

How to learn dribbling

Dribbling is, perhaps, the most important skill you can develop as a player. You will be able to make the opposition ineffective by dribbling past them...and by dribbling you're controlling the tempo of the game.

There are occasions when it's wrong to dribble. The most skilled dribbler cannot always beat the opposition.

On Offense - If you are dribbling in the attacking third of the field, a 90% success rate is good and you can score plenty of goals.

On Defense - Don't dribble near your goal. Just get rid of the ball and get it out of there. Every time you lose the ball you will present the opposition with a great chance to score, since the ball is near your goal

The lesson is? Don't dribble in front of your own goal! Clear it out!

First things first- you have got to have confidence in yourself in order to pass a person while dribbling. To gain that confidence, you must feel as if you and the ball "**are one**". In other words, you must feel as if that ball is part of you. Practice running back and forth with the ball using your dominant foot. Try touching the ball in different ways- outside, inside, outside, inside. Then try just outside or just inside. Once you have that down, try your weaker foot over and over again, doing the same as with your other foot. **You must have 3 times more contact with your weak foot in order for you to improve significantly.** Once you feel as if you are doing better, do it with both feet - outside, inside dominant then inside outside weaker. Be creative and do what feels comfortable. Once you have all of that down and you feel pretty confident, try some moves. But the moves should be the last thing you learn. Learn to be confident...You will only become confident if you, practice, practice, and practice some more. You must constantly feel the ball against your feet.

Some basic dribbling moves

Perform the "Stop and Go". For this move, the key is simply a change of pace. Jog slowly with the ball almost to the point of stopping. Usually it is best to do this as a defender is alongside of you and suddenly as you are jogging, burst past the defender. You can magnify the effect if you also put the sole of your foot on top of the ball for a second when you stop the ball, and then push it forward with your instep when you break off to perform the dribble again.

Perform the "Fake Shot". Look up and towards what would be your target. Bring your leg back as though you are going to shoot to freeze the defense. Draw your leg back as though you are going to make a pass or take a shot, and then stop this motion just in front of the ball. You can then move the ball to the left or right to set yourself up for your next play, since the defender thought you were going to shoot.

Try the "Cut Back" ("the Cruyff"). Cut the ball back behind your body with the inside of your foot. Plant your left foot to the side of the ball. Then bring your right foot up to cut the ball back. Do the reverse if you are cutting the ball back with your left foot.

You can often tie this in with a fake shot. Dribble into an open space and fake a pass or shot, and then chop the ball back with the inside of the foot you used to fake the pass or the shot. Dribble off in the other direction at speed.

Start by dribbling the ball forward and plant your left foot near the ball as your right leg "winds-up" for a big kick or shot. However, instead of shooting, bring the right foot down and "chop" the ball backwards and underneath your left leg.

Do the "Scissors". Swing your right foot over the ball in a outward motion and take the ball with the outside of your left foot. The steps of the move are the same, but in reverse if you are doing this move with your other foot.

Practice the "Reverse Step Over". Bring your right foot around and over the top of the ball to the inside and plant your foot on the ground. While your foot is on the ground, kick the ball with the outside of your foot to the right. Always remember to accelerate after doing a move. This move is most often done while in a standing position. Do the reverse for your left foot. To perform the trick faster, do foot drills as in jogging backwards and dragging the ball backwards with you or jogging forwards and tapping the ball in front of you. Try and keep the ball close to you.

Try the "Double Step Over". If the defender doesn't go for the first "step over", you can try this move. Take your right foot over the ball, and then swing your left foot over the ball. Take the ball away with the outside of your right foot - it's two swinging motions of each foot over the ball - and then break off at speed.

Pull the "Inside Outside". Fake like you're going inside and then rush to the outside. With the inside of your foot on the ball, carry the ball a little bit to the inside a few steps (leaning in the direction you want the defender to

think you are going). When the defender is off balance or not ready, push the ball to the outside with the outside of your foot, and dribble away at speed. Again, change of pace is key to **all** dribbling moves.

Reverse the above for the "Outside Inside". Use the outside of your foot. This is usually more difficult because you don't have as much control with the outside of your feet in terms of surface area, so make the dragging of the ball to the outside a shorter distance. Push the ball to the outside a few touches and then break to the inside with the ball on the inside of your foot.

Try "Dropping the Shoulder". Dribble directly at a defender and feint with the shoulder in one direction and dribble away in the other direction. You are ducking or leaning your shoulder down a little bit one way and taking off the other way. Thus the reason for calling this the "Dropping your Shoulder" technique. Remember to touch the ball with each step as you move towards the defender so that the ball is close to you and easier to control and touch to one side or the other. If you are dribbling the ball with your right foot, then you are going to fake with your right shoulder. Touch the ball to the left foot just after you drop your shoulder fake.

Perform the "Sole of the Foot Turn". Dribble straight ahead with the right foot and then pull the ball back with the bottom of your right foot, bursting away in the opposite direction with a change of pace.

"Scoop" it! Tempt the defender into diving for the ball, and lift the ball over the defender's foot just as he or she dives in. This is usually done while feinting one way and then scooping the ball the other way, just over the defender's planted foot. Make sure to take off with a burst of speed after you lift the ball over the defender's foot. Often, you'll want to scoop or lift the ball over the defender's foot onto your other foot, so that your body will be between you and the defender after you make the move. Have the ball on your right foot and scoop it over the defender's foot to your left foot. Your body is then between the ball and the defender. This move is usually done when you're in an almost-standing position, and the defender is rushing at you, or you're suckering the defender in and then lifting the ball over his or her foot as he or she comes towards you too fast.

Do the "Lean". Lean to one side and carry the ball with you as if you are going to dart off with it. When the defender doesn't expect it, take off in the opposite direction that you are leaning towards. This move is also usually done when you are in a standing position, trying to beat a defender to get a cross or shot off for instance.

Sucker them. Entice the defender to try to go for the ball, exposing the ball as if the defender can steal it, and when he or she makes a move to go for it, you cut the ball away and take off. Again, change of pace is the key when beating a defender on the dribble. This is why, when training, you touch the ball each time you dribble, so that you can gain greater control of the ball and make those sharp cuts to the side or back and entice, elude, frustrate, and really annoy defenders.

Try the "Stepover Nutmeg". While dribbling, step over the ball with your right foot, and when the defender leans that way, hit the ball with your left foot. It will "Stepover Nutmeg" the defender every time.

Do a "Fakie". Take a small quick touch to the right, and then touch it through the defender's now-open legs or around him or her, and run onto it to do a "Fakie".

Get "Behind the Foot". When you are in a jam with a defender in front of you, try this move. Take a hard half step to the right side of the ball with your right foot. You want your opponent to stab to your right side. Pull the ball back with the sole of your right foot, when it is past your left foot, tap it across the back of your left foot and if possible, tap it forward. When done fast, this move works very well.

Get the defender to shift his or her weight. Drag the ball with your right leg toward your left leg and do a stepover with your left leg and explode to the left. Do this smoothly and the defender will shift his or her weight to the opposite direction.

Remember the key point: change of pace after doing a move! Go at a slow pace before you do the move and then speed up after you do the move.