



BALL MASTERY DRILLS

Football, particularly in the early age groups is all about “Ball Mastery” which is the individual control & skill that a player develops with the ball at their feet. Once “ball mastery” is achieved many more options are available for team play. All exercises should be done with equal time spent on each / both feet. Ball Mastery exercises include;

- Juggling; Start by player dropping the ball out of their hands, then kicking it back up & catching it. Alternate between each foot. Once mastered progress to dropping the ball, then doing right then left then catch it again & so on.
- Tic-Toc; Touch the ball with the inside of the right foot then the inside of the left foot, basically passing the ball between the feet while staying on the same spot. Once mastered players continue while moving forward or backwards.
- Sole Tap; Lightly touch the ball with the bottom (sole) of one foot then the other while staying in the one spot. Once mastered players continue while moving forward or backwards.
- Push-Pull; Players pull the ball back with the sole of the foot then push the ball forward with the lace part of the foot. Do with each foot individually then progress to one foot after the other.
- Rolling sideways; Roll your right foot from the right hand side of the ball, over the top of the ball finishing on the left side of the ball, repeat this a few times moving sideways (to the left) then go back the other way with your left foot.
- Inside Turns; Right foot, place the left foot on the right hand side of the ball, bring your right foot around, pivoting of the left foot & turn 180degrees taking the ball with the right foot. Then do opposite for left foot.
- Outside Turns; Right foot, place your left foot on left side of ball and take the ball with the outside of your right foot pivoting on the left & turning 180degrees.

- Cruyf Turn; Similar to the inside turn but start with feet beside the ball, the ball is then played / cut back between the legs. Practice with both feet.
- Sole Turn; Right foot, roll the sole of your right foot over the top of the ball pulling it backwards while pivoting 180degrees on your left foot. The ball must always be under control & in contact with the player's right foot until the move is complete.
- Dribbling; players dribble the ball using the below variations;
 - o Inside of right foot then inside of left foot.
 - o Outside of right foot then outside of left foot.
 - o Inside & outside of right foot only.
 - o Inside & outside of left foot only.
 - o With the outside of the right foot touch the ball twice sideways to the right then swiftly take it back to the left with the inside of the right foot, ie; outside, outside, inside. Then do the same with the left foot.
 - o The ball should be kept close to the player for the above exercises with players getting as many touches as possible over a short distance.
- Dribbling at speed or running with the ball; This is for when a player finds themselves in space & wants to make up distance fast. Player touches the ball three to four metres in front of them, sprints after it, touches it again with the lace / top part of the foot & chases it again. Would normally be done over approx a twenty metre course.
- 1st Touch; 1st touch is all about putting the ball exactly where you want it ready for your second touch. Your second touch can then be dribble, pass or shoot for goal. See also 1st Touch Training Drills.
- 1st Touch may also be a 1st time pass or shot at goal.
- Touch & pass; receive the ball with one foot transfer / touch it to the other & pass back, start with player's 1metre apart & once mastered progress to 3metres max.
- Heading & chesting the ball; Get players used to heading & chesting the ball firstly by letting them throw it up (not high) & heading it or throwing it against their chest & catching it again.
- Step over's; Move your left foot from inside the ball, over the top finishing on the outside of the ball, your body & weight should now be on your left foot, then swiftly take the ball to the right using the outside of your right foot. Reverse the move & take the ball with the outside of the left foot.