

KICKING POWER

Keys:

- *Use the instep (shoelace part of the foot) for power drive shots.*
- *Use the inside and inside front part of the foot for quick accurate shots.*
- *Glance at the target but then keep your eyes on the ball while shooting.*
- *Have your ankle "locked" with the foot extended downwards.*
- *Keep your head down and over the ball as you follow through.*
- *First kick softly, just trying to make solid contact with the instep.*
- *Later go for speed and power and don't worry if it doesn't go very high at first. That will come.*
- *Do not try and "cheat" the ball up into the air by leaning back or lifting your toes.*
- *Buy a lightweight ball like a volley ball or "cheapie" plastic soccer ball and start off kicking it to build confidence. Believe me, it will zoom all over the place.*
- *Use a little orange marker disk as a "tee" to prop the ball up off the ground while trying to master the mechanics.*
- *START EACH PRACTICE WITH THE WEAKER FOOT, and then later work the stronger one..*

Practice and Games

"PK's" - Nothing is more fun than penalty kicks. Use your garage door or your rebounder net as the "goal". Take big kicks at the goal and keep score. Keep moving the shooter further and further back.

Garage Punts - Find the side of your garage roof that slopes towards you (hopefully there are no windows nearby). Practice "goalie type" punts up to the roof. Make good contact with the instep (shoelace part) and follow through. The ball will conveniently bounce back to you as you build strength. If you are really "into it", you can try to "trap" the ball as it bounces back to you (chest trap, thigh trap etc.) and then try to flip the ball up to your hands with a little pull-back lift. Now you have worked on kicking power, trapping skills and some juggling and the shingles are still up there.

Soccer Golf - Go to the nearby park or schoolyard or common ground area. Each player brings a soccer ball. Then make up a "golf" hole. For instance, I might say "We kick it to the right of that big oak tree, then around the back-stop, then hit the brown dumpster..... and it will be a 'par 6'" So now the players put their balls down and try to do that hole in 6 shots or less. Make the holes reasonably long to work on big kicks. The players take turns in making up holes. Keep track of who wins the hole. (Smaller players get handicap strokes so they may have to do the hole in 8 kicks not 6 kicks etc...) And yes, you can "blow" putts in this game too!

Use the "rebounder" - Don't underestimate the value of banging the ball against a wall or rebounder net. It is an excellent way to rehearse volleys, half volleys, rollers, bad bounces, side volleys, chest traps to volley kicks etc. In fact I would go so far as to say that kids that do not work with a rebounder will be at a disadvantage as they get older.practice and games