

How to Kick a Ball

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Kicking a ball is an essential part of a variety of games, including soccer, American football, rugby, and lots of other sports. Not to mention that kicking a ball around the backyard informally is great fun. To learn to kick the ball safely and properly, you can learn to kick it off the ground, punt it up in the air, and learn other more complicated kicks to help you have fun.

Method 1

Method 1 of 3: Kicking a Ball on the Ground



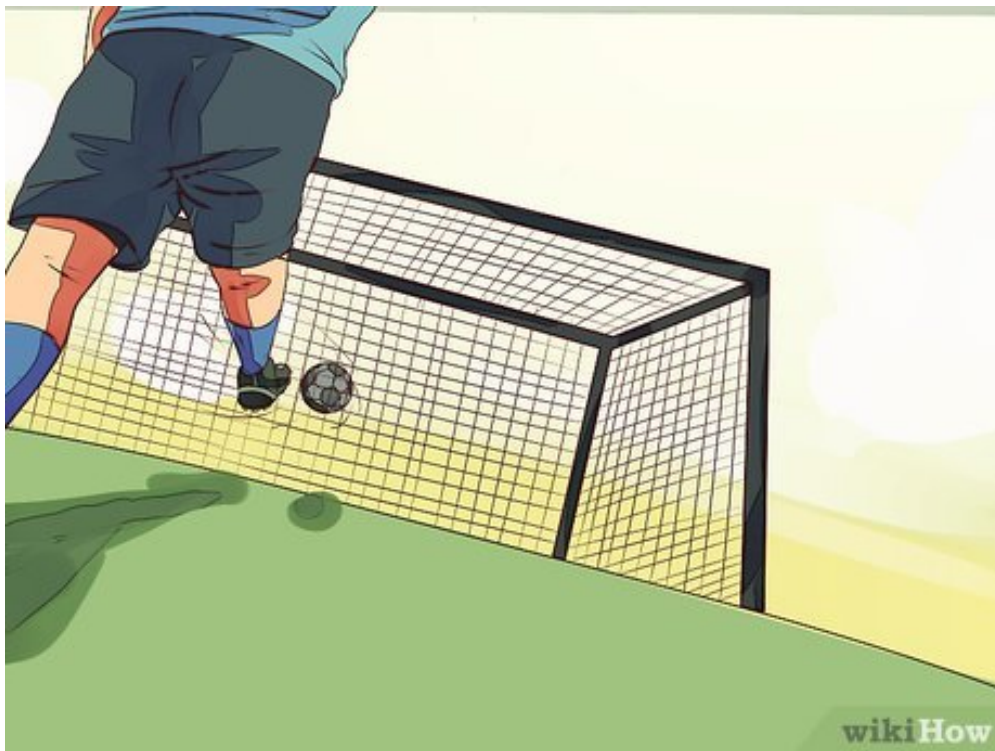
1 Use a good ball. Whatever you're playing, even if you're just goofing around with your friends and not playing an organized sport, you should make sure your balls are inflated to the proper specifications, and that you're using the right kind of ball. Kicking a well-inflated ball is important to keep the ball from getting wrecked and your foot from getting bruised.

- Soccer balls, kickballs, footballs, and foam-style Nerf balls are all appropriate for kicking off the ground. You can use this to take shots, American football kickoffs, and other plays in sports that involve kicking a round or oblong ball off the ground. Do not kick basketballs.



2 Find your kicking foot. When you kick a ball, most of the time you'll want to do it with your dominant foot, usually the foot on the same side of your body that you write with. This is your kicking foot and the other foot is your plant foot.

- Practice on your non-dominant foot too, to become a better kicker. Even if you're not playing an organized sport, being an ambidextrous kicker is a cool trick. For soccer especially, learning to kick with both feet is desirable.[1]



3 Practice your approach steps. Taking a few pre-kick steps helps to increase the power behind your kicks as well as your accuracy. Learning to coordinate your steps, plant your foot, and approach the ball properly is one of the most important parts of kicking a ball.^[2] Using the right technique will always allow you to kick a ball farther than a super-strong leg. To approach the ball properly:

- Lead with your non-kicking foot. Take a few steps back from the ball and step toward it with your non-kicking foot. Take one more step with your kicking foot, lining it up behind the ball. Your last step will be with your non-kicking, or "plant" foot, just beside the ball you're about to kick.
- A common mistake a lot of kickers make is taking too many steps back to kick the ball. 15 steps won't give you more power than three, if you use the right mechanics, but it will make it more likely that you'll stumble, or whiff the ball.



4 Plant your non-kicking foot beside the ball. Your other foot should be planted a few inches to the side of the ball you're about to kick, with your kicking leg cocked back behind you and ready to strike.

- Plant your foot forward to keep the ball low. If your plant foot is slightly ahead and to the side of the ball, you'll be able to put lots of power behind your kick, and it'll stay low to the ground.
- Plant your foot behind the ball to chip it up. If your plant foot is slightly behind and to the side of the ball, you'll be able to put a little more air into the kick, but perhaps slightly less power.



5 Swing your kicking leg forward. The power from a kick comes from your hip. Your kicking leg should be cocked back behind you when you plant your other foot beside the ball, and should extend and swing forward simultaneously to make contact with the ball.

- Imagine a magnet that connects your foot to the ball, drawing your kicking foot ever closer until you make contact.



6 Use the top of your foot for shots and the side for passes. Whether you're kicking a soccer ball or a kickball, the technique may be basically the same, but you'll need to use a different part of your foot depending on your purposes. Using the laces on the top of your foot, your toe pointed down, helps you to put power behind it, while the in-step of your foot is perfect for accuracy.^[3]

- If you want power, kick the ball with the hardest part of your foot, the seam that runs just to the side of your laces. Point your toe and strike the ball with the top of your foot.
- If you want accuracy, use the instep of your foot. You'll need to rotate your ankle to the side slightly to use your foot as a kind of mallet, striking with the arch on the side of your foot.



7 Follow through. Drive through the ball and extend your kicking leg, pointing your toe where you want the ball to end up. When you're striking the ball hard, it's important to follow through with your kick, rather than stabbing at the ball.

- Imagine that you're kicking through the ball, as if you were trying to punch through it, or kick the opposite side of the ball to the one you're actually kicking.
- Depending on the kind of kick you're taking and the power behind it, you might land on your kicking foot by taking a little hop forward and letting your momentum carry you, or you might hop up and land on your plant foot.

Method 2 of 3: Punting a Ball



1 Use an appropriate type of ball for punting. Punting involves picking up and dropping the ball to kick it high and far into the air. It's a common part of soccer, football, and other sports. Use this technique for punting a soccer ball, rugby ball, American football, or any other kind of ball that you pick up and drop to kick.^[4]

- Never try to punt an especially heavy ball like a medicine ball or another weighted ball. If you try to kick something too heavy with this technique, you can twist your ankle or otherwise hurt your foot.



2 Hold the ball at waist height. Pick the ball up and hold it somewhere around your waist-height. The punt is a way of getting the ball very far and very high, usually to transfer the possession of the ball in football or send the ball up the field in soccer. Make sure you've got enough space to kick the ball, since it's going to go a long ways without trying very hard.

- Never drop the ball from very high, or toss the ball up before trying to kick it. Hold it gently with both hands, just out from your body comfortably at about your waist-level.



3 Take your first step with your kicking foot. The basic punt step involves only two steps. In most game situations, you won't have more space than a few steps, so it's important to distill all your movements into a fairly small space. To punt correctly take full-stride steps, starting with your kicking leg.



4 Plant your other foot and cock your kicking leg. After taking that first step, you're ready to plant and swing. Plant your non-kicking foot on the ground, keeping it flexed and ready to spring. Keep your eye locked on the ball to make sure that you strike it correctly. Don't look at any other players or gameplay happening around you. Just focus on the ball.

- Bend your kicking knee and pull your leg back behind you to strike the ball. Keep your kicking toe pointed.^[5]
- As you do this motion, extend the ball straight out from your body. It'll take some practice to get it completely right, but most people need to stretch their arms out all the way to drop the ball and contact perfectly.
- Some kickers prefer a locked plant leg for power, while others prefer a more flexed knee to help make sure your strike the ball accurately and securely. Practice, experimenting some with both methods of punting to get a sense of what feels right for you.



5 Bring your leg up as you drop the ball straight down. After you plant your leg, start swinging your kicking foot forward. When your leg starts to swing back around and come straight up toward the ball, drop the ball straight down simultaneously. Don't toss it out in front of you, toss it up, or otherwise put any spin on it. Just drop it straight down as gently as possible.^[6]

- If you're kicking an oblong ball, you've got to keep the point of the ball pointing straight back at your body, not perpendicular with yourself.



6 Follow through and hop. As soon as your foot contacts the ball, keep completing the kicking motion, swinging your leg forward and up in an arc. Point your toe in the direction that you want the ball to go. (And make sure.. PRACTICE=PERFECT!)

Method 3 of 3: Getting Fancy



1 Kick with the outside of your foot. For a good quick fake-out, use the outside of your foot instead of the inside of your foot to slice the ball in the opposite direction. This is a trick commonly used in soccer.

- Bend your ankle so that your toe is pointed toward your plant foot and strike the ball with the outside edge of your foot, just behind your little toe. When you strike the ball, straighten out your foot to make it go in the other direction.



2 Try a heel kick. This might not be the most practical way to kick a ball off the ground, but doing a spinning heel kick can be a great fake-out when you're messing around with your friends. It's hard to control, but with some practice you can learn to strike the ball accurately almost every time.^[7]

- As you step toward a ball on the ground, plant your non-kicking foot on the opposite side of the ball that you normally would, twisting your body around as you do it. Swing your kicking foot around, sweeping into the ball with your heel. If you're right-footed, you would turn clockwise and if you're left-footed you would turn counter-clockwise.



3 Try a rainbow kick. Rainbows are one of the cornerstones of fancy soccer footwork. If you want to really improve your skills, pulling off a rainbow can help impress your teammates. There's not much cause to use it in a game, but it's an intimidating way to practice in front of the other team.^[8]

- As you're dribbling around, step with your kicking foot in front of the ball, stopping the ball with your heel. Use the instep of your non-kicking foot to trap the ball against your heel. In one fluid motion, do a little hop step with both feet, flicking the ball up and over your head, back in front of your body.
- It'll take some practice to get the right amount of hop and power into the kick to get it to go where you want it to go. Practice while stationary at first, then gradually try to do it at speed.



4 Try a bicycle kick. Done properly, a bicycle kick can be one of the most spectacular shots in all of soccer. Think of it like a backwards punt, done when you've got your back facing the directions in which you want the ball to travel. To pull off a bicycle kick, lean your body backward and gently fall onto your back while you bring your kicking leg up for a kick. Strike the ball over your head as you fall, so it goes back behind you.

- You need to be extremely careful not to flat-back and hurt yourself, and to tuck your chin so you don't hit the back of your head hard on the ground. Do this on soft grassy surfaces and be extremely careful.



Community Q&A

Question

How can I kick a ball high?



Community Answer

Put your foot under the ball when you kick.

Helpful 19 Not Helpful 24



Tips

- It's okay if you fail or kick backwards. It happens to everyone. Just keep practicing.
- Practice makes perfect!
- Always focus on the ball. When it drops to the desired height, kick.



Warnings

- Make sure no one is in your way when kicking the ball.
- To avoid any injuries, ensure that the shoe you are wearing is hard.

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