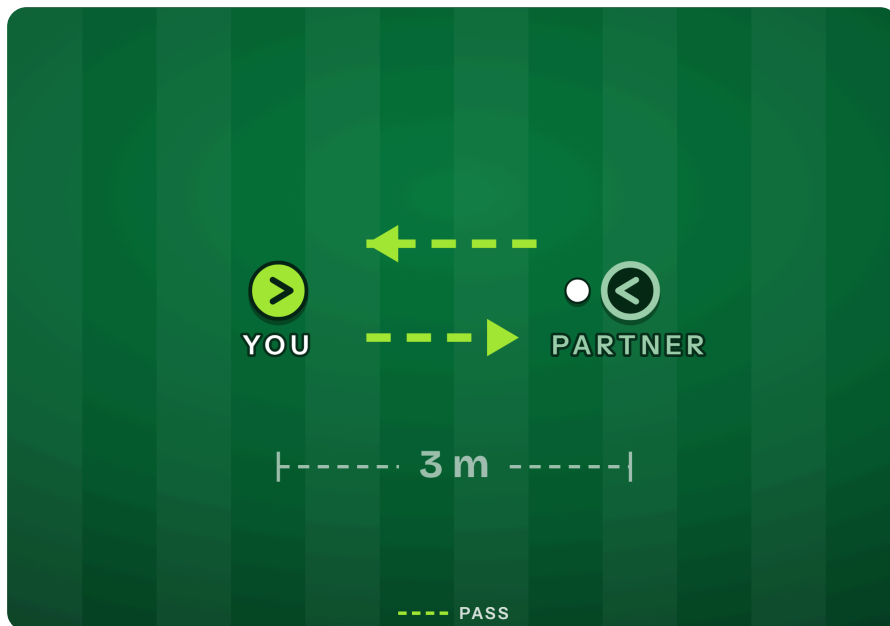




Cushion the dropping ball

TECHNICAL & TACTICAL · RECEIVING A DROPPING BALL ·
1 PLAYER + A PARTNER TO THROW (A PARENT, COACH OR TEAMMATE) · AGE 12+



Set up

Warm up first

A ball (size 4 or 5)

A partner to throw

3 m apart

Dose

5 on each foot and thigh

2 rounds of 20 throws

5 on each foot and 5 on each thigh (20 throws), 2 rounds with 1 minute of rest: our target, not an FA rule.

What it trains

Control a dropping ball with your foot and thigh: meet it, then let that surface give so the ball drops dead, one step in front of you. The FA says players need to learn to control a ball dropping out of the air.

How it works

- 1 Warm up first. Find flat grass with about 5 x 5 m of space. Your partner stands 3 m away with a ball (size 4 at U12–U13, size 5 from U14).
- 2 Your partner throws underarm, gently, so the ball drops in front of you at about waist height. Watch it all the way and get in line with it early.
- 3 Laces: lift your foot to meet the ball and let your foot drop with it, so it lands dead within one step. Pass it back along the ground.
- 4 Thigh: lift your knee, meet the ball with the middle of your thigh and drop the thigh, so the ball falls to your feet. Control it with your foot, then pass it back.
- 5 5 on each foot and 5 on each thigh is one round of 20 throws. Rest 1 minute, then do a second round.

Coaching points

- 1 **Catch it with your laces**
Lift your foot to meet the ball, laces up and ankle firm. As the ball lands on your laces, let your foot drop with it, so it settles on the grass in front of you.
- 2 **Give like a cushion**
On the thigh, lift your knee so the middle of your thigh meets the ball. Drop the thigh as it lands, like a cushion, so the ball falls about one step in front of you.

× **Not this:** Stabbing at the ball with a stiff, straight leg. It bounces away and you have to chase it. Meet it, then give with it.

MY NOTES

HARDER

Set a 2 m cone gate to one side and touch the ball through it straight after you control it. Or your partner throws from a little further away, still dropping at waist height or below.

EASIER

Let the ball bounce once first, then cushion it as it drops from the bounce. Or your partner stands closer and throws more softly.

Safety

- Warm up first. Flat grass with space around you, never a road.
- Gentle underarm throws that drop at waist height or below, never near the face. Control with your foot or thigh only: this drill never uses the head.
- If the ball hits your face or head, or anything hurts, stop and tell an adult.
- Warm up first. Stop if anything hurts and tell an adult.

Track 12 weeks (tick each session)

W1	W2	W3	W4	W5	W6	W7	W8	W9	W10	W11	W12
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐



Watch Archie show it

footballreach.com/drills/cushion-the-dropping-ball

Then take the free test at footballreach.com