



WALKING
FOOTBALL

NATIONAL WALKING FOOTBALL PROGRAM SESSION GUIDE



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WHAT IS WALKING FOOTBALL

Walking Football is a social, small-sided, and sustainable version of football played by people worldwide. It is the slower paced version of the beautiful game and the rules have been adjusted to make it social, safe and fun.

It has been designed to suit new participants and veterans alike, and provides a safe, inclusive, and enjoyable format of football to increase participation of Older Australians in regular physical activity. It focuses on low-impact and team-based exercise and provides physical and mental health benefits, social connectedness, alongside education and promotion of the benefits of ongoing physical activity.

The format and rules of the game, as well as the emphasis on having fun and socialising, make football available for everyone no matter the age or skill level. The program takes a 'whole of family' approach to include participants of all ages in football and increase intergenerational interaction, whilst also providing participants opportunities to continue their involvement in their local club as members and volunteers.

We believe that this fun and inclusive approach to playing football will give many Australians enjoyable football experiences that will foster a love and passion for the beautiful game that will last a lifetime. With this guide we want to provide more information about Walking Football and its benefits, and support game leaders, facilitators, and club officials with creating an environment that empowers participants to thrive by offering activities that suit their stage of development, age, abilities, and interest. This guide will also assist you with information and exercises as you set up the program in your area to safely prepare for your sessions.

WHY WALKING FOOTBALL

Average age of populations has increased and being active and ageing well is becoming important for all countries. The number of Australians aged 65 and over is projected to more than double in the next 40 years. Many older people are not active or do not achieve the recommended amounts and types of physical activity for health and independence. As participation decreases with age, supporting older people to stay or to become more physically active is something we can all do. Evidence shows that not being active is a big health risk and leads to loss of muscle strength, balance, flexibility, and joint mobility. This then causes a decline in the ability to manage everyday activities and independence.

Walking is the most popular activity for Older Australians and, due to lack of mobility or for other reasons, they are not able to play the beautiful game. As a result, Walking Football has been designed to offer a modified format and low impact alternative that is fun, safe, accessible allowing participants to stay active, have a sense of purpose, learn skills, be involved in their community, and make friends.

Unfortunately, stereotypes about ageing and the way society views older people are very common and can influence health and limit potential. Walking Football will help challenge some of the negative stereotypes about older people playing sport and create new beliefs and possibilities for playing football regardless of age, fitness levels, health conditions and ability.

BENEFITS OF WALKING FOOTBALL

Walking Football is designed for safety and participation and offering this 'age friendly' program will help your club attract and retain new members, address barriers to participation, and help more people participate in football. Furthermore, your club will also make a positive difference to the health and wellbeing of your community and participants will benefit from:

- Becoming more physically active which can be a breath of fresh air and a great way to get out more, feel healthy and happier.
- Staying independent and mobile, getting stronger and fitter and improving balance.
- Reducing the risk of developing many diseases, building strength and stamina, improving energy levels and movement.
- Preventing or improving many physical conditions such as improving blood sugar levels, heart, circulation, bones, and muscles.
- Increasing confidence and self-esteem.
- Learning new skills.
- Promoting teamwork and sharing.
- Keeping social connections, staying connected with people and reducing social isolation.
- Having positive mental health, improving mood and sleep, reducing stress and anxiety, and keeping the mind sharp.
- Having a sense of purpose and belonging.
- Continuing to contribute and be part of the football community.
- Accommodating people with physical limitations.
- Helping older people become involved, stay involved, and continue doing what they have always enjoyed.
- Building friendships - Retirement brings with it more free time. There is no better way to give some of that time by playing Walking Football while meeting new people and rekindling old friendships.
- Remembering the old times – the feeling of playing sport as a child should not change as people get older. Everyone should get the same pleasure with activities and feel good about themselves.
- Injecting energy into your weekly routine and increasing overall quality of life.

TESTIMONIALS



SHONA BASS (WALKING FOOTBALL AMBASSADOR)

"It's so important for us as we get older that we keep active. Being active can actually slow the ageing process from a physical perspective, but also it provides such a wonderful stimulus for social and emotional wellbeing, improved mental health, and the opportunity to feel really good about being involved in exercise. Walking Football gives it all"



PAUL WADE (WALKING FOOTBALL AMBASSADOR)

"As you may well know, I had epilepsy and I lived with that fear of people knowing and people judging. But it's amazing how relieved you'll feel if you get involved and feel part of a group. Happiness comes from the intention of activity and you can do that by going out and playing Walking Football"



DAVID MUDGE

"I love Walking Football as anyone can play the game we love in a uncompetitive, social environment, the banter is priceless, and it helps to stay fit"



CHRISTINE HINDMARSH

"Walking football is about trying something new and suits my motto to a tee - 'have fun, keep moving and keep smiling'"



GAYLE PAGE

"I love playing Walking Football and having fun with a great bunch of different people every week, it really has been the highlight of 2021 for me personally and I can't wait to return"

TESTIMONIALS



NICK BRON

"Walking Football allows me to once again safely participate in the game I love. Before it, I wasn't sure I'd ever be able to play again"



LEE PEPPER

"Walking football has given so many people in my age group an opportunity to play football forever. It is literally forever football! There is no reason that I'm ever going to stop playing this game"



YOUR ROLE AS A GAME LEADER

As a team leader or club official you can be a powerful motivator and role model in your community. It is important that you work on helping our community and older people to flourish at every age and have more choice and an opportunity to keep participating in football. You can help your players toward better health and becoming more physically active through playing Walking Football. You will also play a role in addressing the health consequences of physical inactivity and isolation exacerbated during COVID-19, contribute to the promotion of an 'all age friendly' culture, address barriers to participation, attract more members, and help older people in your community feel welcome, valued, and play with other members of their family.

Many people may feel concerned about playing football especially if they have never played before, or have not played in some time. Often, the fear of being injured, or exacerbating existing injuries can prevent participation. Being aware of the causes that prevent older people from playing or the reason they stopped playing can help attract and retain more participants. This includes a club culture that does not welcome older people, clubs focusing on younger people, lack of confidence, fear of not fitting in or being embarrassed, even the fear of the unknown. Your actions and attitudes will reflect on your participants so to improve the experience, create an inclusive environment, and ensure positive engagement of players in your social program, you can:

- Take the word 'coach' out of your mind. Your role is summed up as a leader of fun, safe and engaging practices.
- Set a regular time and space for your program.
- Encourage the wider football community to support the program and your players.
- Help your players feel part of the club and ensure everyone feels safe and welcome.
- Arrive early to set up your activities and games.
- Greet every participant with a smile and acknowledge each one by name.
- Prepare them to play and implement specially designed warmups and warm downs to help reduce injuries and improve the body's flexibility.
- Start at a level that is easily manageable and gradually build up the amount, type, and frequency of activities.
- Do activities that are fun, help develop skills and build confidence through drills that suit your players' needs and abilities.
- Start with a small achievable goal then look to increase the amount of time or difficulty of activities. Take it slow and steady.
- Be flexible, make modifications, and adapt your session based on your players' needs and abilities.
- Numbers permitting, begin with two small-sided games – one with the newer players and one with the more experienced – and look to combine the groups down the line when the newer participants are more comfortable.

YOUR ROLE AS A GAME LEADER

- Allow time for social connections and offer group activities as socialising makes being active more enjoyable.
- Organise safe small-sided games in between exercises.
- Encourage exercises and stretching in between games to help the body recover, improve flexibility and reduce injuries.
- Follow correct exercises and offer convenient game times and practices. Never push players to move more than is comfortable for them.
- Invite players to exercise at home as it is a safe, low cost and effective way to improve physical abilities, strength, and balance.
- Have a family member, mentors, or friend to support, inspire and encourage your players.
- Listen and use the right communication with your players.
- Foster a healthy team spirit and encourage team members to speak up, let you know about their concerns and what they might need.
- Create a culture where the players show gratitude towards opponents, officials and facilitators.
- Talk about what you can do to make sure their needs are met, e.g. how long they'd like to be on the field.
- Be aware of their needs and that there will be a wide range of physical abilities in your team.
- Keep track of your players' progress and notice, acknowledge, or celebrate their improvements and achievements.

Your players may need some time, can lose enthusiasm or momentum if they are injured, feel uncomfortable or do not feel like they are progressing. They may also need support at the different stages of the process. Be patient, prepare and plan your session to help improve health and build commitment. Helping your players understand the importance of being active and setting some goals is a great way to start.

DEFIBRILLATORS

When you plan for your program, please ensure that an automated external defibrillator (AED) is available and deployed across your venue to enhance first aid capabilities and response in case of a cardiac arrest.

Cardiac arrest is the term given to the sudden loss of heart function. The person will collapse and stop breathing normally. The heart is no longer pumping blood around to the vital organs of the body. Cardiac arrest is recognised if the person is:

1. Unconscious
2. Unresponsive
3. Has absent or abnormal breathing

An AED is a small, portable device designed to deliver a controlled electrical shock to a person experiencing certain cardiac arrhythmias. An AED can be purchased by individuals and organisations and must be used in conjunction with CPR. AEDs have been designed to be used by the general community without formal training, and they are equipped with verbal and visual instructions to guide the operator.

Before each session, make sure you have a first aid kit and check your defibrillator is working or whether the electrode Pads or Battery are expired.



PLANNING YOUR SESSION

Your group may have a range of physical abilities, some may have played football before or just looking for a great way to keep active and meet new people. For this reason, the session plan has been designed to make activities easy to organise and flexible to adapt for your group of players and their needs. The purpose of the session plan is for your participants to prepare for the session, learn through play and game-based activities, build their confidence, and become more physically and mentally active.

We hope that you and your players have fun playing and learning from the session plan outlined in the resource. We also hope that they support you to design your own games and activities to allow participants to improve their fitness levels, socialise, and make new friends while playing football in a safe, friendly, and social environment.

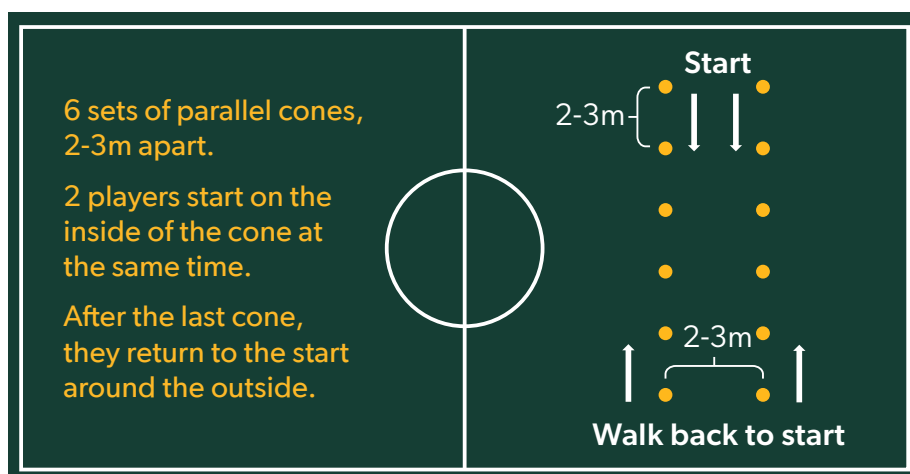
We want to also stress the importance of adapting and modifying activities, start slowly and build up gradually. Depending on their level, adjustments or modifications may need to be made to ensure all players are engaged and included in order to achieve an adequate level of success. We highly recommend starting up your session with safely warming up the team, stretching during activities and cooling down exercises at the end of your session.

SESSION DURATION – 45 TO 60 MINUTES ACROSS 8 TO 12 SESSIONS

Football Australia has designed a Walking Football specific program to assist players participate safely while also aiming to improve everyday function for the older person. The Walk2Perform+ program is a 3-component program consisting of a Warm Up and Cool Down to be done at the session with the Move+Perform section to be completed at home. The 3 to 5 minute Warm Up is designed to prepare the player for Walking Football and is similar to the Football Australia Perform+. It includes simple and controlled movements that will be performed in a Walking Football match while increasing muscle temperature enough to reduce injury risk.

1. WARM UP: (3 TO 5 MINUTES)

Warming up helps prepare the body for physical activity. It may also help minimise the risk of injury and soreness. The Walk2Perform+ warm up is an adaption of the Football Australia Perform+ and designed to prepare Walking Football participants for a Walking football session. This warm-up is designed to be short enough to fit in before a session and contain all the key physical movements of Walking Football. Once participants have completed Walk2Perform+ they are ready to complete the warm-up phase with some ball and passing drills. Instructions on how to set up the warm-up are below.



NOTE: this set up does not have to be on the field. For convenience, setting up the series of parallel cones on the sideline or outside the field can be useful for efficient use of time prior to players entering the field. This way the warm up can be completed while the previous match is still being completed.

Each exercise can be adjusted to individual player capacity and never push players to move more than is comfortable for them. Lead your players in warm up exercises and we recommend you follow the following specially designed Walk2Perform+.

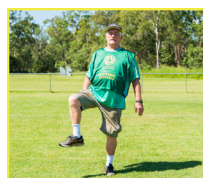
WARM UP | PREPARE TO PERFORM

Before Every Session – 3-5 minutes (Complete all Exercises)



WALKING STRAIGHT AHEAD

The course is made up of 6 pairs of parallel cones, approx. 2-3 metres apart. As a pair, walk together from the first pair of cones to the last pair of cones. On the way back, you can increase your speed progressively as you warm up. **Perform 2 sets.**



WALKING HIP OUT

Walk, stopping at each pair of cones to lift your knee and rotate your hip outwards. Alternate between left and right legs at successive cones. **Perform 1 set.**



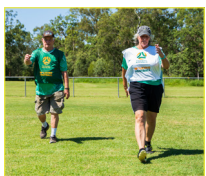
WALKING CIRCLING PARTNER

Walk forwards as a pair to the first set of cones. Shuffle sideways by 90 degrees to meet in the middle. Shuffle an entire circle around one another and then return back to the cones. Repeat for each pair of cones. Remember to stay on your toes and keep your centre of gravity low by bending your hips and knees. **Perform 1 set.**



WALKING MEET IN THE MIDDLE

Walk forwards in pairs to the first pair of cones. Shuffle sideways by 90 degrees to meet in the middle then pause and return to the outside cone. Walk to the next set of cones and repeat. **Note:** Make sure you concentrate on keeping your balance and knees slightly bent. **Perform 1 set each side.**



WALKING BUILDING SPEED

Walk through the cones again, but this time at a faster pace. **Perform 1 set.**



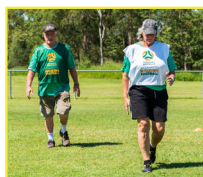
WALKING HIGH KNEE MARCHING

Walk with high steps with a high knee lift, landing gently on the ball of your foot. Use an exaggerated arm swing for each step (opposite arm and leg). Try not to let your leading leg cross the midline of your body or let your knees buckle inwards. Repeat the exercise until you reach the other side of the pitch, then jog back to recover. **Perform 1 set.**



WALKING HIP IN

Walk, stopping at each pair of cones to lift your knee and rotate your hip inwards. Alternate between left and right legs at successive cones. **Perform 1 set.**



WALKING

QUICK FORWARDS & BACKWARDS

As a pair, walk quickly to the second set of cones then walk backwards quickly to the first pair of cones keeping your hips and knees slightly bent. Keep repeating the drill, walking two cones forwards and one cone backwards. Remember to take small, quick steps. **Perform 1 set.**



WALKING CHANGE OF DIRECTION

Walk 2-3 steps, then plant on the outside leg and cut to change direction. Accelerate and walk quickly to the diagonally opposite cone before you decelerate and do a new plant & cut. Do not let your knee buckle inwards. Repeat the exercise until you reach the other side, then walk back. **Perform 1 set.**

2. DRILLS AND GAMES: (30 TO 40 MINUTES)

You can choose your activities based on your participants needs and levels. Run games for no longer than 15-minute halves and allow 2 to 3 minutes breaks between games for a quick drink and chat.

Small-sided games can be modified based on the number of participants. Ideal playing formats are generally 4v4, 5v5, 6v6 or 7v7.

Field Sizes can be adjusted to suit numbers – 30m x 20m to 40m x 30m most common in programs.

Goal Size flexible – maximum 2.4m x 1.2m to increase 'scoring moments' during matches.

No goalkeepers allowed.

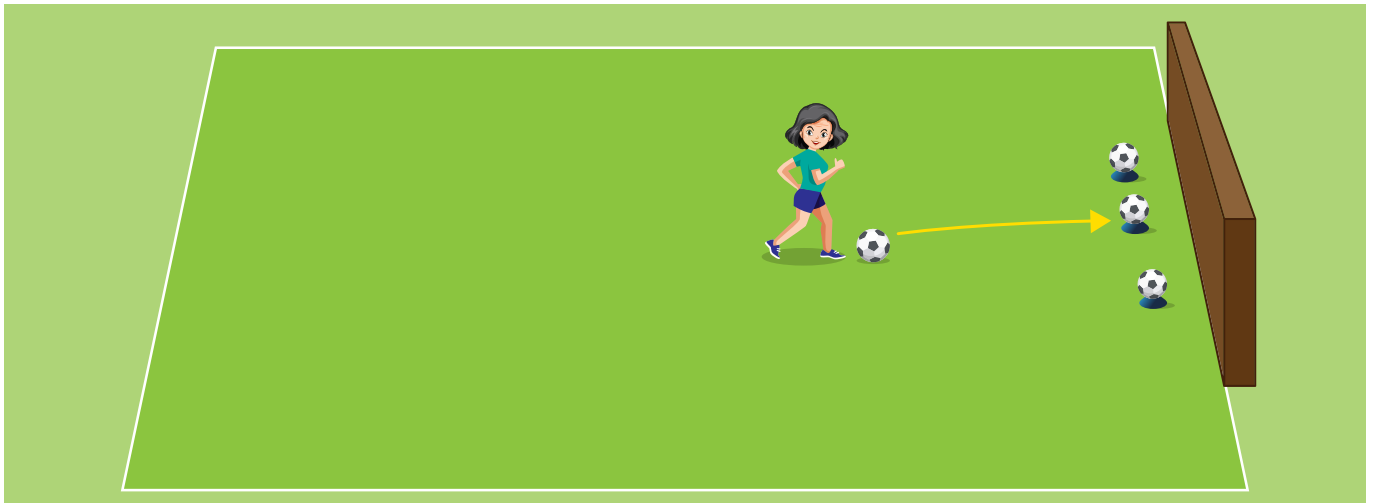
Ensure games are played safely - with ball height to 1.2m and no body contact - and encourage stretching or exercises in between games to help achieve the goals of this program.

INDIVIDUAL-BASED ACTIVITIES

Suggested equipment list: 5 cones, 4 balls, 1 portable goal

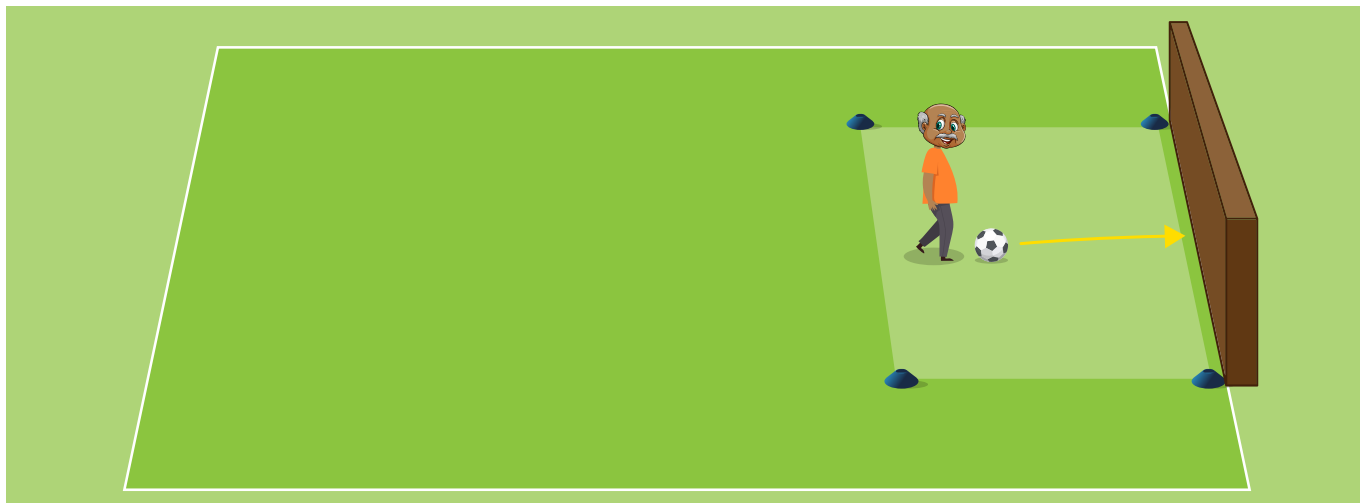
ACTIVITY: KNOCK IT OFF

- Place balls on top of cones near a wall (don't have to chase balls)
- Player will attempt to pass the ball and knock the balls off the cones in as little attempts as possible
- Players counts number of times they attempt to hit all of the balls off the cones
- Once player has knocked off all the balls, sequence repeats and player will attempt to get a lower score
- **CHALLENGE:** Alter the distance player is passing the ball from



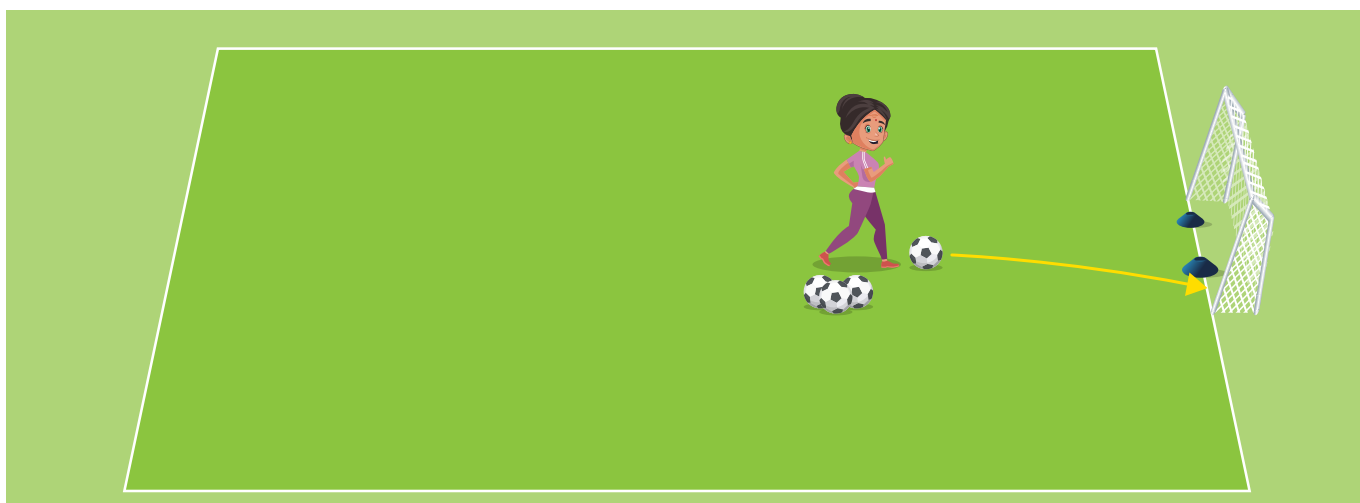
ACTIVITY: HIT IT

- Create a small area around a wall
- Player will pass the ball against the wall (in the air or on the ground) and attempt to complete as many consecutive passes against the wall as possible without ball going out of the area
- Players receive 1 point each time ball is kicked against the wall
- If ball goes out of area, sequence repeats and player attempts to beat their previous score
- **CHALLENGE:** Implement a touch limit per pass (e.g. one-touch)



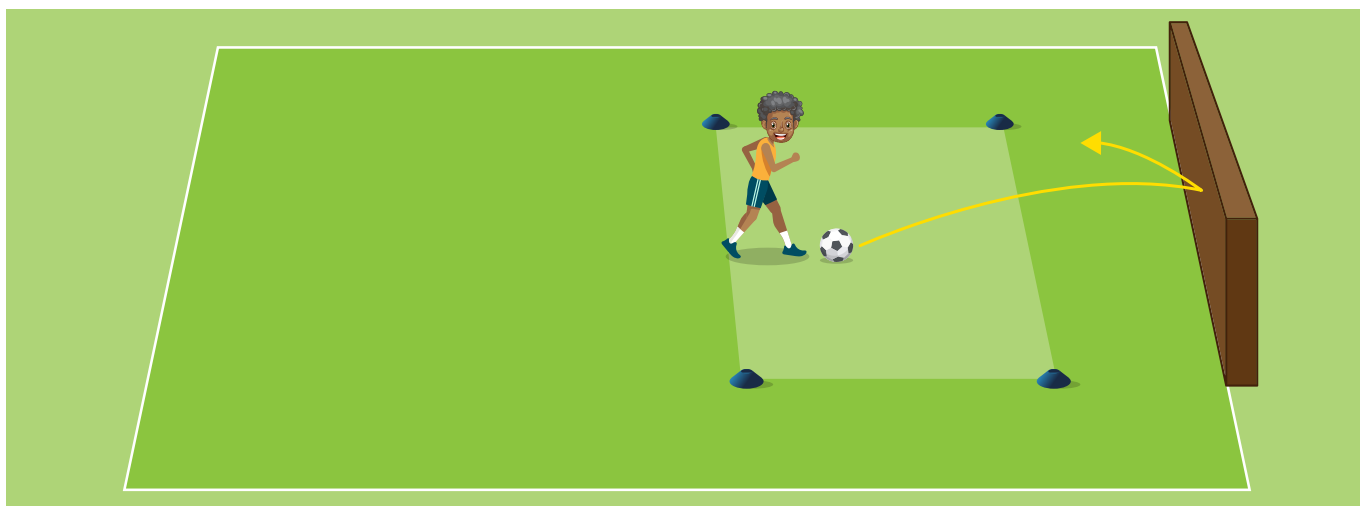
ACTIVITY: CORNERS

- Place two cones to mark out either corner of the goal
- Player will attempt to shoot the ball into the corners of the goal (as marked by cones) as many times as possible from a total of 4 kicks
- Player receives 1 point each time the ball is kicked into the corners
- Alter the distance player stands away from the goal based on ability
- Once all balls are shot at goal, repeat sequence and player attempts to beat their previous score
- **CHALLENGE:** Make corners of the goal smaller



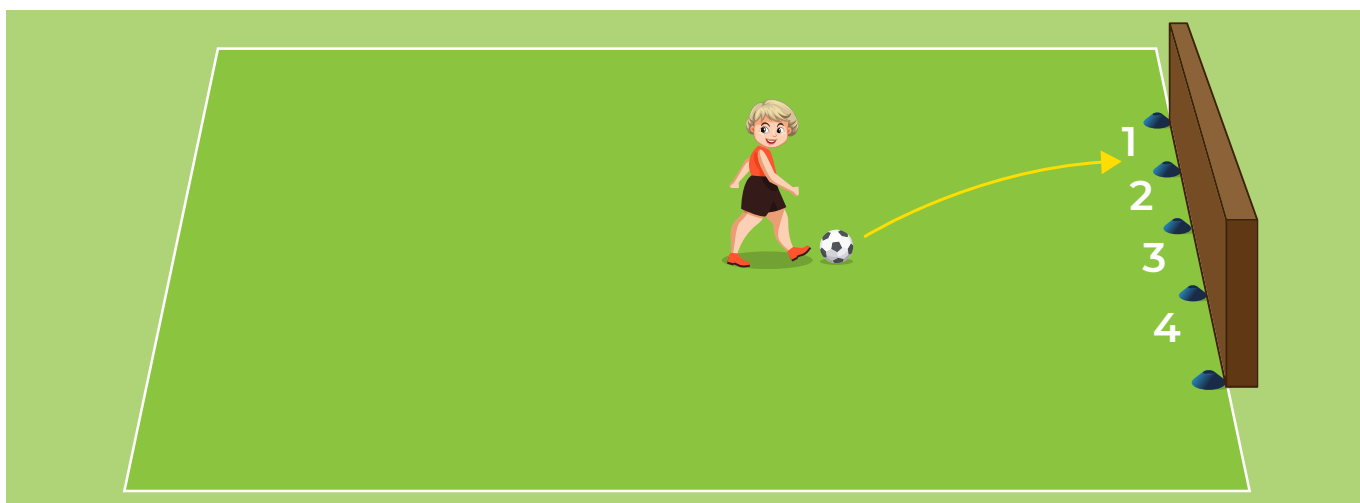
ACTIVITY: BOUNCE BACK

- Create a small area close to a wall
- Player will attempt to kick the ball against the wall and have the ball come back and land in the area
- Alter distance of area from wall based on ability
- Player receives 1 point each time the ball bounces back inside the area on the first bounce
- If the ball does not bounce inside area, score resets and sequence repeats with player attempting to beat previous score
- **CHALLENGE:** Increase distance area is away from wall



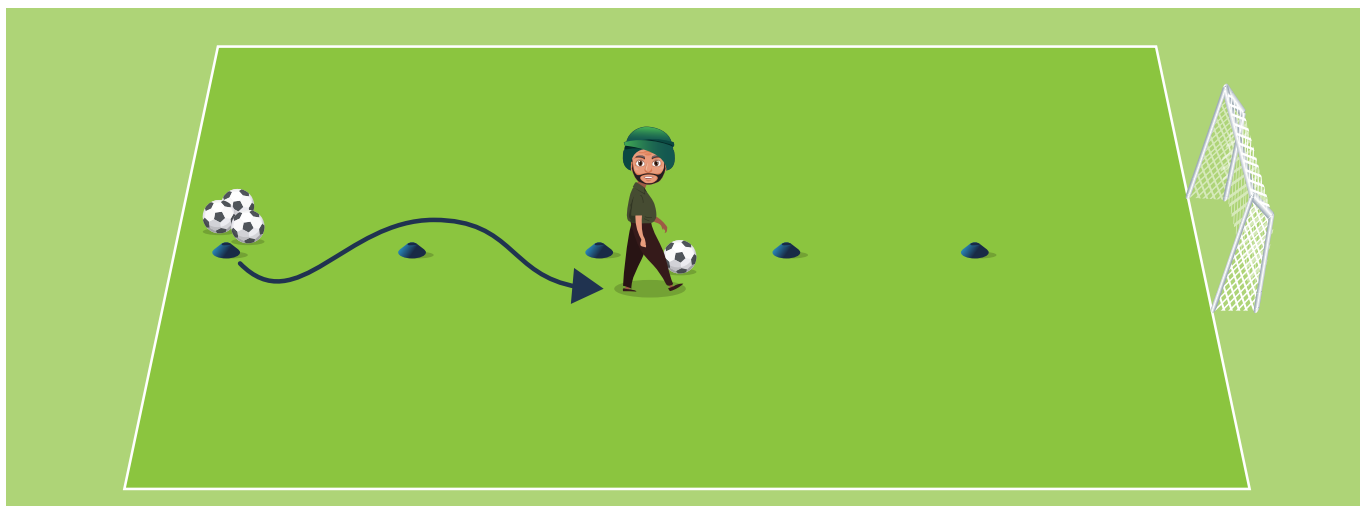
ACTIVITY: HIT THE TARGET

- Split up wall into four targets/areas (marked by cones)
- Player will attempt to pass the ball against the wall in a certain sequence (i.e. 1-2-3-4, 1-3-2-4 etc.)
- Player receives 1 point each time they successfully pass the ball against the wall in a pre-determined sequence
- Alter distance player is standing from wall based on ability
- **CHALLENGE:** Decrease size of targets/areas



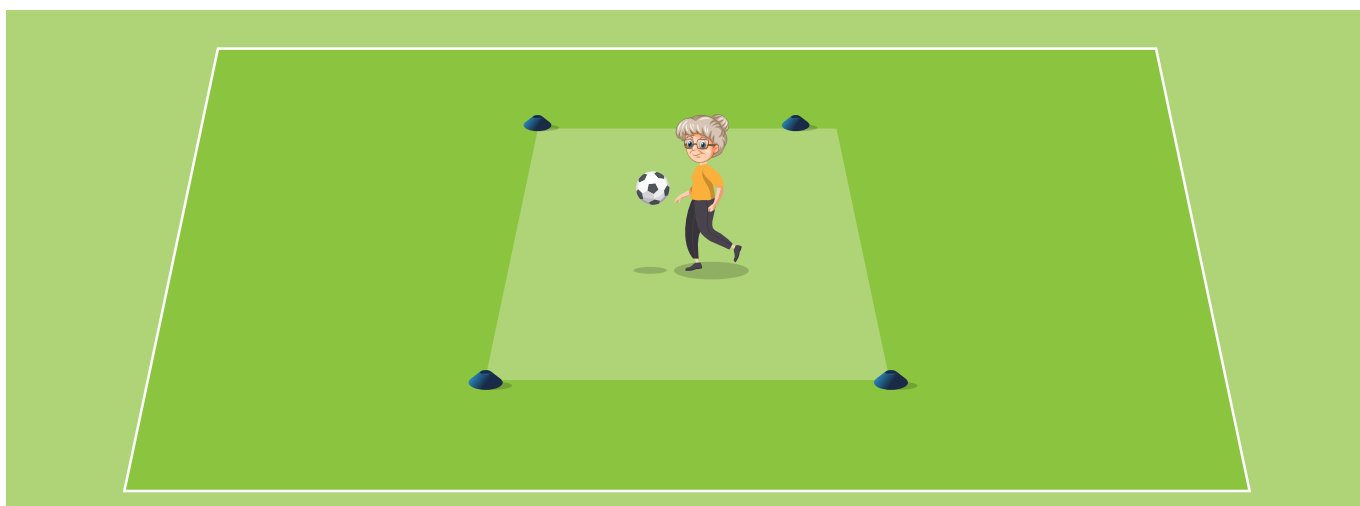
ACTIVITY: GET AROUND THEM

- Place a set of cones down in a straight line leading to a goal
- Player will start with all the balls at one end and attempt to individually dribble the balls around the cones to score in goal
- Consider the distance between two cones based on ability
- Player will receive 1 point each time they dribble successfully around cones and score a goal without the ball touching the cones
- **CHALLENGE:** Decrease distance between cones



ACTIVITY: JUGGLING

- Create a small area for player to juggle within
- Player will attempt to keep the ball up for as long as possible within area created and without the ball touching the ground
- Consider allowing for a certain number of bounces in between each kick (e.g. 1 bounce allowed per juggle)
- **CHALLENGE:** Player alternate side of body they are juggling with on each kick (e.g. left -> right -> left -> right etc.)

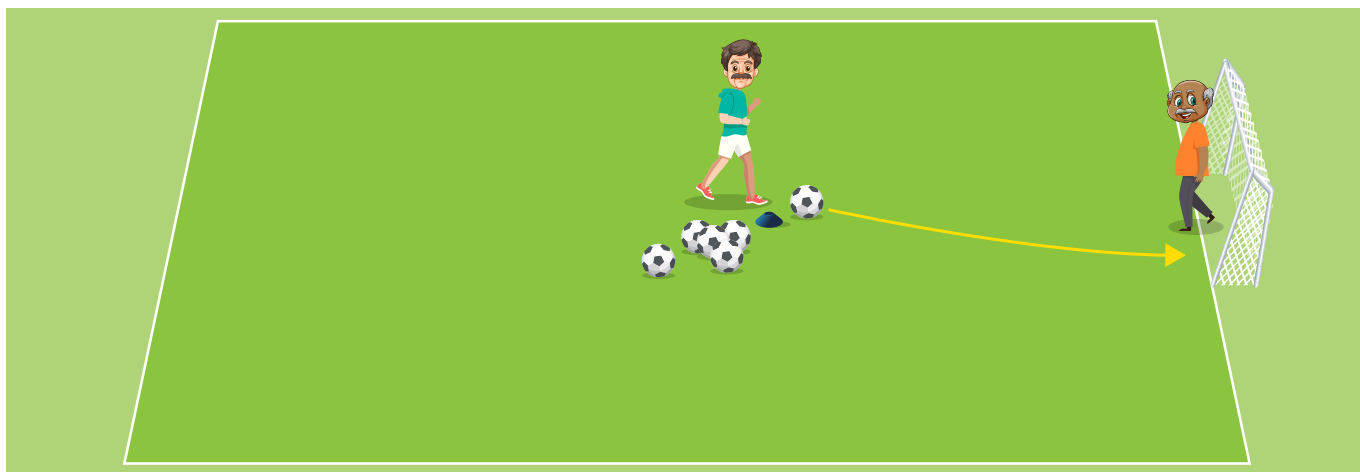


SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES

Suggested equipment list: 10 cones, 6 balls, 2 portable goals

ACTIVITY: 1V1

- Place a marker 6 metres away from goal (guide only)
- Player/s will attempt to shoot and score in goal past the opposition defender with each goal worth 1 point
- The opposition player will come out and try to press and win possession of the ball with no physical contact to receive 1 point
- After all the balls have been shot, players rotate roles and sequence repeats with a new opposition player
- **CHALLENGE:** Increase distance players shoot away from goals



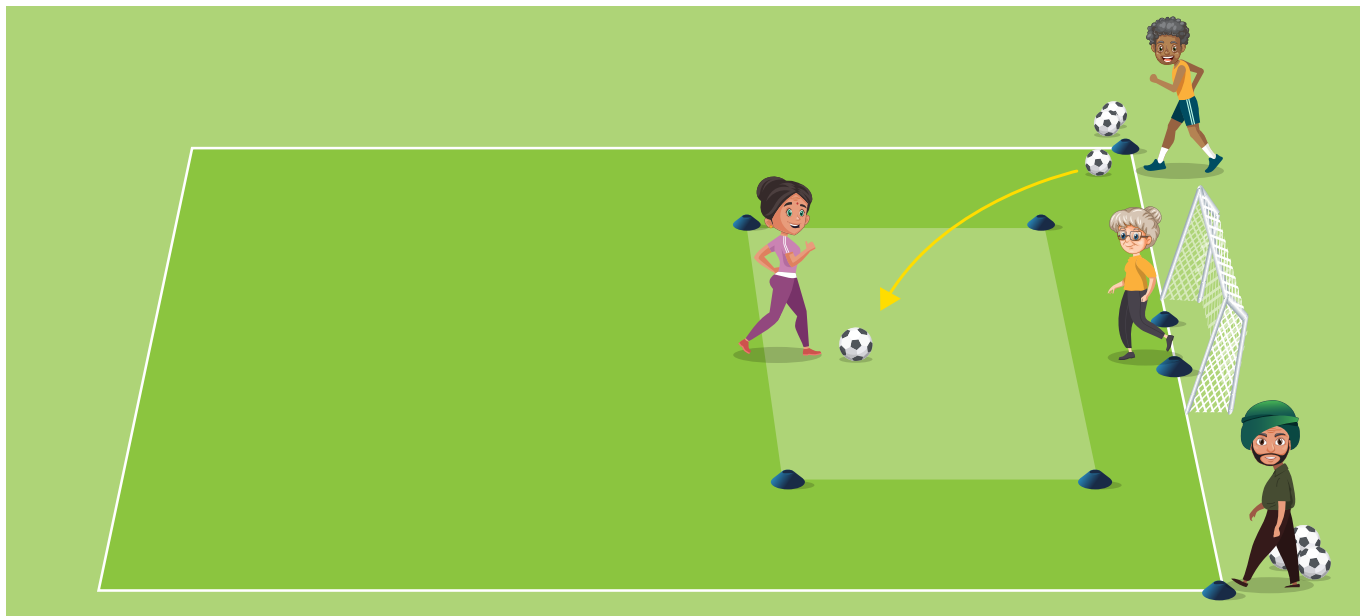
ACTIVITY: WALL BALL

- Create a marked area around a wall
- Players attempt to pass the ball against the wall and prevent the ball from going out of the marked area
- Players receive 1 point for each time ball is kicked against the wall
- Determine number of bounces allowed per kick based on ability
- **CHALLENGE:** decrease size of area or number of bounces allowed



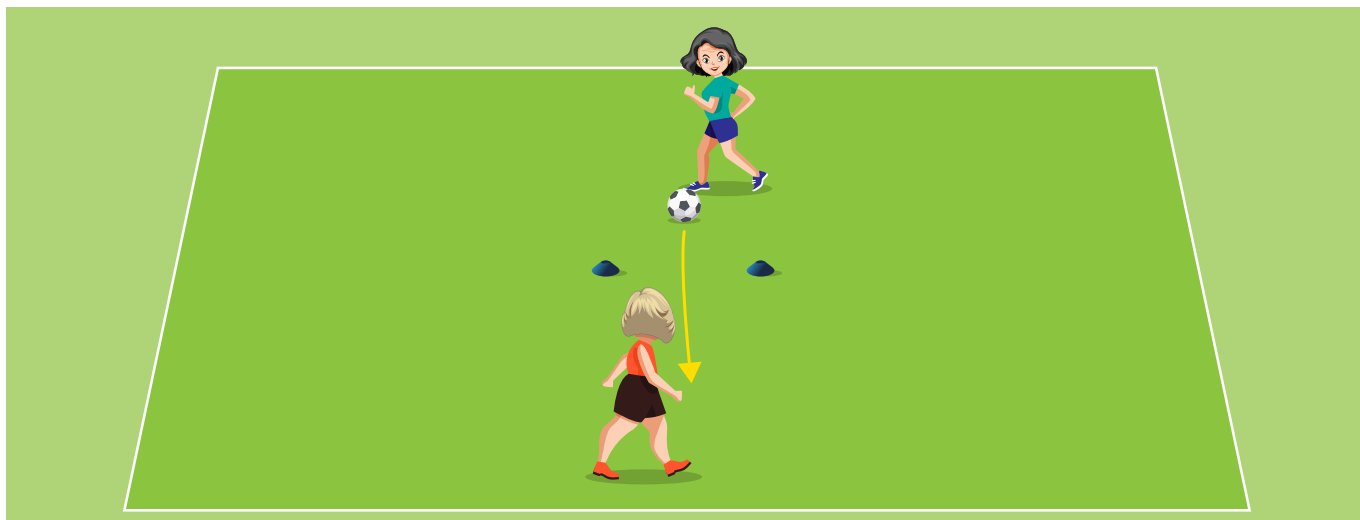
ACTIVITY: IN THE MIXER

- Create an area as shown a small distance away from goal
- Player will pass/cross the ball into other player in the middle area who will shoot and attempt to score in the corners of goal
- Group receives 1 point for every goal scored
- Group receives 3 points if a goal is scored in the corners
- Alter distance away from goal based on ability
- **CHALLENGE:** Decrease size of corners (as marked by cones)



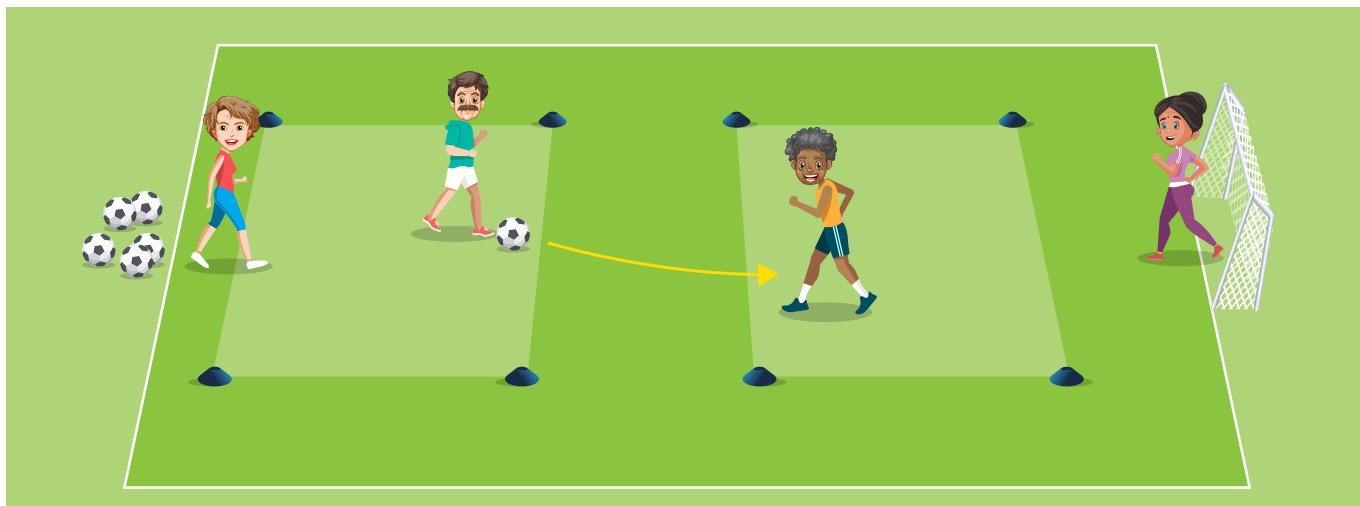
ACTIVITY: KICK IT THROUGH

- Place two cones apart to create a gate (size = ability-specific)
- Players stand either side of the gate and will attempt to pass the ball through the gate as many times as possible
- Players receive 1 point each time ball is kicked through the gate
- Alter distance players stand away from gate based on ability
- If ball does not go through the gate, sequence repeats and players will attempt to beat their previous score
- **CHALLENGE:** Limit touches allowed per pass attempt



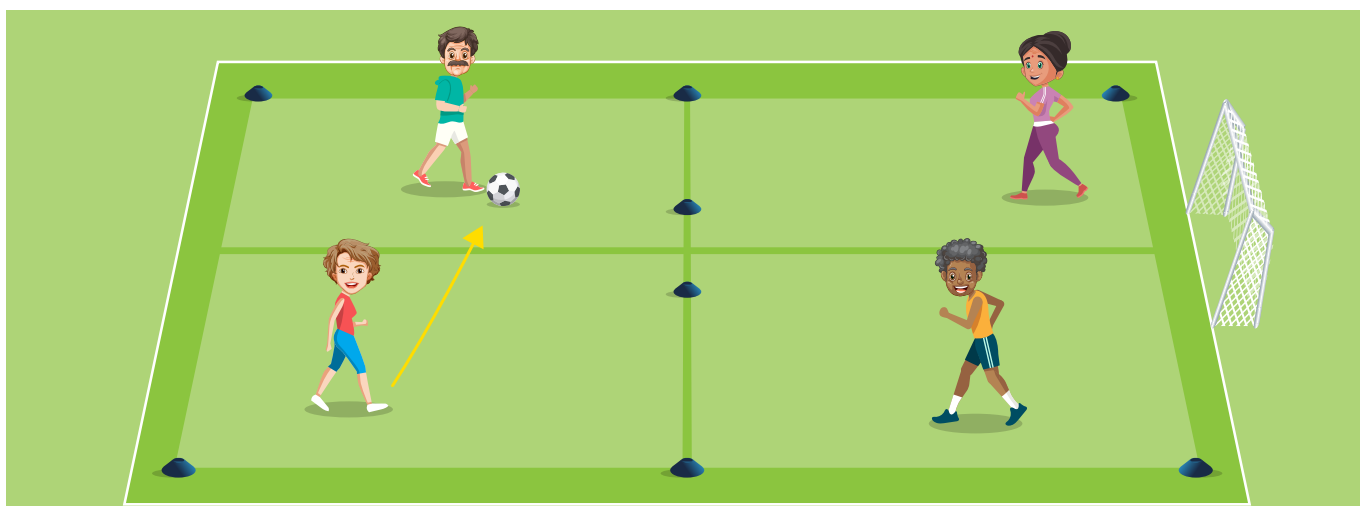
ACTIVITY: SET IT UP

- Create small areas as shown with a goal at one end
- Group will start with all the balls at one end and player will set up other player to take a shot and attempt to score past the defender
- Group receive 1 point each time a goal is scored
- Consider distance between areas and goal based on ability
- The defender will come out and try to press and intercept the ball with no physical contact to receive 1 point
- Once all the balls have been shot, rotate players through positions (including defender) after each sequence
- **CHALLENGE:** Introduce touch-limit (i.e. two touch)



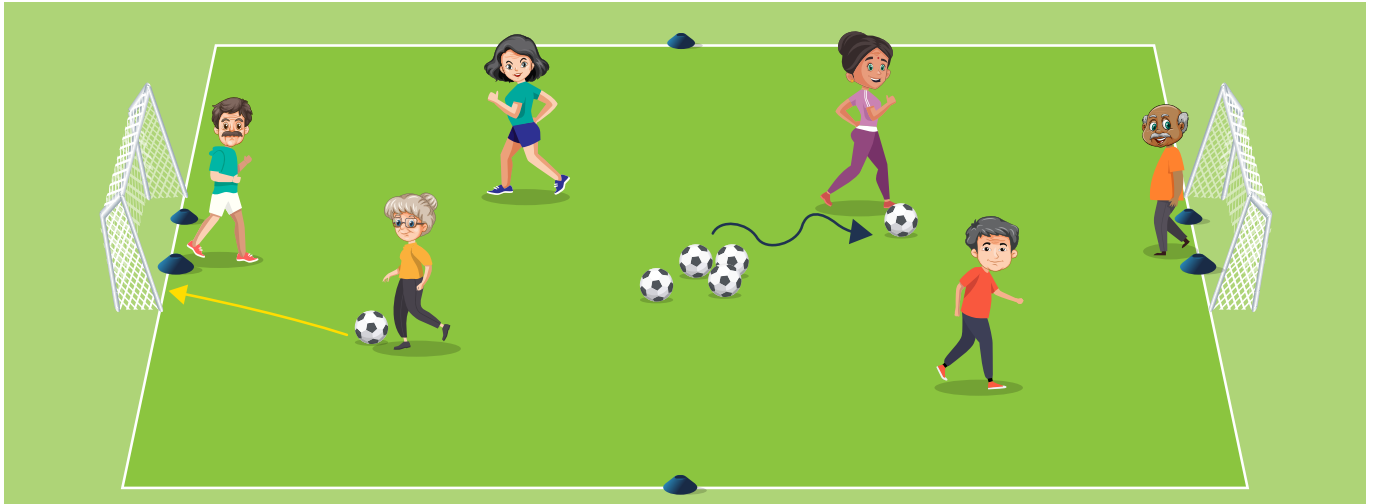
ACTIVITY: GIVE AND GO

- Create four small areas as shown
- Players will pass the ball around the four areas with players having to move to a different area each time they pass the ball
- Group receives 1 point each time a successful pass is made
- Group receives 3 points each time the ball is successfully passed through the centre gate (as marked by cones)
- If a player receives a ball in the same area or ball goes out of the area, sequence repeats and group attempt to beat previous score
- **CHALLENGE:** Introduce two balls or a touch-limit



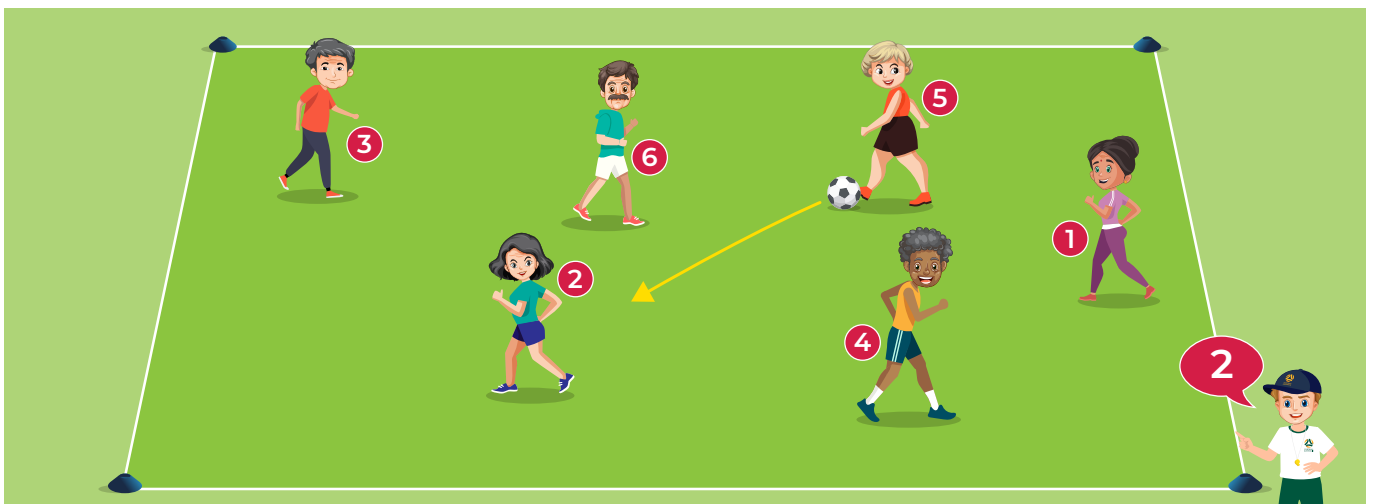
ACTIVITY: SCORE

- Split players into two halves
- All the balls will start in the middle and players will attempt to get the balls and score in goals past the last defenders
- Group awarded 1 point for scoring in the centre of goals
- Group awarded 3 points for scoring in corner of goals (as marked by cones)
- Once all balls are out of the middle, number of points is recorded and sequence repeats. Attempt to increase score on next attempt
- Rotate player roles frequently
- **CHALLENGE:** Decrease size of corners in goals



ACTIVITY: PASS IT AROUND

- Create an area with all the players in the middle and number off players
- Players will move and pass the ball around within the area in a designated sequence. Sequences may include:
- Passing in sequence 1-6
- Odds then evens 1-3-5-2-4-6
- Call of a player's number by coach
- Group receives 1 point each time a successful pass is made and will attempt to beat score in next attempt/sequence
- **CHALLENGE:** Limit number of touchers per possession (i.e. one touch)



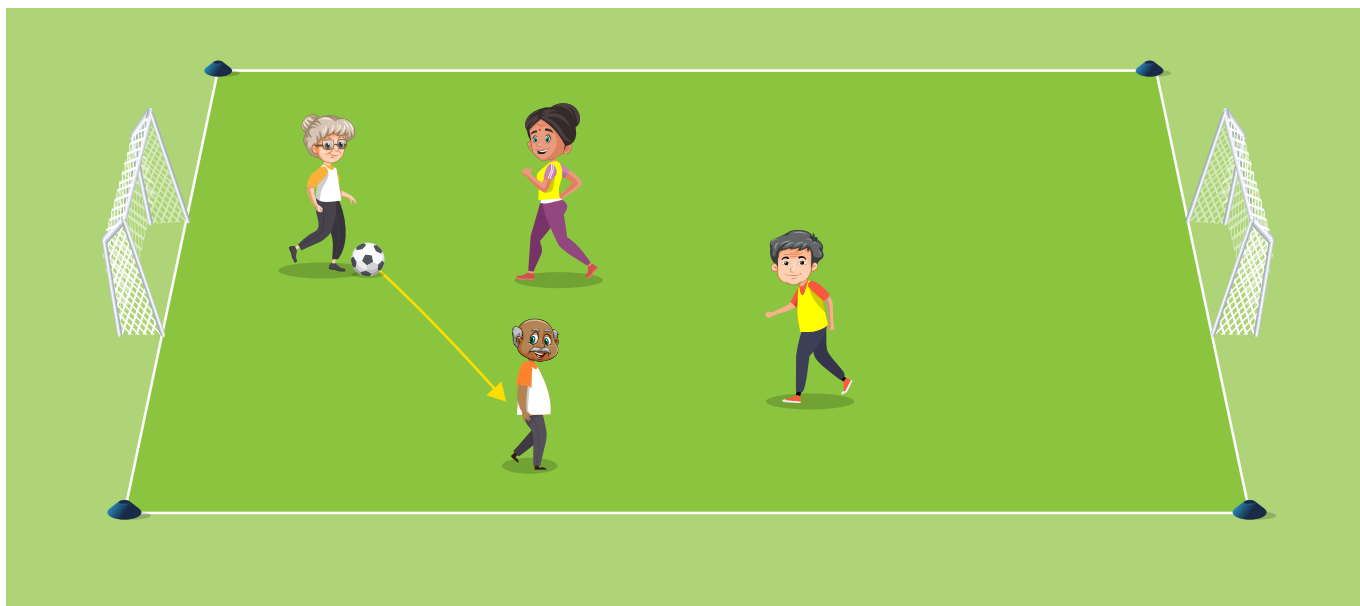
ACTIVITY: KNOCK OVER

- Create a small area with players positioned on the outside of the area
- Players attempt to pass the ball and knock over balls that are placed on top of cones around the area in as little attempts as possible
- Consider adding in more balls to area based on equipment you possess
- Record the number of attempts it takes group to knock over all the balls that are on top of cones. Attempt to lower score on next attempt.
- **CHALLENGE:** Increase size of area and position cones further away



ACTIVITY: GAME

- Create a 15x15m area (guide only)
- Split players into two teams
- Normal game with Walking Football rules
- Teams awarded 1 point for a goal
- Rotate players in teams frequently (i.e. change teams)



LARGE GROUP ACTIVITIES

Suggested equipment list: 6 cones, 10 balls, 2 portable goals

ACTIVITY: KNOCK IT OFF

- Place balls on top of cones in the middle of a small area
- Players will stand on the outside of the area and attempt to knock the balls off the cones with a pass
- Players can attempt to knock ANY balls off the cones and group works together to knock all the balls off
- Set a timer to record how long it takes for all the balls to be knocked off the cones, and attempt to lower time in next sequence
- **CHALLENGE:** Increase distance players pass the ball from



ACTIVITY: DRIBBLE THROUGH

- Create an area approximately 25x25m (guide-only)
- Each player has a ball and will dribble around within the area attempting to dribble through gates (as marked by cones)
- Group receives 1 point every time a player dribbles through gate
- Each sequence lasts 2 minutes where group tallies total score, and will attempt to beat their score in the next sequence
- Consider size of area and size of gates based on ability
- **CHALLENGE:** Decrease area size or size of gates



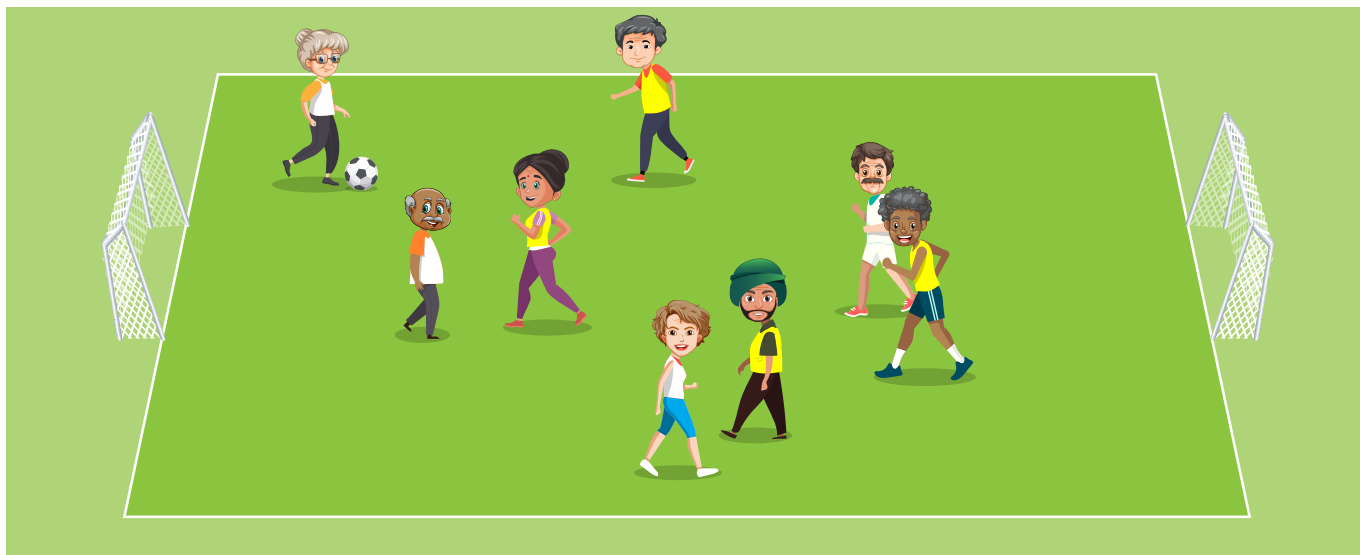
ACTIVITY: MOVE IT AROUND

- Create a small area (approximately 10x10m) with players positioned in a circle surrounding the small area
- Balls will start with players on opposite sides of the outside circle who will pass the balls into one of two players in area
- Once players pass the ball into central player, they rotate into the area as the central player passes to next player in circle
- Group receives 1 point when each player touches the ball
- **CHALLENGE:** Implement a touch-limit (e.g. two-touch)



ACTIVITY: GAME

- Split players into two teams
- Normal game with Walking Football rules
- Teams awarded 1 point for a goal
- Teams awarded 3 points if every player touches the ball in build-up
- Rotate participants frequently



3. COOLDOWN – (2 TO 3 MINUTES)

Cooling down and stretching helps the body recover from exercise and return to its normal state. It may also assist in reducing soreness, improve flexibility, and reduce post activity stiffness.

We recommend that you encourage post-session gatherings as part of your program to allow participants to mingle and socialise.

Walking Football is safe and suitable for most older people. However, if a team member reports **any unusual symptoms** during warming up, playing, or cooling down, **Refer to your first aider or first aid protocols.**

COOLDOWN | PERFORMANCE · RESILIENCE

Perform at the End of Training or Home – 2-3 minutes



WALKING HIP RANGE OF MOTION

While walking around the pitch, perform gentle hip rotation movements rotating the hip inwards and outwards. Aim for **5 repetitions** during the walking period.



WALKING AROUND THE PITCH/COURT

At the completion of the session, walk around the pitch for **2-3 minutes** at a steady but low intensity pace. Feel free to add arm swings and trunk rotations into the exercise.



WALKING LEG SWINGS WITH PARTNER

At the end of the walking period of the cooldown, using a partner for support, perform gentle leg swings forwards, backwards and to the side. Aim for **3x each direction** on each leg. Ensure the range of movement is comfortable and the speed is controlled.

4. HOME EXERCISES

Encourage your participants to stay active between sessions by exercising at home to maintain their physical and mental wellbeing. Exercising at home is a simple, safe, low cost and effective way to improve your participants' abilities in the game, strength, and balance.

The Move+Perform is designed to be performed at home 2-3 times a week and includes strengthening, balance and mobility exercises that have been shown to reduce falls risk and assist in improving general function for everyday activity. All exercises should only be performed as comfortable, avoiding pain and built up slowly. The exercises in the Move+Perform section are designed to be done away from the field and highlights that being involved football can be a vehicle to promote health and well-being to increase the performance of everyday tasks. As always, if in doubt, check with your health professional prior to beginning any new exercise task.

You can also check PlayFootball for home exercises and activities on:

<https://www.playfootball.com.au/walking-football/play-at-home-challenge>

Or download the brochure:

<https://www.playfootball.com.au/sites/play/files/2020-03/Walking-Football-Daily-Home-Activities.pdf>

MOVE + PERFORM | STRENGTH · BALANCE · MOVEMENT

Perform at Home - 10-15 minutes (Complete all Exercises 2 to 3x/week)

STRENGTH



HIP BRIDGES ON A BED OR FLOOR

Starting position: Lay on your back with your knees bent to 90 degrees and feet comfortably on the floor or bed. **Exercise:** Slowly lift your hips off the floor/bed until your hips are in alignment with your shoulders and knees. Pause and then slowly lower down to the floor/bed. **Repeat for 10sec and progress to 20sec. Start with 1 set and progress to 2-3 sets as able.**



SIT TO STAND WITH A CHAIR

Starting position: Stand with your feet hip-width apart. Use a chair or bench to support if needed. **Exercise:** Picture that you are about to sit down on a chair. Perform squats by bending your hips and knees to 90 degrees. Do not let your knees buckle inwards. Descend slowly until you reach the chair. Then pause on the chair and progress to standing up. **Repeat the exercise for 10sec. Start with 1 set and build to 2-3 times.**

BALANCE



STANDING ON ONE LEG HOLDING A CHAIR

Starting position: Stand on one leg holding onto a chair/bench. **Exercise:** Balance on one leg holding the chair for stability with one or both hands. Keep your body weight in the centre of your foot. To increase difficulty – try closing your eyes for a short period or reduce chair support. **Hold for 5-10 sec then change legs. Repeat 3x each leg.**



STEP LUNGES HALF RANGE OF MOTION

Starting position: Standing with feet hip width apart. Have a stable bench or table close if needed. **Exercise:** Take a step and lunge forward slowly at an even pace. As you lunge, bend your leading leg until your hip and knee are flexed to a **MAXIMUM of 45 degrees and SHORT OF PAIN**. Do not let your knee buckle inwards. Try to keep your upper body and hips steady. Pause and return the standing position. **Repeat 5x each leg. Progress from 1 set to 3 sets as able.**

MOVEMENT



MARCHING WITH ARM SWINGS

Starting position: Standing with your feet comfortably at shoulder distance apart. Have a chair or bench close if you have balance issues. **Exercise:** Begin marching on the spot, lifting your knees to a comfortable height and letting your arms swing freely. Aim to put your feet down softly and do not let your knees buckle in. The movement should be comfortable. **Start with 10sec, rest for 10sec and repeat 3x. Progress to 20-30sec as able.**



SIDE STEPS WITH ARM SWINGS

Starting position: Standing with feet hip width apart. Have a stable bench or table close if needed. **Exercise:** Take a step to the side slowly at an even pace. As you step, allow your arms to move freely in front of your body, encourage your shoulder and trunk movement. Pause and return the standing position with your arms swing in the direction you are moving to. **Repeat 3x each side. Progress from 1 set to 3 sets as able.**

STRENGTH



WALL PUSH UP SHORT DISTANCE

Starting position: Standing facing a wall, arms extended with hands on the wall below shoulder height. Feet shoulder width apart and comfortably close to the wall. **Exercise:** Bending your arms, with trunk in alignment, slowly lower your body to the wall. Pause short of the wall and slowly extend your arms and push your body away from the wall. Keep slow and controlled. Move feet further away from the wall to make it harder. **Repeat for 10-15 sec. Start with 1 set and build up to 2-3 sets as able.**



HEEL TOE LIFTS WITH A CHAIR

Starting position: Stand with your feet hip-width apart. Use a chair or bench to support. **Exercise:** Keeping your legs straight, hold onto a stable chair or bench, slowly lift your heels off the ground. Aim to lift up as high as comfortable, pause for 1 sec and slowly return to the ground. **Repeat the action for 10-20sec. Start with 1 set and build-up to 2-3 sets as able.**

BALANCE



CLOCK STEPS CONTROLLED

Starting position: Standing with feet hip-width apart. Have a stable bench or table close if needed. **Exercise:** Imagine you are standing in the middle of a clock. Forward is 12, 90 degrees to the right is 3 and back is 6. Step with your right foot to 12, 3 and 6 on the clock, return to the centre each time. Then repeat with your left foot but to 12, 9 and 6 on the clock. Keep your step length to a comfortable and achievable distance. **Repeat 2-3x each leg. Progress to 2 sets.**



WALKING ON TOES USING SUPPORT

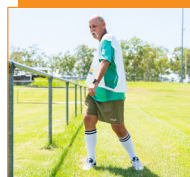
Starting position: Standing next to a stable support (e.g. a bench). **Exercise:** Raise onto the balls of your feet, walk forward 5-6 steps, using a bench for balance if necessary. Then turn around and repeat. Maintain a steady and controlled pace. **Rest, then repeat x 3-5 times.**

MOVEMENT



HIP ROTATIONS GENTLE TWISTS

Starting position: Standing with feet hip width apart. Have a stable bench or table close if needed. **Exercise:** Place your hands on your hips and slightly bend your knees. Make gentle circles with your hips and waist similar to using a Hooola Hoop. **Start with 5 in one direction and then reverse. Repeat x3.**



TRUNK ROTATIONS UPPER BODY SWINGS

Starting position: Standing with feet hip width apart. Have a stable bench or table close if needed. **Exercise:** Have your arms relaxed in front of your body. With relaxed hips and knees, slowly twist from side to side letting your arms move freely. **Perform for 10sec progressing to 20sec as able. Start with 1 set and progress to 3 sets as able.**

RULES AND CONSIDERATIONS

New players may not know that Walking Football rules have been carefully designed to make it more enjoyable, safer, and more suitable for a wide range of physical abilities. The game is more social and less physical, slower pace, passing is the focus rather than speed and running, game times are flexible, there is no offside, tackling or heading the ball to make sure participants have fun and stay safe. The rules include:

- Walking instead of running – putting less demand on the heart and lungs.
- NO slide tackling, trips, strikes, pushes, excessive force – reducing potential injuries
- There are NO goalkeepers in Social Walking Football
- Smaller field dimensions – reducing the distances travelled in a game
- More opportunities to score goals, mixed games welcoming all fitness and skill levels

1. WALKING RULE

Walking is defined as 'always having at least one foot in contact with the ground'. A walking action will generally be determined as the progression of steps throughout which there is constantly at least one foot in contact with the ground; both are momentarily grounded with the advancing leg straightened i.e. heel to toe action.

2. HEIGHT OF BALL RESTRICTIONS

A height restriction must apply, which cannot be less than the height of the crossbar and not greater than 2 metres. If a height offence occurs within the penalty area (from a goal clearance) an indirect free kick should be awarded 3m from the penalty area line nearest to where the offence took place.

3. FOULS AND MISCONDUCT

An indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following offences against an opponent in a manner considered by the referee to be careless, reckless or using excessive force:

- Charges
- Jumps at
- Kicks or attempts to kick
- Pushes
- Strikes or attempts to strike (including head-butt)
- Tackles or challenges
- Trips or attempts to trip

An indirect free kick is also awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following offences:

- Running
- Deliberately heading the ball
- Holds an opponent
- Bites or spits at someone on the team lists or a match official

4. ADDITIONAL PROGRAM REGULATIONS

- **Fouls and Misconduct:** An Indirect free kick is awarded for all acts of handball or fouls and misconduct. Opponents must be at least 3m away from the ball when the indirect free kick is taken.
- **Offside:** There is no offside rule in Walking Football.
- **Ball crossing the sidelines - 'Kick-ins' One Step Approach:** There are no Throw ins in Walking Football. Players are to kick/pass the ball back into the field of play once the ball crosses the sideline. The player must take one step only before kicking the ball. This 'one step only' applies to corner kicks, indirect free kicks, goal kicks, kick off and penalty kicks. During a 'Kick in' opponents must retreat a minimum of 3m from the kicker.
- **Ball crossing the line - 'Goal Kicks' 'Corner Kicks':** There are Corner Kicks in Walking Football. You cannot score directly from a Corner Kick at any level of Walking Football. Opponents must retreat from any dead ball situation for a minimum of 3m from where the free kick, corner kick is taken. The ball must touch a teammate or opponent before a goal can be scored.
- **Penalty and Free Kicks:** Indirect free kicks are awarded to the opposing team if a player, substitute, substituted or sent off player, or team official guilty of an offence. During games, a penalty can be awarded and must be taken from the centre spot with the kicker using the 'one step only' method to strike the ball towards goals. Infringements are determined by the Mandatory and Key Rules of Walking Football as well as any additional criteria and/or rulings as determined by the game leader.
- **No Substitutions:** Facilitators are encouraged to model the session around all players in attendance to ensure as much game time as possible.

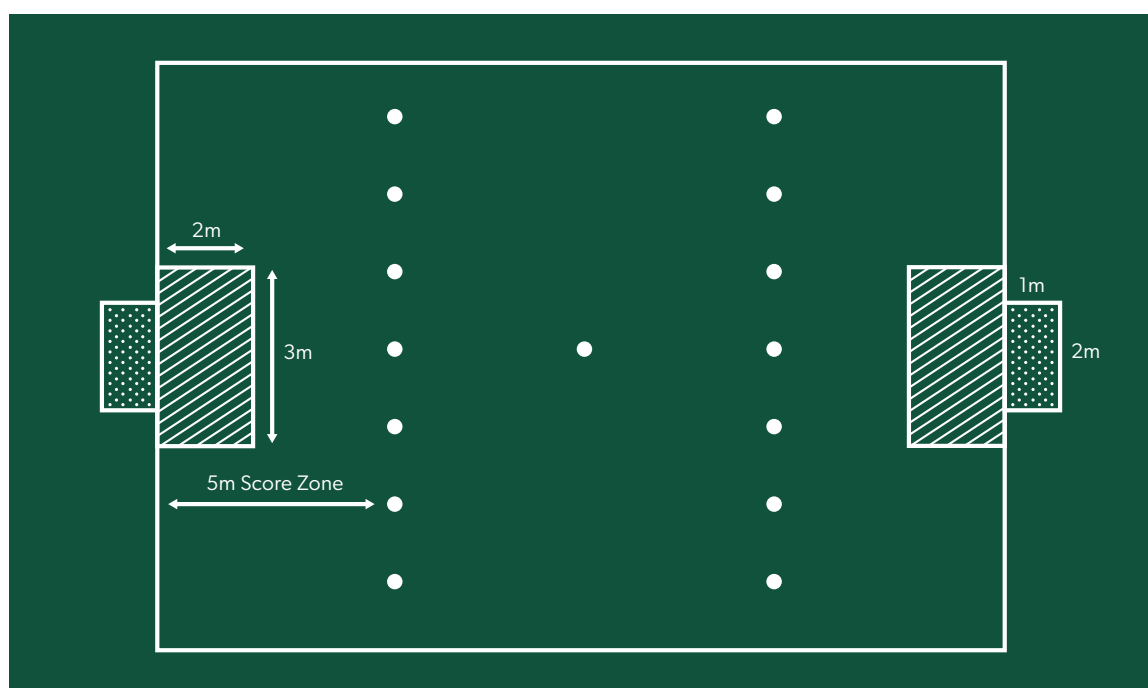
5. FIELD LAYOUT

Facilitators, game leaders, or program administrators have the adaptability to incorporate varying playing formats and field dimensions for Walking Football with the aim of providing the best possible player experience within their facility.

Format – 4v4 / 5v5 Dimension – 30m x 20m

Format – 6v6 / 7v7 Dimension – 40m x 30m

Field setup is determined by the number of players on a football pitch. The average size varies from 30m x 20m to 40m x 30m which are ideal for your social program. A 5-10m imaginary line or semi-circle indicated by a coloured marker on each sideline or flat markers across the field will indicate the 'scoring' or 'exclusion' zone. The 5–10-metre measurement is taken from the goal line in each half.



6. GOAL SIZE

Goals' size are 2m x 1m to 2.4m x 1.2m with a goals area or 'no go zone' being either a 3 metre semi-circle or a 3m x 2m rectangle marked with either flat discs, raised markers or paint. Best practice is to enhance player experience by increasing 'scoring moments'.

7. SURFACE

Walking Football is an adaptable format of our sport of which can be facilitated on a variety of surfaces including football pitches, green space, indoor centres, tennis courts, etc. Program Hub administrators should undertake a pitch/venue/surface risk assessment before commencing play.

8. FIELD MARKINGS

Cones, markers, or painted line markings are suitable - this includes the penalty areas. Flat disc markers are recommended for marking out the defined penalty areas, penalty spots, and centre spot where paint markings are not allowed or available.





WALKING FOOTBALL

