

SELF PRACTICE EXERCISES

NOTE: You MUST make the demands in these training exercises real and game like

PLEASE NOTE: The OBJECTIVE of each exercise is listed AFTER the exercise

SECTION I FINISHING EXERCISES

Exercise 1-1

Line up 5 balls in a row close to the net, around 10 yards away. Without using a *stride* (or a long step and a swing) into the ball, hit 5 consecutive shots.

OBJECTIVE: Many times a forward will have to shoot in a situation where they catch the ball too tight on their foot and there is not space or time for a stride into the ball. This exercise will build confidence for that situation

*As you gain confidence gradually move the row of balls back (15-18 yards) and also use the opposite foot twice as much as the dominant foot.

Exercise 1-2. Player A half turned to the goal (left shoulder facing the goal, body facing player B) and standing 18 yards from goal receives a pass from Player B (who is about 10 yards to the right side of Player A). Player A *purposely* catches the pass too tight (with their left foot) so that they must pull off a quick *snap* shot with their next touch (using their right foot) using the same technique as the exercise above.

Exercise 1-3 Player A this time catches the ball too tight with their right foot and snaps off a shot with that same right foot.

Exercise 1-4. Player A now hits this shot first time

Do twice as many reps with the weaker foot.

Exercise 2-1

Player A lines up 18 yards from goal with shoulders square to goal. Player B (about 5-10 yards to the side of Player A) plays a square ball to player A. Player A must hit the ball first time with the instep.

OBJECTIVE: This shot is one of the hardest balls for a forward to hit because it requires great timing and technique. Remember first time shots are very difficult for goalkeepers to save because the keepers usually don't have their feet set. The player must decide whether to hit the ball with the closest foot or let it run across their body.

Exercise 3-1 Player A lines up 5 balls in a row about 12 yards from goal similar to the set up in exercise 1. This time Player A tries to curl the ball with the inside of their foot in the corner of the goal. The emphasis is for the shot to have accuracy and does not necessarily have to go into the upper corner but placed in a spot where the keeper cannot get to. The ball should be curled hard and not chipped softly.

Exercise 3-2 Player A, with a group of balls is located about 20-25 yards from goal. Player A dribbles the ball towards goal, makes a quick move around a cone or defender and then curls the ball with the inside of the foot.

Exercise 4 Players line up balls on the 18 and try to curl the ball with the inside of the foot using a HARD shot.

Phase II Same exercise except now the player takes a short dribble before shooting

Phase III Player B plays a sharp pass on the ground to Player A who catches the ball too tight on their foot and must snap off a quick curling shot with the inside of the foot.

Phase IV This time player A must hit this shot first time.

Do twice as many reps with weaker foot

Exercise 5-1 Player A standing behind a small hurdle 18 yards from goal with a group of balls. Player A plays a pass on the ground to Player B who is standing 5 -7 yards to the right. Player A, after passing to Player B, jumps over the hurdle. Player B pushes a sharp pass back to him who shoots first time.

OBJECTIVE: So that the attacking player gets used to rearranging their feet and getting balanced before shooting

Exercise 6-1 Player A stands about 18 yards from goal and lined up a few yards wide of the far post. While Player A makes a diagonal run across the penalty area, Player B who is passes a ball *wide* enough to Player A so that he can turn and hit a first time shot on goal. Player B is about 25 yards from goal and lined up on the near post.

Phase II. Players A and Player B are lined up in the same starting points. Player B starts to dribble towards goal, Player A starts his diagonal run and Player B pushes a pass for Player A to shoot and score.

OBJECTIVE: Diagonal runs by forwards are very important in clearing space in the penalty area. This shot is a very difficult one to hit and can only be accomplished by consistent practice.

Exercise 7-1 Player A stands 25 yards from goal. There is a goalkeeper in goal. Player B who is behind Player A plays a through ball to Player A who must finish the breakaway. Put a 3-5 second time restriction on this play.

Phase II Vary the angle, type of serve (sometimes a bouncing ball) and distance from goal.

OBJECTIVE: Despite the fact that a huge portion of goals are scored from through balls and breakaways it is very rarely practiced.

Exercise 8-1. Using the same set up as practice #8, Player B plays a through ball to Player A who shoots it first time. Use different distances and angles for starting points.

OBJECTIVE: Players need to learn to finish off first time chances because they are the most difficult ones for goalkeepers to save. Close to 40% of all goals are scored from first time chances

Exercise 9-1 Player A starts out in the penalty area at different angles and with their body shaped up different ways (facing goal, half turned, quarter turned, etc.)

Player B will cross a ball *just slightly out of their range* to Player A who volleys the ball on goal. When the player crosses the ball just out of their range it results in a realistic bouncing ball. **Player B should create a bouncing ball any way they can.**

It is difficult to replicate the awkward bounces a ball will take in a game. You can also try to get awkward bounces by having Player B crosses the ball with their weaker foot, slightly out of their range so that the ball reaches the forward on a bounce.

Next, try this exercise starting with a run from different angles.

Phase II Player B plays a ball to Player A to volley. Mix it up between bouncing balls, awkward balls and volleys.

NOTE: Any time that you get an awkward bouncing ball in training, use it as an opportunity to practice taking a tough shot.

Exercise 10. Player A and Player B play 1 vs. 1 in the penalty area. Just like in basketball, when the ball turns over, the defending player must take the ball outside the penalty area before shooting.

Next, do this exercise but no instep drive can be used to score. The strikes on goal must be curled balls or placed balls with the side of the foot.

Also, try playing 1 vs. 2 in the penalty area with a 4th player pushing passes in to the attacking player. Let the attacking player get first touch. A player must get 3 shots on goal before switching roles.

OBJECTIVE: Creating enough separation to get a shot off

Exercise 11 Player A stands 3-5 yards to the right of the **D (right on the 18 yard line)** and Player B is about 10 yards away (right on the 18 yard line) from him. Player A plays a firm pass along the ground and Player B must hit it first time. This is a difficult ball to hit as it comes right across your body.

Exercise 12 Player A starts out at the far post. Player B has a group of balls from different angles outside the penalty area. Player B hits a still ball to Player A who heads on goal. We hit a still ball so that we can get accuracy because we are working on heading. Player A must initiate a short run to the far post before the ball is crossed.

Phase II Player A makes a hard SPRINT into the near post for a near post header. Player A must sprint

Phase III. Next, before the ball is crossed Player A makes a quick run to the far post. This will allow him to shape his body up better to head (or volley) the ball to goal and also give you a greater angle and more goal to shoot at.

Phase IV, only after Player A has experienced success with the exercise above, Player B crosses a moving ball. This will help him develop timing with his teammate, read cues from his teammate as to when the ball will be crossed and learn how to sprint into good scoring spots.

Phase V Do this exercise with Player C marking Player A and Player B crossing a STILL ball. This will help player A learn how to get on the blind side of defenders and decide whether to run to the near post or wait for the cross at the far post. Player A must read the situation and decide whether to go to the near or far post.

Phase V Do this exact exercise with Player B crossing a moving ball

Player A, spreads out a group of balls on the flank. Players B and C are in the penalty area. Player D is defending. Player A crosses balls into the box that players B, C and D must compete for, thus creating a 2 v. 1 heading situation in the box. You may also increase this to a 3 vs. 2 situation.

OBJECTIVE: To be able to master heading in the box

Exercise 13. Player A crosses a still ball into the penalty area trying to hit certain targets set up inside the box. Player A will work on accuracy, ability to cross using the inside of the foot, getting his head up and crossing from different angles especially the early diagonal ball.

Phase II, Player A hits a moving ball (either a pass to yourself or a pass from a teammate) and hit crosses as the ball is moving. Keep in mind it is easier to cross a ball when it is moving because the ball already has forward momentum. Practice making a little curved run so that you are not striking the ball across your standing leg.

Phase III, as you get better at this skills make your last few approach steps to the ball faster as if to replicate a defender coming from behind to close you down.

Phase IV Dribble the ball and hit a cross off the dribble

Phase V Have a defender shadowing you making it hard to get a cross in. The defender should not try to steal the ball just shadow you so that you learn to create some separation in order to get the cross in.

Phase VI Have the players set up a channel of cones about 40 yards long (15 yards inside the touchline). Players A and B play a game of crossing:

RULES:

Player A gets the ball first. He plays 1 vs. 1 (full defense) against Player B. Points are scored in the following manor:

*3 Points for a great cross into the penalty area that could be headed or volleyed first time

*2 Points for cross that gets into the penalty area but may not lead to a first time header or volley

*1 If the player cuts inside and crosses the ball.

If Player B steals the ball he may cross the ball into the box and steal points from Player A

Each player gets 5-10 chances to cross the ball. Players can alternate either every chance or every other chance.

Again, the objective is to create enough separation to get a cross in the box under pressure

Exercise 14 Use 4 players. One player stays outside the box with a bunch of soccer balls. Player A is the attacking player, Players B and C defenders. Players play 1 vs. 2 in the box until player A gets off three shots. Alternate roles

Exercise 15 Player A is on the flank with a bunch of soccer balls about 25 yards from goal. Players B and C are in the center about 25 yards from goal also. Place a cone about 8-10 yards from goal at the near post. Player A dribbles at speed (angling in their run) and once he gets 8-10 yards from goal he plays a hard pass across the goal for B or C to finish

B and C should use different starting points on each exercise.

Phase II Same exercise but start closer 15 yards from goal. Player A dribbles to the end line and then cuts a ball back for B or C to finish

Exercise 16 Player A is in the center of the penalty area 16-18 yards from goal. Player B is off to either the right or left side about 10 yards away from them. Player B plays a firm, hard pass to Player A who purposely catches it too tight to their foot with the first touch and then shoots a hard curling ball with the second touch using the same foot they controlled the ball with. Player B should play the first pass to the right foot and the second pass to the left foot.

Phase II Have a defender stand a yard in front of Player A and shadow them and close the down on their first touch.

SECTION II EXERCISES FOR PASSING, CONTROL

OBJECTIVE: Developing accurate passing, a good first touch, soft feet. With a teammate, practice playing long balls back and forth from a comfortable distance.

- a). Try limiting the amount of time and touches that it takes to get the ball back to your partner
- b). Use your opposite foot

Phase II, put more demands on yourself by making the pass off the dribble

*If there is no partner then Player A should set up targets and put demands such as hitting the ball off the dribble, etc. Player A can even set up a surface that they can play the ball off of so they may receive the ball, control it and make the long pass.

3. Using 3 players, Player B in the center and Players A and C on the outside practice turning with the ball. Player A plays the ball on the ground to Player B who turns *in one touch* and plays a short pass over to Player C. Repeat, with Player C playing ball to Player B. **Players must learn to turn sharply and quickly because it is vital to be able to turn quickly, face the goal and play the ball forward as often as you can. THE EMPHASIS HER IS TO TURN 180 DEGREES TO FACE THE OTHER SIDE OR FACE THE GOAL**

OBJECTIVE: Turning with the ball quickly

4. Player A lines up 5 balls in a row. Without using a stride into the ball (similar to Exercise #1 for finishing) Player A plays a long ball to Player B who is 20-30 yards away.

Phase II (See diagram A below) Player B gives Player A a pass on the ground, Player A turns and plays a long ball to Player C or a target with the 2nd touch. Player C must be shaped up about 20 yards away and all the way to the touchline. The goal is to eventually develop an understanding and timing between Player A and player C.

Phase III (See diagram A) Try hitting the target off the dribble.

THIS EXERCISE IS FOR CENTRAL PLAYERS

DIAGRAM A

Player C

On Touchline

Player B

Player A

Phase IV (See Diagram B below) Player B, with a teammate (Player C), pass the ball back and forth. When Player A initiates a run, either Player B or C play the ball into the path of Player A. Player A must have an understanding as to when to start

THIS IS FOR FLANK PLAYERS

Player A

On Touchline

Player B

Player C

Phase V Try doing this off of a dribble

Phase VI For Central players (See Diagram C)

Player A plays ball to Player B who turns and plays ball across field to Player C

Diagram C

Player C

Player B

Player A

6) 3 Players lined up in a row. The center player, Player A is in the middle and about 10 yards away from Player B and Player C and 5-8 yards away from the cone in between the three players.

Player B plays a short pass to Player A who takes ONE TOUCH to turn (180 degree turn) and the second touch to play a pass to Player C. The exercise is repeated with Player C. Player A must make the necessary adjustments such as turning their body halfway before they receive the ball

PB

PA

PC

PHASE II PA between PB and PC IN A SIDEWAYS (recreating a situation where PA receives the ball and turns in one touch to switch the ball) POSITION

THE GOAL for both Exercise #5 and 6 IS TO GET THE PLAYER TO BE ABLE TO TURN THROUGH 180 DEGREES IN ONE TOUCH

Objective: To receive the ball facing the goal or HALF TURNED POSITION

This next exercise involves 6 players in a grid 20 X 20 yards. Players 1 and 2 are on one side of the grid, players 3 and 4 on the other side. Both sides should have one ball.

P1

P2

P5

P6

P3

P4

Players 5 and 6 are in the center. P5 tries to receive a pass from P1 or P2. P6 works really hard for 45-60 seconds to mark P5. After receiving the pass P5 either plays it back to P1 or P2 if they cannot turn OR turns and plays the ball to P3 or P4. The exercise is repeated on the other side. P5 must work very hard to create separation from the defender and get the ball in a half turned position

In a space 20 yards X 20 yards Players A and B play 2 vs. 2. All of the players are defenders who must work on their passing

Delayed Box drill

3 players make a square 10-15 X 10-15 yards with cones.

1. 3.

2. X

To start, 1 passes to 2. As the ball is moving 3 moves to the X spot. 2 takes the ball with their right foot (on the first touch) and cleans the ball up so that with the second pass they can play it to the outside of the cone where X is marked. 3 must arrive slightly late so that they get to work on the movement of taking the first touch with the right foot and playing the ball to #1 who is moving to spot 3 where # 3 just vacated.

Continue the drill with #1 running to spot where #3 was and then #2 runs to the spot where #1 was

Players should take the ball with the right foot and pass it with the right foot.

Reverse the drill to work on left foot.

Players must arrive “slightly late” to the cone and the pass must be made accurately to the outside of the cone

Pressure Turning drill

X1

X2

X3

O3

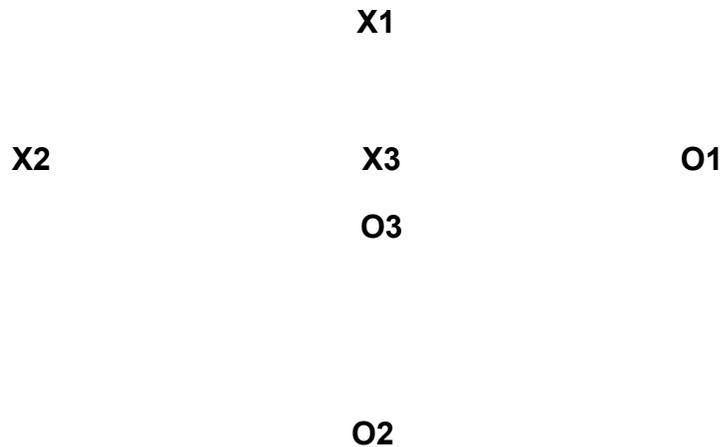
O1

O2

X1 and X2 play the ball back and forth. X3 tries to get a pass from either X teammate. They must move when the ball moves and set their opponent up so they have enough room to turn. Ideal position to get in is HALF TURNED or FULLY TURNED. X3 can play ball back to either X teammate but only gets a point when he turns and plays ball through (Maximum 3 touches) a 180 degree turn. Drill continues with X getting a pass from either O player. O3 defends hard for one minute then players switch. X3 should also look to get behind the defender to keep them honest

Phase B play game where X 3 gets 2 points for a turn, one point for a square ball and loses a point for a lost ball.

Phase C All four players have a ball and a small goal is set up between O1 and O2 and X1 and X2. When the player receives the ball and turns he tries to play it through into the goal or to a player who may not have a ball at the time. Attacking player can get a pass from any player.



Same exercise but now the players are in the position listed above. X3 gets 2 points for a 180 degree turn 1 point for a square ball and loses a point for lost ball. X3 can get the ball from any player on the perimeter.

Emphasis is on 180 degree turn

Phase B Perimeter players can pass the ball all around the perimeter

Phase C Use two balls

Defending

Player A and Player B play 1 vs. 1 for a minute in a restricted area such as:

*10 X 10 yards

*A small portion of the penalty area

2. Have a teammate cross the ball into the penalty area. Player A practices heading the ball out for distance

3. Player A plays balls into Player B (a defender inside the penalty area or just outside penalty area). Player B must control the ball and play to a target. Make long targets and short targets

Next, keep an opponent close to Player B who must pressure Player B after their first touch or before they touch the ball

4. Refer to the section on finishing, exercise#12 Phase IV. Do the last exercise where the defender must mark an opponent in the box, defending a cross

5. Player A is the attacker. Player B is the Defender. Player C tries to play balls behind Player B (the defender) for Player A to run on to.

USE ALL DIFFERENT STARTING POINTS FOR THE ATTACKER AND DEFENDER
TO START AT *SEE BELOW*

Player B

Player A

Player C