



STEPS to SUCCESS
ACTIVITY SERIES

SECOND EDITION

SOCCER

Steps to Success



JOSEPH A. LUXBACHER

#1
Sports
Instruction
Series

SOCCER

Steps to Success

Second Edition

Joseph A. Luxbacher, PhD
University of Pittsburgh



Human Kinetics

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Developmental Editor: Rodd Whelpley; **Assistant Editors:** Kent Reel, Sally Bayless; **Editorial Assistant:** Jennifer Hemphill; **Copyeditor:** June Waldman; **Proofreader:** Sally Bayless; **Typesetter:** Kathy Boudreau-Fuoss; **Text Designer:** Keith Blomberg; **Layout Artist:** Tara Welsch; **Cover Designer:** Jack Davis; **Photographer (cover):** Wilmer Zehr; **Illustrator:** Keith Blomberg; **MAC Illustrator:** Jennifer Delmotte; **Printer:** United Graphics

Instructional Designer for the Steps to Success Activity Series: Joan N. Vickers, EdD, University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta, Canada

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Human Kinetics

Web site: <http://www.humankinetics.com/>

United States: Human Kinetics, P.O. Box 5076, Champaign, IL 61825-5076

1-800-747-4457

e-mail: humank@hkusa.com

Canada: Human Kinetics, 475 Devonshire Road, Unit 100, Windsor, ON N8Y 2L5

1-800-465-7301 (in Canada only)

e-mail: humank@hkcanada.com

Europe: Human Kinetics, P.O. Box IW14, Leeds LS16 6TR, United Kingdom

(44) 1132 781708

e-mail: humank@hkeurope.com

Australia: Human Kinetics, 57A Price Avenue, Lower Mitcham, South Australia 5062

(088) 277 1555

e-mail: humank@hkaustralia.com

New Zealand: Human Kinetics, P.O. Box 105-231, Auckland 1

(09) 523 3462

e-mail: humank@hknewz.com

PREFACE

Soccer is the most popular sport on the planet. More than 200 million people worldwide play more than 20 million soccer games each year. To give you an idea of the magnitude of soccer's popularity, a television audience of more than 2 billion people watched Brazil defeat Italy in the 1994 World Cup final. Compare that figure to 750 million who watched the 1993 NFL Super Bowl, 350 million who watched the Wimbledon tennis final, and 490 million who watched the first man land on the moon.

The reasons for soccer's universal appeal rest with the nature of the game. Soccer is a game of physical and mental challenges. You must execute skilled movements under game-related conditions of restricted space, limited time, physical and mental fatigue, and opposing players. You must be able to run several miles during a game, mostly at sprintlike speed, and respond quickly to a variety of rapidly changing situations during play. Finally, you need a thorough understanding of individual, group, and team tactics. Your ability to meet all these challenges determines how well you perform on the soccer field.

Whether your orientation is purely recreational or highly competitive, you'll enjoy the game more as you master the skills and strategies required for successful play. The second edition of *Soccer: Steps to Success* provides a step-by-step plan for improving your soccer skills and developing a more complete understanding of tactics and strategies. The book is organized in a series of clearly defined steps that enable you to advance at your own pace. Illustrations clarify the proper execution of soccer skills and tactics, including those used by the goalkeeper. The drills at the end of each step begin with basic exercises and progress in complexity. The sequence of drills enables you to practice the fundamentals before you engage in game-simulated conditions. Once you have mastered the skills and tactics covered in one step, you are ready to move on to the next. At the end of your journey you will be ready to play the game of soccer.

Writing a book requires the support and cooperation of a great many people. I tip my hat to the outstanding, highly professional staff at Human Kinetics. Although I can't possibly mention all of the players by name, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to the following individuals. To Judy Patterson Wright, my editor and friend, whose guidance and good humor helped to keep me on course when the writing was difficult; to Rodd Whelpley for his patience, persistence, and insight concerning revisions to the text; and to the many soccer coaches and players who were kind enough to share their knowledge and ideas. I would also like to thank my mom, Mary Ann Luxbacher, for her constant love and encouragement. Her support is steadfast in everything I do.

I especially want to express gratitude and love to my beautiful wife, Gail, the most special person in my life. Her willingness to sacrifice personal time for writing time when the deadlines drew near and to tolerate the moods and quirks of a sometimes frustrated author are deeply appreciated. Her constant love, support, and encouragement enabled me to complete this project.

THE STEPS TO SUCCESS STAIRCASE

Get ready to climb a staircase—one that will lead you to become an accomplished soccer player. You cannot leap to the top; you get there by climbing one step at a time. Each of the 10 steps you will take is an easy transition from the one before. The first few steps of the staircase provide a foundation of basic skills and concepts. As you progress further, you will learn how to connect groups of those seemingly isolated skills. You will learn how to consistently pass and receive the ball, how to shoot, and how to play individual offense and defense. As you near the top of the staircase, you will become more confident in your ability to play as a team member, both offensively and defensively, and you will learn how to communicate effectively with your teammates.

Familiarize yourself with this section, as well as the “Soccer: A World-Class Sport” section for an orientation and help in setting up your practice sessions around the steps. Follow the same sequence each step (chapter) of the way.

1. Read the explanations of what is covered in the step, why the step is important, and how to execute or perform the step's focus, which may be on basic skills, concepts, tactics, or a combination of the three.
2. Follow the numbered illustrations showing exactly how to position your body to execute each basic skill successfully. There are three general parts to each skill: preparation (getting into a starting position), execution (performing the skill that is the focus of the step), and follow-through (reaching a finish position or following through to starting position).
3. Look over the descriptions in the “Success Stoppers” section for common errors that may occur and the recommendations for how to correct them.
4. Read the directions and the Success Goals for each drill. Practice accordingly and record your scores. Compare your score with the Success Goals for the drill. You need to meet the Success Goals of each drill before moving on to practice the next one because the drills are arranged in an easy-to-difficult progression. This sequence is designed specifically to help you achieve continual success.
5. As soon as you can reach all the Success Goals for one step, you are ready for a qualified observer—such as your teacher, coach, or trained partner—to evaluate your basic skill technique against the Keys to Success items. This is an evaluation of your basic technique or form, which can enhance your performance.
6. Repeat these procedures for each of the 10 Steps to Success. Then rate yourself according to the directions in the “Rating Your Total Progress” section.

Good luck on your step-by-step journey to developing your soccer skills, building confidence, experiencing success, and having fun!

KEY

X = Offensive player	STB = Stopper back
O = Defensive player	RB = Right back
X⊗ = Player with the ball	LB = Left back
-- ➔ = Path of the ball	RMF = Right Midfielder
— ➔ = Path of player without the ball	CMF = Center midfielder
~~~~ ➔ = Path of player dribbling the ball	<b>LMF</b> = Left midfielder
<b>S</b> = Server	<b>RFW</b> = Right forward (winger)
<b>GK</b> = Goalkeeper	<b>LFW</b> = Left forward (winger)
<b>SW</b> = Sweeper back	<b>CS</b> = Central striker (forward)

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*Block  
poke  
side*

*Jump  
dive*

*Forward  
vault  
freeline  
standing  
move*

# S OCCER: A WORLD-CLASS SPORT

**S**occer! The game evokes an outpouring of passion and emotion unparalleled within the realm of sport. Soccer is a common language among peoples of diverse backgrounds and heritages, a bridge that spans economic, political, cultural, and religious barriers. Known as “football” throughout most of the world, soccer is the national sport of nearly every country in Asia, Africa, Europe, and South America. It remains the only football-type game played at the Olympics. Millions more people follow the World Cup, soccer’s international championship, than follow the Super Bowl and World Series. Soccer is without question the world’s most popular game.

## The Modern Game

In a global society divided by physical and ideological barriers, soccer’s popularity is not restricted by age, sex, political, religious, cultural, or ethnic boundaries. The fluid, controlled movements of each player express his or her individuality within a team game. Speed, strength, stamina, skill, and tactical knowledge are all important aspects of performance. The variety of challenges confronting players may be the primary reason for the game’s universal appeal.

The tactics of team play have undergone many modifications during the evolution of the sport. In the past players filled very specialized roles. Forwards were assigned the sole task of scoring goals, and defenders were expected to prevent the opposition from scoring. Positional responsibilities were narrowly defined, and there was little overlap of roles. Soccer today requires much more of players. The modern game places a premium on the complete soccer player, that is, the individual who can defend as well as attack. With the exception of the goalkeeper, the days of the soccer specialist are history.

Because soccer is an international game, the rules and regulations must be standard throughout the world. The governing body of world soccer is the Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA). More than 170 nations, including the United States, are members of FIFA. In 1913 the United States Soccer Football Association (USSFA) was founded and approved as a member of FIFA. Its name was later changed to the United States Soccer Federation (USSF). The various professional and amateur associations in the United States are organized under the auspices of the USSF. In 1974 the United States Youth Soccer Association (USYSA) was established as an affiliate of the USSF to administer and promote the sport for players under 19 years of age.

## Playing the Game

Soccer is played on a larger field than any sport except polo (where horses do most of the work!). The field is commonly called a *pitch*. A regulation game consists of two 45-minute



periods of virtually nonstop action. There are no time-outs and few substitutions. It is not surprising that soccer players are among the fittest of all athletes.

A soccer match is played between two teams of 11 players each. Each team defends a goal and tries to score in the opponent's goal. Each team designates one goalkeeper whose job is to protect the team's goal. The goalkeeper is allowed to control the ball with his or her hands within the penalty area, an area 44 yards wide and 18 yards from the endline. Field players may not use their hands or arms to control the ball, but instead they must use their feet, legs, body, or head. Goals are tallied by kicking or heading the ball into the opponent's goal. Each goal counts as one point, and the team that scores the most goals wins the match.

The alignment of the 10 field players can vary. Most systems of play deploy three or four defenders, four or five midfielders, and two or three forwards. Players are permitted to move anywhere on the playing field although each has specific responsibilities within the system of play used by the team. (See chapter 10 for more on team organization.)

A coin toss generally determines which team kicks off to start the game. Once play begins, the action is virtually continuous. The clock stops only after a goal is scored, on a penalty kick, or at the discretion of the referee. After a goal, the team scored against restarts play with a kickoff at the center of the field.

## Rules of Play

Soccer is a simple game with only 17 basic rules. The official FIFA laws of the game are standard throughout the world and pertain to all international competition. (Minor modifications of the official FIFA laws are permissible for youth and school-sponsored programs in the United States. These modifications may involve the field size, size and weight of the ball, size of the goals, allowed number of substitutes, and duration of the game.)

### Playing Field

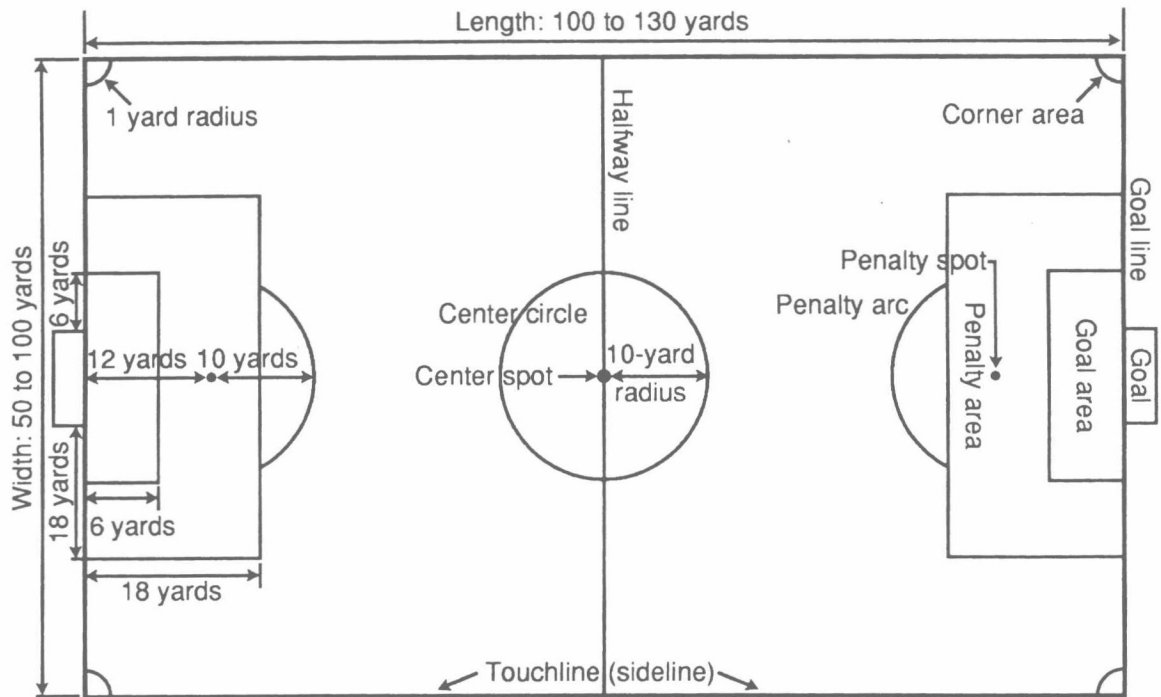
The soccer field must be 100 to 130 yards long and 50 to 100 yards wide. The length must always exceed the width. (For international matches the length must be 110 to 120 yards and the width 70 to 80 yards.)

Distinctive lines no more than 5 inches wide mark the *field area*. As shown in Diagram 1, the end boundaries of the field are called the *goal lines*, and the side boundaries are called the *touchlines*. The *halfway line* divides the playing area into two equal halves, and the *center spot* marks the center of the field. A *center circle* with a radius of 10 yards surrounds the center spot.

A *goal* is positioned at each end of the field on the center of the goal line. The dimensions of each goal are 8 feet high and 24 feet wide. The *goal area* is a rectangular box drawn along each goal line. It is formed by two lines drawn at right angles to the goal line, 6 yards from each goalpost. These lines extend 6 yards onto the field of play and are joined by a line drawn parallel with the goal line.

The *penalty area*, a rectangular box drawn along each goal line, is formed by two lines drawn at right angles to the goal line 18 yards from each goalpost. The lines extend 18 yards onto the field of play and are joined by a line drawn parallel with the goal line. The goal area is enclosed within the penalty area.

Located within the penalty area is the *penalty spot*. The penalty spot is marked 12 yards front and center of the midpoint of the goal line. Penalty kicks are taken from the penalty



**Diagram 1** Official soccer field.

spot. The *penalty arc* with a radius of 10 yards from the penalty spot is drawn outside the penalty area.

A *corner area* with a radius of 1 yard is marked at each corner of the field. Corner kicks are taken from within the corner area.

### ***Equipment***

The soccer ball is spherical and made of leather or other approved materials. The official FIFA ball is 27 to 28 inches in circumference and weighs between 14 and 16 ounces. The regulation-size adult soccer ball is designated internationally as the Size #5 ball. Smaller balls (Size #4 and Size #3) are sometimes used for youth games.

The required attire for a field player consists of a jersey or shirt, shorts, socks, shinguards, and shoes. The goalkeeper wears a shirt and shorts with padding at the elbows and hips in colors that distinguish him or her from the other players and the referee. Players are not permitted to wear any article of clothing that the referee considers a potential danger to another player. For example, watches, chains, or other forms of jewelry are usually forbidden.

### ***Officials***

An appointed referee officiates at each game. The referee enforces the laws of the game and has ultimate authority on the field. Two linesmen assist the referee. The linesmen indicate when the ball is out of play (subject to the decision of the referee) and determine which team is entitled to the throw-in, goal kick, or corner kick. They also assist the referee in determining when offside violations have occurred.

### ***Start of Play***

A player takes a placekick from the center spot of the field to initiate play. Opponents must position themselves outside the center circle in their own half of the field. The ball is “in play” when it travels into the opponent’s half of the field the distance of its own circumference. The kicker is not permitted to play the ball a second time until another player touches it. A similar placekick restarts the game after a goal has been scored and also begins the second half of play. A goal cannot be scored directly from the kickoff.

### ***Ball in and out of Play***

The ball is considered “out of play” when it completely crosses a touchline or goal line, whether on the ground or in the air, or when the referee stops the game. The ball is in play at all other times, including

- rebounds from a goalpost, crossbar, or corner flag onto the field of play;
- rebounds off the referee or linesmen when they are in the field of play; and
- intervals while a decision is pending on a supposed infringement of the laws.

If the referee is unsure of who last touched a ball that traveled out of the field area, play restarts with a *drop ball* at the spot where the ball was last in play. The referee drops the ball between two opposing players who cannot attempt to gain possession until the ball contacts the ground.

When the ball travels out of play over a sideline, either on the ground or in the air, it is returned into play by a *throw-in* from the spot where it left the playing field. A player from the team opposite to that of the player who last touched the ball takes the throw-in. The thrower must hold the ball with both hands and deliver it from behind and over his or her head. The player must face the field of play with each foot touching the sideline or the ground outside the sideline at the moment the ball is released. The ball is considered in play immediately after it crosses the touchline onto the field of play. The thrower may not touch the ball a second time until it has been played by another player. A throw-in is awarded to the opposing team if the ball is improperly released onto the field of play. A goal cannot be scored directly from a throw-in.

A ball last touched by a member of the attacking team that passes over the goal line, excluding the portion of the line between the goalposts and under the crossbar, is returned to play by a *goal kick* awarded to the defending team. The goal kick is taken from a spot within that half of the goal area nearest to where the ball crossed the goal line. The ball is back in play once it has traveled outside the penalty area. The kicker cannot play the ball a second time until a teammate or an opponent touches it. A goal kick cannot be played directly to the goalkeeper within the penalty area. All opposing players must position themselves outside the penalty area when a goal kick is taken. A goal cannot be scored directly off a goal kick.

A ball last touched by a member of the defending team that passes over the goal line, excluding the portion of the line between the goalposts and under the crossbar, is returned to play by a *corner kick* awarded to the attacking team. The corner kick is taken from within the quarter circle of the corner nearest the spot where the ball left the playing area. Defending players must position themselves at least 10 yards from the ball until it is played. The kicker is not permitted to play the ball a second time until another player touches it. A goal may be scored directly from a corner kick.

## Scoring

A goal is scored when the ball passes completely over the goal line, between the goalposts and under the crossbar, provided it has not been thrown, carried, or intentionally propelled by an arm or hand of a player of the attacking team. Each goal counts as one point. The team scoring the most goals during a contest wins the game. The game is termed a *draw* if both teams score an equal number of goals during regulation time.

## Offside

All players should be familiar with the offside law. A player is in an *offside position* if he or she is nearer the opponent's goal line than the ball is at the *moment the ball is played* unless

- the player is in his or her own half of the field or
- at least two opponents are as near their own goal line as the player is.

Just because a player is in an offside position does not mean that he or she must be declared offside. A player is declared offside and penalized for being in an offside position only if, at the moment the ball touches or is played by a teammate, the referee judges the player to be

- interfering with play or with an opponent or
- seeking to gain an advantage by being in an offside position.

A player is not offside under the following conditions:

- Merely by being in an offside position
- Receiving the ball directly from a goal kick, corner kick, or throw-in

The punishment for infringement of the offside law is an indirect free kick awarded to the opposing team at the spot where the offside occurred. It is important to consider that the referee shall judge offside at the instant the ball is played and not at the moment the player receives the ball. For example, a player who is onside at the moment the ball is played does not become offside if he or she moves forward into an offside position to receive the pass while the ball is in flight.

## Free Kicks

There are two types of free kicks—direct and indirect. A goal can be scored directly by the kicker from a direct free kick. To score from an indirect free kick the ball must be played or touched by a player other than the kicker before it passes over the goal line. Defending players must position at least 10 yards from the ball for both direct and indirect free kicks. The only instance in which defending players can position closer than 10 yards to the ball is when the attacking team has been awarded an indirect free kick within 10 yards of the defending team's goal. In that situation defending players can stand on their goal line between the goalposts in an attempt to prevent the kick from entering the goal.

When a player takes a free kick from within his or her own penalty area, all opposing players must remain outside the area and position at least 10 yards from the ball. The ball must be stationary when the kick is taken and is in play once it has traveled the distance of its circumference and beyond the penalty area. The goalkeeper may not receive the ball

into his or her hands and then kick it into play. If the ball is not kicked directly into play beyond the penalty area, the kick must be retaken. If the kicker touches the ball a second time before another player touches it, then the opposing team is awarded an indirect free kick.

### ***Fouls and Misconduct***

Fouls are either *direct* or *indirect*. A player who intentionally commits any of the following nine offenses will be penalized by the award of a *direct free kick* to the opposing team at the spot where the foul occurred:

- Kicking or attempting to kick an opponent
- Tripping an opponent
- Jumping at an opponent
- Charging an opponent in a violent or dangerous manner
- Charging an opponent from behind unless the opponent is obstructing the player from the ball
- Striking or attempting to strike an opponent or spitting at him or her
- Holding an opponent
- Pushing an opponent
- Carrying, striking, or propelling the ball with a hand or arm (This violation does not apply to the goalkeeper within his or her penalty area.)

If a player on the defending team intentionally commits a direct-kick offense within his or her own penalty area, he or she is penalized by the award of a *penalty kick* to the opposing team.

*Indirect free kicks* result from the following rule infractions:

- Playing in a manner the referee considers to be dangerous to you or another player.
- Charging an opponent with your shoulder when the ball is not within playing distance of the players involved. (Charging with the shoulder is legal if you are attempting to play the ball.)
- Intentionally obstructing an opponent when not attempting to play the ball.
- Charging the goalkeeper except when he or she has possession of the ball or has moved outside of the goal area.
- The goalkeeper takes more than four steps while in possession of the ball without releasing it into play (the so-called four-step rule).
- The goalkeeper indulges in tactics that the referee rules are designed to waste time, delay the game, and give an unfair advantage to the goalkeeper's own team.
- Violation of the goalkeeper backpass rule (see below).
- Violation of the offside rule.

### ***Goalkeeper Backpass Rule***

FIFA recently instituted a major rule change involving the goalkeeper. The *Laws of the Game* now state that the goalkeeper is not permitted to receive the ball in his or her hands after it has been deliberately kicked to him or her by a teammate. The kick must be a deliberate pass for this rule to take effect; a deflection, for example, is not penalized. Violation of the backpass rule results in the award of an indirect free kick to the opposing team at the spot of the infraction.



Players may use their head, chest, or knees to intentionally pass the ball to their goalkeeper. However, if a player uses a deliberate trick to circumvent the backpass rule (e.g., uses his or her feet to flip the ball in the air to head it to goalkeeper), the player will be guilty of “ungentlemanly behavior” and officially cautioned. The opposing team is awarded an indirect free kick from the place where the foul was committed.

### ***Cautions and Ejections***

It is the referee's discretion to reprimand a player who continually commits flagrant violations of the laws. The referee issues a *yellow card* to officially caution a player. A yellow card violation conveys a warning to the player that he or she will be ejected from the game if similar violations continue. The referee issues a *red card* to signal that a player has been ejected from the game. A player can be sent off the field and shown the red card if, in the opinion of the referee, he or she

- is guilty of violent conduct,
  - is guilty of serious foul play,
  - uses foul or abusive language, or
  - is guilty of a second cautionable offense after already having received one caution.
- delays or restarts of game  
- fails to respect required distance when play is restarted w/ a corner kick or free kick  
- enters or re-enters the field w/out referee's permission  
- deliberately leaves the field w/out ref's permission

The guilty player cannot return to the game and cannot be replaced by a substitute.

### ***Penalty Kick***

The most severe sanction for a direct foul, other than ejection from the game, is the penalty kick. A penalty kick results when a player commits a direct foul offense within his or her team's penalty area; it can be awarded irrespective of the position of the ball. The kick is taken from the penalty spot 12 yards front and center of the goal. All players except the kicker and the goalkeeper must position outside the penalty area at least 10 yards from the penalty spot. The goalkeeper must stand on the goal line between the goalposts and is not permitted to move his or her feet until the ball has been played. The kicker must kick the ball forward and cannot touch it a second time until it has been played by another player. The ball is in play once it has traveled the distance of its circumference. A goal can be scored directly from a penalty kick. Time should be extended at halftime or the end of regulation time to allow a penalty kick to be taken.

## **Warming up for Success**

Prior to every practice or game you should perform a series of warm-up activities. The primary objectives of warm-up exercises are to elevate muscle temperature, promote increased blood flow to the working muscles, and stretch the major muscle groups. A warm-up improves your muscular contraction and reflex time, increases suppleness, and helps to prevent next-day soreness. A thorough warm-up also reduces the likelihood of muscle and joint injuries.

How long and hard should I warm-up? is an issue of concern to many athletes and coaches. Individual needs vary, and there is no hard and steadfast answer to that question. Environmental conditions, such as temperature and humidity, must also be taken into account. You probably will not have to warm up quite as long on a hot, humid afternoon in June as you would on a cold, blustery day in November. As a general guideline,

warm up for 15 to 20 minutes at sufficient intensity to break a sweat. Sweating indicates an elevation in muscle temperature.

Begin your warm-up by increasing the blood flow to your muscles, something coaches commonly refer to as “getting your blood moving.” You can accomplish this with 5 to 10 minutes of activity that elevates your heart rate from its resting state. Light dribbling with the ball or interpassing with a teammate while jogging will usually suffice. Next, perform a series of stretching exercises that work all of the major muscle groups used in soccer.

Flexibility is the range of possible movement around a joint or series of joints. Static stretching is the preferred method of increasing your range of motion. Slowly extend the target muscle or group of muscles to its greatest possible length without discomfort. A slow, steady extension of the muscle will inhibit firing of the stretch reflex, the body’s built-in safeguard against overstretching. Don’t bounce or jerk! Hold the stretch for 30 to 60 seconds, relax, and then move gently into a deeper stretch for 30 to 60 seconds. Stretch each muscle group twice. Be sure to address the following muscle groups:

- Hamstrings
- Quadriceps
- Back
- Groin
- Calves and Achilles tendons
- Neck

Never compete with teammates when performing flexibility exercises. Measure progress against your own standards and initial state of flexibility. Your objective is to improve your range of motion in a safe, injury-free manner, not to outstretch your friends. Conclude your warm-up with exercises designed to develop or maintain muscular strength in the following muscle groups:

- Abdominals
- Legs
- Arms and chest

At the end of each practice session or after a game, spend a few minutes allowing your heart rate and body functions to return to their resting state. During this cool-down time, perform a stretching exercise for each major muscle group. Stretching after a hard practice or a game will help to prevent next-day soreness. Remember, don’t bounce or jerk when extending your muscles. Assume the stretch position, hold that position, then relax for a few seconds. Repeat each stretch twice.

## International and National Associations

The following organizations are under the auspices of FIFA and administer soccer competition in the United States. The United States Soccer Federation directs amateur and professional soccer competition. The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), the National Association for Intercollegiate Athletes (NAIA), or the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) control collegiate competition for both men and women. Questions or requests for information should be directed to the appropriate organization.

**International Organization**

Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA)  
 FIFA House, Hitzigweg 11  
 8030 Zurich, Switzerland  
 Phone 41-1/384-9595

**National Organizations**

American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO)  
 5403 W. 138th St.  
 Hawthorne, CA 90250  
 Phone 310-643-6455

National Soccer Coaches Association of America (NSCAA)  
 4220 Shawnee Mission Pkwy., Ste. 105 B  
 Fairway, KS 66205  
 Phone 800-458-0678

United States Soccer Federation (USSF)  
 U.S. Soccer House  
 1801-1811 South Prairie Ave.  
 Chicago, IL 60616  
 Phone 312-808-1300

United States Youth Soccer Association (USYSA)  
 Campbell Business Center  
 899 Presidential Drive, Ste. 117  
 Richardson, TX 75081  
 Phone 214-235-4499

**Scholastic Organizations**

National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA)  
 6120 S. Yale Ave., Ste. 1450  
 Tulsa, OK 74136  
 Phone 918-494-8828

National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)  
 6201 College Blvd.  
 Overland Park, KS 66211-2422  
 Phone 913-339-1906

National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA)  
 P.O. Box 7305  
 Colorado Springs, CO 80933-7305  
 Phone 719-590-9788

