

Working During Your Own Time
By Adrian Parrish
Kentucky Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coach & Player Development

During your regular soccer season you may only practice or play with your club for 3 to 5 hours a week. If your team participates during an indoor season on average you may only get together once for an hour plus a game. It is already a well known fact that teams and players in the United States have a lower practice to game ratio than any other nations in the world. Yet more and more players are signing up to play organized soccer than any other sport.

If a child is serious about the sport and participate in an elite program such as ODP they need to dedicate a significant amount of time to improving their skills outside all of their regular organized practices.

Children that do this will develop a real love for the game, although as coaches and parents we can constantly encourage and recommend this, the players themselves must have the drive and desire to do it. The best coach is always going to be the player themselves. They will learn from mistakes, they will express themselves more freely without having been told what to do.

Working on such skills will also help a player develop a quality first touch and be more comfortable on the ball when under pressure. Players that are capable of doing such skills allow their coach the opportunity to move them on to the next level

Homework can be set by the coach including such things as dribbling feints, ball manipulation moves, juggling challenges and using the wall for improving you passing can all be practiced at home either as an individual or in a small group of friends.

The Home-Work Sheet along with descriptions below are skills you can do on your own time, all you need is a ball and an area as large as 5yd x 5yd grid. So even the excuse of bad weather can not be used, practice in the basement.

You can set this up as a competition amongst your team and monitor which players

develop.

HOME-WORK SHEET

<u>Skill</u>	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
1. Fast Feet							
2. Triangles (Right Foot)							
3. Triangles (Left Foot)							
4. Drag Push							
5. Inside-Outside							
6. Toe Taps							
7. Double Taps							
8. Slaps							
9. Squeeze & Push							
10. Step over Push Thru							
11. Body Triangles							
12. Juggle (Feet Only)							
13. Juggle (Thighs Only)							
14. Juggle (Head Only)							
15. Juggle (All Parts)							

On the foot skills 1 through to 11 you work for 30 seconds and record your score each day. Have a few practice runs before timing yourself. For Descriptions on the exercise see below. Make sure to do all exercises on the balls of your feet and with speed.

For the juggling exercises (12 through to 15) you work on the skill for 5 minutes each day and record your best score.

Foot Work Skills Description

Fast Feet

- Place the ball in between you feet, with your legs shoulder width apart • Slightly bend your knees
- Knock the ball in between you feet as quickly as you can, using the instep

Triangles

- Start with the ball slightly in front of you
- Drag the ball back with the sole of your right foot at an angle so your legs are shoulder width apart
- Pass the ball across to your left foot using the instep of your right foot • Pass the ball forward at an angle with your left foot
- Stop it with the sole of your right foot and continue the process • Do the same exercise but now start with your left foot

Drag-Push

- Ball Starts in front of you, drag the ball back using the sole of your foot • Then push the ball forward at a slight angle using your laces • Stop the ball with the sole of your other foot and quickly pull the ball back • Push it forward again at slight angle and continue process.

Inside-Outside

- Start with the ball slightly in front of you
- Play the ball side-wards with the instep of one foot
- With the other foot play the ball in the same direction with the outside of the foot
- Then use the inside of the same foot to pass the ball back in the opposite direction
- With the other foot play the ball in the same direction with the outside of the foot
- Use the inside of the same foot and continue the exercise

Toe Taps

- Stand a few inches behind the ball
- Using the sole of one foot touch the top of the ball
- Switch and then use the sole of the other
- Find a rhythm and make sure you hop in between each one, by being on the balls of your feet

Double Taps

- This is a combination of fast Feet and Toe Taps
- Once again find a rhythm, it is easier if you say the process to yourself, side to side, top, top
- So knock the ball from one foot to the other using the insteps • Then follow that by touching the top of the ball with two toe taps • Continue the exercise

Slaps

- Start with the sole of your foot on top of the ball

- Allow your body to lean and go to one side, leaving the ball and your foot on top of it still in the starting position
- The using the sole of your foot drag the ball sideways allowing it roll across your body
- At this point your leg should be crossed but with a distance between them • Then bring your back leg round to the front and stop the ball using the instep of your foot
- Repeat exercise with other foot

Squeeze & Push

- Have the ball underneath your body
- Place the sole of your foot on top of the ball
- Roll it to the side so it opens your legs and push it back with the inside almost keeping your foot in contact with it the whole time
- The continue the exercise using the other foot

Step Over - Push Thru

- Have the ball slightly out on front of you
- Step around the ball, going from inside to outside
- Make sure the step is around the ball and ends out in front but diagonally to the ball
- Then with your back foot, push the ball forward with a delicate touch using the instep
- With the foot that then went around the ball, drag it back to the start and continue the exercise with the other foot

Body Triangles

- Start with the ball out in front of you
- Drag it back with the sole of your foot till it goes all the way past your standing foot
- Then with the instep pass it around the back of your standing foot • Your standing foot will then stop the ball and push it forward with the sole of your foot to the start position. Rotate which way the ball moves around