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Opening extract from

50 Football Skills

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First touch

Controlling the ball as you receive it is one of the most important skills you can learn. A good first touch keeps the ball moving and places it a short distance from your feet.

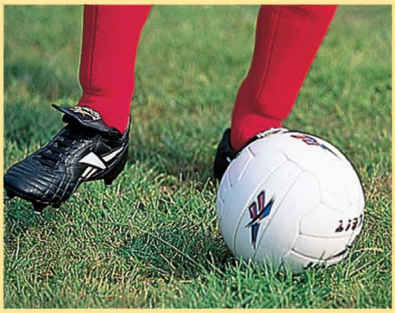


Don't just hope the ball will come to you – move into line with it.

Here, the player is 'cushioning' the ball with his foot. This slows the ball down without making it bounce away.

Cushioning the ball

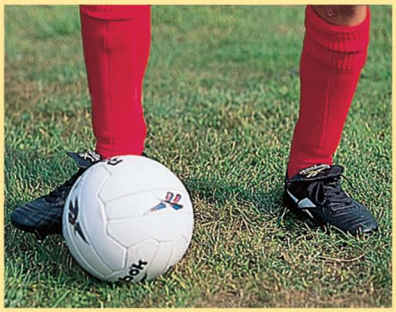
Cushioning the ball means taking the speed out of it, just as a cushion would if it were attached to your body.



1. As the ball travels towards you, position your foot in line to receive it.



2. On making contact, relax your foot and let it travel back with the ball.



3. The speed of the ball is absorbed. It slows down and you can play it away.

Foot control

A good first touch can slow the ball down and position it in one movement. If you use the inside of your foot, you will be in a good position to play the ball away when you have controlled it.

1. Watch the ball as it approaches and place your foot in line with it. Balance on one leg with your receiving foot turned out.

2. As you receive the ball with the inside of your foot, relax your leg and foot so that they travel back with it.



3. The ball should drop just in front of your feet.

Foot control exercise

Try this game with a friend. Make a 'gate' with two markers and stand with the gate between you. Pass the ball through the gate so that your partner has to control it.

He passes the ball down the outside of the gate. Control it, turn and pass it back through the gate or down the other side of it. Carry on passing and receiving like this.

