

Fitness Soccer Drills

Stamina (Aerobic fitness)

The average professional footballer runs or is in motion almost constantly for 90 minutes of playing time. Having a decent level of stamina is dependent upon what we call aerobic fitness. Aerobic fitness is developed through continuous exercise usually lasting over 30 minutes.

Drills for Soccer Stamina

Technique

The technique for jogging is slightly different compared to that of sprinting. On each step, you must contact the floor from the middle of the foot to the heel first and shift the weight up to the toes. When running, the arms have to be moving parallel to your direction. If your head seems to move up and down a great deal, or from side-to-side, you are running inefficiently.

Drills for Stamina

Cardiorespiatory endurance

- Drill: Over 3000 meters (2 miles) of running at 50-60 percent. It is recommended working on this at least 2-3 times per week to achieve optimal gain.
- Benefits: This drill improves your cardiovascular system and capillarisation. It is designed to develop your heart as a muscle as well as your circulation and lungs.

Improving muscle endurance

- Drill: Over 1500 meters (1 mile) of running, preferably on a sandy or elevating surface. It should be practiced at intensity between 60-80 percent.
- Benefits: This drill improves glycogen burning, lactate tolerance and removal. These are chemicals that accumulate in the muscles and cause fatigue. Compared to the previous drill, this one is concentrated on improving your ability to sustain intense level of activity. However, because of its long duration, you will also experience gain in aerobic fitness.

Incorporating skill

- Drill: Continuous dribbling with the ball for a period of time of over 20 minutes. This can be done around a soccer field or on any suitable area (preferably even, real grass turf).
- Benefits: This is a very specific drill that improves both aerobic and anaerobic fitness. It also incorporates dribbling and can therefore be considered beneficial in terms of technique.

Speed

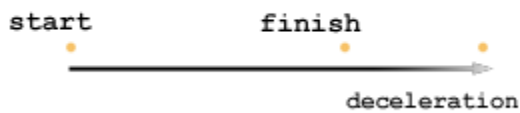
Workouts designed to improve your speed for soccer should not be dedicated solely to sprinting. Your workout must resemble realistic game aspects like change of direction, acceleration and speed with the ball. Drills designed to improve speed need to be executed at maximum effort. They need to be segmented into intervals in order to suppress fatigue.

Speed for Soccer

Technique

Off Ball

Sprinting, in contrast to jogging, requires that you contact the ground with your toes. Your upper body should be slightly bent slightly forward. You must keep your arms aside of your body. Put emphasis on how you drive yourself forward with each step. By feeling out the ideal length of your stride, you can adjust for optimal performance. Once you have adapted a good sprinting stride, you should not change the rhythm by shortening or lengthening your step.



Mixed sprints of "slow motion running" and top speed bursts are a good way to get a feel for your technique. This will give insight whether you are marking superfluous motions while at top speed.

You can practice your ideal stride by placing a line of cones with an equal distance between each. When you sprint next to the cones they will give you a sense of the consistency in your stride and speed. Remember to swing your arms parallel to your path rather than across the body. This preserves energy. It is all about developing economical technique.

On Ball

Generally, when a player is moving with the ball at speed, he has to keep a low center of gravity. The knees have to be bent. He has to be leaning slightly forward. When dribbling in a straight line, the ball has to be pushed with the instep and should not spin.

Control is extremely important when working on your speed with the ball. If you feel that you are losing your handle on the ball, you are moving faster than your skill level is allowing you.

Drills for speed

Warming up

Warming up the body must be done ahead of every practice that involves running at top speed. Ideally, you should spend 5-15 minutes trying to incorporate as many muscle groups as possible through light jogging, running sideways, backwards and so on.

It is very important to also warm up dynamically. It decreases muscle stiffness, which lowers the chance of injury incidents. Start with jogging while bringing your heels as back, as if trying to kick your own backside. This will loosen up your hamstring. For the quad muscle, jog while bringing your knees up as high as you can. Do not lean backwards. The calf muscle can be warmed up by jogging and periodically leaping up off of either foot. Remember to gradually increase the intensity of your warm-up.

Maximum speed

Set up a line of three cones. The first two will be the actual distance you are sprinting. The last one exists for practical reasons. Usually, when sprinting from one cone to the other people tend to slow down for the last few meters. By predefining the actual path for deceleration you can get preserve the quality of your sprint. Fatigue is not acceptable when working on this drill. If you are not sprinting at maximum speed you will not achieve the desired improvement. Work on sprinting drills, such as this one, early in your practice.

Acceleration

Put four cones in a line so that they split your path in three equal sections. Start from the first and gradually increase your pace until you reach the third cone. From that point on, sprint at top speed until the last cone. With each repetition, try to remain consistent when accelerating.

Weightlifting

Weightlifting is definitely a great way to build up the muscle tissue on your legs as well as your entire body. It must be emphasized that muscles built through weightlifting will not make your legs move quicker, they'll give you more power. Benefits: Building your leg muscles gives you more power. The extra power can enhance your kicking, jumping and explosive speed. Having well-developed musculature also decreases the likelihood of injury. Good rest is vital for developing your legs. Muscles regenerate during the day after the actual exercise. Therefore, working out should not be done more than 2-3 times per week.

Plyometrics

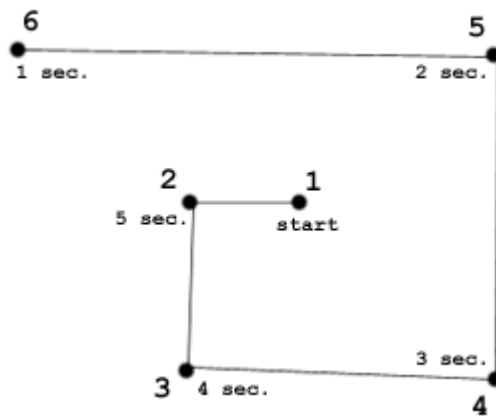
Plyometrics is another training method suitable for developing your legs. It basically consists of jumping exercises designed to improve the responsiveness of your leg muscles.

Muscle Endurance (Anaerobic fitness)

Anaerobic fitness accounts for your ability to recover quicker and consistently sprint at high speed. This is especially useful in soccer because you may have to perform at your highest pace during any given moment in the course of a match.

Anaerobic fitness for soccer

Fartlek



Drill: Sprint from points 1 to 6 and then back to 1. Rest at each point the given amount of time. You can alter the values in the diagram, but it must be done proportionally. Repeat 5 to 10 times. Benefits: Fartlek drills, such as this one, are designed to get you fit quickly. Depending on the number of repetitions you complete, you will notice improvements in both your anaerobic as well as aerobic endurance. If you want to emphasize on the latter, shorten the resting time between reps

Alternating jogging and sprinting



Drill: Run on the given course altering between top speed sprinting and slow jogging. One complete circle counts as a single repetition. Adjust the distance between points accordingly and repeat 3 to 15 times depending on the course length.

Benefits: This drill improves glycogen burning, lactate tolerance and removal.