

POSITIONING


Simply being in the right place at the right time is critical for successful goalkeeping. The positioning demo can be dropped (or briefly reviewed) for more experienced keepers; use the time for more of the game-like exercises at the end.

- **Warm Up (10 min)**

Jog and stretch, light footwork mirroring exercise, simple catch in pairs to warm up the hands.


- **Positioning Demo (15 min)**

Have three ropes set up beforehand; one tied to a stake at the center of the goal line, one tied to each post. Place a ball out near the edge of the penalty area, off center, and explain the center line and covering the posts. You can move the ball and ropes around the edge of the penalty area to demonstrate the goalkeeper's arc. Don't forget to point out **they need to be "outside" the near post on shots from an angle.**

 Make it clear that this positioning is a general starting position for facing shots; crosses and breakaways are handled a bit differently. It is helpful, but not absolutely necessary, to have the field markings on the grass for this demo.


- **Two-Sided Saves (15min)**

Keepers in groups of three, with two cones 6 yards apart. One keeper stands between the cones, the other two players are about 8 yards away, one on each side of the cone "goal", with balls. Keeper faces one player, who shoots a ball at keeper who makes the save. While the keeper is making the save, the player behind them is moving their ball to a new position. After keeper makes the save, they must turn, find the ball and the other shooter, get in good position and save the shot from the second shooter. The keeper immediately turns and find the other ball and shooter, who has also moved to a varied position, and save the next shot. Each keeper makes 5 saves in succession, then rotate positions. Encourage shooters to serve balls from all angles.

 The keeper's arc for this 6-yard "goal" is smaller, but keepers need to quickly check the posts and find good position, along the center line and far enough out to cover the posts. Make sure the keepers, after turning, move *through* and out in front of the cones, off the goal line, to make the save.


- **Color-Coded Shots (20 min)**

Place four differently-colored cones, pinnies or other objects in an arc around the goal, about 16-18 yards away from the goal. At least one should be at an acute angle close to the goal line. At each cone, there is a shooter and several balls. Keeper starts at one goalpost. The coach calls a color. The keeper must quickly find that color object, get in good position along the arc, and make the save. Coach calls next color, and so on until the keeper has faced four shots. Then rotate keepers. First time through, have the shooters evaluate the keeper's position and help adjust them if they are not properly positioned. The second time through, the color call and the shot come immediately after the previous save. If the shooter thinks the keeper is out of position, they should try to take advantage of it.

 Make sure the keepers check the posts as they move to be sure of their positioning. Keepers need to be off the goal line and outside the near post, along their arc. Footwork comes into play here too; the keeper should try to be in proper position *before* the shot is taken, if possible. Don't hesitate to "freeze" the keeper after a shot and correct their position if necessary.


- **Follow the Bouncing Ball (15 min)**

This is similar to Color-Coded Shots, except now the keeper must track a moving ball. Put 3-4 players in a similar arc around the penalty area, and one keeper in the net. There is one ball. Players pass the ball around the arc; the keeper must use footwork and positioning to track the ball. At any point after 3-4 passes, a player may elect to take a shot, particularly if they feel the keeper is out of position. Each keeper saves three or four shots, then rotates out.

 Similar coaching points to the previous exercise. The field players should try to quickly move the ball side-to-side to try to get the goalkeeper out of position.

- **Moving Ball plus Defenders (15 min)**

Take the "Follow the Bouncing Ball" exercise, and now add one or two players as defenders who can pressure the ball but not tackle it away or intercept it. This adds a match-related condition to the exercise.

 This exercise is a good one to use in a team training environment, and make it a more match-condition exercise, by adding more players in a larger area. The offense should always be numbers up (e.g. 5v2+K or 6v3+K) and encouraged to quickly switch the point of attack.