and then checks into the space towards the winger. With their first or second touch, the striker should play a pass into the path of the overlapping wingback for them to run unto (Figure 3.6c).



Figure 3.6b

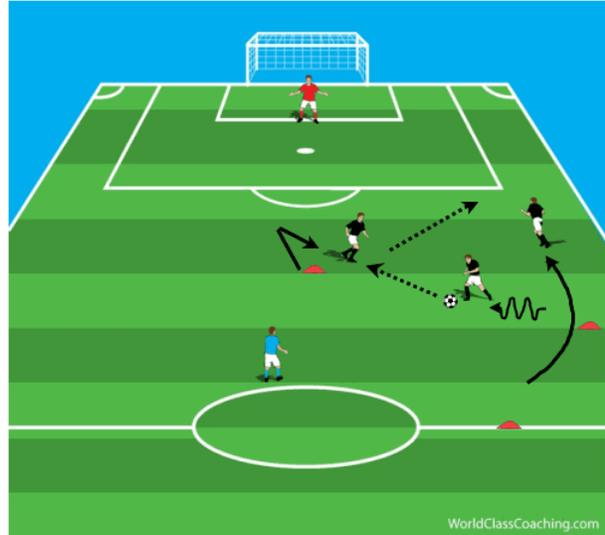


Figure 3.6c

With their first or second touch, the wingback should play a cross into the box for the striker (who has made a curved run towards the near post) or winger (who has made a run towards the top of the box) to finish on net (Figure 3.6d).

As soon as the shot is made on goal have all three players sprint as quickly as possible back to their starting positions (Figure 3.6e).



Figure 3.6d

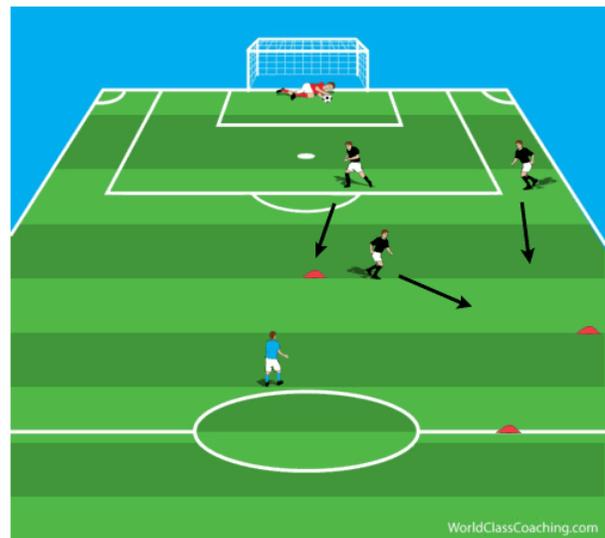


Figure 3.6e

Upon reaching back to the cones marking their initial positions, have the players rest for 60 to 90 seconds and then repeat the process for a total of 4 to 6 repetitions (1 set). Have the players rest for 3 to 4 minutes and then perform a second set this time using the opposite flank.

Coaching Points: Coach the quality (weight and accuracy) of the short passes as well as the timing of the runs (from the forward and the winger) as shown in Figures 3.6b and 3.6c. You must also coach the quality of the crosses from the wingback. Encourage them to deliver crosses to both the near-post and the top of the 18-yard box.

Because this exercise uses a pattern play format (no opposition), you have to encourage your players to work at game speed.

Progression: You can progress this exercise by including a central defender and a wing back (Figure 3.6f). The exercise is initiated in the same manner, but the winner can now choose to use the overlapping run of the wingback as a decoy and create a 2 v 1 situation with the striker and the central defender in an attempt to score on net.



Figure 3.6f

Short Sprints, Change of Direction, and Finishing on Net by Heading

Target Position(s): Strikers and Central Defenders

Objective: Develop ability to quickly change direction using proper cutting technique and then finish on net with a header

Set-up and Directions: This exercise uses the 18-yard box and the area just outside it for the playing area. Set up three cones as follows: Place the first cone 10 yards outside the 18-yard box so that it is in line with the penalty spot. This is the starting position for your players. Place another cone, 5 yards outside the 18-yard box so that it is in line with one of the two goal posts (right below). Place the third and final cone on the edge of the 18-yard box so that it is also in line with the penalty spot. The coach should stand on the goal line at the point where the 6-yard box intersects the line on the side that the middle cone is on. There should be a goalkeeper in net (Figure 3.7a).

Play starts by the player sprinting (diagonally right) towards the second cone (Figure 3.7b).

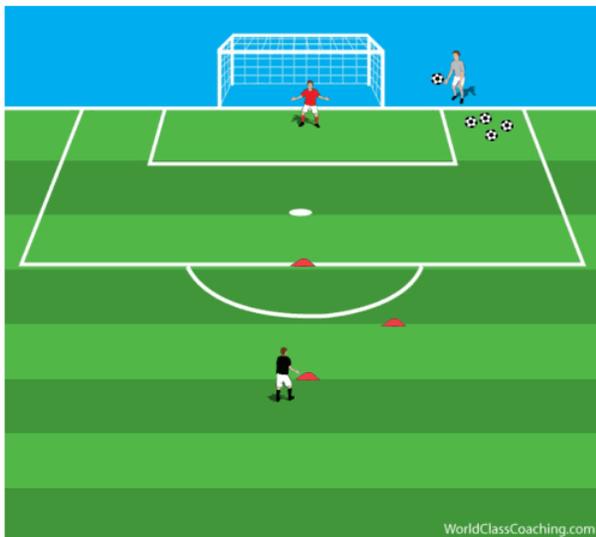


Figure 3.7a



Figure 3.7b

Upon reaching the cone they should cut left and then accelerate towards the third cone. As they reach this cone they now cut right and sprint in the direction of the coach (Figure 3.7c). As the player reaches the final cone, the coach will toss a ball in the air for them to finish on net with a header (Figure 3.7d).

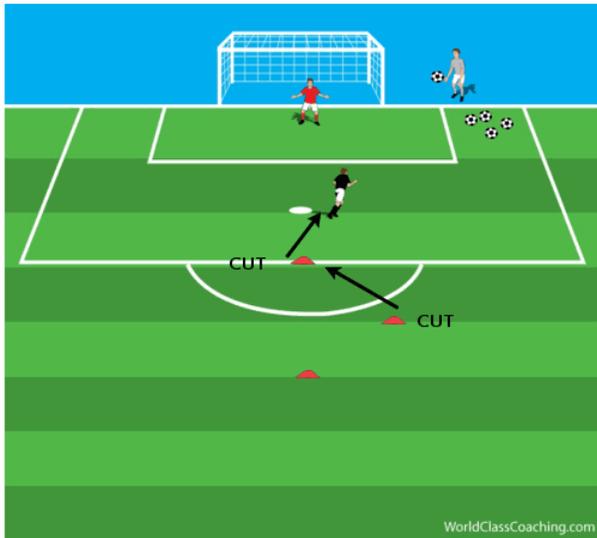


Figure 3.7c
Figure 3.7d

As soon as the player finishes on net, have them rest for 30 seconds and then repeat the process for a total of 6 to 8 repetitions (1 set). Have them rest for three minutes and then perform a second set. This time however, place the middle cone so that it is in line with the left goal post so that the player starts by sprinting diagonally left.

Coaching Points: The player must accelerate towards the cones and the coach as quickly as possible using short, powerful steps. Ensure they use proper cutting technique as they approach both cones.

The player should properly judge the flight of the ball and time their jump so that they can meet the ball while at their highest point. In addition, they should use the forehead and make contact on the top half of the ball so that they head the ball downwards.

Variation: You can tailor the exercise by i) shortening the rest periods between repetitions or ii) asking them to sprint to half line after each rep to incorporate anaerobic condition or speed endurance respectively.

3 V 2 Counter Attack to Goal

Target Position(s): Centre backs, Strikers and Wingers

Objective: Teach attackers to counter attack quickly; teach central defenders how to defend when outnumbered; and develop anaerobic endurance.

Set-up and Directions: This exercise uses half of a regular-sized soccer field for the playing area. Place three cones on the half-way line: one at the centre point and the other two 10 yards in from each side line. These will mark the starting positions of the attackers. Place two cones 10 yards away from the half-way line towards the goal so that they are in line with the points at which the centre circle intersects the half-way line. Have a defender stand at each of these two cones facing the attackers. One of the defenders should have a ball at their feet (Figure 3.8a).



Figure 3.8a

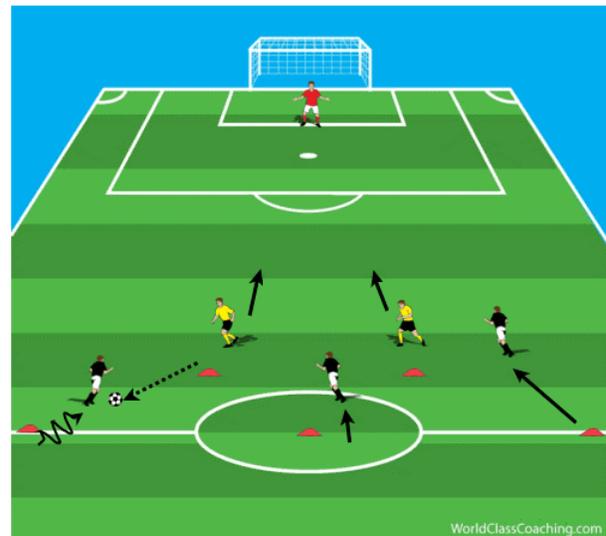


Figure 3.8b

Play is initiated by the defender with the ball passing to any of the three attackers. As soon as this attacker takes their first touch all players are allowed to move (Figure 3.8b).

The three attackers must then combine and try to beat the two defenders in order to score on net (Figures 3.8c and 3.8d). However, they must try to do this as quickly as possible.

If the defenders win the ball, they must try and pass to the coach who can choose to stand anywhere in the playing area.

Note: The offside rule is in effect so attackers need to time their runs properly.

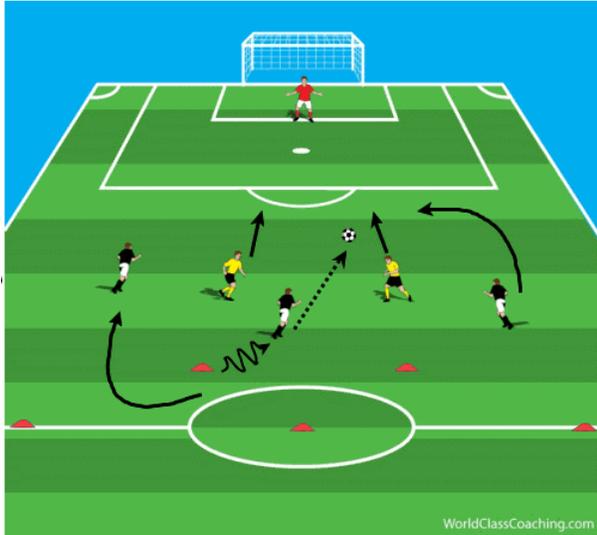


Figure 3.8c



Figure 3.8d

As soon as the play is over (defenders win the ball and play it to the coach, or a shot is taken on net) have the players slowly jog back to their starting positions and then immediately repeat the process. Do a total of 5 to 6 repetitions (1 set) and then have the players rest for three minutes. Complete a total of 2 to 3 sets.

Coaching Points: The attackers must move the ball and attempt to take a shot on net as quickly as possible. Coach the quality of the passes from the player with the ball as well as the timing and type of off-the-ball runs from the supporting attackers. It is also important that the attackers maintain good width in an attempt to spread the defenders as much as possible.

Defenders must retreat as quickly as possible, by rapidly backpedaling, as soon as the initial pass is made. They must try and stay compact and shift across the field as a unit: good communication is essential. If possible, one of the defenders should approach the player with the ball in a way that allows them to cut out passes to at least one of the supporting attackers. Defenders should not dive in and should only commit to the tackle if the player with the ball takes a bad touch or is within shooting distance.

Variation: You can vary this exercise by changing the numbers of players in both groups. However, ensure the attackers always have at least a one man advantage (4 v 3, 2 v 1, etc.).

Progression: You can progress this exercise by including a third defender, who starts 10 yards behind the half-way line in the other half of the field. The aim of the defenders is to slow the forward progress of the attackers until the recovering defender can provide support. You can also progress the exercise by limiting the attacking players to two touches.

Training Centre Midfielders to Screen Passes Into Strikers

Target Position(s): Central Midfielders

Objective: Teach central midfielders how to screen passes into strikers and develop lateral quickness and agility.

Set-up and Directions: Set up a playing grid 15 yards long and 10 yards wide in the space between the centre circle and the top edge of the 18-yard box. Divide your midfield players into groups of three. Have one player stand on the end-line at the top of the grid and another stand at the end-line at the bottom. One of these players should have a ball. Have the third player stand in the middle of the grid facing the player with the ball (Figure 3.9a).

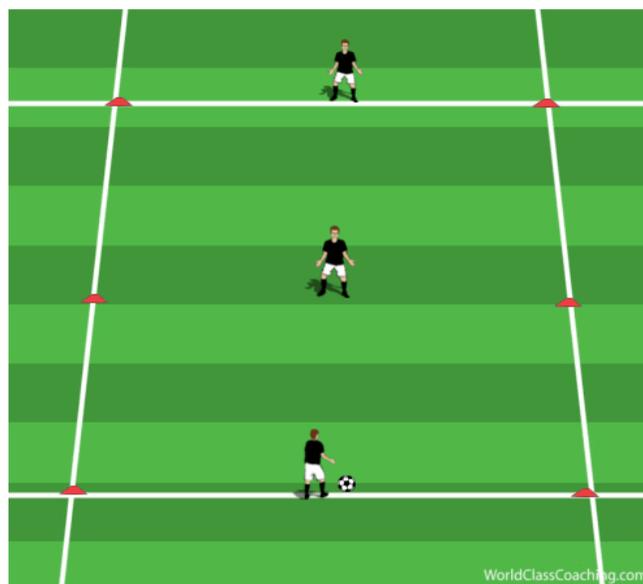


Figure 3.9a

The objective of the activity is for the central player to prevent the players on the end-lines to play penetrative passes to each other. Play is initiated by the player with the ball dribbling along the end-line and then trying to play a pass through the grid to the player on the other end-line (Figures 3.9b and 3.9c).

If the pass is successful, then the player who receives the ball immediately tries to do the same thing. If the central player intercepts the pass, they should immediately play the ball back to one of the outside players and the activity continues.

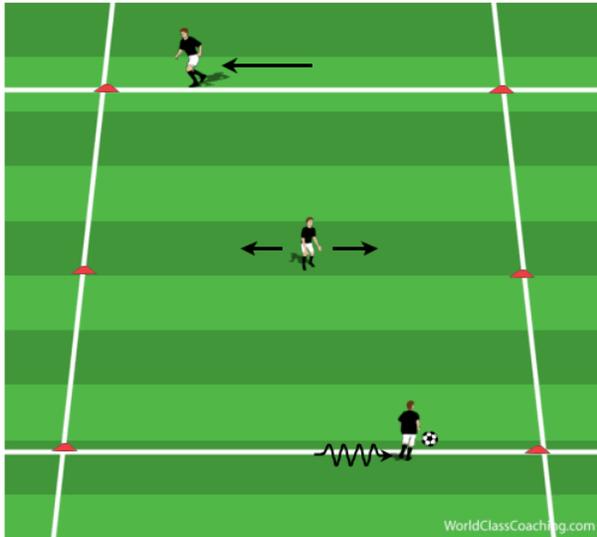


Figure 3.9b

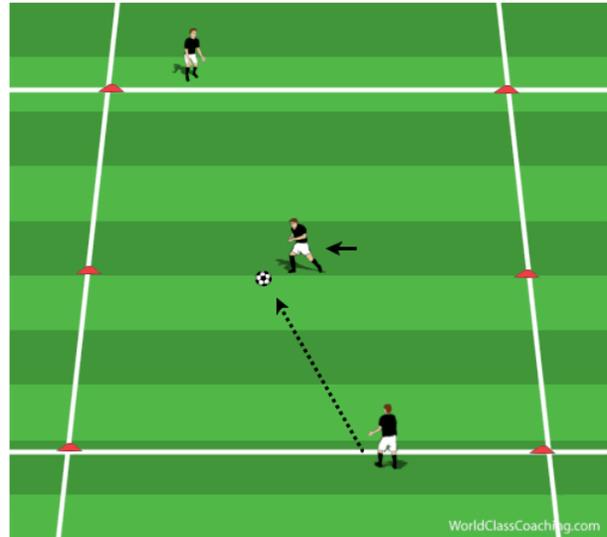


Figure 3.9c

Continue this process for 90 seconds and then switch the central player. Have each player perform a total of 6 to 8 repetitions.

Note: The players on the outside of the grid are allowed to move along the end-lines in order to create good passing angles. They are not allowed inside the grid however. The central player is only allowed to move along an imaginary line that splits the grid into two halves; they cannot approach the players with the ball. All passes must be on the ground.

Coaching Points: The central player must try to position themselves so that they are always on an imaginary line that connects the two players on the outside of the grid. As such, this player should maintain an open body position and continuously swivel the head so that they are constantly aware of the other players' movements. Quick lateral movements are also required from the central player and they should therefore maintain good posture (low centre of gravity and slight forward lean); be on the balls of their feet; and use short, quick steps.

The outside players must continuously move along the end-lines until a passing lane opens up. Encourage both the dribbling player and the player without the ball to use fakes and quick changes of direction to accomplish this.

Receiving Under Pressure, Combination Play and Penetrative Passes

Target Position(s): Central Midfielders and Strikers

Objective: Improve the ability to receive under pressure; teach players how to combine and make penetrative passes; and develop aerobic capacity

Set-up and Directions: This exercise needs three groups of two (two pairs work while one pair rests). Set up a playing area 10 yards long and 20 yards wide 5 yards outside the centre circle as shown (Figure 3.10a). Have the two working groups stand inside this grid. Have one of the players in the resting group stand a few yards outside the bottom end-line of the grid with a ball. This will be the server.

Set up another grid that is 5 yards by 5 yards so that one edge of the grid is on the top of the 18-yard box and the other edge is 1 yard in front of the penalty spot. Have the other player in the resting group stand inside this square. This will be the target man (Figure 3.10a).



Figure 3.10a

To start, designate one team as the attacking team and the other the defending team. Play is initiated with the server playing a ball into the feet of a player on the attacking team (Figure 3.10b).



Figure 3.10b

The attacking team must then try to combine with the ultimate goal of playing a pass into the feet of the target man (Figures 3.10c and 3.10d). However, they are allowed to pass back to the server in order to try and keep possession or for a third man combination (Figure 3.10c).



Figure 3.10c



Figure 3.10d

As soon as the ball goes out of play, or if the attacking team completes a pass to the target man, the server should play a new ball into one of the two teams so that play continues. If the defending wins possession they become the attacking team. However, they must play a pass to the server before attempting a pass to the target player. Continue this sequence for three minutes, rest for 90 seconds and then switch teams.

Coaching Points: Coach the quality of the passes from all players, including the server. Good movement and off-the-ball runs are important to the success of this activity. Encourage the attackers to use fakes and short sprints in order to create space between themselves and the defenders. In addition, ensure the attackers keep possession of the ball and attempt to make passes to the target man only when space opens up. They should not force the pass.

Good pressure and cover are needed from the two defenders. Communication between the two is also important and they should try to make play predictable.

Progression: You can progress this exercise by allowing the player who completes the pass to the target man to follow their pass and then finish on net (Figure 3.10e). The target man is only allowed one touch and must play the return pass into the path of the running midfielder. One defender is allowed to chase the supporting midfielder as this forces the target man to make quality passes and encourages the midfielder to shoot quickly.



Figure 3.10e

CHAPTER 4: BALL-ORIENTED CONDITIONING DRILLS FOR GOALKEEPERS

Similar to outfield players, goalkeepers must perform a variety of high-intensity actions over the course of a game, although the frequency of these actions may not be as often. Players in this position have to make diving saves, sometimes in very close succession; move side-to-side rapidly as the ball is passed around their penalty box; and leap high in the air to claim corners or crosses.

Often overlooked is the amount of movement goalkeepers have to perform inside and around their penalty area. They must provide good passing angles for their center backs or wide defenders when they are in possession of the ball in their defending third. They must also position themselves correctly when the opposition is in possession, which will depend on how wide and deep the player with the ball is. That is; they cannot be too far off their lines to get beaten by chipped or lofted balls, but they must be close enough to the play so that they can be first to balls played deep in behind the last defender. Indeed, goalkeepers often act like sweepers in teams that play with high defensive lines. **It is no surprise that elite goalkeepers cover an average distance of 5.5 km per game, a large percentage of which is made up of by side-to-side shuffles, backpedals and short sprints.**



Figure 4.1 Agility and speed of reaction are essential qualities for the goalkeeper position

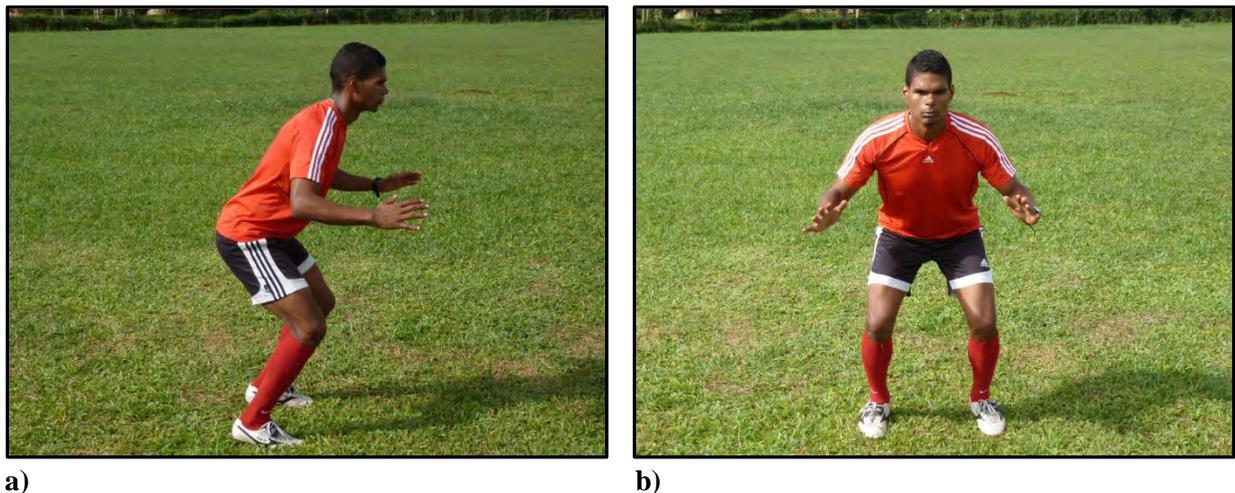
Unfortunately, goalkeeper-specific conditioning is quite often overlooked at the amateur and youth level, with many coaches simply having their goalkeepers participate in the fitness program designed for their outfield players. This can be a cause for concern; as, although goalkeepers need to develop a base level of fitness, they have different fitness demands than outfield players. Certain components such as agility need to be developed more than others, and certain elements *within* each component, such as footwork and

speed of reaction, need particular attention. For example, goalies rarely, if ever, need to cover 70 yards at maximum speed and so developing *speed endurance* is not a priority for this position. However, they frequently have to race off their lines to intercept through balls or close down strikers in 1 v 1 situations and therefore developing *starting speed* and *acceleration* is a must.

This chapter provides information on how the different elements of conditioning apply to goalkeepers and gives a number of goalkeeper-specific exercises that can be used to develop each component. In Volume 1 of *Total Soccer Conditioning: A Ball-Oriented Approach*, we provided a comprehensive set of ball-oriented exercises that are intended mainly for outfield players. It is an excellent idea to have your goalie participate in these exercises in order to develop their foot skills. In fact, goalkeepers today use their feet at least 5 times as much as their hands. With appropriate exercises however, you can also choose to have your goalkeepers perform goalkeeper-specific technique instead of the assigned technical action. For instance, instead of performing a side-footed volley or one-touch pass, they can catch a ball volleyed to them by their partner.

THE SET POSITION

Before we progress into how each component of fitness relates to goalkeepers and goalkeeper-specific training exercises, we must address the concept of the *set position*. The set position is the body orientation and posture that a goalie should assume the instant before a shot is made. **It must be an inherent reaction and goalkeeper coaches must ensure they get their players into the habit of quickly getting set by repeatedly incorporating it in the various exercises.** When in the set position, the goalkeeper must have a low centre of gravity. Their body weight must be slightly forward and over the balls of their feet. The feet should be shoulder width apart and their hands should be to the side and slightly forward (Figures 4.2a and 4.2b).



a) **Figure 4.2**
b)

Assuming this position better prepares the goalie to make explosive actions such as dives or jumps, and also allows them to react more quickly.

FLEIBILITY TRAINING FOR GOALKEEPERS

Goalkeepers must sometimes adjust themselves into very awkward positions when making saves; often after balls are deflected, or from shots at close range. Having good *whole-body flexibility* will enable them to orient their bodies so that they can get behind the ball, or to get enough of a touch on the ball to divert it past the post.

Flexibility also plays a major role in the kicking and punting tasks of the goalie. Indeed, one of the most beneficial qualities of a goalkeeper is a long goal-kick. Short or misplaced goal-kicks will continuously put your team under pressure, and a high degree of flexibility, especially in the hip musculature and the hamstrings, will greatly enhance a goalkeeper's ability to kick or punt further distances.

Goalkeepers must also focus a great deal on developing *upper-body flexibility*, more so than outfield players, especially in the chest musculature and around the shoulder joints. Having a greater range of motion in these areas increases their reach when claiming high air balls or when stretching to make a diving save. It also allows them to make one-arm throws (important for distribution) with greater accuracy and for further distances.

FLEXIBILITY EXERCISES FOR GOALKEEPERS

Goalkeepers should devote enough time to develop whole body flexibility but should pay special attention to the hip flexors, hamstrings, quadriceps, chest muscles and shoulder joints. Similar to outfield players, they should perform a dynamic warm-up routine that incorporates both *dynamic stretching exercises* (lunges, high kicks, etc.,) and *soccer-specific movements* (back-pedals, side-to-side shuffles), which were provided in Volume 1 of this book series. However, they should also include two or three extra stretching exercises that focus on the upper-body such as cariocas with arm swings (Figure 4.3) and skips with above the head reach (Figure 4.4).



Figure 4.3

The following is a sample dynamic stretching routine that goalkeepers can perform prior to games and training sessions.

Figure 4.4

Dynamic Warm-up Routine for Goalkeepers

Part 1: Agility-Ladder Runs with Ball Handling Skills

For the first part of the routine, set up an agility-ladder on the edge of the 18-yard box so that the start of the ladder is on top edge of the box and in line with the penalty spot. Have your goalkeeper stand on the penalty spot facing the coach who is standing 5 yards from the end of the ladder with a supply of balls (Figure 4.5a).

When ready, have the goalie run towards, and then through the ladder, using a one foot per square pattern (emphasize coordinated and fast footwork). As soon as they complete the ladder, the coach will play a ball to their feet that they must gather with both hands (Figure 4.5b).



Figure 4.5a

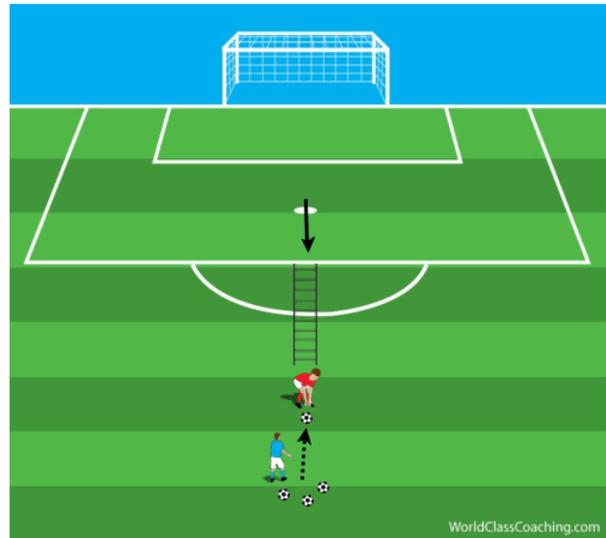


Figure 4.5b

Continue this sequence until the goalie has performed five run-throughs in a row (1 set) and then have them rest for 90 seconds. Do a total of three sets. However, you may choose to vary the ball handling skill after each set. Consider having the goalie i) catch balls volleyed into them at waist height (Figure 4.5c) or ii) gather balls along the ground played to their left or right sides (Figure 4.5d).

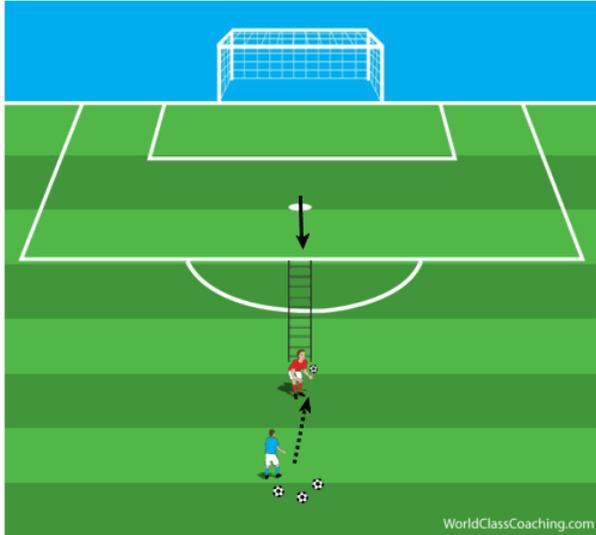


Figure 4.5c

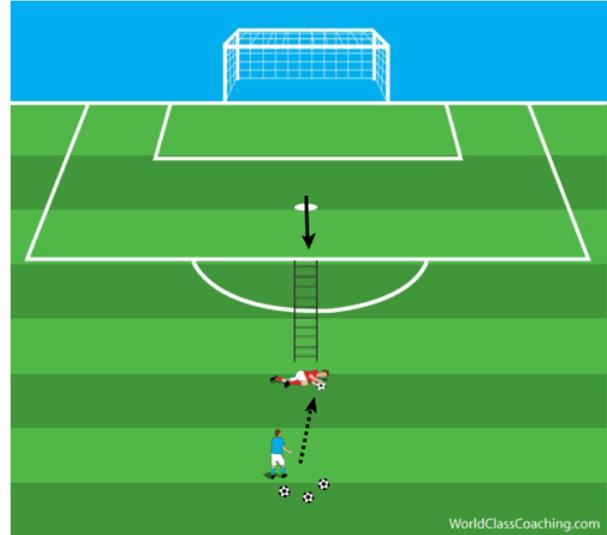


Figure 4.5d

Part 2: Lateral Shuffles and Ball Handling Skills

For this section, place two small cones 5 to 7 yards apart. Have the goalie stand in the middle of the two cones facing the coach who is standing 3 yards away (Figure 4.6a).

When ready, have the goal keeper shuffle towards and touch the cone to their left and then return to the centre. As soon as they reach back to their starting position, the coach should volley a ball towards them at waist height, which they should catch with both hands (Figure 4.6b). They should immediately return the ball to the coach, and then shuffle towards the cone to their right and then back to the centre. As before, the coach will volley a ball towards them that they should catch with both hands.

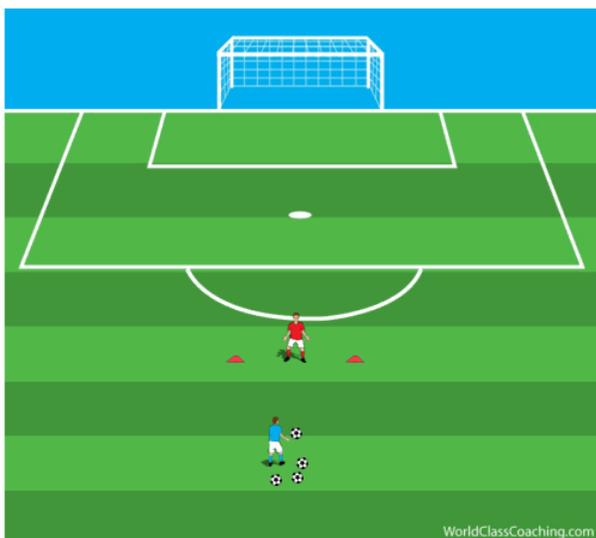


Figure 4.6a

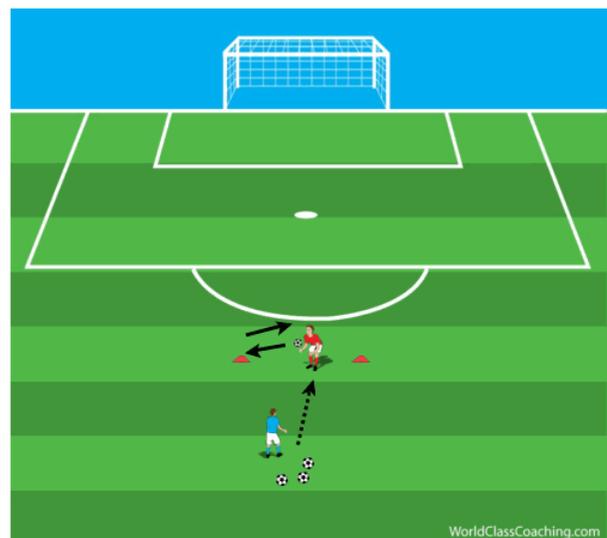


Figure 4.6b

Continue this process for 20 seconds and then rest for 1 minute. Perform a total of 3 or 4 sets. However, you can vary the technical component of the exercise if you see fit. Appropriate actions that can be included in this activity include collecting ground balls and catching balls above the head.

Part 3: Gathering High Balls

For this section of the warm-up, have the goalkeeper start on the goal line (in line with the centre of the goal) facing the coach who should be standing by the penalty spot with a supply of balls (Figure 4.7a).

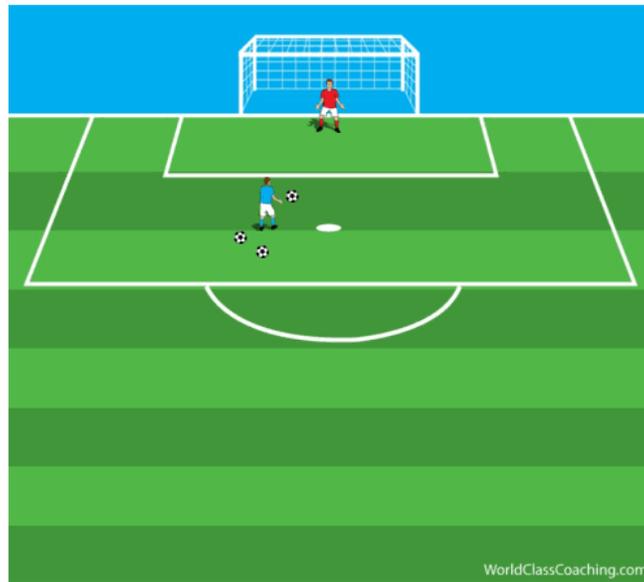


Figure 4.7a

On the coach's signal, have the goalkeeper accelerate off their line towards the penalty spot (Figure 4.7b). As soon as the goalkeeper takes their first step, the coach should toss a ball high in the air for them to collect above their heads (as shown in Figure 4.7c).

As soon as they land, instruct the goalkeeper to return the ball and then ***backpedal*** towards their starting position on the goal line. Repeat the process for a total of 5 to 6 repetitions (1 set), and then have the goalkeeper rest for 60 to 90 seconds. Do a total of 3 sets.

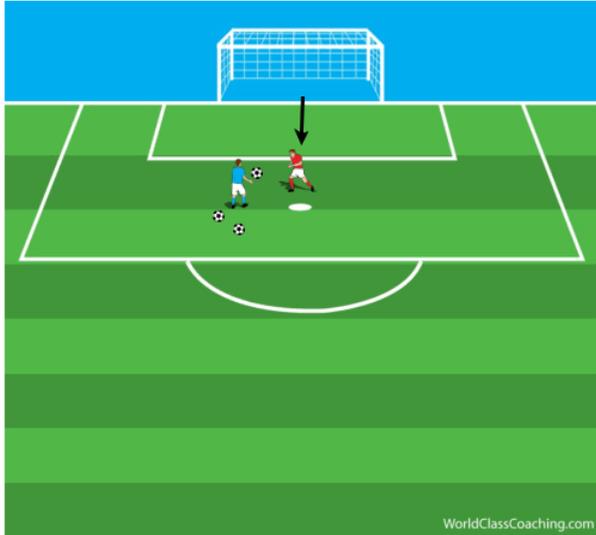


Figure 4.7b



Figure 4.7c

Dynamic Stretching: At the end of each of the three segments described above, have your goalkeeper perform two different dynamic stretches (in place or for a specific distance) before progressing to the next section of the warm-up routine. Ensure they perform stretching exercises for all the major muscle groups.

Note: You may also have your goalkeepers perform the warm-up routines provided in Chapter 2 of the first volume. However, as mentioned above, you should consider replacing the technical actions such as heading and side-footed volleys with catching, shot-stopping and throwing actions. It is highly recommended that you also incorporate some simple footwork exercises such as agility ladder run-throughs or zigzag shuffles that focus on speed and coordination.

Goalkeepers can follow the same **cool-down** routine performed by outfield players (described in Chapter 2 of the first volume) that involves performing static stretches for the major muscles groups.

BALANCE TRAINING FOR GOALKEEPERS

For goalkeepers, developing good static and dynamic balance is important for a number of different reasons. Goalkeepers do a lot of activity on one leg. They dive off of one leg and they jump off of one leg, and this (diving or jumping) leg must remain stable prior to taking off, as it allows them to forcefully drive into the ground. Good posture and balance are also required for the set position. You frequently here coaches refer to goalkeepers being caught 'flat-footed' or 'off-balance'. Both these situations are less likely to occur if the goalkeeper can effectively maintain control of their centre of gravity.

Balance is especially important when taking goal kicks. Goalkeepers make a large hop onto the supporting leg prior to striking the ball, and this leg must remain stable throughout the planting and kicking process in order to effectively strike the ball.

Similar to outfield players, having good balance can play a role in preventing injuries. When goalkeepers jump high in the air to claim aerial balls, they raise the knee of the non-jumping leg (Figure 4.8), which means they tend to land on one leg, often in a crowded area.



Figure 4.8

Because their arms are up as well, this places an added challenge on the body to stabilize itself after landing. This further emphasizes the importance of incorporating dynamic balance exercises into the conditioning program of the goalkeeper, as it will help prevent unwanted movement when landing and lessen the chance on injury.

BALANCE EXERCISES FOR GOALKEEPERS

The balance training exercises presented in **Volume 1** are all suitable for your goalkeeper. However, for each balance exercise, have them do goalkeeper-specific technique (although on occasions you may want them to do the same technical actions). For instance, in the *Single-Leg Balance with Headers* exercise given to develop static balance; instead of performing a header while balancing on one leg, they can catch a ball volleyed to them by their partner (**Figure 4.9**).

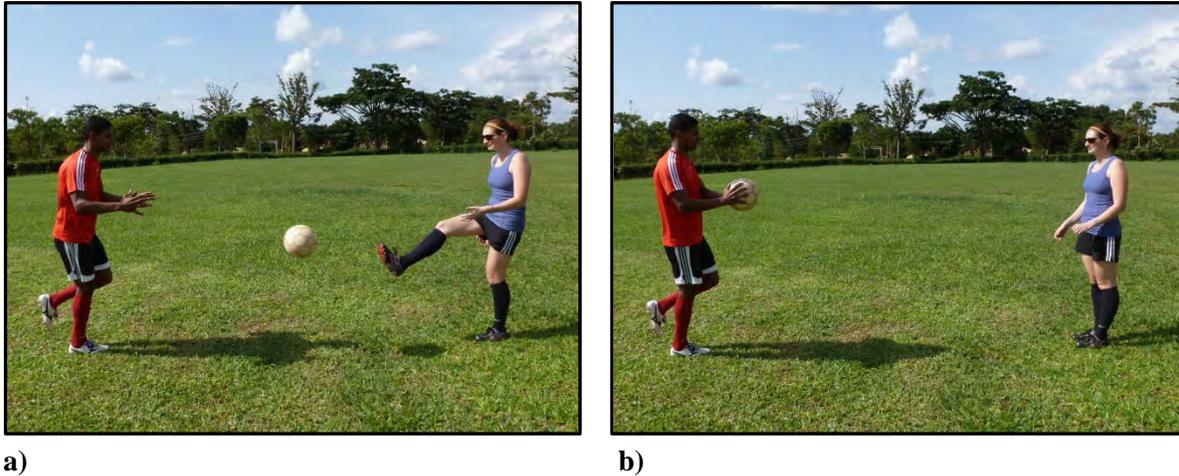


Figure 4.9

As another example, in the *Keep-Ups While Balancing on One Leg* exercise; in place of juggling while remaining balanced on one leg, you may instruct them to throw back and forth between each other. Encourage them to make throws of different heights and pace.

The following are some other variations that can be used:

Single-Leg Hop with High and Low Balls

Level: Basic

Set up and Instructions: Have your goalkeepers work in pairs (or a coach and the goalie) with one ball to use between the two. Instruct them to stand about 3 yards apart and have one goalie (or coach) hold the ball in their hands. The other goalkeeper starts by standing and balancing on one leg. The balancing leg should be slightly bent at the knee.

When ready, direct this player to hop off, and land, on the balancing leg and hold this position for three seconds. At this instant, they will have a ball volleyed to them either i) above the head (Figure 4.10a) or ii) at waist height (Figure 4.10b); which they must catch with both hands, while remaining balanced on one leg.



a)



b)

Figure 4.10

Continue this process until you have completed 8 to 10 hops followed by catches, then switch legs. When finished, have the goalies switch roles. Perform a total of two sets.

Coaching Points: Ensure the goalie bends the knee slightly upon landing to absorb the impact. Additionally, the player should keep the upper-body straight and sway as little as possible while balancing by keeping the core muscles tight. Make certain the goalie gets both hands behind the ball and they keep their eyes on the ball as it enters the hands.

Progression: You can progress this exercise by volleying the ball to the sides so that the goalkeeper has to stretch to reach the ball (Figure 4.10c). This will greatly increase the balance demands of the exercise.



Figure 4.10c

Single-Leg Jump and Land with Catching Lofted Balls

Level: Intermediate

Set-up and Directions: Have your goalkeepers work in pairs (or a coach and the goalie) with one ball to use between the two. Have both goalies stand at least 10 yards apart. When ready, have the goalie with the ball toss it high into the air so that the other goalkeeper can run, then jump and catch the ball with both hands over their head (Figures 4.11a and 4.11b).



a)



b)

Figure 4.11

The goalkeeper must land on one leg with both hands above the head and hold this position for at least three seconds before returning the ball to their partner. Do 6 to 8 repetitions of jumping (and landing) with the same leg and then switch legs. Do a total of two sets.

Coaching Points: The goalkeeper must jump off, and land on, the same leg. The knee of the non-jumping leg must be driven upwards during the jump so that the thigh of this leg is just about parallel to the ground upon catching the ball (Figure 4.12) and after the goalkeeper has landed. Ensure that the torso is kept straight during the jump and landing, and that the goalie keeps their eyes on the ball at all times.



Figure 4.12

SPEED TRAINING FOR GOALKEEPERS

Speed requirements for goalkeepers are quite different compared to those of outfield players. As alluded to earlier, goalkeepers rarely have to cover distances greater than 30 to 40 yards and therefore developing *speed endurance* is not a priority. However, at various times throughout the game they may be required to rush off their lines to close down attackers or to intercept passes played in behind high defensive lines. In fact, the majority of sprints made by goalkeepers are less than 15 yards long. For this position therefore, developing *starting speed* and *acceleration* should be the main focus of speed training. These elements of speed are also important as goalkeepers frequently are required to change positions quickly when balls are played across their area. *Speed of reaction* (addressed in the Agility section) is also an essential quality for the goalkeeper position and should be incorporated into the various exercises.

SPEED EXERCISES FOR GOALKEEPERS

In Chapter 4 of the first Volume, we provided exercises to develop the various components of speed. You may choose to have your goalkeeper participate in some, but not all, of the exercises listed that do not require someone in goal. Appropriate exercises include: *Close Him Down*, and *Long Range Passing with Sprinting*. You can have them perform the same technical action, or you can have them work on goalkeeper-specific technique. For example, you can instruct them to do a one-arm throw instead of playing a long range pass in the Long Range Passing exercise listed above.

Below are few additional exercises that you can use specifically with your goalkeepers to develop their starting speed and acceleration.

Race of Your Line with Shot-Stopping

Objective: Develop linear starting speed and speed of reaction, as well as shot-stopping ability

Set-up and Directions: Place two small cones, 1 yard apart, 10 yards outside the 18-yard box so that both cones are roughly in line with the middle of the goal. Have a small group of players line up behind another cone 7 yards behind the first two cones, facing the goal. Each player needs a ball. Have your goalkeeper stand in line with the penalty spot, 1 yard off their line (Figure 4.13a).



Figure 4.13a

When ready, have the player at the front of the line dribble towards the two small cones (Figure 4.13b). When they are about 1 yard away, they must play the ball between the two cones and then sprint around one of the cones to where the ball is played and finish on goal with their next touch. The goalkeeper is not allowed to move until the player touches the ball through the cones. At this point, they must quickly race off their line and get into a position to stop the shot on net (Figure 4.13c).



Figure 4.13b



Figure 4.13c

Do 6 to 8 repetitions and then switch goalies. Have each goalkeeper perform a total of 2 to 3 sets.

Coaching points: The goalie should maintain a good ready position (low center of gravity, good posture). They must take a powerful first step in intended direction, and short, powerful steps while accelerating. In addition, the goalkeeper must assume the set position the instant before the shot is taken and must properly position themselves based on where the dribbling player has played the ball (that is, they must try to position themselves on an imaginary line that runs from the ball to the center of the goal).

Progression/Variation: You can vary or progress this exercise by changing the start position of the goalkeeper. For example, you can have them lie flat on their stomachs, as they would in the down position of a standard push-up

Across The Face of the Goal

Objective: Develop starting speed after turning, as well as speed of reaction and shot-stopping ability

Set-up and Directions: Place a cone 10 yards outside the 18-yard box in line with any of the two goal posts. Have a small group of players line up behind this cone. The coach should stand with a large supply of balls at the intersection of the goal-line and the edge of the 18-yard box, on the side closer to where the players are standing. Instruct your goalkeeper to stand at the post that is in line with cone and players, facing the coach (Figure 4.14a).



Figure 4.14a

Play is initiated by the coach playing a ball towards the middle of the 18-yard box for the player at the front of the line to sprint unto and finish on goal with one-touch (Figures 4.14b and 4.14c).

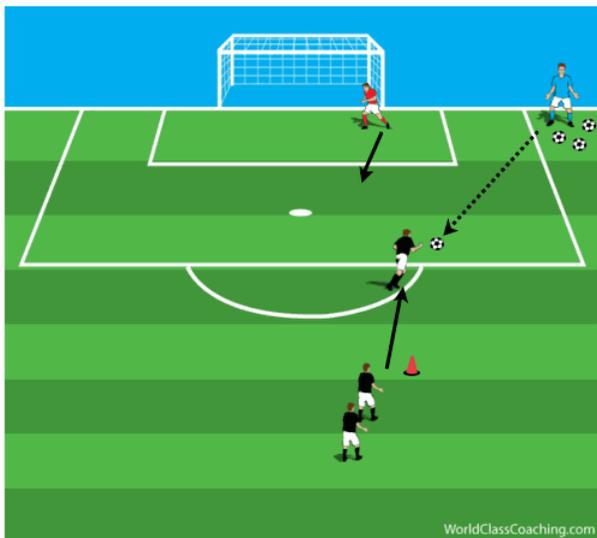


Figure 4.14b**Figure 4.14c**

Note: Both the player finishing on goal and the goalkeeper are not allowed to move until the ball has left the coach's feet. Do 6 to 8 repetitions, rest for 90 seconds to 2 minutes, and then repeat from the other side of the 18-yard box.

Coaching Points: The goalie should maintain a good ready position (low center of gravity, good posture) before the ball is played. As the ball is played, they must turn quickly and side shuffle towards the middle of the goal until they are in the best position to cover a shot to the near or far post (that is, they must try to position themselves on an imaginary line that runs from the ball to the center of the goal to). In addition, the goalkeeper must assume the set position the instant before the shot is taken.

Progression/Variation: You can vary or progress this exercise by changing the start position of the goalkeeper. For example, you can have them lie flat on their stomachs, as they would in the down position of a standard push-up.

Short Sprints with Collecting Crosses

Objective: Develop starting speed and acceleration, as well as the ability to claim aerial balls played from the wing

Set-up and Directions: Place four cones in a rectangular pattern so that two of the four cones are at the intersection of the D and the edge of the 18-yard box and the other two cones are in line with the penalty spot (Figure 4.15a). The coach should be standing approximately 5 yards in from one sideline, 5 to 10 yards above the top of the 18-yard box. Instruct the goalkeeper to stand one yard off their goal line, in line with the centre of the goal, facing the coach.

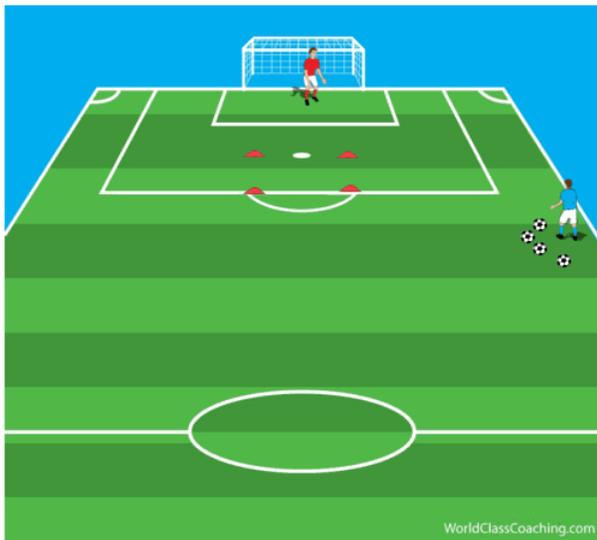


Figure 4.15a

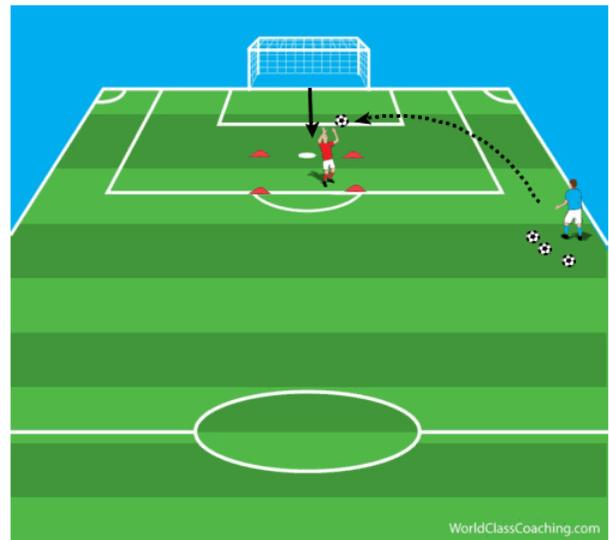


Figure 4.15b

Play is initiated by the coach taking a touch out of their feet and then playing a **driven** ball in the air towards the centre of the rectangle. The goalkeeper must sprint off their line and claim the cross while it is in the air (Figure 4.15b). After claiming the ball, they must throw it to the coach and then immediately return to the starting position. Do 6 to 8 repetitions, rest for 90 seconds to 2 minutes, and then repeat from the other wing.

Coaching Points: The goalie should maintain a good ready position (low center of gravity, good posture) before the ball is played. They must take a powerful first step in intended direction and short, powerful steps while accelerating.

The goalkeeper must also properly judge the flight of the ball. They should jump off, and land on, the same leg. The knee of the non-jumping leg must be driven upwards during the jump so that the thigh of this leg is just about parallel to the ground upon catching the ball (see Figure 4.8). In addition, ensure that the goalie keeps their eyes on the ball at all times.

Clearing the Through Ball

Objective: Develop starting speed and acceleration, as well as decision making when making clearances

Set-up and Directions: This exercise needs a half of a regular-sized playing field for the playing area. In addition to your goalkeeper(s), you will need one or two outfield players (preferably a striker). Have your goalkeeper stand on the penalty spot facing an outfield player who is standing at the centre spot on the half-way line. The coach will stand approximately 10 yards in from one sideline and approximately 5 yards from the half-way line with a ball (Figure 4.16a).

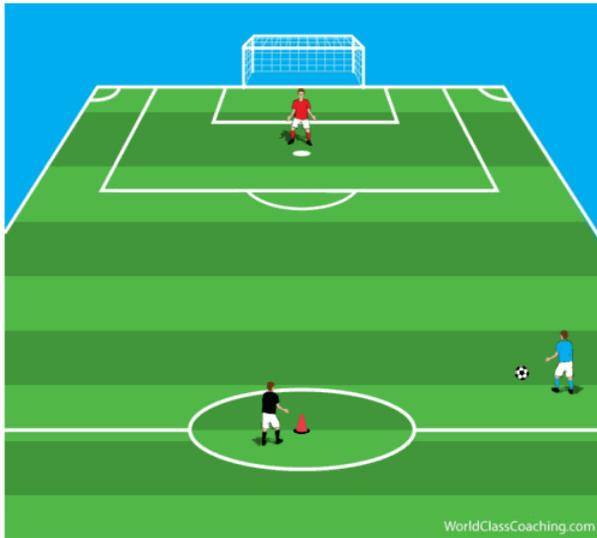


Figure 4.16a

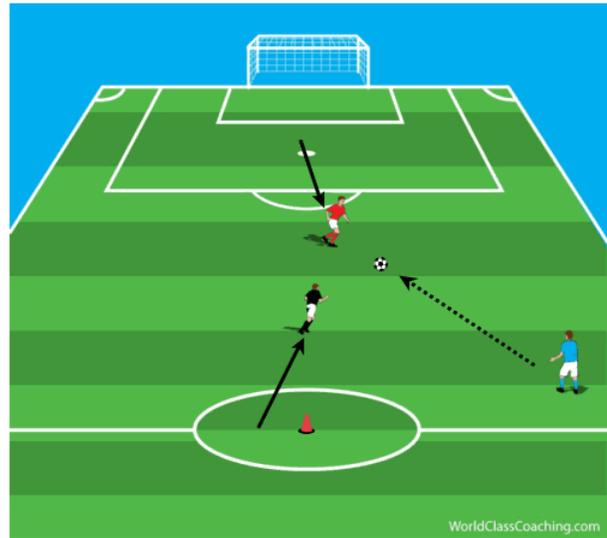


Figure 4.16b

When ready, the coach will play a firm ball along the ground between the striker and the goalkeeper. As soon as the ball is played, but not before, both players race towards the ball (Figure 4.16b). The objective for the goalkeeper is to get to and clear the ball beyond or close to the half-way line before the striker can get to the ball. If the striker gets to the ball first, then they should attempt to beat the goalie and finish on net.

Do 5 to 6 repetitions per set for a total of 2 to 3 sets. The coach should vary where they play the pass: sometimes closer to the goalkeeper; sometimes closer to the striker; and sometimes midway between the two.

Coaching Points: The goalie should maintain a good ready position (low center of gravity, good posture) before the ball is played. The goalkeeper should judge the placement of the ball and quickly decide if they can reach to it before the striker. If they decide to approach, they must take a powerful first step in intended direction and short, powerful steps while accelerating.

When clearing, they have to be aware of the running path of the striker and adjust their approach so that the clearance will not rebound off the striker back towards goal. They should aim far and wide if possible.

AGILITY TRAINING FOR GOALKEEPERS

Agility is one of the most important, if not the most important, components of conditioning that apply to goalkeepers. Successfully performing so many of a goalkeeper's responsibilities depends on proper positioning and positioning is all about good *footwork* and *coordination*. For example, shuffling across the face of the goal as the ball is played towards the penalty spot from the side of the 18-yard box; or appropriately closing down the angle between the attacker and the goal. In addition, think about that first step laterally before making a dive, or backpedaling and jumping off one leg to claim balls played to the far post. All these situations are likely to take place during a game, and all depend on good (fast and coordinated) footwork.

Another element of agility that goalkeepers should focus on developing is *reaction*. Reaction comes into play when goalkeepers have to quickly adjust and re-position themselves to save deflected shots, or when shots are powered in from close range. Establishing good posture while moving as well as including a reaction component into goalkeeping exercises will help to improve this facet of their agility development.

AGILITY EXERCISES FOR GOALKEEPERS

In the section below, we have provided a variety of ball-oriented agility exercises that are specifically for goalkeepers. As alluded to above, a large percentage of exercises should focus on developing good posture, footwork and coordination; and should have an element of reaction in them. For each exercise you should do approximately 6 to 8 repetitions per set and a total of 2 to 3 sets.

You can also have your goalkeeper participate in many of the agility exercises provided in Volume 1 (Chapter 5) that do not require someone in goal. These include: *Zigzag Shuffle with Receiving*, *Backpedal and Sprinting Combo with One-Touch Passing*, *4-Cone Hop Drill*, and *Agility Ladder with Turns and Dribbling*. You can have them perform the same technical action, or you can have them work on their ball handling and catching skills. For example, instead of having them do a one-touch pass, you can have them gather a ball played to them along the ground (Figure 4.17).



Figure 4.17

Side-to-side Shuffles with Chest Pass

Objective: Develop side-to-side shuffling technique and ball handling skills

Set-up and Directions: Place two small cones 8 yards apart (you can place them on the 6-yard box in line with each goal post if you like). Have your two goalies, or a coach and the goalie, stand in line with one of the cones so that they are facing each but 2 yards apart (Figure 4.18a). One of the two must have a ball in their hands.

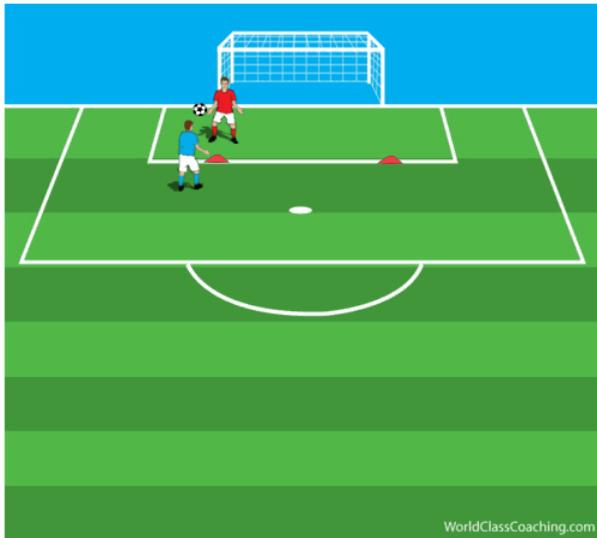


Figure 4.18a



Figure 4.18b

When ready, have both players shuffle side-to-side between the two small cones as quickly as possible. As they shuffle, they must pass the ball back and forth using a chest pass (Figure 4.18b). Continue this for 15 seconds and then rest for 75 seconds. Do a total of 6 repetitions.

Coaching Points: The goalkeeper should maintain a low center of gravity and take small quick steps when shuffling. The legs should not cross. In addition they must keep their hands slightly forwards and to the sides (as in the set position) and maintain eye contact with the ball as it enters their hands.

Forwards-backwards Footwork Exercise with Catching Volleys

Objective: Develop footwork and coordination as well as the ability to quickly assume the set position.

Set-up and Directions: Set up seven small cones 1 yard apart and offset by 1 yard. Have your goalie stand 1 yard behind the first cone in the sequence. The coach will stand 3 to 4 yards behind the last cone with a ball in their hands (Figure 4.19a).

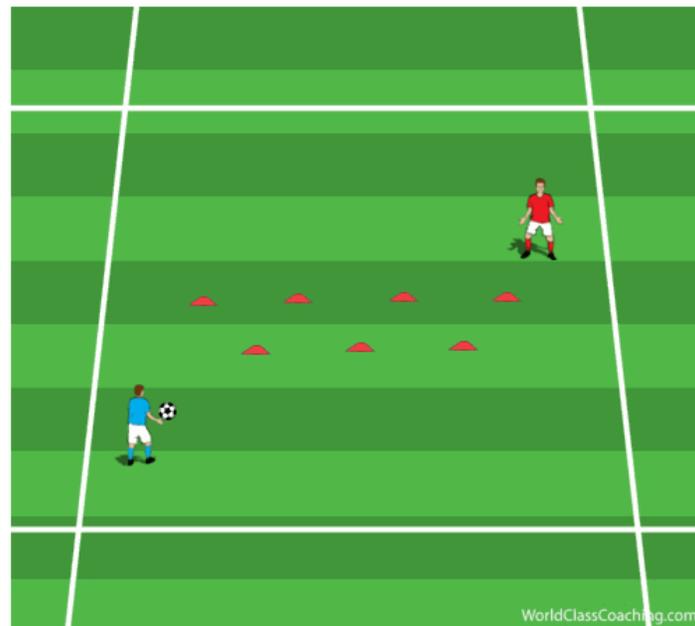


Figure 4.19a

When ready, have the goalie move towards the first cone and then quickly step towards the second cone. As they approach the second cone, they must quickly decelerate, round the cone, and then backpedal quickly towards the third cone. As they approach the third cone, they must again decelerate, round the cone, and then move forwards towards the fourth cone. They continue this backwards-forwards pattern and when they round the final cone, they must immediately assume the set position then catch a ball volleyed into them by the coach (Figures 4.19b and 4.19c).

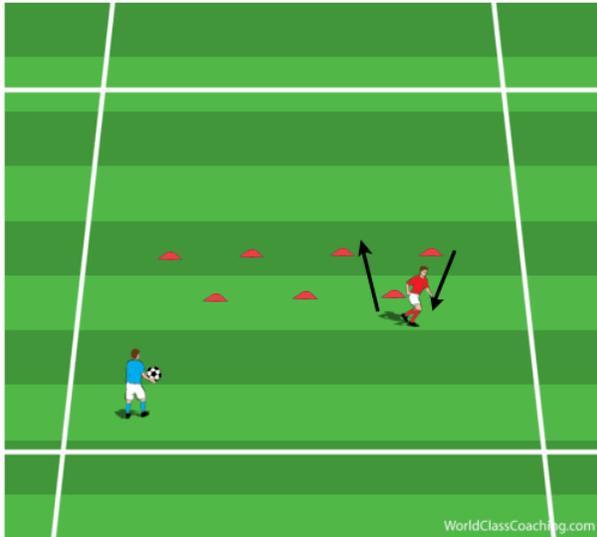


Figure 4.19b

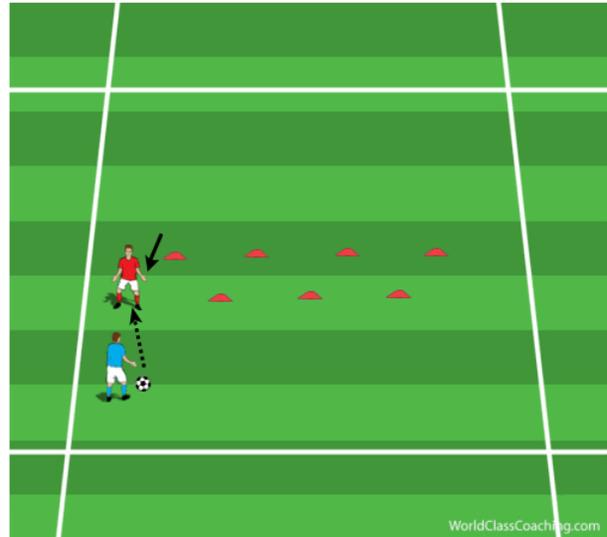


Figure 4.19c

Have your goalie rest for 60 seconds and then repeat for a total of 6 to 8 repetitions.

Coaching Points: The goalie must maintain good posture (slight forward lean at the hips) and a low centre of gravity. Ensure they transition between movements quickly, but under control. The steps should be short, but rapid. As soon as they round the final cone, the goalie must quickly assume the set position (see earlier) before catching the ball played into them.

Variation: You can vary how the ball is played into the goalie (bounce, lobbed, on the ground, etc.).

Progression: Have your goalkeepers start the exercise slowly, and once they have mastered the footwork, have them perform it as quickly as possible.

180-Degree Jumps with Shot Stopping

Objective: Develop speed of reaction and shot stopping ability

Set-up and Directions: Instruct your goalkeeper to stand in the centre of a regular-sized goal, 1 yard off their goal line, but facing the net. The coach should stand at the edge of the 18-yard box in line with the centre of the goal with a large supply of balls (Figure 4.20a).

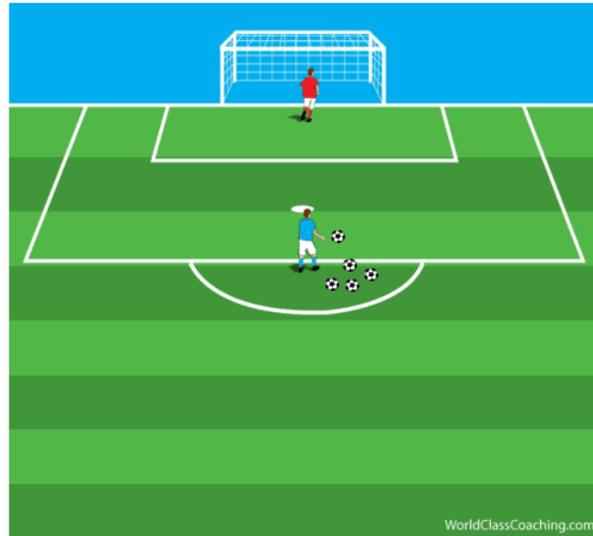


Figure 4.20a

When ready, the coach will yell “Turn!” At this point, the goalkeeper must jump and perform a 180-degree turn so that they are now facing the coach. As they land, the coach must take a shot on goal so that the goalkeeper must quickly assume the set position and then attempt to save the coach’s attempt on net (Figures 4.20b and 4.20c).

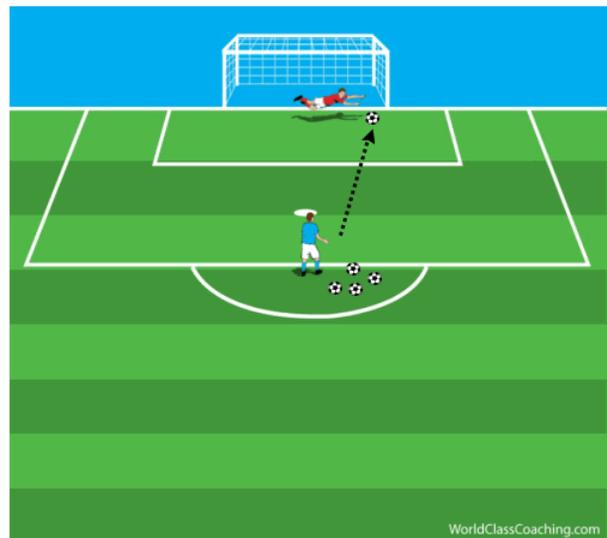
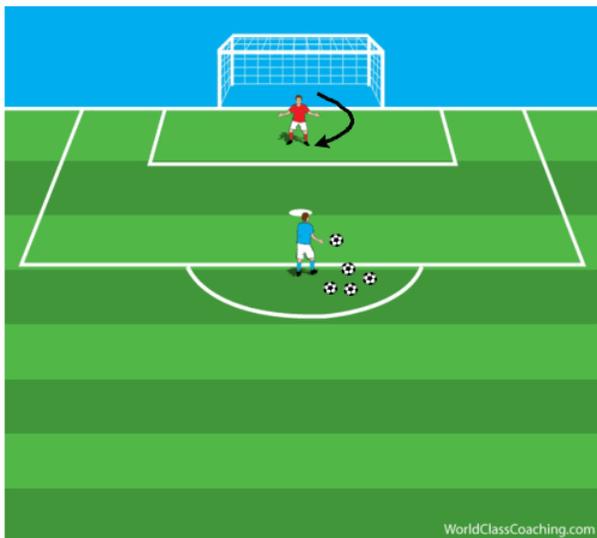


Figure 4.20b

Have the goalkeeper recover for 15 seconds and then repeat for a total of 6 to 8 repetitions. Perform a total of 2 or 3 sets but rest for two minutes between sets.

Coaching Points: The goalie must maintain good posture (slight forward lean at the hips) and a low centre of gravity. As soon as they hear the coach's call, they must immediately jump and turn. However, they must adjust themselves during the jump so that they can land in, or quickly assume, the set position.

Variation: You can vary this exercise by having the coach take up a position to one side of the 18-yard box, or by having the coach pass to a second player who then takes the shot on goal (Figure 4.20d).

Figure 4.20c

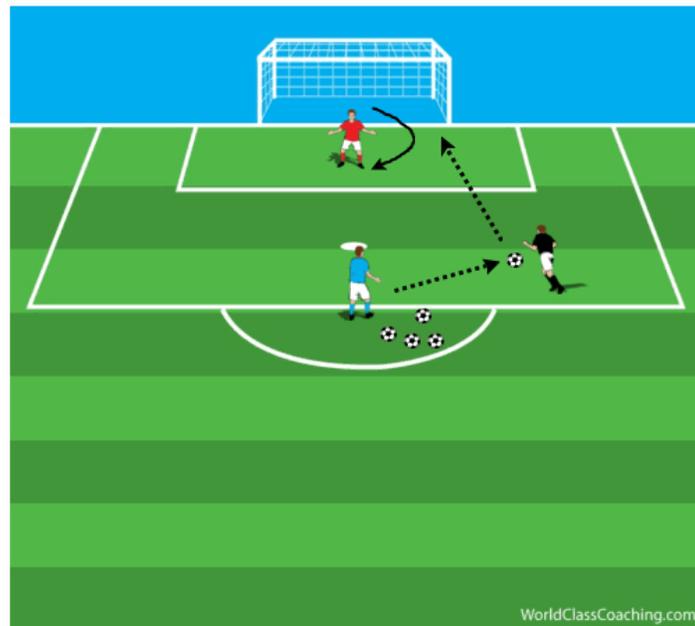


Figure 4.20d

Backpedal and Tipping over the Crossbar

Objective: Develop the ability to deal with lobbed or chipped balls using rapid backpedaling technique

Set-up and Directions: Place a cone 10 to 15 yards in front of a regulation-sized goal so that it is in line with the centre of the goal. You can also choose to place it on the penalty spot. Have your goalkeeper stand 2 yards behind this cone facing the coach who is standing behind the cone with a ball in their hands (Figure 4.21a).

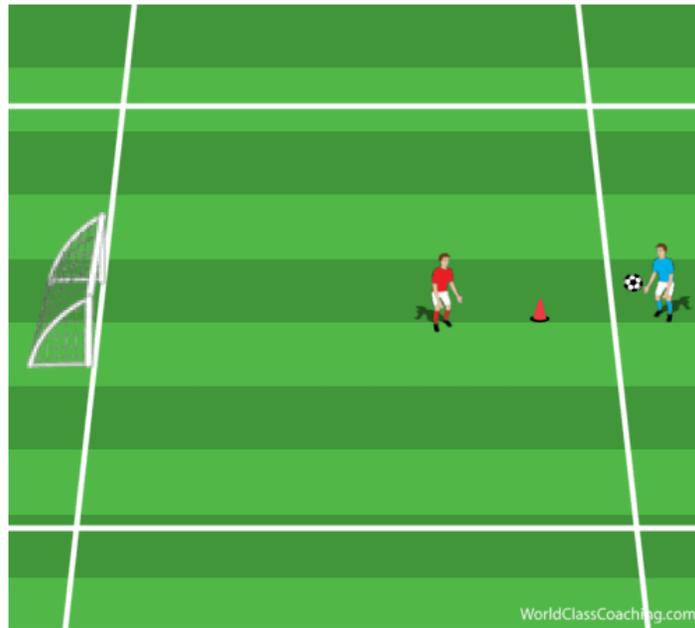


Figure 4.21a

On the coach's call, the goalkeeper should accelerate towards and touch the cone and then immediately backpedal (at speed) towards the goal behind them. As they are backpedaling, the coach will toss or chip a ball slightly behind them on goal (Figure 4.21b). They must either catch the ball or tip it over the crossbar (Figure 4.21c).

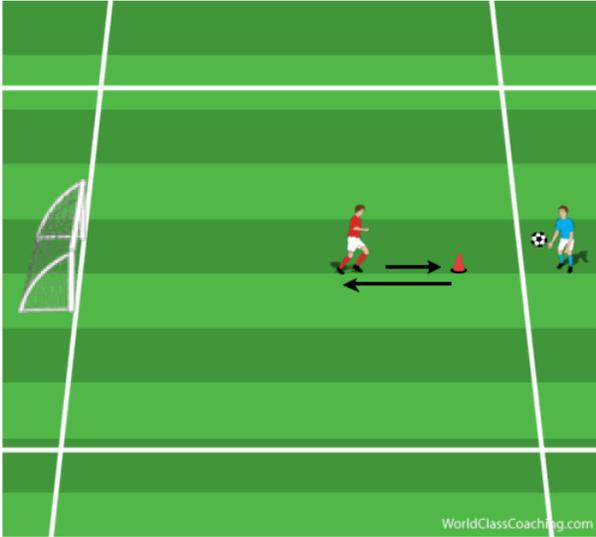


Figure 4.21b

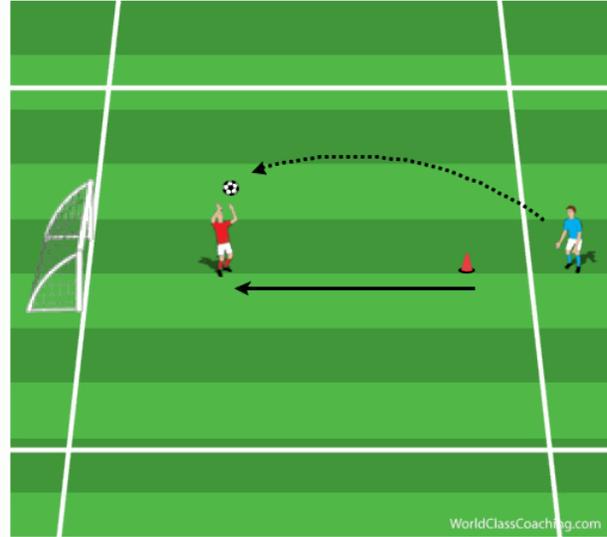


Figure 4.21c

Do a total of 6 to 8 repetitions per set, but have the goalkeeper rest for 30 seconds after each repetition.

Coaching Points: When backpedaling the goalkeeper should use short, quick steps. Their centre of gravity should be kept low and in front of them by leaning forwards slightly. The goalkeeper must judge the flight of the ball and quickly decide whether they should attempt to catch the ball, or tip it over the crossbar.

Timing of the jump is also important and will depend on the flight of the ball. When jumping, they should takeoff of one leg (the back leg), but they must perform a countermovement first so as to produce as much power as possible with the jumping leg. The direction of the jump should be slightly behind rather than straight up.

Note: The coach should vary where they place the ball. They should begin by placing the ball directly behind the goalkeeper, but after a few repetitions they should try and aim to either the left or right goalposts.

Passing Around the Edge of the Box

Objective: Develop side-to-side shuffling technique, positioning sense and shot-stopping ability

Set-up and Directions: Place three cones on the top edge of the 18-yard box. Place the first one in line with the centre of the goal, and then place the other two, 2 yards in from each side of the 18-yard box. Have one player stand behind each cone facing the goalkeeper who should be standing in line with the centre of the goal, 1 to 2 yards off their line. The player behind the centre cone should have a ball (Figure 4.22a).



Figure 4.22a

When ready have the centre player pass to the player standing to their left or right (left in Figure 4.22b below).

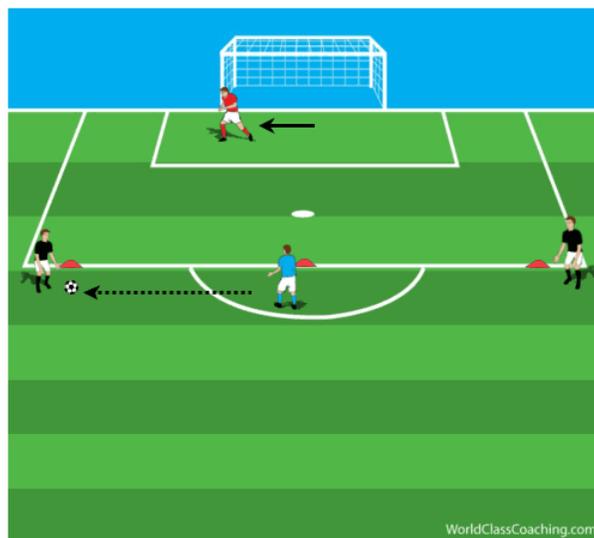


Figure 4.22b

This player must then take a touch and can either pass it back to the central player, or switch it all the way to the third player standing on the right of the 18-yard box. In this example, they have chosen to pass it player on the right of the box (Figure 4.22c).

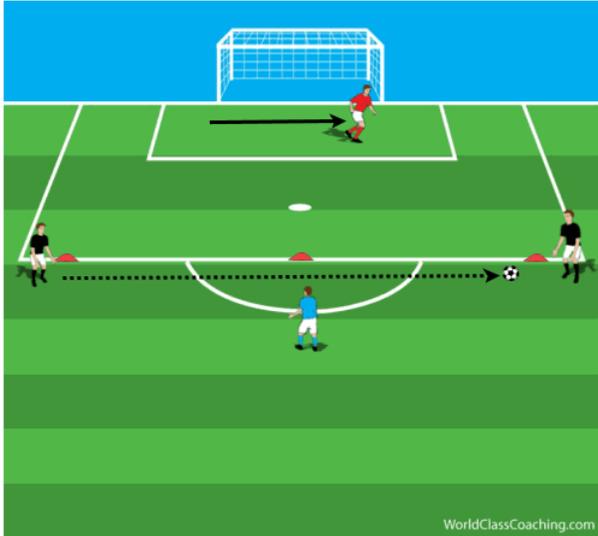


Figure 4.22c



Figure 4.22d

Have the three players pass back and forth for several seconds after which, one of the players will take a touch towards goal and then shoot on net (Figure 4.22d). Perform 6 to 8 repetitions, but rest for 60 seconds after each rep.

Coaching Points: The goalkeeper must always be in a position so that they are on an imaginary line that runs from the ball to the center of the goal. When the ball is played to, or from the centre player (Figure 4.22b) the goalkeeper must side shuffle only. If the ball is played from one side of the box to the next (Figure 4.22c), they must perform a cross-over step and then sprint until they have assumed the appropriate position. The goalkeeper must also assume the set position in the instant before the shot is taken.

STRENGTH TRAINING FOR GOALKEEPERS

Developing whole-body strength is essential for a goalkeeper. Much of the play that a goalkeeper is involved in has them performing explosive actions such as jumps or dives, and a base level of leg or **lower-body strength** is required before they can train for explosive power. Lower-body strength is also important for getting good distance on goal kicks and punts.

Good posture and therefore a high degree of **core strength** is also required by goalkeepers as this allows them to properly maintain the set position. Core Strength is also important for efficiently transferring force from the lower-body to the upper- body when throwing, leaping and diving.

In comparison to outfield players, goalkeepers must devote a large amount of time in their strength training program to developing **upper-body strength**. A high degree of upper-body strength is important not only for long and accurate throws, but also for collecting high balls, such as from crosses or corners, as well as appropriately handling powerfully driven shots. Upper body strength is also necessary when challenging attackers for balls, as they are frequently pushed and bumped, and they must be able to withstand this physical contact in addition to maintaining their ground.

STRENGTH TRAINING EXERCISES FOR GOALKEEPERS

In the first volume of this book series, we described a multitude of strength training exercises for developing upper-body, lower-body and core strength. We also showed how technical and skill training can be incorporated into these exercises. All the strength training activities presented in the first volume are suitable for your goalkeeper. However, for each exercise, you can have them do goalkeeper-specific technique. For example, instead of performing a side-footed volley or one-touch pass between each repetition during a set of lunges, have them catch or gather a ball played to them in the air or on the ground. Shot-stopping is another good goalkeeper-specific action that can be interspersed with performing a strength training exercise.

As mentioned above, developing upper-strength should also be a main focus of the goalkeeper's resistance training program. As such, goalkeepers should perform at least two exercises emphasizing upper-body strength each time strength training is incorporated into the practice session.

The following are some sample activities involving strength training and technical exercises that can be used specifically for your goalkeepers:

Lunges with Ball Gathering and Long Throws

Objective: Develop lower-body strength as well as the techniques for gathering ground balls and long throws

Set-up and Directions: Have your goalkeeper stand on the goal line in the centre of the goal. The coach should stand 5 yards outside the 18-yard box in line with any side of the box. Using four small cones, set up a 7 yard by 7 yard square 5 yards in from the side-line opposite to where the coach is standing, and 5 to 10 yards from the half-way line. Have your second goalkeeper or another player stand inside this box (Figure 4.23a). For younger players, this square may have to be closer to goal.

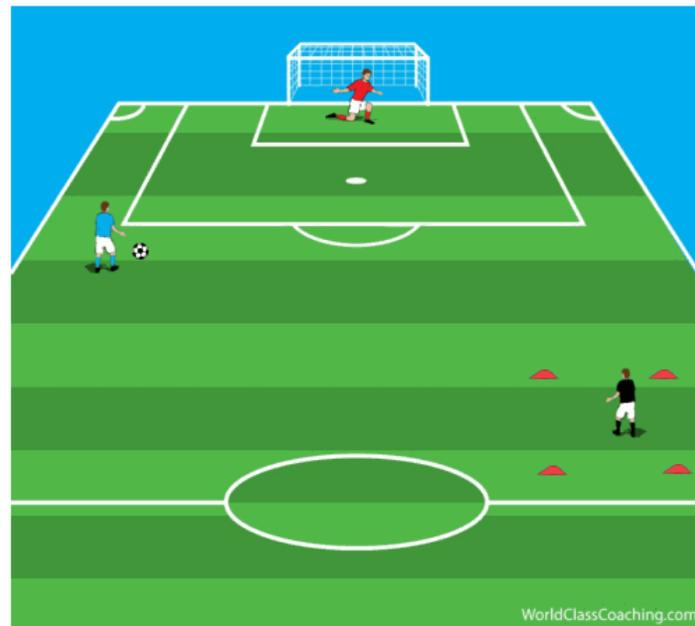


Figure 4.23a

When ready, instruct the goalkeeper to perform 8 to 12 repetitions of lunges. As soon as they complete the last repetition, the coach will play a firm pass along the ground towards the penalty spot. The goalkeeper must rush off their line and gather the ball using both hands (Figure 4.23b) and then immediately distribute the ball to the player in the square using a long throw (Figure 4.23c).

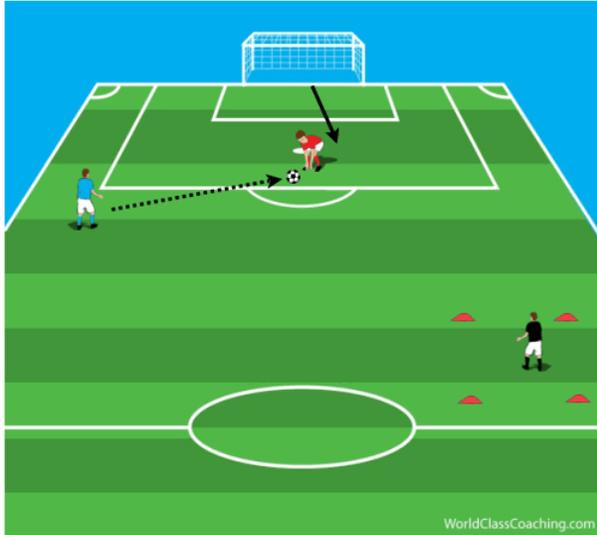


Figure 4.23b

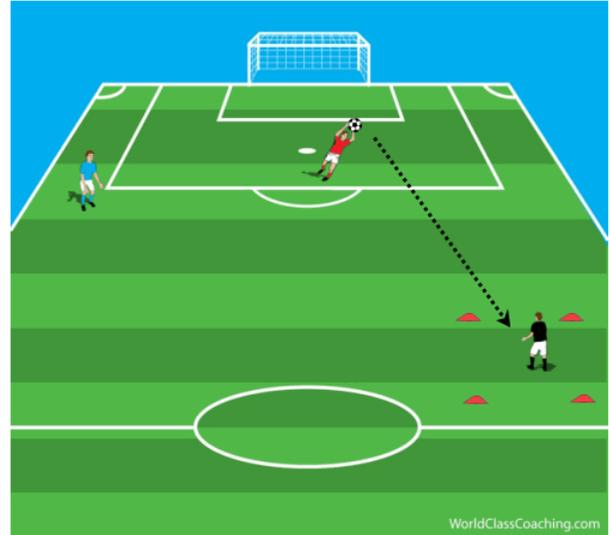


Figure 4.23c

Perform a total of three sets, but have your goalkeeper rest for 90 seconds between sets.

Coaching Points: The goalkeeper should attack the ball as soon as it leaves the coach’s feet. They must keep their eyes on the ball at all times. As they are about to gather, they should get their bodies behind the ball and get low. The arms should be close together and they should place both hands on the ball.

In order to get enough distance on the throw, the goalie should use the leg and core muscles to generate and transfer power to the upper body. A good follow through is also important. Make certain that the throwing arm follows through in the direction of the target to increase the accuracy of the toss.

Variation: You can vary this exercise by having the goalkeeper rush off their line to catch a high ball tossed in the air by the coach. You can also vary the exercise by changing the form of distribution. For example, you can ask the goalkeeper to make an under-arm throw or a punt.

Appropriate Strength Exercises: This exercise is especially appropriate for exercises such as the plank and other core exercises that require the athlete to hold a set position for a specific amount of time. It is also suitable for sets of exercises that take longer than normal. Appropriate strength training exercises to use with this activity include the plank and its variations (side, supine, etc.), hip bridge, plank with one-arm row, single-leg deadlift, and multi-directional lunge.

Push-ups with Shot-Stopping

Objective: Develop upper-body strength and shot-stopping ability

Set-up and Directions: In this exercise, the keeper lies flat of their stomachs in the centre of the goal while the coach stands between the penalty spot and the top of the 18-yard box with a supply of balls. When ready, the goalie will perform two push-ups in row and then immediately get up and to save a shot on goal taken by the coach. As the save is made, they immediately return to the starting position and perform another two push-ups followed by attempting to save a shot. Repeat the sequence until the goalie has performed 8 to 12 push-ups (with 4 to 6 shots). Do a total of three sets and rest for 90 seconds between sets.

Coaching Points: The goalkeeper must assume the set position as quickly as possible after completing the push-ups.

Appropriate Strength Exercises: You can replace push-ups with any exercise that allows the player to easily transition to the set position after performing two repetitions. Appropriate strength training exercises include the lunge, lateral lunge, squat, and single-leg squat.

POWER TRAINING FOR GOALKEEPERS

One of the most fascinating things to see during a soccer game is a goalkeeper making a full-stretched dive to block a shot destined for the top corner of the net. Such a feat requires good positioning and agility, but is also highly dependent on the goalkeeper's lower body power. Actually, as mentioned in the section on strength above, most of the high-intensity actions that a goalkeeper performs during a game, such as diving and jumping, will be influenced by the player's ability to generate force rapidly in the legs. Goalkeepers with inadequate leg strength and power will be restricted in the amount of distance they can cover both vertically (jumping) and laterally (diving).

Interestingly, scientific studies have shown that goalkeepers most often have higher vertical jumps than outfield players and perform better on tests that assess lower body power such as the squat jump and countermovement jump. Clearly, this component of conditioning is crucial for the goalkeeper to perform successfully in the game.

POWER EXERCISES FOR GOALKEEPERS

In Volume 1, we described *Plyometric Training* (mainly jump-related exercises that focus on training the muscles to produce the maximum amount of force in the shortest amount of time) and identified why this form of training is appropriate for youth and amateur coaches that are aiming to develop explosive power in their players. All plyometric exercises presented in the first volume are suitable for the goalkeeper. As before, you may have them perform the same technical actions or you can have them perform goalkeeper-specific technique. For example, instead of having them perform a volley after the *Multiple Front Hurdle Jump* exercise, you can have them catch or collect a ball driven to them in the air or on the ground. Similarly, instead of doing a side-footed pass after a *180-Degree Jump*, you can have them catch a ball volleyed into their mid-rift area.

In comparison to outfield players however, more emphasis should be placed on performing single-leg jumps (both laterally and vertically) as many power-related goalkeeping actions, such as diving and jumping, require a single-leg takeoff.

The following are examples of how you can combine plyometric training with technical exercises with the main aim of developing explosive lower-body power in your goalkeepers:

Standing Vertical Jumps and Catching Volleys

Category: Vertical Standing Jump with Long Response

Intensity Level: Low

Set-up and Directions: Place a row of 5 to 8 cones in front of a goal. Each cone should be 1.5 yards apart. Have the goalkeeper stand behind the first cone in the row. The coach (or a partner) should stand approximately 3 yards away, facing the goalkeeper with a ball in their hands (Figure 4.24a).

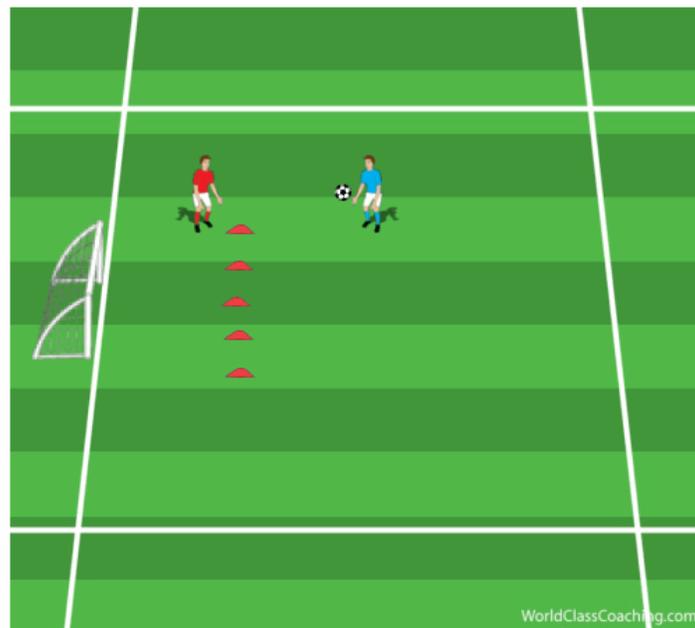


Figure 4.24a

When ready have the goalkeeper perform a standing vertical jump emphasizing vertical height (Figure 4.24b). As soon as they land they must assume the set position and the coach will volley a ball into them that they must catch with both hands (Figure 4.24c).

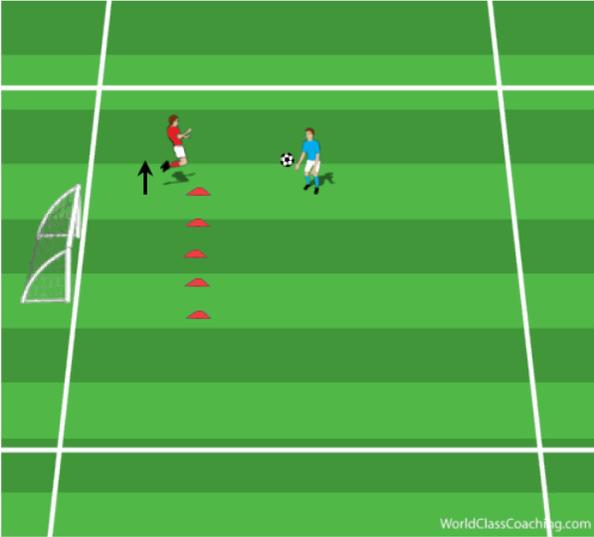


Figure 4.24b

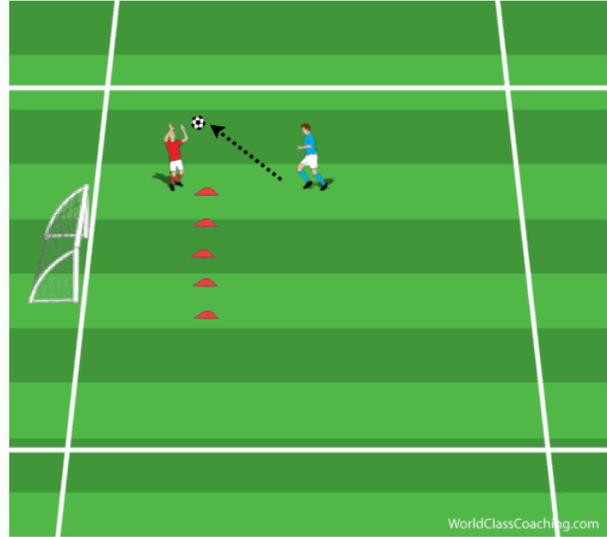


Figure 4.24c

As soon as the goalkeeper returns the ball to the coach, they should side-shuffle to the cone next in line and repeat the process. Have them continue this sequence until they have performed a jump followed by a catch at each cone. Perform a total of 3 sets but have them rest for 90 seconds to 2 minutes between sets

Coaching Points: When jumping, the goalie should begin with a counter movement and jump explosively upwards by extending the ankles, knees and hips, and using the arms to assist. Ensure they use proper landing technique and assume the set position immediately after landing. They must also use both hands when catching, while keeping their eyes on the ball at all times.

Progression: You can progress this exercise to a *high* level of intensity by having the player jump off and land on one leg.

Single-Leg Lateral Jump with Ground Balls

Category: Lateral, Standing Jump with Long Response

Intensity Level: High

Set-up and Directions: Have the goalkeeper stand and balance on one leg, 6 to 12 inches to the right or left of a hurdle (or large cone). The coach (or partner) should be standing with a ball at their feet approximately 5 yards away from the goalkeeper (Figure 4.25a).

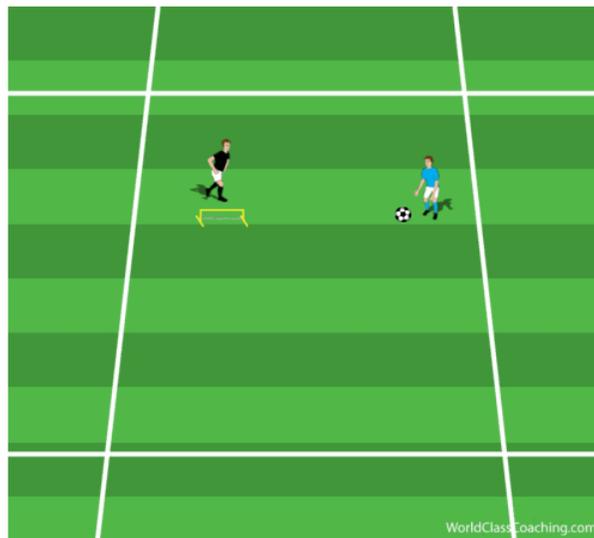


Figure 4.25a

When ready, have the goalkeeper begin the exercise by jumping laterally over the hurdle emphasizing horizontal distance (Figure 4.25b).

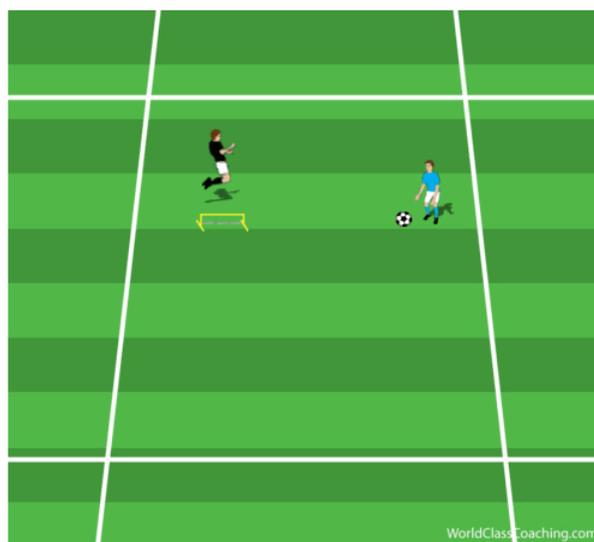


Figure 4.25b

As soon as they land, the coach should play a firm pass along the ground that they should gather with both hands (Figure 4.25c) and then return with an under-arm throw.

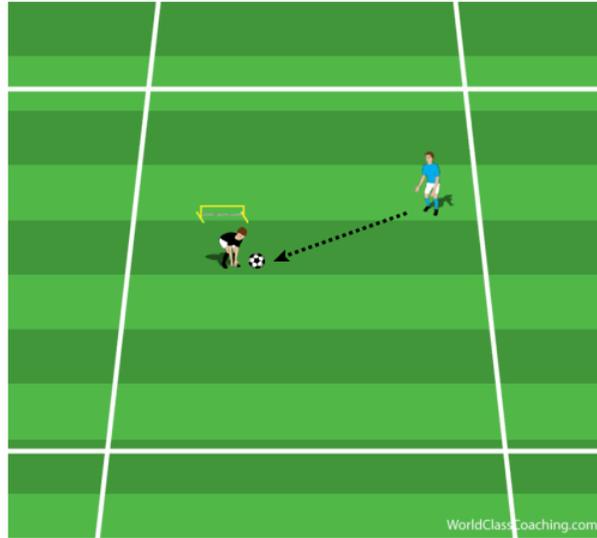


Figure 4.25c

After returning the ball, have the goalie assume the initial starting position (standing on one leg) and then repeat the process. Repeat this sequence for a total of 6 repetitions and then have the goalkeeper switch jumping legs.

Coaching Points: When jumping, the player should begin with a counter movement and jump explosively upwards, and to the side, by powerfully extending the ankle, knee and hip of the jumping leg. They should also use the arms to assist in generating power. It is important that proper landing technique be emphasized as well.

They must get behind the line of the ball as it is played by the coach. They should also keep their eyes on the ball at all times. As they are about to gather, they should get their bodies low. The arms should be close together and they should place both hands on the ball.

Progression: You can progress this exercise by increasing the height of the hurdle

Other combinations of power-training exercises and goalkeeper technique include:

- Jumps in place with shot-stopping (both double and single-leg takeoff)
- Multiple front jumps over hurdles with collecting crosses
- Multiple lateral jumps over hurdles with shot stopping
- Split Squats followed by gathering through balls

Volume 1 (Chapter 7) describes how to properly execute each of the above mentioned plyometric exercises in great detail.

ENDURANCE TRAINING FOR GOALKEEPERS

Goalkeepers should strive to develop both anaerobic and aerobic endurance. Goalkeepers playing at elite levels cover approximately 5.5 km per game. This distance is only half of what outfield players average, but is still a substantial amount and requires a fairly high work capacity. Additionally, the goalie must perform many high-intensity actions over the course of the game including diving saves, vertical jumps, and short sprints. Unfortunately for them however, the slightest of errors, such as a mistimed jump or poor foot movement, may cost their team a goal. These errors are more likely to occur with tiredness, and as mentioned in Chapter 8, developing a high level of aerobic endurance will allow your players to recover from intermittent high-intensity bouts and slow the onset of fatigue.

The goalkeeper's level of anaerobic conditioning will also impact how well they perform during the game. Not only does it affect the ability to recover quickly after making a save, but it also allows the goalkeeper to repeatedly re-positioning themselves as the ball is moved in and around their penalty area for an extended period of time.

ENDURANCE EXERCISES FOR GOALKEEPERS

By participating in SSG and the various activities that involve having someone in goal, your goalkeepers will develop and maintain a base level of anaerobic and aerobic endurance. However, it is important that when possible, the coach dedicates time to having the goalkeeper do goalkeeper-specific endurance training. A select few of the endurance exercises presented in the first volume of this book series are suitable for training your goalkeeper. These include *Control, Pass and Sprint*; *Pass and Sprint to Open Cone*; and *Centre Circle Game for Dribbling, Passing and Sprinting*. As with the other conditioning elements, the choice of whether to have the goalkeeper do the same technical actions as the outfield players or goalkeeper-specific technique is up to the coach.

The following are some endurance-based activities that involve ball-handling skills and can therefore be used to specifically train your goalkeeper:

1 v 1 Dribble and Shoot

Objective: Develop aerobic capacity and shot-stopping ability

Set-up and Directions: Set up a playing area 30 yards long and 20 yards wide. Place a regular-sized goal on the end-lines at the top and bottom of the playing area so that are in line with the centre of the field. Mark out a half-way line using four or five small cones. Place approximately 6 soccer balls on the goal-line at each end. The balls should be spread equal distances apart. A goalkeeper starts in each net (Figure 4.26a)

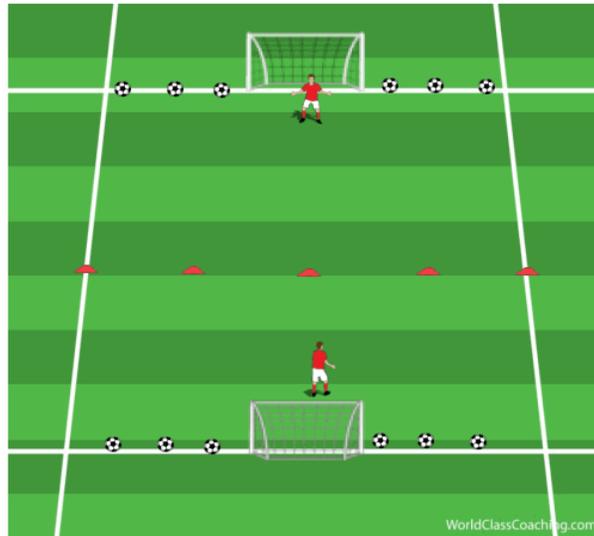


Figure 4.26a

When ready, direct one of the goalkeepers to run to any of the balls placed on their goal-line. They must then dribble towards the half-way line and take a shot on the other goalie's net before the ball crosses the half-way line (Figure 4.26b).

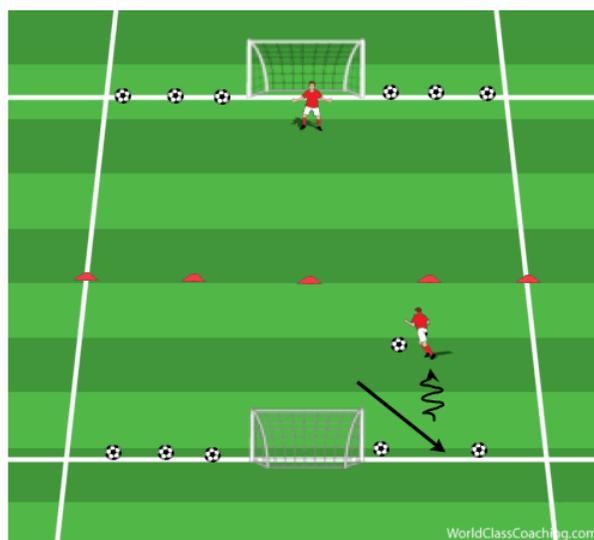


Figure 4.26b

As soon as they have taken the shot, they immediately backpedal and ready themselves for a shot on their net from the other goalkeeper who will immediately sprint towards and dribble a ball placed on their end line after attempting to save their partner's strike (Figure 4.26c).

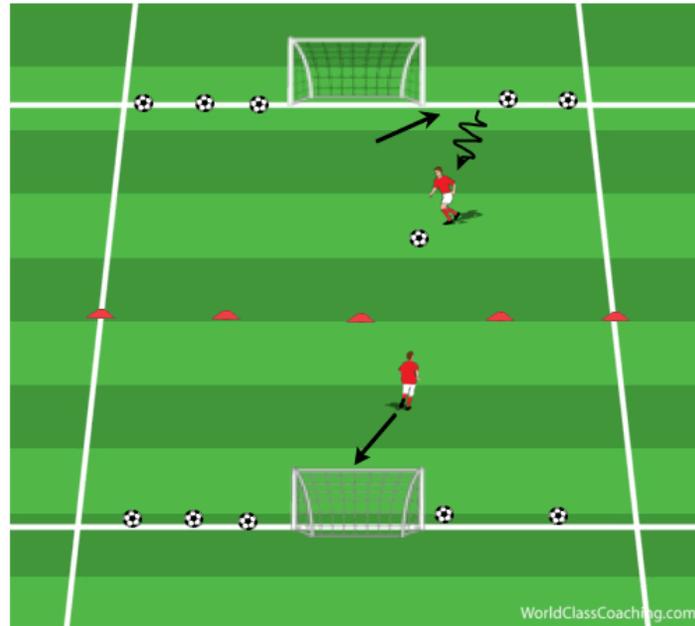


Figure 4.26c

Have the goalkeepers continue this 1 v 1 shooting game until they both have taken six shots on their opponent's net.

Work-to-rest Ratio: Each round should take approximately 90 seconds to complete. After each round, have them rest for 90 seconds and then repeat the process. This gives a work-to-rest ratio of 1:1. Perform 4 to 5 sequences for a total of approximately 15 minutes.

Centre Goal Game for Quick Recovery

Objective: Develop anaerobic endurance as well as the ability to recover quickly after making a save

Set-up and Directions: Set up a playing area 30 yards long and 20 yards wide. Using two flags, or large cones, set up a regular-sized goal in the centre of the playing pitch. Have a player (or coach) stand on the bottom and top end-line with a supply of balls facing the goal in centre of the field. The goalkeeper should be standing in the centre of the goal facing one of the players on either of the two end-lines (Figure 4.27a).

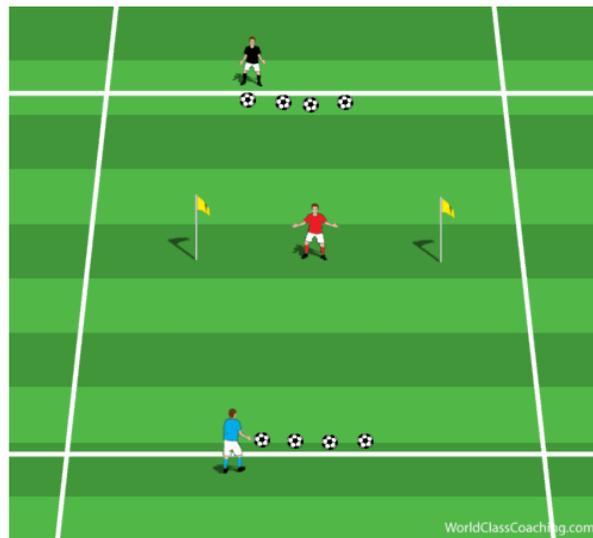


Figure 4.27a

When ready, the player on the end-line the goalkeeper is facing will take a shot on net that the goalie must attempt to save (Figure 4.27b).

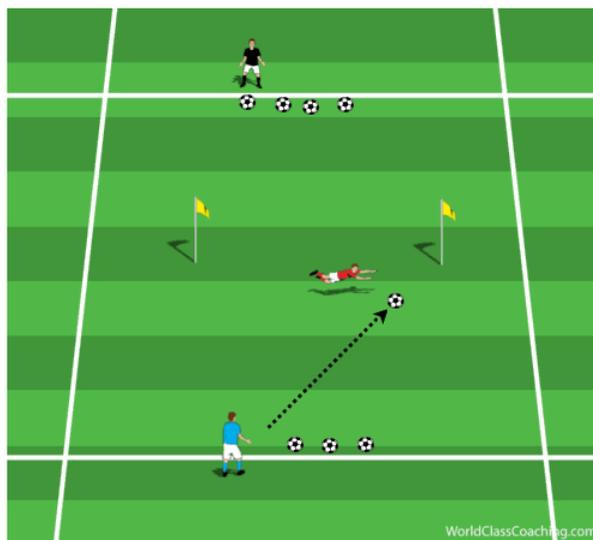


Figure 4.27b

As soon as they make a save or the ball passes them, they must immediately recover and turn 180 degrees to face the player on the other end line (Figure 4.27c). This player will then take a shot on the centre goal, which the goalkeeper must again attempt to save (Figure 4.27d).

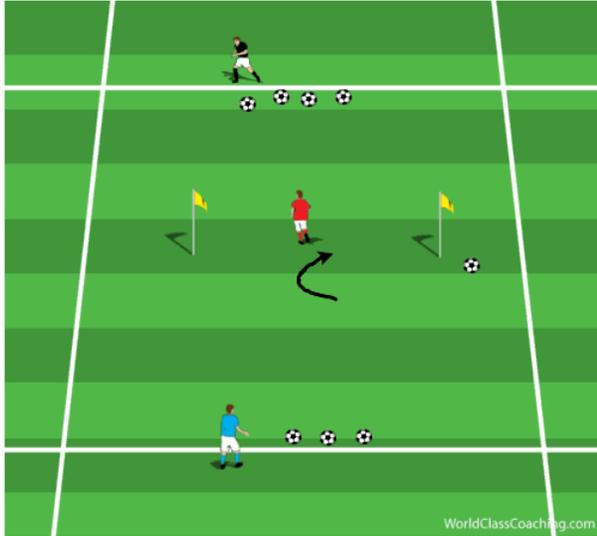


Figure 4.27c

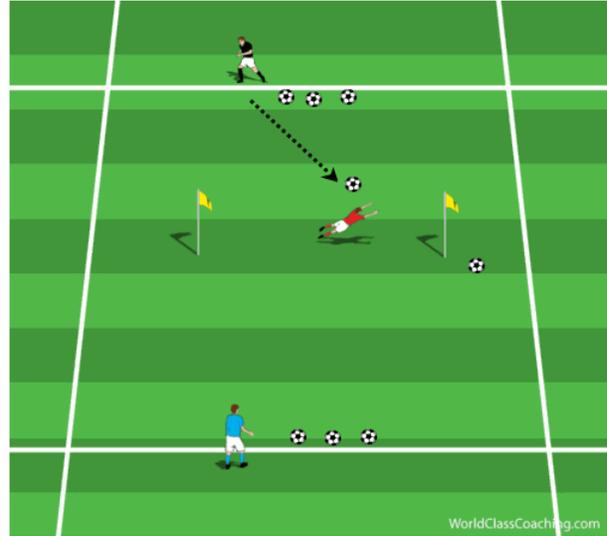


Figure 4.27d

Continue this process until the players on both end-lines have each taken 4 to 5 shots on goal. This exercise is meant to be done at a high intensity, so instruct the players on the end-lines to take a shot as soon as the goalkeeper turns. You must also encourage the goalkeeper to get up and turn as quickly as possible after each attempt on net.

Work-to-rest Ratio: Have the goalkeeper rest for 2 minutes after each sequence, which should take approximately 45 to 60 seconds. This gives a work-to-rest ratio ranging between 1:2 and 1:3. Have the goalkeeper perform a total of 3 to 5 sequences.

Rapid-Fire

Objective: Develop anaerobic endurance as well as the ability to recover quickly after making a save

Set-up and Directions: Place a row of 6 or 7 soccer balls approximately 15 yards in front of goal. Each ball should be 2 yards apart. Have the coach (or player) stand behind the first ball in the row. Direct the goalkeeper to stand a yard off their line and position themselves on an imaginary line that runs from the ball to the center of the goal (Figure 4.28a).

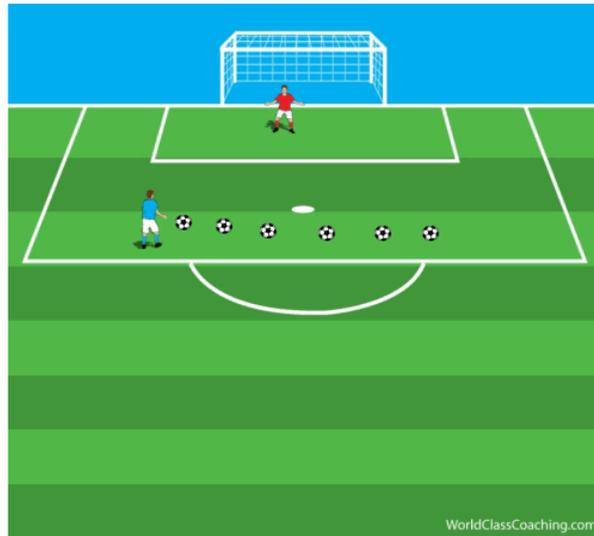
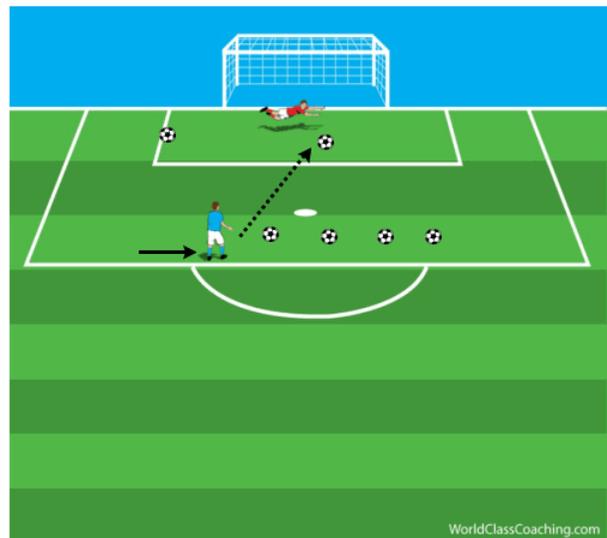
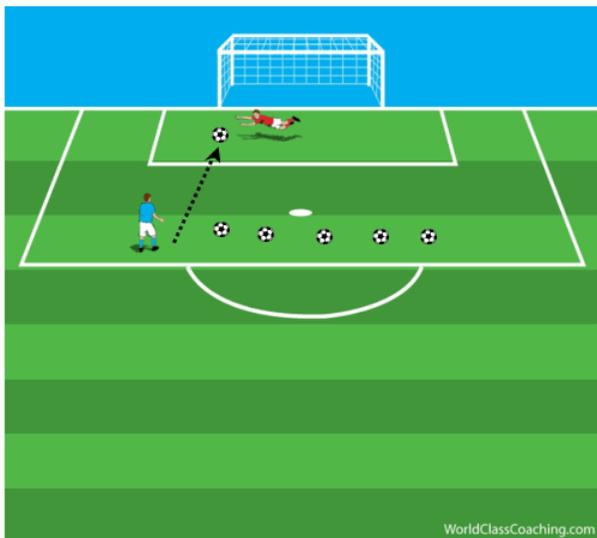


Figure 4.28a

When ready have the coach take a shot on net which the goalkeeper must attempt to save (Figure 4.28b). As soon as they take the first shot, the coach must step to the next ball in line and shoot on net again (Figure 4.28c).



Have the coach repeat this process until they played all the balls in the row. This exercise is meant to be done at a high intensity, so encourage the goalkeeper to get up as quickly as possible and re-position themselves after each attempt on net.

Work-to-rest Ratio: Have the goalkeeper rest for 90 seconds after each sequence, which should take approximately 15 to 20 seconds. This gives a work-to-rest ranging between 1:4 and 1:5. Have the goalkeeper perform a total of 3 to 5 sequences.