

# Activity Ideas for 4-6 year olds.

Activities where all accessed using Soccerrom.com, a free (by registration code) coaching activity finder available to Arkansas coaches.

## 736: Basic Dribbling

**Objective:** This demo outlines technical coaching points for players learning to dribble ball.

**Description:**

- Good dribbling posture includes keeping knees slightly bent, arms out slightly for balance, weight on balls of feet, and body bent forward slightly at waist.
- Touch ball along vertical midline with inside, outside, instep, or sole of foot to move it along ground.
- Strike ball firmly enough to make it roll as you run, but keep it close to you so that defensive players can't take ball away easily.
- Keep your eyes glancing up as much as possible to see space and players around you, and glance down briefly as needed to see ball.
- Practice using both feet to manipulate ball so you are comfortable with it, regardless of whether defensive pressure is coming from your right or your left side.



## 547: Basic Shooting

**Objective:** This demo outlines technical coaching points for players learning to shoot and finish on goal.

**Description:**

- This demo illustrates technical teaching points for instep drive.
- Description Approach ball at an angle (off-center from direction of target, favoring non-kicking foot side)
- Plant non-kicking foot approximately 9" away from ball, with toes pointing towards target
- To keep drive low, plant slightly ahead of ball; to drive ball through air, plant slightly behind ball
- Lock ankle of kicking foot with toes pointed down
- Strike midsection of ball, and follow through with kicking foot directly towards target (avoid crossing over towards plant foot)
- Allow your momentum to carry you forward, and land on your kicking foot to continue your run
- Keep your head down and eyes focused on ball

## 569: Show Me!

**Objective:** This activity challenges young players to be creative as they interact with ball.

**Description:** Have your players form a circle around you, and give a ball to each player. Start activity by saying "Look what I can do!", and then demonstrating an exercise with ball (such as toe taps, hops over ball, or punts high into air). After you demonstrate, all your players should try same exercise. Next, ask each player to take a turn showing you something that he or she can do with ball, let other players try new activity, and continue until every player has done at least one demonstration.



## 444: "Bring 'Em Back"

**Objective:** This beginning level exercise is a fun fitness-building activity.

**Description:** coach starts with a pile of 6 or 7 balls. He kicks or throws balls in all directions, sending them approximately 10-20 yards away. players should chase any ball and dribble it back to pile at coach's feet, working hard to prevent pile from getting down to zero balls. Play for several minutes, rest, and play again.



## 445: "Find a Cone!"

**Objective:** This beginning level exercise is a fun way to do fitness with a ball.

**Description:** Put out as many cones or markers as there are players. Have your players dribble randomly around area until you call out "Find a cone!". players should all dribble quickly to nearest marker and freeze with ball. last player to reach a cone with his ball loses round, and does five "hops" before play



resumes.

#### 446: "Follow Coach"

**Objective:** This beginning level exercise is a fun way to do fitness with a ball.

**Description:** Give every player a ball, and have them follow coach as he dribbles around field. Along way, coach does goofy things like hopping on one foot, rolling on ground, sitting on ball, etc. Show your players that coach has fun, too!

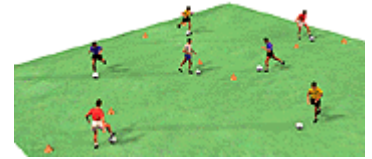


#### 626: Dribbling Through Gates

**Objective:** This activity trains players to keep their head up to see field when dribbling.

**Description:** Using cones, set up a large number of small gates scattered randomly around field. When coach calls out "Play!", players attempt to dribble through as many gates as they can before time expires. Players cannot dribble through same gate twice until they've gone through all other gates on field.

**Variants:** To increase pressure, remove a few balls from activity, and have players who don't have a ball work to win a ball from other players while everyone competes to dribble through highest number of gates.



#### 037: Fast Footwork

**Objective:** "Fast footwork" increases your players' touch and confidence on ball.

**Description:** Have your players do "pendulum" by tapping ball back and forth between insides of their feet.

**Variants:** 1. Next, have your players put sole of their foot on top of ball, roll it out to side of their body, and then push it back in with inside of their foot. Switch feet with each one.

2. Now, have them put sole of their foot on top of ball again, but this time they should roll ball across their body to other foot, and then repeat with that foot.

3. Have them start again with sole of their foot on top of ball, but now they should push it out in front of them and pull it back in. Switch feet each time.

4. Finally, have your players dribble a few steps forward, pull ball back with their right foot (by putting sole of their foot on top of it), open their hips to right, and dribble in that direction. Do same thing with left foot to form a "V" shape, and repeat.



#### 577: Find Coach

**Objective:** This exercise challenges young players to look around field and react quickly.

**Description:** Start with your players laying down on their stomachs and covering their eyes with their hands. coach then moves to some part of field away from players and calls out "Find me!". players then quickly open their eyes, find coach, and sprint to him. last player to arrive must do two "hops", and then everyone lays back down so you can play again.

**Variants:** 1. Play again, but have each player start with a ball. On coach's signal, players must now dribble to coach, stopping their ball in front of him.

2. Finally, increase challenge by having coach run away from players as they dribble to catch him.



#### 573: Firefighter

**Objective:** This activity is an entertaining way for you to emphasize importance of ball control to younger players.

**Description:** In a 25x25 yard area, set up 20 to 25 tall cones in outline of a "house". Explain to your players that house is "on fire", and cones represent fire. Have your players dribble in and out of house, using their balls to knock over cones to put out fire. When all cones are on their sides, have them dribble back to "station" (coach) to get ready to fight next fire. Play several times.



#### 128: Follow-Your-Partner

**Objective:** This exercise is a fun way for your players to do fitness training while still focusing on ball.

**Description:** One player jogs around field, changing direction every now and then. His partner follows behind him while dribbling a ball. Every so often, player in front should stop and open his legs. When player in back sees this, he should pass ball between his legs, crawl through his legs, and sprint back to ball. other player must sprint to get ahead of him again, and then continue his jog around field.

**Variants:** After both players have gone, next make them leap frog over their partner after passing ball through their legs.



#### 459: How Many Fingers?

**Objective:** "How Many Fingers" is an excellent exercise to require your beginning-level players to look up while dribbling ball.

**Description:** Players dribble around in a grid. Periodically, coach (moving around inside grid) will hold up his hand with a certain number of fingers showing. While dribbling, players must look up and call out number of fingers they see. coach should change number of fingers he holds up often so players must continually look up.



#### 460: Start/Stop

**Objective:** "Start/Stop" trains your players to keep ball under close control while dribbling.

**Description:** Players dribble around in a grid. Periodically, coach (moving around inside grid) will say "Stop!". When players hear this, they should immediately stop ball with sole of their foot. When coach says to dribble again, they should continue dribbling around grid.

**Variants:** 1. Next have them stop ball with their knee.

2. Next, make them sit on ball to stop it.

3. Finally, require them to stoop down (in a push-up position) and stop ball with their head.



#### 115: Zig-Zag Dribbling

**Objective:** Zig-Zag Dribbling improves your players' touch on ball by requiring them to focus on dribbling and cuts.

**Description:** Arrange 6 to 8 cones in a staggered pattern, approximately 8 yards apart. Have your players line up at first cone, each with a ball. Each player dribbles from one cone to next, going around each cone slalom-style. When he reaches final cone, each player dribbles quickly back to first cone. Repeat circuit several times.

**Variants:** 1. Change exercise so that dribblers perform different cuts or turns as they approach each cone (i.e., pullback, inside of foot, outside of foot, and many others).

2. Change spacing between cones so that players have to make some cuts in quick succession (for cones placed close together), and will have to accelerate across open space at other times (for cones placed further apart).



#### 121: 1v1 Quick Turn Contest

**Objective:** 1v1 Quick-Turn Contest allows your players to practice turning and taking on defenders in tight spaces.

**Description:** Two players pair up so that attacker is shielding ball from a tight-marking defender. coach initiates action by calling out "Play!". player with ball has 10 seconds within which to turn, bypass defending player, and dribble his ball a few steps further. two then switch roles and wait for next round to begin. first player to score 5 points is winner.



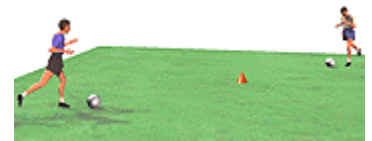
#### 051: Cuts at a Cone

**Objective:** This exercise focuses on dribbling and cutting.

**Description:** Line up two cones a fair distance away from each other. Line another cone up in middle between those two. Start your players on each end cone, each with a ball. first two players should dribble straight to cone in middle at same time, cut to opposite sides just as they reach cone, and dribble to back of opposite line. Remind your players to drop their shoulder on fake to make it more believable.

**Variants:** 1. Once your players get used to exercise, require them to perform it using only their right foot to dribble and cut.

2. Next have them use only their left foot.



#### 046: Individual Shielding

**Objective:** This exercise requires your players to shield ball from defenders.

**Description:** One player shields ball from another by using his hip and arm to keep defending player from being able to reach ball. He should keep his foot on top of ball and his body between ball and defender at all times. defender should put pressure on him by putting his arm on his side, arm, or back, to remind him of his close proximity. If defender comes around shielding player's side to get to ball, he should "flip" his position by switching which foot is on top of ball and which of his sides is against defender. defender should fight for possession of ball, but if he is successful in getting it, he should give it back to attacker. They should play for 1 minute intervals, and then switch roles.



### 064: Mirroring for Field Players

**Objective:** Mirroring for Field Players increases your players' foot speed and reaction time.

**Description:** Place two cones a fair distance apart. Line up two players between them and facing each other. One player should mirror other, who shuffles side to side and tries to "lose" his mirror. They must bend down and touch cones when they get to ends. Tell them to keep a wide stance to keep their balance better and to cover more territory as a result.

**Variants:** After a few repetitions, give one player a ball to increase level of difficulty. He must go sideways with ball to cones as mirror follows.



### 142: Developmental Shooting

**Objective:** "Developmental Shooting" is excellent not only for warming up your goalkeeper, but also for warming up your field players for shooting.

**Description:** Make two lines of players just outside penalty area, with players in one line all having their own ball. first player in this line should dribble to center and just inside penalty area, where he stops ball, steps over it (leaves it), and continues his run. first player in other line starts his run at same time dribbler does, and runs onto ball that he leaves to take a one-touch shot directly to keeper in goal. It is very important for field players to time their runs correctly! Field players switch lines so each person gets to dribble and shoot.

**Variants:** 1. After everyone has taken a shot directly to keeper, next have them shoot to their right.

2. Next, have them shoot to their left.

3. Now have them shoot to either direction so keeper must make reaction save.

4. Finally, coach should call a direction just as shooter approaches ball, requiring him to adjust his shot at last minute.



### 289: Figure 8 Shooting on Goal

**Objective:** This exercise gives your keeper ample opportunity to make saves while also allowing your field players to practice taking both left- and right-footed shots.

**Description:** Place two cones a couple of yards apart at about penalty mark. Have two players stand just outside goal posts, each with several balls, and have one player start by standing between two cones. He should run around one cone (first toward goal and then around behind cone) and look to player on opposite post for a service. server should pass a ball along ground toward center of cones for shooter to run onto and shoot on goal. Immediately after shot, shooter should run around opposite cone, and look to other player for another service. Note that finishing player should shoot with opposite foot each time.



### 430: Ground Strokes Against a Wall

**Objective:** This individual exercise is excellent for helping your players to improve their first-touch receiving for ground balls.

**Description:** One player stands in front of a wall with a ball. He should strike ball with varying force so that he has different types of rebounds to control. Ensure that he uses both feet and strikes ball so that it comes back to him at different angles, requiring him to side-step to get to balls and control them before playing them back.



### 424: Midgoal Finishing Runs Through Flags

**Objective:** This exercise improves your players' skill at finishing balls rolling forward into midgoal.

**Description:** Set up two flags several yards apart at top of penalty area. first player in middle line runs through flags to receive a ball passed forward into midgoal region by first server. receiving player takes one touch to control ball, and then finishes with a shot on goal. Repeat for a specified period of time, then switch sides.

**Variants:** To increase difficulty even further, require server to toss a bouncing ball for finishing player to run onto.



### 568: Obstacle Course

**Objective:** This activity allows you to set up a variety of creative challenges for your players to overcome while working with ball.

**Description:** Using cones, flags, bags, goals, and any other items you have available, set up an "obstacle course" in half a field. Have your players navigate course several times.



For example, you can have your players dribble through a weave course (around cones), then lift their ball over a wall of bags, continue through a zig-zag dribbling course (through flags), and finish with a shot on a full-size goal.

### 712: Shooting Angles Footwork in Goal

**Objective:** This activity trains keeper to move in an arc in front of goal when facing shots from different angles.

**Description:** Place two flags 7' off goal line, 10' apart, and centered in front of a full-sized goal. Each flag should be approximately 10' away from nearest goal post, forming two small "goals" on an angle to each post and a third small goal between two flags. Position three shooters with balls around penalty area, approximately 14 yds away from each of small goals.



One striker starts activity by calling his own name and then shooting his ball in an attempt to score on full-sized goal. One of other strikers then calls out before taking next shot, giving keeper a minimal amount of time to prepare. keeper must stay in front of each small goal, moving laterally on an arc in front of posts and flags to get in position to make each save. Play continues in this way until keeper has made 6 saves or strikers have scored 6 goals.

### 643: Target Practice with a Wall

**Objective:** This individual training activity allows players to practice their shooting using a variety of surfaces and ball-striking techniques.

**Description:** One player stands in front of a wall with a ball. Using a piece of chalk or tape, he should mark a variety of "targets" at different locations on wall (some along ground, and others higher up wall). He should practice striking ball by choosing one of targets and then attempting to hit that target with a ball kicked from 10-20 yards away. Ensure that he uses both feet and strikes ball with different surfaces of foot each time.

**Variants:** Assign different "points" to each target, with higher targets worth most points. Have player see how many total points he can score given 10 shots at targets.



### 617: Volleys to Goal from Hands

**Objective:** This fundamental activity introduces beginning players to concept of using volleys to score.

**Description:** Have your players form several lines in front of same goal (6-10 yards away), each with a ball in his hands. On coach's command, first player in each line drops ball, volleys it into goal, and then quickly runs to side. next group of players then shoots, continuing so that all players in practice have taken their volleys as quickly as possible. coach then counts out 10 seconds, during which all players retrieve their balls and set up to repeat activity again. Award one point for every ball that goes into goal, and two points for each shot that strikes "net first".

**Variants:** 1. Require players to finish with a half volley.

2. Require players to alternate right and left feet on each round.

3. Have players start farther away from goal, toss their balls out in front of them, and finish with volleys on run.

4. Have players turn to face away from goal. Have them toss their balls over their head, turn, and finish with a volley before ball bounces a second time.



### 108: 1v1 Breakaways to Goal

**Objective:** 1v1 Breakaways to Goal is an excellent exercise for your players to practice both finishing 1v1s and on defending them.

**Description:** Set up two cones near midfield, both at an angle to goal, but one approximately 3 yards behind other. players lined up behind cone closest to goal are attackers, and should each have a ball. first attacker starts breakaway by dribbling to goal, and first player on other cone chases attacker and attempts to cut him off before he can take a shot. Be sure to switch lines so all players get several opportunities to be both attackers and defenders. player scoring most goals before time expires wins.



### 071: 1v1 from Poles

**Objective:** This exercise allows your players to practice 1v1 tactics and shooting.

**Description:** Line a group of players up on each goal post. keeper should start with ball, and roll it out to edge of his penalty area. first player on each post sprints out to ball and plays 1v1 until someone breaks free and can get an open shot on goal. If possession changes, new attacker may take shot. When ball goes out of play or a goal is scored, keeper serves next ball out for next player on each post to chase.



### 056: 1v1 Sieve to Goal

**Objective:** "Sieve" is a good opportunity for attackers to take defenders on 1v1.

**Description:** Place a keeper in goal. Line up 6 cones (3 on each side) coming directly out from goal posts. This should make two square grids in front of goal. Put a defender in each grid and an attacker just outside first grid with a ball. This player attempts to dribble past defender in first grid, then past defender in second grid, and takes a shot on goal. Defenders must start on "back" line of their grid and cannot leave their grid to chase attacker.



### 602: Soccer Marbles

**Objective:** This is a fun game to help younger players learn to pass or shoot with accuracy.

**Description:** Using cones, set up a small area (measuring 5-10 yards square, depending on level of your players). Have two teammates start on one side of square, and two opponents on other. Place a ball in middle of area (use a distinctly-colored ball if possible), and have each player start with a ball as well.



When you say "Go!", players attempt to knock target ball across their opponents' boundary line by passing or shooting their balls into target ball. They can collect any balls from area that have stopped rolling and bring them back out of square to try hitting target ball again. Play until one of teams has won, switch sides, and play again.

**SLEEPY DADDY.** Player stands on one side of area with a ball and Coach lays on other side. When coach lays head down that means coach is asleep and that players can dribble towards coach. When coach picks up head player must stop. (THIS IS A VERSION OF RED LIGHT/ GREEN LIGHT)

**BUST ANIMALS** Isaac, like most kids, has way too many stuffed animals, we set them all up in living room and try to shoot ball at them and knock them down.

**JUMP RIVER.** We roll up a blanket and try to kick ball over it to each other.

**1 VERSES 1** – we finish with this one. couch is a goal for him and little chair is my goal. I encourage him not to just kick it but dribble into some space for a good shot. I also encourage him not to run to his goal as a goalkeeper.

**KEEP IT IN SQUARE** – He stands in a square with 4 toys as corners. I toss ball to him and he tries to keep ball from rolling out of square. He gets a point for keeping it in, I get a point if ball rolls out of square.

**SILLY DANCE** – we dribble around and somebody yells 'silly dance' and we dance silly for a few seconds, then dribble again.

**BODY PART** – we dribble around and somebody calls out a body part that we are supposed to stop ball with.