

ACTION: REACTION

The goalkeeper is unique in that he is the only player on the soccer field that has to "react" to most situations in the game, e.g. a shot on goal requires an attempt to save by the goalkeeper.

The following exercises have been designed to improve the "reaction time" of the goalkeeper, i.e., his ability to react to the movement of the ball and/or a player.



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10+ Ways to Improve Reaction Time



1. Goalkeeper is in a squat position, head down and facing server, 2-5 yards away. Server calls goalkeeper's name and immediately throws ball. Goalkeeper reacts to save.

Variation: Goalkeeper adopts kneeling or squatting position.



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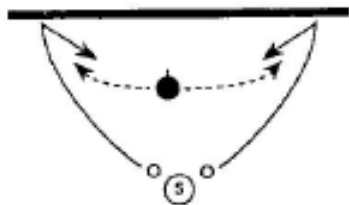
2. Server stands 5 yards behind goalkeeper. Server calls goalkeeper's name and throws ball to either side of goalkeeper. Goalkeeper has to turn and save, before returning to his starting position.

Variation: a) Server calls out which side goalkeeper has to save.

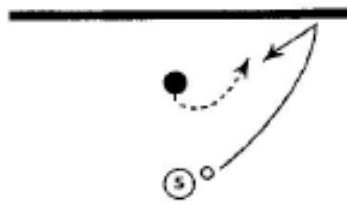
- b) Goalkeeper rolls ball through his own legs to server, who kicks ball back to goalkeeper. Goalkeeper has to turn and save.



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3. Server stands 2 yards behind goalkeeper, both facing a wall. Server throws ball against wall. Goalkeeper has to save rebound.



4. Goalkeeper and server face each other. Goalkeeper has his back to a wall 5 yards away. Server throws ball against wall. Goalkeeper makes a half-turn to save rebound.



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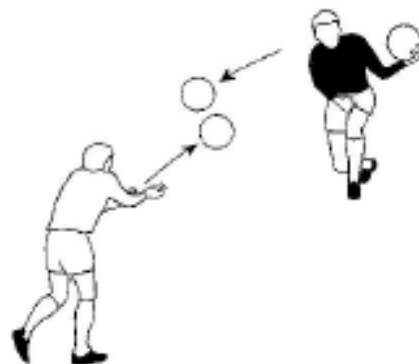
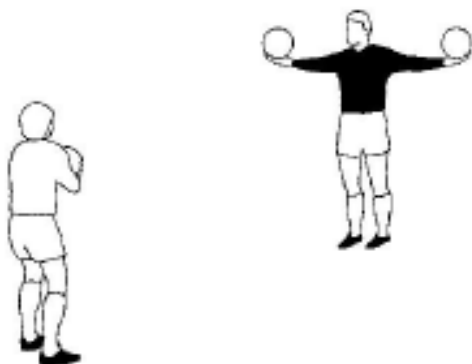


5. Server holds two balls at shoulder height. Goalkeeper stands about one yard away and looks at server's chest. Without warning, server drops one ball. Goalkeeper has to react and catch ball before it hits ground.

Variation: a. Goalkeeper adopts squatting or kneeling position.
b. Goalkeeper deflects ball to target player.



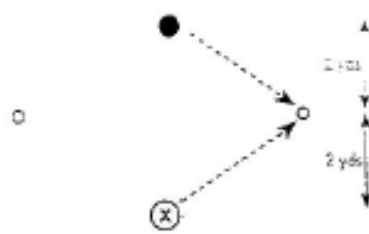
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6. Server and goalkeeper stand 5 yards apart facing each other. Goalkeeper holds one ball in each hand. Server has one ball and, without warning, serves this ball towards one of the two the goalkeeper is holding. Goalkeeper must immediately pass his ball to server in order to catch server's ball with the correct hand.

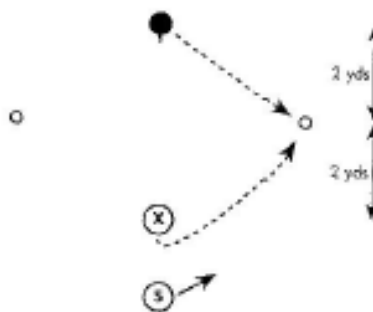


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7. Attacker and goalkeeper stand facing each other 4 yards apart. To the sides, 2 balls are placed 6 yards apart. Attacker attempts to put his foot on one of the balls before goalkeeper can touch ball with his hands. Goalkeeper can only move after attacker moves his feet.

Variation: a. Server and goalkeeper start from a sitting or kneeling position.
b. Attacker faces away from the goalkeeper



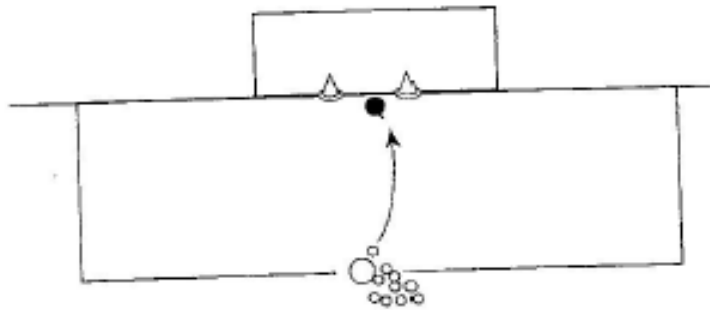
8. Goalkeeper and attacker face server 10 yards away. Goalkeeper is standing 1–2 yards behind 2 balls forming a 6-yard goal. Server uses hand or foot to signal to attacker to the left or right. As soon as server indicates, attacker turns and tries to kick ball. Goalkeeper attempts to get to ball first.

Variation: Attacker and goalkeeper start from a sitting or kneeling position.



9. Goalkeeper stands in a goal formed by 2 balls, 6 yards apart. Server faces him with a supply of balls. Server indicates which side goalkeeper has to move and kicks ball to opposite side of goal after goalkeeper has moved to touch the ball forming the goal.





10. Goalkeeper defends a 2-yard goal. Server, 6 yards from goal, kicks 10 balls in rapid succession. Goalkeeper blocks balls with any part of his body.

Variation: Goal is only 2 feet high.



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Other important Aspects of Fitness

FLUIDITY is a range of movement around a joint or series of joints, is vital to goalkeepers who often have to perform a wide range of movements in a game. Flexibility exercises should be incorporated into both the warm-up and the cool-down parts of a training session. They should be an integral part of the goalkeeper's preparation for a game. The exercises can be done with or without a ball.
Tip: 15-30 seconds for each static stretch.

POWER, in the form of short explosive movements, is used by goalkeepers in diving to save a shot or jumping to catch a cross ball.

PLYOMETRICS is a modern method of improving explosive leg power. It involves a series of single or double leg hopping movements, jumping on and off boxes of different heights as well as skipping and bounding exercises over hurdles.

Tip: 15-30 seconds for each set of exercises.

NB: Skipping rope exercises are excellent in developing leg power, as well as the balance and co-ordination required in a goalkeeper.



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