

SOCCER FITNESS TRAINING

Physical Fitness is a crucial part of soccer. The lower the skill level the more important physical fitness is to a team. More energy is required to execute skills for an unskilled or lesser skilled player than it does for a skilled player. Fitness can win or lose soccer games.

PRINCIPLES OF PHYSICAL FITNESS TRAINING FOR SOCCER

- Develop an Aerobic Base
- Train all three (3) energy systems
 - a. Anaerobic Alactic (without a ball)
 - a. Anaerobic Lactic (with or without a ball)
 - a. Aerobic (without a ball for continuous and with a ball for intervals)
- Train for Power using Plyometrics
- Never train the anaerobic alactic, anaerobic lactic systems or perform plyometric training within 48 hours of playing a game
- Anaerobic training (including plyometrics) is carbohydrate fuelled so players should consume higher levels of carbohydrates prior to training (3-4 hours) and within 20 minutes (fruit & juice) and a full carbohydrate meal (pasta) within 2 hours after training.

Note! Perform anaerobic training which involves sprints outside of the natural grass fields, if possible, to avoid ruining the field.

Pre-season Training:

- Developing an aerobic base is critical and usually takes 6-8 weeks of serious training. This can be achieved by
 - Taking players on runs or having players run on their own for 20-40 minutes three to four times a week (four times is optimal).
 - Doing aerobic intervals of 30 seconds to 3 minutes of high intensity (80-90 percent of maximum effort) with a rest equal to the work time.
 - Using a combination of continuous and intervals which produce the best and quickest results.
- Competitive players should do continuous runs outside of scheduled team training and provide a weekly log of these runs to the coaching staff.
- Aerobic training should be combined with some anaerobic training with anaerobic training increasing in the weeks prior to the start of the season.

In –season Training:

- Aerobic training should be continued with competitive players training aerobically a minimum of twice weekly outside of training sessions and games. Games can count for one aerobic training session provided the player played for a minimum of 40 minutes, twenty of which was continuous (this is a guideline only). Again each player should keep a log that is reviewed each week.

○ **NOTE!** Competitive players must be held responsible for doing aerobic training on their own.

- Aerobic interval training should be done during team training using a soccer ball.
- Anaerobic alactic (0-15 seconds at maximum effort) training should be a part of team training and is most effective when performed without a ball to attempt to achieve 100% effort by the player without skill being a factor. Pause or rest should be 5 to 6 times the work time. The Pause or rest time may be decreased to 3 times the work time for very fit players.
- Anaerobic lactic (10 seconds to 2 minutes at 80-85% of maximum effort) can be performed with a soccer ball. The Pause or rest time may be decreased to 3 times the work time for very fit players.

NUMBERS PASSING - AEROBIC INTERVALS



Set-up

- 4 to 5 players in a 10 x 10 yd grid
- Players are numbered 1-4 or 5

Spare balls are placed outside the grid on each side ensuring they are out of the way of the runners (safety)

Sequence

- The coach passes a ball to player #1 who in turn passes to #2. Immediately after passing to player #2. Player #1 runs around one cone and returns to the grid to await the pass from player #4. Each player passes and runs around a cone.
- If the balls goes out of the grid because of a missed/bad pass the next player in turn uses one of the spare balls placed around the grid
- Specify the number of touches permitted (2, 3 etc.).

Progression & Timings

This is training the aerobic energy system using Intervals. The following is a sample of a typical aerobic interval training session:

Activity	Time
Pass & run around one cone	2 minutes
Pass & run around two cones	1.5 minutes
Pass & run around three cones	1 minute
Pass & run around four cones	.5 minutes
Pass & run around four cones	.5 minutes
Pass & run around two cones	1 minute
Pass & run around three cones	1.5 minutes
Pass & run around four cone	2 minutes

NOTE 1! Under no condition do players stop running. If a ball is not there they make their run around the cone as if they had passed the ball.

NOTE 2! Improved passing is a pleasant by-product of this drill.

Variation

- ♣ Increase the time intervals up to 3 minutes.
- ♣ Decrease the rest/pause time to 1/2 of the work time especially for elite fit players.
- ♣ Increase the grid size.

Coaching Focus

- Players are giving 100% effort.
- Passes are accurate especially as players tire.
- Players remain focused as they tire.
- Players encourage each other especially as they tire
- Be positive and praise and encourage the group for good effort because this can be difficult training.

PASSING AROUND THE FIELD - AEROBIC INTERVALS



SETUP

- ♣ Full or half soccer field with players positioned 30-50 yards apart.
- ♣ Position a second player at each start point so that as players pass & follow there will be a player remaining to receive the ball as it goes around.
- ♣ Place extra balls around the field to avoid stoppages if the ball goes out of bounds.
- ♣ Use half field if necessary.

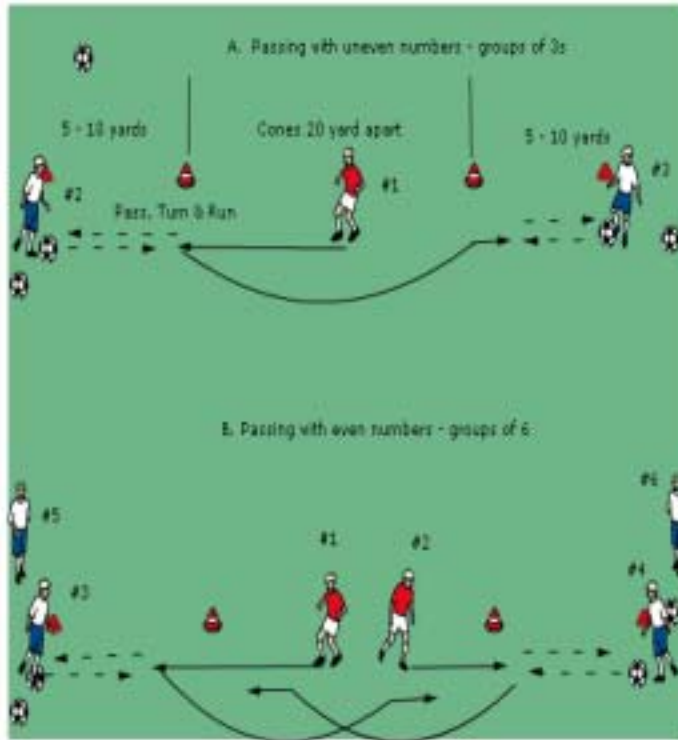
Sequence

- ♣ The 2 starting players pass and follow their pass at maximum speed.
- ♣ Each player in turn receives the ball, passes and follows.
- ♣ Continue for a specific period of time (e.g. 15 minutes) that is adjusted to the fitness, age and competitive level of the players.

Coaching Focus

- Prevent players from dribbling with the ball.
- Demand maximum effort.
- Stress accurate passing as players tire.

PAIRS PASSING – ANAEROBIC LACTIC



Setup –

Group A (Uneven Numbers)

- ♣ Two passers are 30 yards apart.
- ♣ Distance may be slightly shorter for younger players.
- ♣ Runner in middle
- ♣ Ensure there are extra balls available for missed passes

Setup –

Group B (Even Numbers)

- ♣ 2 passers 30 yards apart
- ♣ 2 runners going in opposite directions
- ♣ 2 players waiting for their turn
- ♣ Ensure there are extra balls available for missed passes

Sequence - Group A

- ♣ Runner #1 sprints to passer #2 who passes the ball as player #1 nears the second cone. Player #1 passes the ball back to player #2 and then turns and sprints to player #3 who repeats the procedure.
- ♣ The drill continues for specified time (e.g. 2 minutes). The time will vary by the fitness level and age of the player.
- ♣ **Under no condition are runners to stop.** If they arrive at the second cone and there is no pass, they are to turn and sprint to the other passer as if they had received and given a pass. They continue running from cone to cone while balls are brought back into play.
- ♣ Players rotate after time has elapsed. This constitutes a work to pause ratio of slightly more than 1:3 taking the time for the rotation into consideration.

Timings

- ♣ This is an anaerobic lactic exercise and the players should be stressed to the maximum limits of this system to work up to 3 minutes. The rotation of players takes a few seconds and this turns out to be a work to pause ration of about 1:3.5. As players tire early in the season the rest time can be increased so that a 1:5 work to pause ration is maintained.
- ♣ Rest 3 minutes between sets

Sequence - Group A

- ♣ As per Group A except that there are two runners who run in opposite directions.
- ♣ If one runner is faster than the other is and they both end up going in the same direction then the faster runner will return to his same passer for another pass while the slower runner continues.
- ♣ In this group, the waiting pair will come in as passers and the passers become runners. The runners rest. This constitutes a work to pause ratio of slightly more than 1:3 taking the time for the rotation into consideration.

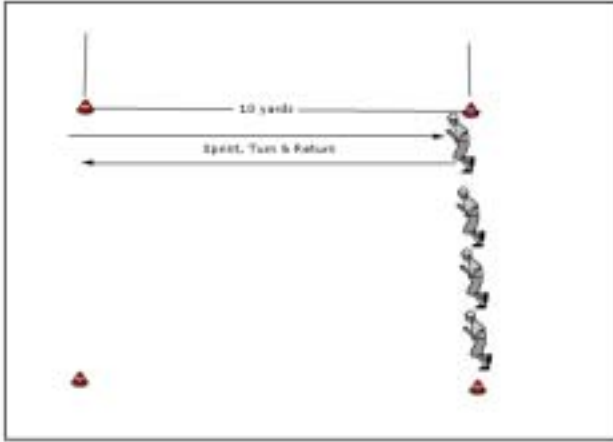
Variation

- ♣ Increase time
- ♣ Increase distance to second cone
- ♣ Place another cone in the center of the two inside cones and the runners must complete a specified number of hops (two feet, one foot etc.,) over the cone after each pass
- ♣ Place 2 cones 3 yards apart side to side in the center and the runner must touch each cone with his/her hand after each pass.

Coaching Focus

- ♣ Maximum effort of near 86% of maximum effort is desired
- ♣ Accurate passing as players tire
- ♣ Encouragement from the passers especially as the runners tire

CONE SPRINTING – ANAEROBIC LACTIC SPRINTING



Setup

- ♣ Place cones 10 yards apart
- ♣ Players line up in line with the cones

Sequence

- ♣ On the whistle or on the command “GO” players sprint at maximum speed to the opposite cones, turn and sprint back.
- ♣ Players continue sprinting until the whistle sounds again on the command to “STOP”.

Timings

- ♣ This is an anaerobic alactic exercise and players should be stretched to the maximum limits of the anaerobic alactic energy system of up to 20 seconds. The work to pause ration is 1:5 /6. Elite players may be able to cope with a lower work to rest ratio of 1:3. The rest periods may consist of easy passing or pairs heading but no running. A sample is as follows:

Sprint #	Time (seconds)	Pause (Active Rest) (seconds)
1	10	50
2	8	40
3	12	60
4	8	40
5	20	100
6	7	35
7	15	75
8	10	50

- ♣ Rest 3 minutes between sets and repeat 3 times. Players may engage in passing and other low intensity activities during the rest phase.
- ♣ Decrease pause time to a work to pause ratio of 1:3 as players get fit.

Coaching Focus

- ♣ Players must sprint at 100% effort.