

A player's first touch is fundamental to the level at which they play the game. Which came first, the chicken or the egg? Juggling is a great teacher of control and should be used as an activity when players have any opportunity to be stood still, such as at the start or end of a session, or when you need an extra minute to organize your next practice. Although control involves the retraction or cushioning of a bodily surface, which is the opposite to juggling, they are complimentary to each other.

**Important coaching points to remember when coaching control:**

- Get your body in line with the ball.
- Select body surface.
- Relax body surface to cushion/control the ball.
- Guide the ball into space away from opponent, & to where the ball is to be played.

Players must experience controlling the ball with all parts of the body in a variety of combinations. Design, develop & progress sequences which build upon player's skill level.

**Warm-Up**

Dribbling in area, on coach's command "soccer" players pick up their ball self feed and control ball INTO SPACE & carry on dribbling. Pick out players who can demonstrate to the rest of the group controlling the ball in a variety of different ways. Allow players to explore/experiment during the warm up as opposed to coaching players. Use surface as an elevator to cushion the ball to the ground.

**Fundamental/Individual Progressing to Game Related**

Individually: Self Service

- Use laces of foot to control ball and cushion it to the ground, alternate feet.

Inside of knee must be over the ball when using inside of foot for wedge control. Outside of knee must be over the ball when using outside of foot for wedge control.

- Thigh Control
- Chest Control
- Head Control/cushion

Pair work: Self Serve

- Cushion control using a variety of surfaces and pass to partner. Partner cannot use hands and flicks ball up into their own hands to repeat.

As above but players feed to their partner (requires good service).

**Yes Please!**

Half the players are spaced out around the outside of the area with a ball in their hands. The remaining players run around/through the area receiving balls from the feeders space around the outside and laying the ball back to the feeders.

**Variations:**

- **Ball fed in air, two touch, control and pass back.**
- **One touch only (pass back)**
- **Chest control**
- **Thigh control**
- **Inside of foot control**
- **Ball fed along ground (passed), two touch, control and pass back.**
- **Head straight back**
- **Head control/cushion and pass back with foot**

**Game Condition (Small-sided/Conditioned)**

6v6/7v7 to goal(s).  
Any restarts, game MUST be started with a throw in to encourage more occasions where players have to control/cushion the ball.

**Game (All conditions removed)**