

The key areas of physical fitness in football



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Aerobic endurance depends on the capacity of the heart and circulatory system to meet the demands of the body for a sustained period of activity. Aerobic endurance is a very important component of fitness for football, as the players need to have high levels of physical fitness throughout the whole 90 minute game. They also need to perform at their best throughout the whole game. Many injuries can occur with low levels of aerobic endurance as you can get tired and you may fall or trip and hurt yourself. You can test your aerobic endurance by the shuttle run/beep test. You can train for this by continuous, fartlek and interval training.

Flexibility is the amount of movement around a joint. Good hamstring flexibility is important for a football player to perform good kicking technique. You also need it as you need to dodge past opposing team and even to score a goal. The goal keeper will need flexibility the most as he needs to stretch to catch the ball preventing it going in the goal. If you want to kick a ball using the right technique, flexibility is useful. You can also get injured by low flexibility as you can pull a muscle. To test your flexibility you can do the sit and reach test and to train for it you can do passive and active stretching.

Speed is innate which means you are either born with or without it. The three types of speeds are accelerative speed, pure speed and speed endurance. You need maximum speed to out run the opponent. You will also need to run from one end to another to get the ball in the goal as fast as you can to score a goal. Good aerobic endurance is needed to have good level of speed endurance because your speed can become low if you get tired. The test for speed is the 30 metre sprint test. To train for better speed you can do hollow sprints, acceleration sprints and hill sprints.

Muscular strength is the maximum force a muscle or group of muscles can produce during a single contraction. A footballer needs muscular strength to get past defenders or to get the ball off the opposing team. If you don't have strength the defender can barge you and it can injure you. The test for muscular strength is the 1 rep max test. To train for this you can use resistance machines and free weights. In the training you should do high weights and low reps.

Body composition is the amount of body fat and muscle in your body. A mesomorph body composition is useful in football as you need to be big and muscular to get past your opponent. If you are too fat you will not be able to run and if you are too skinny you will be too weak, so an endomorph and ectomorph body composition will find it difficult to achieve excellence in football.

Muscular endurance is a measure of the capacity of the muscles to perform repeated contractions near maximum level for an extended period of time without becoming fatigue. Muscular endurance is needed in football to be able to carry on throughout the match to keep moving your muscles.

Midfielder would probably use it the most as he/she will be running up and down the pitch to help get the ball into the goal or to help defend. If you don't have muscular endurance your muscle may hurt after the game. To train for muscular endurance you can do use free weights and circuit training us (low weight and high reps). The test for this is the 1 minute press up test or the 1 minute curl up test.

Power is the work done in a unit of time combining speed and strength. You need good power in football as you need it to get the ball past the goal keeper. If you don't have power the goal keeper can easily catch the ball. You need to keep this power throughout the whole game. To train for power you can do circuit training and plyometrics.

Agility is to be able to quickly and directly move or change direction without losing your balance. You need agility to move quickly in different directions as you need to move as the ball moves and you need to do this faster than the opposing team. You can injure yourself if you don't have good agility because if you need to move in a different direction quickly and you can't then when you try to move you might trip and fall. This may injure you. E. g. breaking your bone.

Reaction time is the time taken for a sports performer to respond to a stimulus and the start of the response. Good reaction time is useful in football as the goal keeper needs to react quickly to the ball going in to the goal. A footballer also needs to react quickly to other people on their team and even the other team to know whether to pass the ball or not. Reaction time good to help pick up loose balls.

Coordination is the smooth flow of movement needed to perform a motor task efficiently and accurately. Hand eye coordination is useful for a football player as they need to aim and kick the ball into the goal. Footballer also needs to coordinate with other people on the team to get the ball across the field. Has to keep good coordination to use correct technique. A defender may have to coordinate with the goalkeeper to save the ball.

Balance is the ability to maintain your centre of mass over a base of support. The two types of balance are static balance and dynamic balance. You need balance in football to kick the ball. If you didn't have balance you won't be able to kick the ball and you will go flying on the floor, this may even cause an injury. A footballer also needs good balance because they need to stay standing while running from one end to another quickly. Balance can also help them when they are changing direction quickly, if they don't have good balance when they do this it may cause them to fall and injure themselves.