

The Kicking Coach

Specialist Off-Season Training Guide

Kicking

Kicking Training Simplified: Kick as much as possible without overkicking.

Volume: Aim for 2 to 4 kicking workouts in one week, totaling about
200 – 250 kicks.

Kickers only and Punters only: Your weekly goal should be closer to 200
kicks

Combos: Aim for 250 to 280 kicks in a week if your legs can take it.

Kicking Session Should Consist Of:

- Dynamic Warm up*: 5-10 minutes
- Drill Work for warm up and fine-tuning: 10 minutes
- Full Kicks:

Kickers:

5-10 full field goals for maximum distance and straightness

20 – 30 field goals kicks from different spots

10-15 kickoffs (mix in some directional kicks and onside kicks)

Punters:

15-20 full punts for maximum height and distance

30 – 40 situational punts (directional, inside the 20)

- Cool Down stretching: 5-10 minutes. Hold stretches for 20 seconds. Focus on hamstrings, quadriceps, hip flexors, lower back and abdominals

General Kicking Guidelines:

1. Try to kick when your legs are fairly fresh. Don't kick with dead legs.
2. Don't empty the tank. Just because you feel good after 60 kicks does not mean that you should keep kicking until your legs are dead. If you do, your next workout will suffer and you will be worse off in the long run.
3. If you are fairly new to kicking or you need to fix something, spend a bit more time on drills.
4. Try to enjoy yourself. Kicking is fun. Focus on making each kick and move on afterwards. Getting frustrated is useless.

Weight Training

Kicker Weight Lifting Simplified: Becoming a more explosive athlete while maintaining flexibility and good kicking mechanics will help you kick the ball farther and higher.

Lifting weights with your team is the easiest way to get stronger. Most coaches have access to good information and design solid off-season programs. There are also many private gyms available that are geared toward improving your speed and explosiveness. Either option is fine. Consistency of the training and volume are more important than what you do. Doing too much will affect your kicking workouts negatively – which will neutralize any strength gains that you made in the weight room.

Contrary to what most people think, mimicking kicking motion while adding resistance in some fashion does not accomplish much. Pretty much every kicker has tried this at some point – hoping for some miracle kicking power gain. But eventually, everyone gives up on it and returns to a well-balanced weight room regimen. I know a lot of people who can hit 65 yard field goals and 80 yard kickoffs. And none of them are doing anything gimmicky. Kicking is a full body explosive movement. Thus, becoming a better athlete will improve your kicking power.

One way that you can make your workouts more relevant to kicking is by adding some one-legged movements. They are more challenging because they strengthen small stabilizing muscles – that are often overlooked. Few examples of single leg exercises are – lunges, step ups, 1-leg squats, reverse lunges, 1-leg deadlift, etc. I posted a brief workout that is loaded with tough single leg movements on youtube - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dDiY3k_gv5U

General Weight Training Guidelines:

1. Always use proper lifting technique. If you try to lift more than you can handle, you risk injury and you diminish the benefits of an exercise. Most kicker injuries take place in the weight room or while running.
2. You will lose strength during the 2-a-days and season. That is a fact. Lifting during this time period is meant to minimize the loss. So, pace yourself in the weightroom and save your legs for the field.
3. Lift on days that you are not kicking or after your kicking workout.
4. If you are motivated to do extra lifting, focus on the strengthening your core. As you gain leg speed, you will need to improve core strength to maintain posture and balance through the swing.

Drills

Drills are used to fine tune the mechanics, and warm-up physically and mentally before full effort kicks are taken. I highly suggest that every young kicker starts with 10-20 minutes of drills prior to their kicking sessions. These drills are very simple but extremely effective. You can always find more drills and ways to make things more complex. But why would you want to? Instead, try to increase the accuracy and success rate of each of these. That is exactly what pros do. Keep it simple, and keep expectations and focus high.

Field Goals

1. **No step taps.** Video - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f6t_ixcPlwc
2. **Contact drill.** Video - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LPgMT8rDz5k&list=UUDwALhxgR0AJcT77xhuYWAw>
3. **Kicking down the line.** Take your regular field goal step and try to kick the ball down a straight line with good end-over-end rotation. Take a little power off and focus on getting a clean rotation and straight flight path – even if ball does not as far as your all out kicks.

Punts

1. **Drop drill.** Video - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JKcAeFvwZ8>
2. **Ball Handling** - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IoWSBhtUox0>
3. **Contact drill** - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-jGlXYf6hc>

Kickoffs

1. **Run Throughs.** Work on finding a comfortable distance from the ball where 6 natural jogging steps in a straight line will get you to the ball. Run through the steps without kicking the ball.
2. **Contact Drill.**

Many of these drills can be performed in relatively small spaces – making them a great way to improve your power and skills during cold winter months. Performing them in front of a mirror occasionally helps monitor your drill accuracy. Remember...practice does not always make perfect, but it always makes permanent. So...make sure that you are doing the drills correctly.

Peak Performance Psychology Tips for Specialists

1. Never focus on anything that is not in your direct control- uncontrollables: weather, your opponents, what others are thinking, your coach, statistics, past performances, other people's expectations, your teammates, your parents.

When you catch yourself dwelling on one of these, bring your mind back to something that is in your direct control – relaxing your body, keeping your eyes on something that calms you down, thinking about the sound of solid contact when your foot meets the ball, seeing the ball float in front of you (punter), accelerating your foot through the sweet spot of the ball, etc.

2. Don't let days when you kick really well or really badly significantly affect your self – evaluation.

- Instead of getting really excited over a good day and really disappointed over a bad one, try to learn something from both experiences.
- Ask yourself these questions:
 - What did I do in the several hours before I kicked?
 - What moods/feelings did I go through immediately before stepping on the field (happy, sad, stressed out, lethargic, worried, bored, excited)?
 - What were my actions, thoughts, feeling and emotions between each kick?
 - What results came from each set of actions, behaviors and thoughts?
 - What were my physical behaviors before and after each kick?

After a period of time, you will learn what behaviors lead to a good performances and which ones lead to bad ones. By monitoring your physical and mental behaviors before and during practices and games you will become more familiar with the state of physical and mental readiness that promotes your **Peak Performance!**

Training Resources

1. Youtube.com
There are many great videos that will show you how to execute various skills. Make sure that whoever made the video is reputable. Compare what they are teaching with what you see NFL specialists do. If it is different, disregard it.
2. My Youtube channel - <http://www.youtube.com/filipovic77>
I occasionally post training videos and I frequently post video of kickers and punters from all levels.
3. Coach My Video APP
Film yourself kicking with your phone or iPad. Open it with this App. You can slow it down, zoom in, play it side by side with other kicker's videos, etc. If you spend \$8 on a Pro version, you can even stream videos from youtube into it for breakdown/comparison, or use a built in stopwatch to measure hang times, get offs, etc.
4. Newsletter
Make sure that you are receiving my Newsletters. I usually send about 10 Newsletter e-mails per year with training information that is relevant for that time of the year. If you are not, email me at TheKickingCoach@yahoo.com

Kicking Shoe Guidelines

Your kicking shoe:

- ***Should Fit Very Tight.*** If your normal walking or running shoe is size 10, your kicking shoe should be size 8 to 9. It has to be tight but not so tight that it restricts the movement of your foot. In other words, you should not have much or any room in front of your toes, but you should be able to walk normally.
- ***Should Be Made of High Quality Leather.*** Leather stretches and forms to the shape of your foot. This allows you to get a smaller, tight-fitting shoe that is still comfortable. If you wear a shoe with plastic or synthetic parts, it is a lot more difficult or impossible to break it in.
- ***Should Have a Clean Contact Area.*** Top of the instep and top of the foot should have nothing but leather and shoe laces. There should be no straps, folded over tongue, shoe lace cover, etc. I prefer flat shoe laces over round ones. They are a lot more comfortable when tied tightly.
- ***Should Be a Soccer Shoe.*** They are designed for kicking. Few football shoes are OK for kicking. But most are not.
- ***Should Be Different From the Shoe on Your Non-Kicking Foot.*** Plant foot shoe can be a regular football cleat. On your plant foot, you want a shoe that has good ankle support and good grip on the playing surface.

Kicking Shoe Breaking-in and Adjustments:

- ***Cut the Tongue.*** I usually fold the tongue over and cut it off where it folds. Part of the tongue that is under the laces stays intact. Part that lays on top of the laces is gone.
- ***Shave Down Front/Interior Molded Cleats.*** This is more important for guys who are kicking off the ground. I recommend using a filer out of your dad's tool box or simply dragging the molded interior studs over a rough pavement. They do not need to be filed down all the way. I recommend shortening them to about 1/2 of their original length.
- ***Stretch the Leather.*** You can use a shoe stretcher insert or simply stuff as many crumpled up newspapers as you can inside your shoe and tighten shoe laces. It usually takes about 2 weeks to fully break the shoe in.
- ***Check Heel Support.*** If the back of the shoe is high and rigid so that you are not able to point your toe as much as you would be able to when barefoot - cut the top portion of the heel support off.

Recommended Shoes:

1. Nike Tiempo. Leather, Molded cleats.
2. Adidas Copa Mundial