

UNITED STATES SOCCER PROSPECTS



Ball Mastery Guide – Sole Taps

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:

- Balance & Coordination
- Using sole of the foot over the top of the ball – no toe touches
- Toes pointed up not down
- Knees slightly bent
- Upright posture

The goal is to be as static (still) as possible while maintaining 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 on the ground and start slowly by stepping over and on top of the ball with the sole part of the foot while rotating left and right or right and left. Watch video for demonstration.
2. Make sure the child's feet is over and on top of the ball while toes point up and the sole of the shoe or foot touching the ball. Correct them or have them restart when they touch the ball with their toes.
3. Sole taps is learning to have mastery of trapping the ball with the sole of your foot and maneuvering the ball more fluently with the sole of your foot along with other ball mastery techniques.
4. Once the child has learned to properly do sole taps with the sole of their foot, teach them to add momentum but applying a hop with the opposite foot while rotating from right to left or left to right. Watch video for demonstration.

Advise: Make sure the child is also focusing on their balance while doing sole taps. 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.'