

Goalkeeper Agility Exercises

The first exercise I want to discuss is probably my favorite exercise of them all. Its called spaghetti or triangle exercises. This exercise requires 4 people, which is best if it's one coach or trainer and 3 keepers. Make an equilateral triangle with each side being 8 yards. This essentially makes 3 full sized goals. The first keeper starts in the middle of the triangle and the other three people are on the outside of the triangle lined up 10 yards from the middle of each goal. Each of these servers has a ball in her hands. The keeper will run to the outside of each goal and save a simple serve with a collapse dive. As soon as the save has been made, the keeper runs though the triangle to the next ball being served. Each save must be made outside the triangle. This will go on for a one-minute period. As soon as the minute is up, the next keeper will start. If the makeup of the group is 3 keepers and one trainer, each keeper will go hard for one minute and then rest for the next two minutes. After each keeper has gone through this process, the next step would be extended dives. It's important for the servers to make sure that each one is not serving to the same side each time. Try to get the servers to alternate each serve. There are many options for sets to do in this series including running through balls, forward dives, high balls, backward tips, and parrying. Then you could build in forward rolls, knees to chest jumps or burpees between each save and this becomes a wonderful exercise for conditioning, agility and technique. The reason it's sometimes called a spaghetti exercise is after each one-minute period; the keeper's legs start to feel like they have the stability of spaghetti. This is a high intensity exercise that requires a lot of concentration. While the conditioning in this exercise is incredible, the technique used in each set is what has to emphasize. One of the reasons for the rolls and jumps is to tire out the keepers to force them to really concentrate on the technique. This exercise will show how fundamentally sound a keeper really is. The only negative of this exercise is the need for 4 people.

The next exercise is also done with a triangle although this one is much smaller. This equilateral triangle should be between 3-4 yards. You also need at least 4 people although the more the better. Field players can be used, as there is a benefit to them as well. In this exercise the working keeper must stay outside the triangle at each time. The players on the outside would stay around 10 yards back surrounding the triangle. They would pass the ball around the triangle trying to create an angle to pass the ball through the triangle. The working keeper must stay outside the triangle and use their footwork to navigate their way around the triangle trying to keep everything outside of the triangle. This can be turned into a competition between keepers to see who can be scored upon the least in a one-minute period. Each time the ball goes through the triangle it's a point and each time the keeper runs through the goal it's also a goal. The keeper who has let up the fewest number of points wins. This exercise requires a lot of balls and the more field players the better since it requires some skill to pass the ball around and through triangle. This is very strenuous and again the only negative is the number of people required plus the number of balls.

The third exercise I want to discuss involves fewer people. It's done in front of a goal with two servers and one keeper. The servers stand approximately 10 yards from the goal even with the posts. They will pass the ball back and forth either with one or two touches and the keeper must move with the ball in order to cut off the angle.

Any time the servers feel the keeper has not gotten there quickly enough, the ball can be shot into the goal (either near post or far post). This requires a great deal of movement and conditioning. The keeper, while going back and forth between the posts does not really run in straight lines but rather almost makes a U in their movements going back to the line in the middle and then attacking the ball when its at the feet of the servers. The advantage of this exercise is the servers can be keepers, coaches or just bystanders and it only requires one ball.

Each of these exercises is high intensity and should last for one-minute periods. Emphasize the fundamentals and realize these are extremely simple but intense exercises.

Have fun.