



International Goalkeepers Academy

Technical Tip # 3

BALL HANDLING

(Part Two)

Catching a powerful shot with the first touch requires good eye-hand co-ordination, concentration, a good handling technique and the ability to position yourself to receive the ball as early as possible.

There are many exercises that will increase your ball handling proficiency from bouncing the ball in front while standing and reclaiming the ball when it bounces up to the more sophisticated rebounder net exercises.

I prefer to use a variety of exercises that stimulate all aspects of catching and securing the ball with the aim of gaining maximum benefit on all aspects of the technique at all times.

As most exercises are repetitive it is easy to just go through many routines without really focusing on what you are doing and therefore not gaining any real benefit.

Concentration is a key element in catching the ball and the keeper must retain a high level of concentration when practicing ball-handling routines. Start each routine slowly at first and build the speed as you become more comfortable with handling the ball. If throwing or kicking the ball is involved in the routines the power and speed of delivery and also the number of balls used may be increased to take the exercise up to the next level.

As concentration levels take time to develop practice each routine for short periods aiming at maximising the percentage of held balls in each period. A quick recovery break will aid in building concentration levels and lengthening the period of each routine.

You must aim at building confidence during these sessions so utilise the recovery break to recover both physically and mentally while keeping on the move so as not to cool down. Stretching the muscles in the area of your body that has been worked in each preceding exercise is a good method of recovering before commencing the next exercise.

Keepers often get frustrated when they drop the ball in these exercises and this can affect the outcome of the session. Any practiced skill takes time to perfect and patience when practicing a routine is important, if you get frustrated you tend to lose concentration and worry about the previous mistake instead of concentrating and endeavoring to improve your technique. This frustration can become a habit in both practice sessions and games. Keepers who display that frustration in a game indicate to the opposition that they have a weakness that can be exploited so one of our primary goals should be to eliminate frustration and focus on the job at hand.

It is hard enough to play against the opposition without playing against ourselves due to frustration.

When working in pairs or having someone serve a ball to the keeper the delivery of the ball should be made so the keeper is capable of making the save and is not continuously beaten by the speed or flight of the ball.

Success builds confidence and when the keeper's success rate is high on the routine then the tempo and power of the delivery can be increased to take the keeper up to the next level.

Make sure you complete each technique and that the ball is held and made safe before distribution. Sloppy practice where the technique is not carried through to completion develops bad habits that carry on to the field. A dropped ball when the keeper is knocked off balance can lead to a goal which is not only embarrassing to the keeper it is also decreases confidence and is a result of not completing the technique by securing the ball in the proper manner.

When catching, watch the ball right into your hands every time and throughout the session check on your hand position to make sure that the W position is retained with the thumbs behind the ball and the fingers stretched around the ball and slightly cupped.

If the ball is caught correctly there should be no slapping sound as the ball should be cushioned on impact. Listen to the ball hitting your hands if there is two distinct sounds one hand is meeting the ball slightly earlier than the other and hard shots will possibly pop out of your hands.

Practice moving your feet in all directions when you are catching the ball and strive for good balance with your body square to the ball when possible to enabling quick distribution to set up a counter attack.

Many drills will not only increase your handling ability but your physical fitness and concentration levels can also be extended by selecting the right drills.

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