

Goalkicking in general play

Many players are more comfortable kicking for goal on the run because it is an extension of their normal field kicking that occurs constantly in the flow of a game and/or at training.

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A set shot is a different situation. The natural flow of the game is dramatically changed and the game stops. Psychologically, goal shooting in general play can be easier than a set shot for many players. In a set shot situation the whole crowd, the opposition players and teammates are standing around focusing solely on the kicker.

In general play, some players are concentrating on chasing and tackling, others on minding their opponent, some are trying to find space to be an optional target. In other words, doing other things and not simply concentrating exclusively on the kicker.

For many players a set shot creates internal pressure, particularly if they are not confident of success. For example, they might have missed a couple of their previous shots.

That is why some players will play on rather than take a set shot while others prefer the more closed, controlled situation of shooting from a mark or a free kick.

Shooting from play is an 'open' skill where there is greater variation in time, space and external pressures. The environment is constantly changing according to the pressure put on by the opposition. The kicker has to constantly adapt to these changes in preparation for a shot.

There are some similarities with 'closed', set-shot goalkicking.

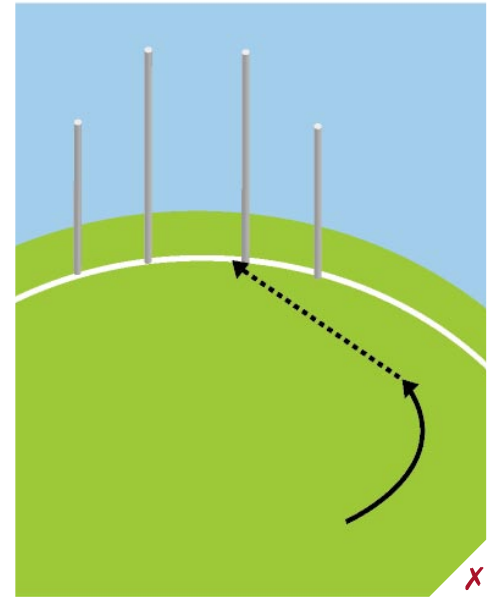
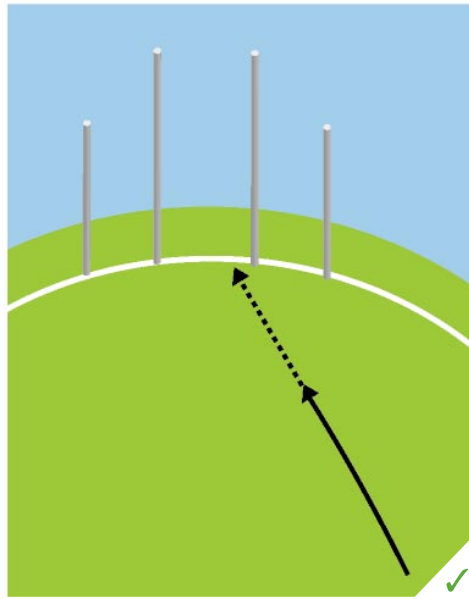
When a player is having a shot on the run he is usually being chased and is running at near top speed. However, not many players have the skill to run and kick effectively at this speed. Therefore a kicker will benefit from slowing down to a pace at which he can execute the skill effectively.

By taking one 'slow-down' (deceleration) step, a player can change from a sprinting with the ball skill to a kicking skill. The last few steps then allow the player to settle and make the kick as close as possible to a set shot.

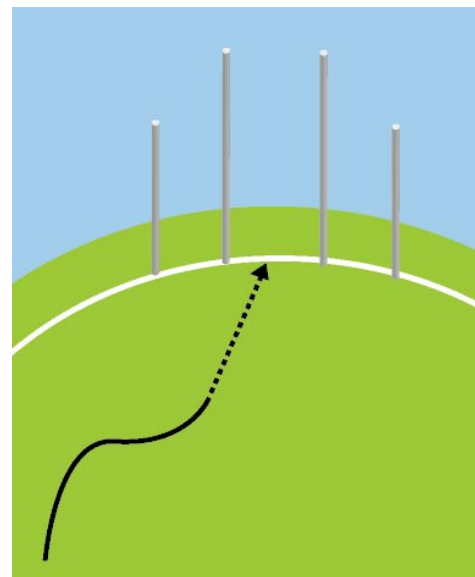
Sprint to avoid the tackler – settle – kick.

Some guidelines for kicking for goal on the run

1. Stay on line (see diagram, left) toward goal – don't run in an arc which forces you to create a new angle and have to swing your leg back across your body.



2. Run an 's'. (see diagram, left) if you are a right-footer, instead of fading to the left and shooting with your non-preferred leg you can weave back to your right just before the kick to allow you to shoot with your preferred leg, which is likely to give you a better chance of success.



3. Kick in a 'j', not a 'c' (see previous article, "Goalkicking").

4. Restrict the ball movement to inside your bodyline as far as possible given that there is naturally more arm movement when sprinting with the ball.

5. Keep your ankle straight during the kick – this will reduce the tendency to swing your knee across your body.

6. Even though you have very limited time and space, see if you can develop the skill of quickly visualising the way the flight of the ball will look like just before you kick.

7. After the kick, keep looking at your foot for a brief period to check that your technique was correct.

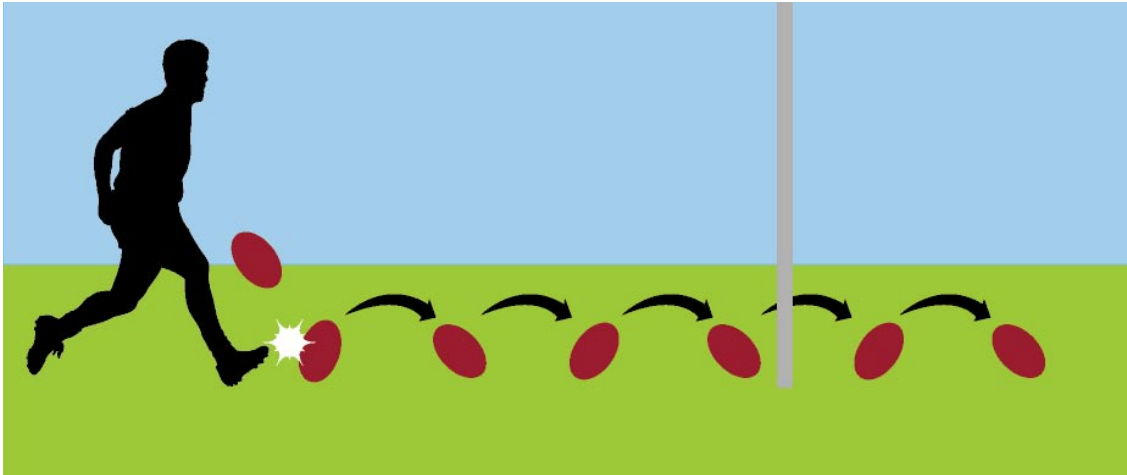
8. Project the flight of the ball higher, rather than lower to make sure there is enough spin to hold its direction on line.

There is one exception. If running into an open goal from within 20 metres and there is no one between you and the goals, keep the flight as low as possible. This minimises the distance the ball actually has to travel and eliminates any wind influence.

Land the ball about one metre from the goals and let it skid through the goals.

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Another method to use in the same situation is to tumble the ball end over end to enable it to roll on a direct path towards goal. Make contact with the top of the ball (the opposite end to where you would normally make contact). Usually the ball is guaranteed to hold its line and roll straight.



Snap shots

Snap shots often have to be taken with very little time and space. Good snap shooters have an innate sense of knowing exactly where the goals are in relation to their own position at all times, even when being tackled.

However, for many players it is a good idea to have a quick glance at the goals to confirm exactly the angle and distance from the goals. If time allows, have a last look just before you execute the snap.

The legendary goalkicker Peter Hudson believes many things can go through your mind in a couple of seconds. Think about which part of the ball needs to be hit to create the necessary spin – for example, the very point of the ball to create a lot of spin or maybe the outside of your foot to kick a 'boomerang' shot which bends to the right for a right-footer. Analyse the wind. Find more space. You often have more time than you think!

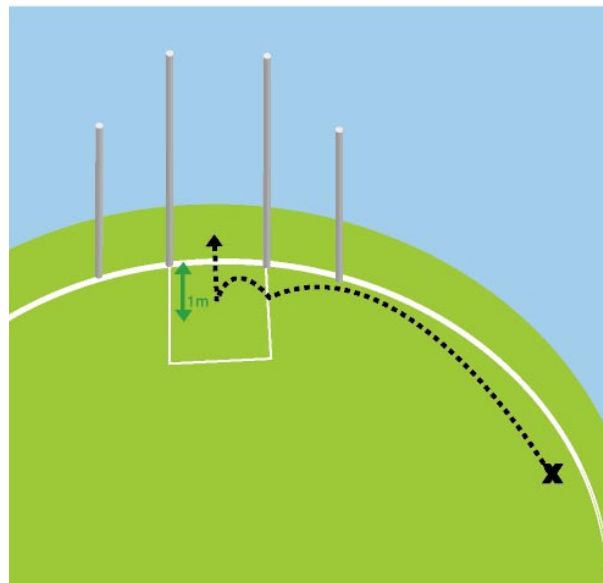
However, with a snap shot it is better to turn the kick as close as possible to a normal drop punt with the ball spinning vertically end over end. Instead of swinging your leg across your body, try twisting your body as much as possible to have your trunk facing the goals.

Peter Daicos, the Collingwood champion goalsneak, was a master at this. On snap shots he would jump off the ground, twist his body and make the kick as close as possible to a normal drop punt. Turn your body, not your leg!

Trick shots

By experimenting with different angles in which you can hold the ball you will discover you can make the ball roll along the ground in a variety of ways.

For example, if trapped close to the boundary, point the ball away from you at about 45 degrees and make contact with the ball at the point furthest away. Land the ball about one metre out from goals near the closest goalsquare line. You can produce a leg break effect where the ball will break at 90 degree in the goalsquare and roll through for a goal.

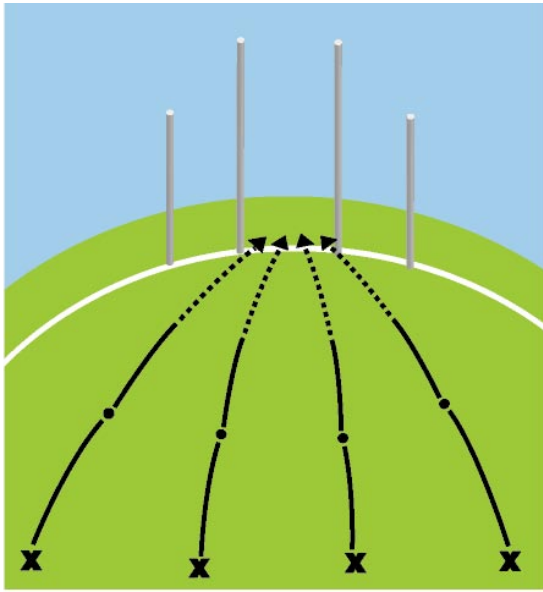


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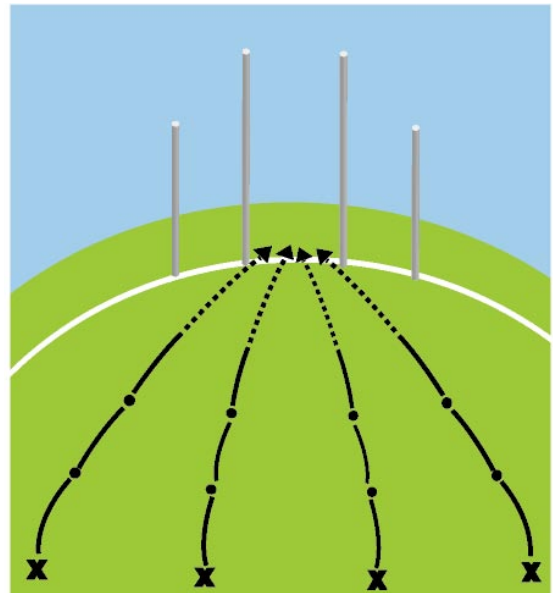
Practices

a) On the run

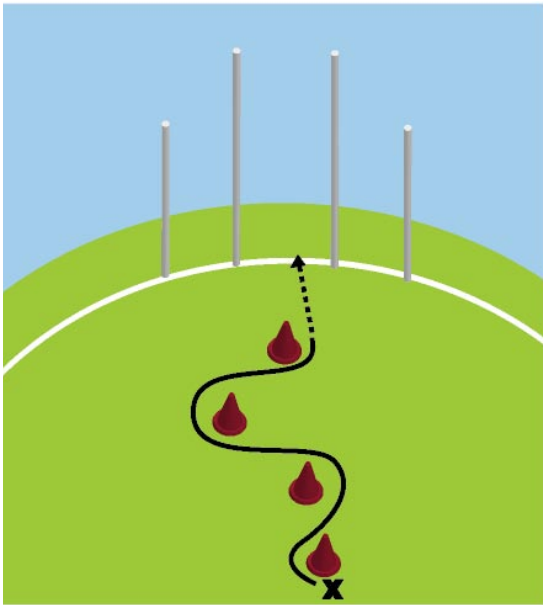
1. Run towards goal, bounce the ball and have shots from a variety of angles.



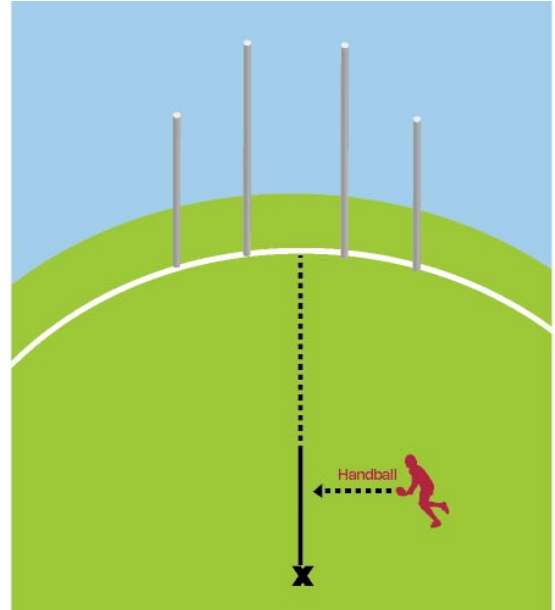
2. Add more bounces.



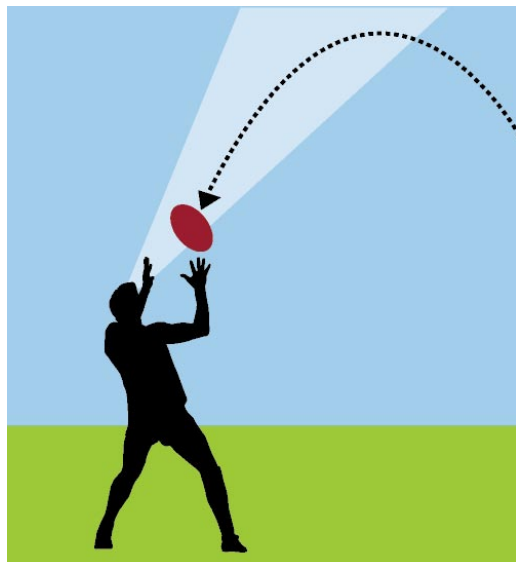
3. Weave around some witches hats.



4. Receive a handball.

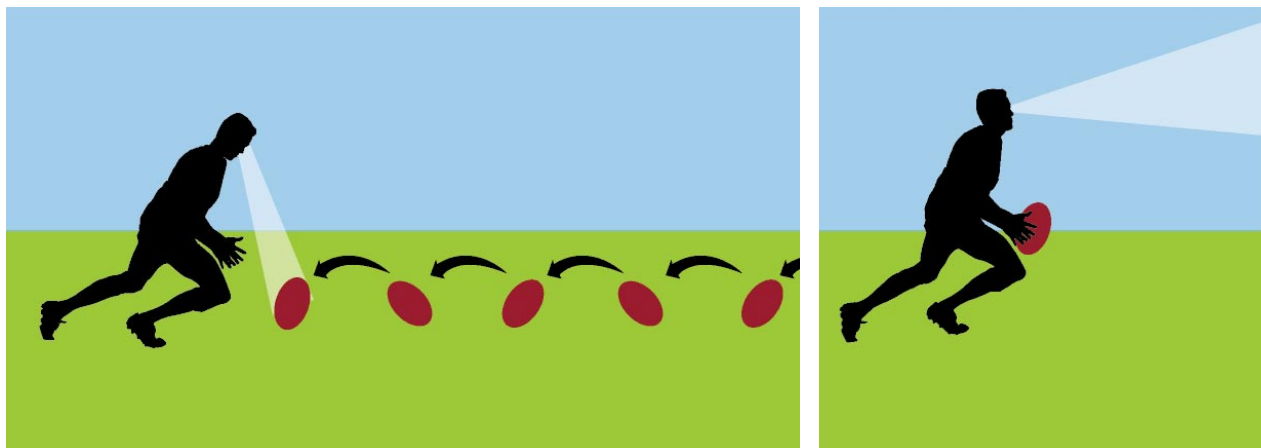


5. Receive a high ball. This teaches players to orientate their position when they lower their vision.

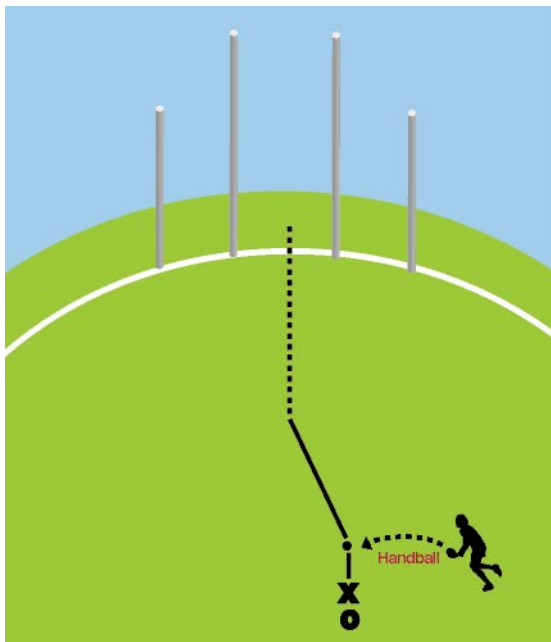


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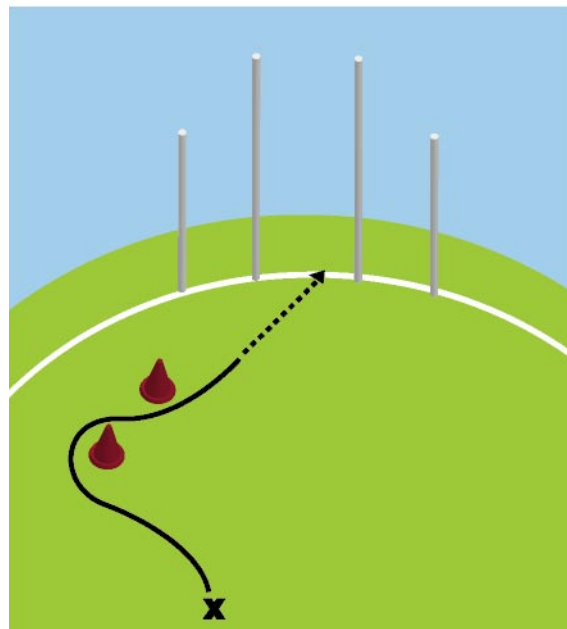
6. Gather a ground ball. Again this teaches orientation after lifting vision.



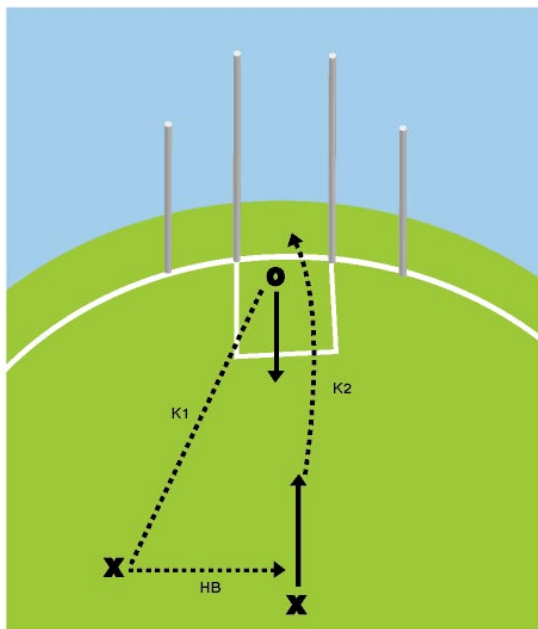
7. Have an opponent **O** give the player just enough start after receiving a handball or a ground ball to put pressure on the player during the kick.



8. Run an 's'.



9. Triangle drill. This creates pressure from the opponent coming towards the kicker.



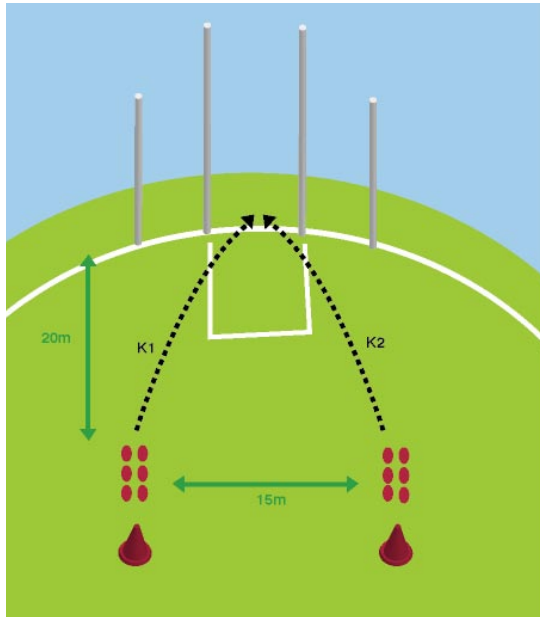
Os immediately rushes toward goalkickers after the initial kick-in

Variations: Goalkickers must kick before **O**s reaches them;
or, goalkickers can run around **O**s and have a shot.

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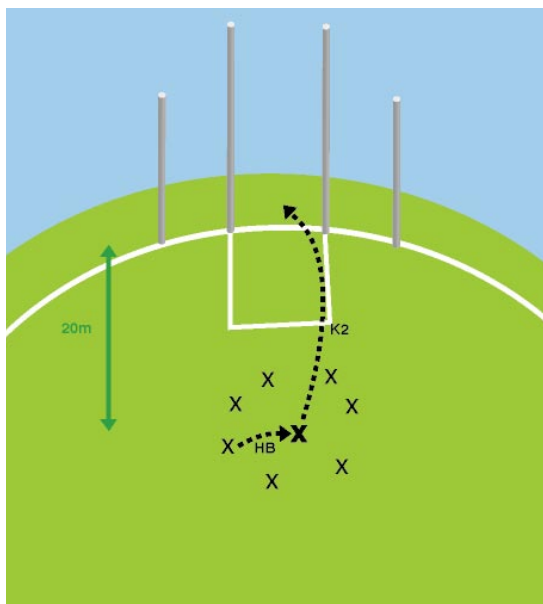
b) Snap shooting

1. Snap shooting competition



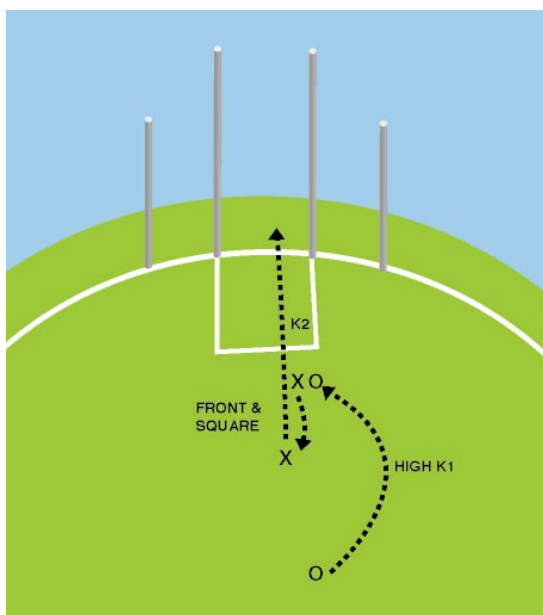
Six balls at each marker.
Player runs to left, picks up ball and snaps with left foot.
Player runs to opposite side and repeats drill with right foot.
Place a reasonable time limit on the 12 shots.
Score = number of goals.
Variation: feed balls to player in different ways.

2. Shooting from inside the circle



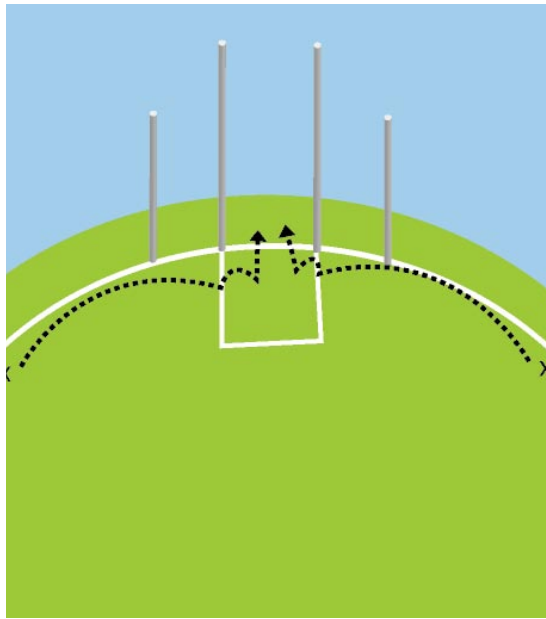
Players form a circle with kicker in middle.
Each player has a ball.
Randomly feed the kicker a ball as soon as each shot is completed.
Kicker maintains good technique even under the pressure of constant feeds.
Rotate kickers.

3. Front and square



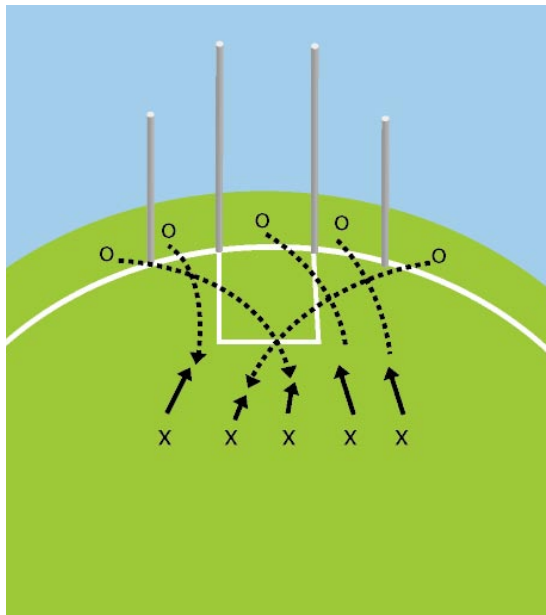
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4. Leg break



Practise kicking balls from either boundary that “leg break” through the goals.

5. Mass pressure



- s kick ball towards ●s in any manner – e.g. high, along ground, to chest.
- s immediately chase any ball to put pressure on ●s who take a snap shot.
- s rotate roles after each snap.

Can be turned into a competition.