



Ball Mastery Guide – Foundation Touches

When working with your child you want to ensure that you have the correct ball size (3-5 years of age is a size 3, 6-11 years of age is a size 4, and 12 – adult is a size 5).

Things to look for:

- Close ball control
- Balance & Coordination
- Touches look like passes
- Toes inward or straight not outwards

The goal is to control of the ball between both feet. What you want to look for is proper technique.

Teaching the technique

Advice: *It is better to do it slow and right rather than fast and wrong!*

1. Place the ball by either foot, not in the middle as most kids will typically miss the ball if they have never done foundation touches before.
2. Make sure the child's feet are slightly inwards or toes pointing towards you. This will ensure better ball control and help them maintain the ball in between their legs.
3. Foundation touches is passing the ball back and forth from left foot to right foot.
4. When ready teach them Spatial awareness by having them look up. Set markers by having them either looking at you, an object (Like a distant cone), or a spot on the wall.

Advise 1: Do not let your child randomly pass the ball side to side, there is no real ball mastery growth when the child does this. Children that are younger tend to do this, so it is imperative you always demonstrate and help them start slow. Be patient and teach them to be patient as all things are better done slow and right rather than fast and wrong when beginning. Teach them that Foundation touches are like making repetitive passes with themselves swaying the ball side to side. If your child is between 2 and 3 you may need to demonstrate and then show them with your hands by moving their legs and feet side to side and repeat. At ages 2-3 the child should focus on dynamic movement while gradually increasing speed and applying momentum.

Advise 2: Imagine a pendulum swaying side to side. Once the child has rhythm without bounce, have them implement a slight bounce moving their hips and legs side to side allowing for a faster paced Foundation pass exercise. View video for full demonstration!

Advise 3: Make sure the child is also focusing on their balance while doing Foundation Touches. This exercise will help increase their overall coordination and bodily motor skills with the ball.

UNITED STATES SOCCER PROSPECTS



We want to ensure all workouts are done correctly, so before leaving your child alone to do the workouts by themselves make sure they are doing it slow and right rather than fast and wrong before increasing speed. As others teach that practices makes perfect our technical director teaches that practice makes permanent.

Not all kids learn at the same pace and it is important that you as a parent coach understand this when you go through these exercises with them. It may take a few training days before your child begins to master the ball on their own so, it is imperative that through the duration of your parent coaching you encourage your child while letting them know when it is being done wrong as well. You never want to tell your child he or she is doing it correctly when you know they are not. Since these practices are more personal, you should take advantage of the situation to correct as much as possible without overdoing it and burning out your child. Let them know soccer is like any subject, you could misspell one word and you lose a point on your essay, you rushed through a math problem and missed the answer by a couple digits and you lost a point... You rushed through the exercise and did not execute the correct technique and now your passes to a teammate is not as good. Therefore, going through the learning process and taking your time with it is better than rushing through it because practice does make permanent. Technical Director, Jarsi Ibanez says - 'If you are used to rushing then mistakes are your forte, but if you train the brain to slowly go through things diligently, the brain will be taught to catch mistakes and master it.'