

Courses

How to Trick People in Soccer

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Last Updated: October 8, 2020

The beautiful game is full of tricks. Bringing your game to the next level involves being able to fake out your opponents with quick jukes, smart passes, and believable fakes. If you want to learn how to get your sneak on, you can learn to handle the ball with wizardry, make sneaky free-kicks, and sell like a champ. See Step 1 for more information.

Method 1

Method 1 of 3:

Ball Handling Tricks

1 Work on dribbling with both feet. Nothing makes a player more one-dimensional than always going to the same side. Becoming an ambidextrous dribbler is a great way to fake out your opponents. If you've got the ability to be strong on both your left and right sides, you'll be a dominant player and a great faker.

- Do cone drills with both feet, going down on one side, and coming back the other way going the other side.
- Switch to the other side of the field every other practice, so you get experience playing from other angles and forcing yourself to take shots with the other foot.

2 Learn the Matthews and the reverse-Matthews. The most basic juke-move in the dribbler's arsenal is the Matthews, followed up quickly by the reverse-Matthews. Learning to integrate these little jukes into your basic dribbling will significantly improve your game. It's the easiest to learn—you might even be doing it already without knowing it. Practice the Matthews slowly and gradually bring it up to game speed.

- To do the Matthews, you make two quick touches on the ball with your dominant foot. On your first touch, bring the ball in across your body with your in-step, and with the second, kick it back away from you to that side with the

side of that same foot. This is often done while stationary, facing off with a defender, and can be a great way to make space.

- To do the reverse-Matthews, you'll also make two quick touches on the ball with your dominant foot, but in the opposite order. Fake like you're going to one side by touching with the outside of your foot, then bring it back in across your body with your in-step. At high-speed, it's a great fake out.^[1]

3 Practice rollovers and reverse rollovers. Rollovers are a great way to vary your touches and keep a tremendous amount of control on the ball. Learning to do rollovers quickly and with an economy of movement will keep your defender off balance, making it very difficult to tell where you're going. It's also an extremely easy touch.

- To do a rollover, use the instep of your dominant foot to roll up and over the ball in toward your body. Don't kick it, but roll it. To go back in the other direction, use your other foot, rolling it back the other way. Practice doing this going forward, around cones to get the timing right.
- To do a reverse rollover, you pull the ball back toward you while moving backwards. Start with your dominant foot on top of the ball, then step back, rolling the ball toward you and moving quickly enough so that you'll be ahead of it. Then, pull back with the other foot. This can be a great way to change direction and make space.

4 Do a step-over. Maybe the flashiest move in the soccer player's dribbling arsenal is the step-over, in which you juke to one side quickly before cutting back in the other direction. To complete the move, start dribbling forward at a normal pace.

- With your dominant foot, step over the ball from your weak side to your strong side. In other words, if you're right-footed, step over the ball as it's moving, from your left to your right. Plant your dominant foot and use the outside of your opposite foot to kick the ball in the opposite direction quickly. The step should fake-out the defender, leaving them flatfooted and mis-directed, and you can cut around in the opposite direction.
- In a double step-over, you'll step over the ball with both feet before going in the original direction. If you're right-footed, step over the ball with your right foot from the left to the right, then with your left foot from the right to the left, then use the outside of your right foot to kick it back to your right. Lightning speed!

5 Try the Zidane spin. No, you don't walk up to a defender and headbutt them in the chest. Instead, this is a 360 spin with the ball that'll leave your opponent in the dust. It's easy in practice, but somewhat more difficult to pull off in a game. Still, used correctly, it can be a devastating move. Use this when an opponent is coming straight for you.^[2]

- As you're dribbling at a comfortable speed, step on the ball with your dominant foot to stop it and pivot your body 180 degrees in that direction. If you step on the ball with your right foot, swing around your left shoulder until you're facing the opposite direction.
- Then, continue swinging around another 180 degrees, but switching your touch on the ball. Use your other foot to do a reverse roll-over, pulling the ball back with you and you turn and head in your original direction.

6 Do a rainbow. A rainbow is super-flashy, awe-inspiring, and almost completely useless in a real game situation. Still, it's a cool skill to learn and practice your touch. Who knows when it might come in handy?

- To do a rainbow, step with the heel of your dominant foot in front of the ball and use the instep of your other foot to trap the ball against the back of your leg. Use the heel of your dominant foot to flick the ball up and forward, preferably directly in front of you.
- Practice the move stationary, and then work on doing it at an easy forward dribble. If you can do it at game-speed you'll be a great dribbler.

7 Try a rabona. A rabona is kind of like a one-footed rainbow and a step-over combined, and is a common little chipping cut used as a part of freestyle dribbling exhibitions and occasionally in games.

- To do a rabona, step with your non-dominant foot over the ball toward your dominant side, and use the inseam of your dominant foot to make a short little stabbing kick up and in the opposite direction, back toward your non-dominant side.

8 Make tricky passes by keeping your head up at all times. One of the best ways to keep the defense off-balance is to make smart passes. Work on dribbling with your head up at all times to keep track of where your opponents are spaced on the field and fake out the defense by looking one direction and making a sharp pass to an open teammate in the opposite direction. Make enough no-look passes and you'll be the Steve Nash of soccer.

**Method
2****Method 2 of 3:
Free-Kick Tricks**

1 Kick a knuckle ball. Point the ball's valve, where the air-pump is inserted, directly back toward you. Fluff the grass so the ball sits as high and soft on it as possible. Take several steps to drop back, and kick the ball head-on, flush with the valve, as flat as possible. Use the top of your laces and put no English or spin on the ball whatsoever.

- Struck correctly, a knuckle ball will feint slightly through the air, not spinning, but dipping up and down unpredictably. If you can get it over the wall, it can be very hard for a goalie to trap, and can even slip through the hands suddenly. It almost defies physics.

2 Don't shoot it. If you're within striking distance, everyone will expect that you'll take a shot on goal. Instead, try to curve it around the wall for a higher-probability assisting goal, or chip it up softly over the wall for a chance at a header. Or even just make a sharp pass to an unmarked teammate off the wall. Put the ball into play rather than trying to bend it like Beckham.

3 Go under the wall. Too often, defenders who form a wall to defend a free kick will jump up in the air instinctively when the ball is kicked. This is especially true if you're close to the goal and have taken several shots at the wall before, trying to get over it. One sneaky trick is to aim as low as possible, to skid the ball under the wall, hopefully going under the defenders to break the defense and let a teammate get a shot on it.

4 Make a short pass around the wall for a shot. Look to pass into space next to the wall and let a teammate run onto the ball rather than trying to get it up in the air. Use the angles opened up by the wall to make a surprising pass, rather than trying to use power to muscle the ball into the box.

5 Coordinate a swarm with teammates. You can sometimes juke out the defenders forming the wall, and even get the goalie to hop out of position prematurely, by organizing between two and four teammates to take fake free kicks, running toward the ball in a coordinated way, but jumping over it instead and running on to take a pass if necessary. After they swarm toward the goal, take the chip over the wall as your teammates run onto the ball.

- Alternatively, you can have a teammate make a short touch back to you, who can take cross the ball in, shoot it, or work a pass around from a new angle to get the ball back into play.

**Method
3****Method 3 of 3:
Diving Tricks**

1 Sell it shamelessly. Diving is all in the acting. Soccer moves so fast that it's almost impossible for the referee to see everything, meaning that constant fouls by your opponent might go unnoticed a lot of the time. The goalie can't be everywhere. To make sure little touches and elbows get noticed, then, you've got to sell them like you're Brad Pitt going for an Oscar moment.

- Flop to the ground, comically howling in pain. Grab your ankle or jaw, or whatever place your opponent supposedly hid, as if it were broken in half. Roll around on the ground comically, a look of pained desperation on your face. Make it look bad.
- Keep holding the position until you hear a whistle. When your teammates come up, or your opponents start complaining that you're faking, resist the urge to break out of character. You're hurt. Mortally wounded perhaps. Stick to it until the foul is called and you can get up.

2 Fall down when someone challenges your possession hard. The best time to sell an injury is when you've got the ball and the defense comes in hard. Even if they get the ball clean, throwing your legs out behind you as if they went straight for your shins is the best time to sell.

- Let the momentum of your opponent affect the power with which you throw your legs out. It'll always be better if the other player is running very fast, so the sell can be seamless. You need to make sure that your opponent is moving quickly, so when you kick your legs out from under yourself it looks more realistic.
- Kick your legs in the direction your opponent was running. So, if you're both running toward each other, kick your legs out behind your. If you're running parallel, your legs need to go out in front of you.

3 Go up in the air for a challenge and fake an elbow. If you both go up for the ball together, elbows will be flying around. Even if one doesn't hit you, come down howling and holding your jaw, your eye, or your teeth as if you'd just been cold-cocked.

4 try to dive when you're in the opponent's 18-yard box. The best place on the field to dive is when you're in possession and you've crossed into your opponent's 18 yard (16.5 m) box. If you're taking the ball in unsupported and being defended heavily, make a big show of getting injured. Any penalties called

while you've got the ball in the box will result in a penalty kick for your team, which is a high-probability opportunity.

- Don't flop if a good offensive opportunity is presenting itself. If your teammate is streaking toward an open net and is open for the cross, don't fall down so you can try to get a penalty kick. Make the pass and get the clean goal.

5 Only dive on defense when you've got support. If you're playing defense and you get beaten off the ball, a good way to stop play and give your teammates a change to catch up is to sell an injury. Fake like your opponent stole the ball by stabbing your ankle, rather than getting the ball clean. Play should be whistled dead, effectively stopping a fast-break and giving your teammates a chance to catch up.

- It's best to only do this if you've got defensive support, and other teammates can make up for it if your fake doesn't fake out the refs. You don't want to end up flopping on the ground and howling while the offense streaks for the goal and the ref calls nothing.
- If you don't have support, it's sometimes a better idea to foul the other player to stop a fast-break. If it looks especially dire, you can halt play and give up a free kick, but take away the possibility of a fast break goal.

Community Q&A

Question

What are some cool tricks to steal the ball from my opponent?

Dancerdancer

Community Answer

Pretend to move in one direction and then come back to your initial place, your opponent will play the ball to you.

Question

When a defender jumps in front of a full-speed player on offense and is run over by the offensive player, what is the call?

Community Answer

The call is an offensive foul and is formally known as a charging foul. If the defender holds his position and is run over, then he can gain possession of the game through an offensive foul.

Tips

- Use tricks sparingly and focus instead on playing good soccer first and foremost.

Warnings

- Practice these carefully in private before you try them in a game.

References

1. <http://coachingamericansoccer.com/introductions-to-skills/introduction-to-dribbling/>
2. http://www.soccer-training-info.com/soccer_dribbling_skills.asp