



Balance and Footwork

To become a better football player, you need to consistently work at improving your footwork and balance.

Footwork is a vital element to your success in football, from simple movements such as sprinting, jumping, weaving, and turning through to football skills such as passing, receiving, dribbling, tackling, feints and shooting.

Good balance and control of your centre of gravity are also very important in enabling you to react and move with greater speed and composure.

Balance and footwork go hand in hand. A player with good footwork generally has good balance and vice versa. A typical sign of poor footwork is poor balance.

CHARACTERISTICS OF PLAYERS WITH GOOD BALANCE AND FOOTWORK

- The body is constantly in a good position to change direction, accelerate or stop quickly, eg doesn't overstep.
- The player is balanced before, during and after the receiving and passing technique, so is often capable of a late change of decision or quick movement if required.
- The player shows a good ability to control the ball as the preparation footwork gets the body into correct positioning and a balanced stance before the ball arrives.
- These players often dominate in one-on-one scenarios because of their stronger stance with a lower centre of gravity.

CHARACTERISTICS OF PLAYERS WITH POOR BALANCE AND FOOTWORK

- They have poor receiving and passing techniques because they are unbalanced when the skill is needed.
- They are slow to react or change direction as body weight needs to be constantly realigned before movement can occur in the desired path.
- They tend to over-commit when tackling because of too much body momentum.
- They stumble or fall over after skills are performed because they are unbalanced at the point of impact.

TIPS TO IMPROVE BALANCE AND FOOTWORK

- To improve your balance in preparation to move in any direction, widen the space between your feet (to at least shoulder width apart) and bend your knees slightly to ensure a lower centre gravity. Also be on your toes and lean slightly forward, thus allowing for a quicker initial acceleration.
- Spend lots of time practising individual skills and movements with the ball at your feet. Be aware of the need to control your centre of gravity in order to stay balanced at all times and focus on moving your feet rather than stretching or lunging at the ball. This can be done alone or in your team training sessions.
- If you're not getting sufficient quality training sessions, you can use agility ladders and hurdles to improve your footwork by building strength and speed, which will ultimately increase your ability to effectively control your feet and body weight.