



Melchior Individual Training Curriculum (MITC)

Powered by the Melchior 5 Fundamentals Test™

Development you can measure.



Why an Individual Training Curriculum?

WHY TRAIN INDIVIDUALLY?

Team training is essential—but it's often spread thin across many players, positions, and tactical priorities. **Fundamental skill development**, especially in areas like ball control, coordination, and body mechanics, requires high-quality repetitions, clear feedback, and focused attention on individual performance.

These foundations are best built in **individual or small-group settings**, where players can slow things down, repeat key movements, and track their progress. At **Melchior Coaching**, we believe every player who is serious about improvement should commit to training an additional 2–3 days per week on their own—using a structured and progressive approach like the **Melchior Individual Training Curriculum™**. This is where true growth happens—and where confidence is built from the ground up.

BACKED BY RESEARCH

- **Deliberate Practice Theory (Ericsson et al., 1993):** Expert performance stems not from talent, but from **structured, effortful practice done outside of performance settings**. Most top performers accumulate thousands of hours through individualized, feedback-rich repetition.
- **Motor Learning Science (Schmidt & Lee, 2011):** Repetition alone doesn't create learning—**high-quality, variable practice with clear feedback** does. Solo training allows for this targeted feedback and intentional repetition without the distraction of team play.
- **Transfer of Learning (Pekrun et al., 2002):** Skills practiced in isolation transfer more effectively to performance environments when learners experience autonomy and mental engagement—both of which are fostered in personal training sessions.

THE GOAL

This curriculum empowers players to take control of their development. It removes the guesswork from “what to do on your own” and replaces it with a roadmap: **repetition with purpose, activities aligned to core competencies, and clear benchmarks to measure growth**. This is how confident, adaptable, and technically sound players are built—one session at a time.





Melchor Individual Training Curriculum (MITC)

Development you can measure.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 4. What is Deliberate Practice?*
- 5. Curriculum Overview*
- 6. Methodology*
- 7. The Six Block System™*
- 14. Training Activities*
- 36. Melchor Fundamentals Test™*
- 49. Ball Size Recommendation*
- 52. Glossary*
- 53. References*





What is 'Deliberate Practice'?

Rooted in the groundbreaking research of Dr. Anders Ericsson

Deliberate Practice is a structured, purposeful method of training proven to develop expert-level skill. Unlike regular practice, it is not about just playing the game or repeating drills mindlessly. Instead, it targets specific weaknesses with focused attention, includes clear goals, provides immediate feedback, and pushes players slightly beyond their current ability. Grounded in the research of Dr. Anders Ericsson, Deliberate Practice is mentally demanding, often uncomfortable, but consistently leads to long-term improvement. At Melchor Coaching, we use this framework to design every session—prioritizing quality over quantity, depth over variety, and intentional repetition over random activity.

Ericsson, K. A., Krampe, R. T., & Tesch-Römer, C. (1993). The role of deliberate practice in the acquisition of expert performance. *Psychological Review*, 100(3), 363–406.





CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

Development you can measure.

MITC Curriculum Overview

At Melchor Coaching, our curriculum is built on the proven science of **Deliberate Practice** and **Modern Motor Learning Theory**, designed to develop confident, skillful players through structured progression and purposeful repetition. Whether a beginner or advanced player, each athlete is challenged to improve with clear standards, consistent feedback, and measurable milestones.

Structure (The Six Fundamentals of an Individual Player)

1. Athleticism
2. Ball Control
3. Passing
4. Dribbling
5. Heading
6. Shooting

Each block in our curriculum includes training challenges rooted in motor learning, cognitive development, and the science of deliberate practice. Players advance through trackable skill levels by demonstrating technique, consistency, and adaptability. Activities can be implemented by all youth ages and all levels.

Why MITC Works:

- Our curriculum is a combination of common sense and research.
- We believe less activities + more repetition + trackable progression = mastery.
- Based on research by Dr. Anders Ericsson and modern training science
- Designed for individual development
- Scalable for players, coaches, and families





METHODOLOGY

Development you can measure

Rooted in Dr. Anders Ericsson's 'Deliberate Practice' Framework

- **Purposeful Repetition:** Each session targets specific skills with focused intensity.
- **Clear Goals:** Activities have defined performance standards for progression.
- **Immediate Feedback:** Players receive real-time feedback through assessments
- **Stretch Zones:** Each level is designed to push players slightly beyond their comfort zone.

Structured Around Six Blocks

- Each block targets a core component of complete player development.
- Activities scale by level with consistent cues and standards.
- Curriculum fosters technical mastery and confidence over time.

Evidence-Based Coaching Principles

- Aligned with **modern motor learning** science and **skill acquisition** research.
- Prioritizes **retention, transfer, and long-term development**, not just short-term wins.
- Supports **measurable growth** through assessments and progress tracking.

“Deliberate practice is not enjoyable. It requires effort and is designed to improve performance.” - Dr. Anders Ericsson

(Peak: Secrets from the New Science of Expertise)



The 6 Fundamental Blocks

The Melchor Individual Player Curriculum is built around six fundamental blocks that reflect the complete development of a modern soccer player: (1) Athlete First, (2) Ball Mastery, (3) Dribbling, (4) Shooting, (5) Passing, and (6) Heading. Each block targets a key component of performance and is designed to layer progressively, building confidence, skill retention, and in-game transfer. **We believe that every training session should incorporate all six blocks**, because the game of soccer demands players to move, control, and make decisions under pressure—all at once. Isolating skills can help with short-term improvement, and **blending blocks within sessions builds true fluency**, ensuring athletes can transfer skills to team practice and games. By structuring sessions around all six areas, players develop more holistically, reduce performance gaps, and build habits that stick.

1

ATHLETICISM

2

BALL
CONTROL

3

PASSING

4

DРИБBLING

5

HEADING

6

SHOOTING



Fundamental Block 1 - Athleticism

Developing general athleticism - including balance, strength, speed, and coordination - is critical to early sport success and injury prevention. Research by Lloyd et al. (2015) supports motor skill competency and physical literacy as prerequisites for long-term development and higher-level specialization. Additionally, the Youth Physical Development Model (YPDM) emphasizes that multi-directional movement training and age-appropriate physical challenges improve motor control, reactive ability, and resilience. Melchior Coaching integrates progressive bodyweight and agility drills to build these attributes systematically, aligning with foundational strength and movement guidelines for youth athletes.

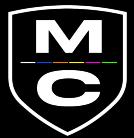




Fundamental Block 2 - Ball Control

Ball control is a core indicator of soccer performance. Studies show that early mastery of touch-based skills (like juggling, trapping, and surface-specific control) is correlated with technical confidence and game adaptability (Ali, 2011; Praca et al., 2015). Juggling tasks in particular have been associated with cognitive-motor efficiency and dynamic balance. By integrating varied control surfaces and progressive repetitions - such as wall work, self-toss drills, and partner sequences - Melchior Coaching reflects current best practices in technical skill development that emphasize both repetition and variability.





Fundamental Block 3 - Passing

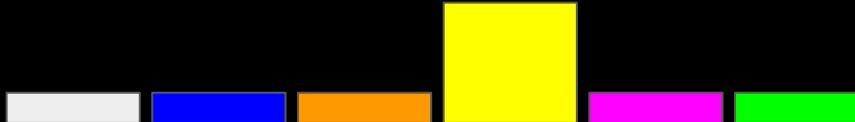
Passing proficiency influences possession retention, tempo control, and team success. A study by Gómez et al. (2019) found that successful passes per match are among the top technical indicators distinguishing elite from amateur players. Evidence also shows that wall-passing and one-touch drills significantly improve reaction time, spatial awareness, and decision-making speed in small-sided formats. Melchor Coaching's passing block combines isolated technical reps (e.g., static and wall-based passing) with variable-intensity partner sequences to reinforce timing, accuracy, and communication.

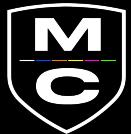




Fundamental Block 4 - Dribbling

Dribbling is a complex perceptual-motor skill requiring coordination, rhythm, and spatial control. According to Oppici et al. (2017), dribbling practice in constrained environments enhances players' scanning behaviors and decision-making under pressure. Research supports the use of cone dribbling, zig-zags, and variable pace runs as methods that improve agility and touch consistency. Our focus on straight-line and change-of-direction dribbling matches these recommendations and supports cognitive-motor integration essential for in-game ball retention and evasive movement.

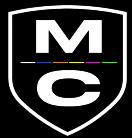




Fundamental Block 5 - Heading

Teaching heading as a technical skill, especially in youth soccer, requires a balance of safety and skill acquisition. Research by Kontos et al. (2016) and Di Virgilio et al. (2019) highlights potential risks of repetitive heading in young players, particularly when done at high volumes or under match conditions. However, controlled heading practice—emphasizing proper technique, short distances, soft balls, and limited repetitions—has been shown to mitigate risk while improving neuromuscular coordination and spatial awareness (Caccese & Buckley, 2016). The U.S. Soccer Federation now prohibits heading for players under 11 and limits it for ages 11–13, encouraging coaches to focus on technical instruction rather than competitive use. Melchior Coaching's methodology aligns with this: heading is introduced only in stationary or lightly assisted formats, using soft tosses at close range, with clear rules and progression. This structure respects cognitive safety while developing aerial timing, forehead contact, and targeting ability—skills that are transferable as players grow into higher levels of play





Fundamental Block 6 - Shooting

Shooting is the culmination of multiple biomechanical and cognitive elements - from foot placement and striking mechanics to accuracy, decision-making, and composure. A study by Lees & Nolan (1998) highlights the role of segmental coordination and ball contact angle in shot power and accuracy. Furthermore, activities that segment shooting into subcomponents (e.g., stationary strikes, two-touch finishes, and volleys) have been shown to improve goal conversion rates over game-only practice (Ali, 2011). Melchior Coaching's progressive shooting tasks target placement, power, and footwork under variable entry points, reflecting evidence-based practice structure.





Melchor Individual Training Curriculum (MITC)

Development you can measure

Fundamental Training Activities

For optimal development, we strongly encourage players to complete 2–3 individual training sessions per week in addition or in place of team practices. These sessions can include both Independent and Assisted Activities. Each session should last between 60 to 90 minutes and incorporate exercises from all Fundamental Blocks to ensure balanced, comprehensive growth. *Progress can still be made with less sessions/time but fundamental development come slower*

Independent Activities = Activities that can be performed by a player without the assistance of a coach or partner.

Assisted Activities = Activities that can be performed by a player with the assistance of a coach or partner.

All training activities can be performed by players Ages 4-18. Players are assessed by the level they can reach for each activity.





Area 1: Balance & Coordination

Mobility Warm-Up Series

Time: 1 set = 15 Yards & Back (Recommended: Minimum 1 set per activity)

Task: Perform each activity with control and good posture. Finish each rep set with a jog back to the start.

1. “Open the Gate” / “Close the Gate”

- **What:** While walking, lift your knee and rotate it out to “open the gate,” then rotate it in to “close the gate.”
- **Why:** Improves hip mobility and balance.
- **Coach/Parent Tip:** Encourage steady posture — no wobbling!

2. “Leg Kicks” (Forward - Backward - Side)

- **What:** Controlled kicks while walking — forward, backward, and sideways.
- **Why:** Warms up hamstrings, hip flexors, and inner thighs.
- **Coach/Parent Tip:** Kick with control, not speed. Height is not the g

3. “Leg Twists”

- **What:** Walk forward with a kick while twisting the upper body in the opposite direction.
- **Why:** Engages core and improves dynamic balance.
- **Coach/Parent Tip:** Encourage smooth twisting — not rushed or stiff.

4. “Forward Lunges”

- **What:** Step forward into a lunge, keeping posture tall. Jog back after reps.
- **Why:** Activates glutes, quads, and hips.
- **Coach/Parent Tip:** Back knee should drop straight — not angle out.

5. “Side Lunges”

- **What:** Step sideways into a lunge, then return to standing. Jog back after reps.
- **Why:** Stretches groin and strengthens lateral movement.
- **Coach/Parent Tip:** Keep the chest up and push the hips back like sitting into a chair.



Area 2: Speed & Agility

Dynamic Warm Up Series

Time: 1 set = There & Back (Recommended: Minimum 1 set per activity)

Task: Perform each movement with control and good posture. Jog back after each rep set.

1. **“High Knees”**
 - **What:** Lift knees toward chest in a quick rhythm while moving forward.
 - **Why:** Activates hip flexors, core, and coordination.
 - **Coach/Parent Tip:** Encourage light feet and upright posture — not leaning back.
2. **“Butt Kicks”**
 - **What:** Kick heels toward glutes while moving forward with quick steps.
 - **Why:** Warms up hamstrings and improves running rhythm.
 - **Coach/Parent Tip:** Small steps, quick turnover — heels should touch or nearly touch the back.
3. **“Side Shuffles”**
 - **What:** Shuffle laterally, staying low and keeping feet apart.
 - **Why:** Warms up hips, groin, and improves lateral movement.
 - **Coach/Parent Tip:** No feet clacking — stay light and smooth.
4. **“2&2 Shuffles” (Forward + Backward)**
 - **What:** Side shuffle twice, rotate body, then side shuffle twice again. Do both forward and backward.
 - **Why:** Builds coordination, body control, and change-of-direction sharpness.
 - **Coach/Parent Tip:** Emphasize clean transitions and full turns — not rushed.
5. **“Reaches” (Forward + Backward)**
 - **What:** Reach forward or backward with extended arms while walking.
 - **Why:** Stretches shoulders, spine, and core while improving balance.
 - **Coach/Parent Tip:** Big reaches, long strides — stay under control, not floppy.



Area 3: Strength & Conditioning

Explosive Movement Series

Task: Perform each activity with control and max effort. Walk back unless noted.

Recommended: 1 set per activity unless otherwise specified.

1. “Frog Jumps”

- **What:** From a deep squat (“frog”) position, jump forward with hands on hips.
- **Reps:** 10–15 Forward Jumps + Walk Back
- **Why:** Increases vertical and horizontal power through full leg drive.
- **Coach/Parent Tip:** Keep the chest up and go full depth on each rep.

2. “Lateral Shuffle - Ball Touches” (Place two balls 5 yards away from each other)

- **What:** Shuffle side to side between two balls (5 yards apart), touch each while facing forward.
- **Time:** 30–60 Seconds Continuous
- **Why:** Develops lateral quickness and total-body coordination.
- **Coach/Parent Tip:** No turning — hips and shoulders stay square.

3. “Sprints”

- **What:** Sprint down and back at full speed.

Reps:

- 10 Yards There & Back (Beginner)
- 15 Yards There & Back (Standard)
- 20 Yards There & Back (Advanced)

Why: Trains acceleration, speed, and recovery.

Coach/Parent Tip: Watch for strong take-offs and clean stops. Let them fully reset before each rep.

Fundamental Block 2 - Ball Control (Two Areas)



Area 1: Juggling

Activity 1: “Keep Ups” (Independent Activity) *TESTED ACTIVITY*

Time: 5 Minutes Per Variation

Task: Keep the ball in the air using only the assigned body part. Try to get as many in a row as possible without the ball dropping

Variation 1a: Feet Only

What: Tap ball with feet only. Alternate feet.

Why: Develops control, timing, and touch with both feet.

Coach/Parent Tip: Encourage calm, light touches. Use both feet!

Variation 1b: Thighs Only

What: Tap ball with thighs only. Alternate legs.

Why: Builds control and rhythm using upper legs.

Coach/Parent Tip: Focus on keeping the ball close and centered.

Variation 1c: Head Only *Only Ages 11 and up!*

What: Tap ball with forehead continuously to keep it up.

Why: Improves heading comfort, control, and focus.

Coach/Parent Tip: Keep eyes open and use soft touches - aim for control!

Variation 1d: Free

What: Keep the ball up using any part: foot, thigh, or head.

Why: Builds creativity, comfort, and full-body ball control.

Coach/Parent Tip: Let them experiment! Praise effort and creativity. They will figure it out.



Area 2: Ground Trapping

Activity 2: “Coach Passes” (Assisted Activity)

Time: Minimum of 2 sets Per Variation (1 set = 10 reps, 5 each leg)

Task: Stand 5 yards from your coach. They pass you the ball. Trap it so it stops as close to your foot as possible and then pass ball back to coach.

Variation 2a: Step Trap

What: Stop the ball by stepping on it after the pass. Alternate feet.

Why: Builds control and calm under pressure.

Coach/Parent Tip: Roll firm passes. Watch their trap and cheer for clean stops!

Variation 2b: Inside Foot Trap

What: Use the inside of your foot to stop the ball. Alternate sides.

Why: Trains soft touches and smoother first control.

Coach/Parent Tip: Encourage soft, quiet traps. Ask: did the ball stop close?



Area 2: Ground Trapping

Activity 3: “Ball & Wall” (Independent Activity)

Time: Minimum of 2 sets Per Variation (1 set = 10 reps, 5 each leg)

Task: Stand 5 yards from wall. Pass ball at wall, then trap it so it stops as close to your foot as possible. 1 touch to pass, 1 touch to trap and continue.

Variation 3a: Step Trap

What: Stop the ball by stepping on it after the pass. Alternate feet.

Why: Builds control and calm under pressure.

Coach/Parent Tip: Roll firm passes. Watch their trap and cheer for clean stops!

Variation 3b: Inside Foot Trap

What: Use the inside of your foot to stop the ball. Alternate sides.

Why: Trains soft touches and smoother first control.

Coach/Parent Tip: Encourage soft, quiet traps. Ask: did the ball stop close?

Fundamental Block 3 - Passing (Two Areas)



Area 1: Ground Passing

Activity 4: “Static Ball & Target” (Independent Activity) *TESTED ACTIVITY*

Time: Minimum of 2 sets Per Variation (1 set = 20 reps, 10 each leg)

Task: Place the ball 10 yards from a target (Two cones 1 yard away from each other serving as a “gate”). Strike the ball from a standstill and aim to hit the target. If the ball hits a cone or goes in between the cones, that counts.

Variation 4a: Inside Foot Pass

What: Use inside of foot to pass the ball into the target. Alternate feet.

Why: Builds accuracy, balance, and technique.

Coach/Parent Tip: Focus on plant foot direction and follow-through!

Variation 4b: Low Driven Pass

What: Use laces or top of foot to hit a firm, low pass into the target.

Why: Trains power with control — essential for strong game-speed passes.

Coach/Parent Tip: Encourage them to keep their head down and ankle locked.

Fundamental Block 3 - Passing (Two Areas)



Area 1: Ground Passing

Activity 5: “Coach Passes” (Assisted Activity)

Time: Minimum of 2 sets Per Variation (1 set = 20 reps, 10 each leg)

Task: Stand 10 yards from your coach. Coach will stand between two cones that are 1 Yard away from each other. Receive a pass, control it, then return a pass so accurate your coach only needs 2 steps or fewer to receive it. Two touches max.

Variation 5a: Control + Inside Foot Pass

What: Control the ball, then return it using the inside of your foot. Alternate feet.

Why: Develops clean control and reliable short-passing accuracy.

Coach/Parent Tip: Watch for smooth touches and passes that stay low and straight.

Variation 5b: Control + Low Driven Pass

What: Control the ball, then strike a firm, low pass back.

Why: Trains strong passing under control — key for game speed.

Coach/Parent Tip: Can you get it back quickly and cleanly without rushing?



Area 2: Volley Passing

Activity 6: “Self Toss Volley Pass” (Independent Activity) *TESTED ACTIVITY*

Time: Minimum of 2 sets Per Variation (1 set = 20 reps, 10 each leg)

Task: Player stand 10 yards from a target (Two cones 1 yard away from each other serving as a “gate”). Toss the ball and volley before ball hits ground. Aim to hit target. If the ball hits a cone or goes in between the cones, that counts.

Variation 6a: Inside Foot Volley Pass

What: Use inside of foot to volley pass the ball into the target. Alternate feet.

Why: Builds accuracy, balance, and technique.

Coach/Parent Tip: Focus on plant foot direction and follow-through!

Fundamental Block 3 - Passing (Two Areas)



Area 2: Volley Passing

Activity 7: “Coach Volley Passes” (Assisted Activity)

Time: Minimum of 2 sets Per Variation (1 set = 20 reps, 10 each leg)

Task: Stand 3 yards from your coach or helper. They toss the ball to you. Volley it back with one touch before it hits the ground. Make it easy to catch.

Variation 7a: Coach Toss + Inside Foot Volley Pass (No Bounce)

What: Volley the ball back using the inside of your foot. Alternate feet.

Why: Builds coordination, timing, and clean contact for close-range volleys.

Coach/Parent Tip: Give gentle, chest-high tosses. Remind them to stay balanced and focused on smooth contact.

Variation 7b: Coach Toss + Laces Volley Pass (No Bounce)

What: Use your laces (top of foot) to volley the ball back firmly.

Why: Trains striking technique and controlled power with one-touch finishes.

Coach/Parent Tip: Encourage locked ankle and solid posture. Catch and praise good effort, not just perfect passes.



Area 1: Straight Line Dribbling

Activity 8: “Backward Rolls” (Independent Activity)

Time: Minimum of 2 sets (1 set = 20 yards there and back)

Task: Roll the ball using only the sole of your foot. Keep it moving the entire way without stopping or needing to adjust. Stay in as straight a line as possible. Try to go as fast as you can.

Variation 8a: Backward Rolls (Alternate Feet)

What: Roll the ball backwards while walking in reverse, switching feet each step.

Why: Builds foot sensitivity, control under pressure, and body awareness.

Coach/Parent Tip: Stay patient! Encourage smooth rolls, not speed — control comes first.

Fundamental Block 4 - Dribbling (Two Areas)



Area 1: Straight Line Dribbling

Activity 9: “Straight Line Dribble” (Independent Activity)

Time: Minimum of 2 sets (1 set = 20 yards right foot there and left foot back)

Task: Dribble in a straight line using only the outside of one foot. Dribble at the next cone and try to keep a straight line between cones. Right foot there and left foot back. Keep the ball moving - no stops or pauses. Try to go as fast as you can.

Variation 9a: Straight Line Dribble (Right Foot There & Left Foot Back)

What: Use the outside of one foot to control the ball the entire way, stop at the next cone.

Why: Builds directional control, balance, and single-foot confidence.

Coach/Parent Tip: Set up a visible cone. Remind them to avoid it and keep touches small and steady.

Variation 9b: “Straight Line Dribble + No Look” (Right Foot There & Left Foot Back)

What: Use the outside of one foot to control the ball the entire way, stop at the next cone. Not allowed to look at ball. Head up to look at where you’re going.

Why: Builds directional control, while being able to make decisions with head up.

Coach/Parent Tip: Set up a visible cone. Remind them to look at the cone they are dribbling to. Remind them to not look at ball.



Area 2: Change of Direction Dribbling

Activity 10: “L Dribble” (Independent Activity) *TESTED ACTIVITY*

Time: Minimum of 2 sets (1 set = Right Foot There & Left Foot Back)

Task: Set Up “L” shape (Two Perpendicular Lanes). Each lane is 10 yards long and 1 yard wide. Dribble through the “L” shape using only the outside of one foot. (Right foot starts at the bottom of L and left foot starts at the top of L) Keep touches continuous, don’t let ball stop. Try as fast as you can.

Variation 10a: L Dribble (Right Foot There & Left Foot Back)

What: Use just one foot’s outside edge to dribble straight forward. No switching feet.

Why: Sharpens cutting, directional control, and single-foot strength.

Coach/Parent Tip: Watch for clean outside cuts at each turn. Encourage steady, controlled pace.

Variation 10b: L Dribble + No Look (Right Foot There & Left Foot Back)

What: Use just one foot’s outside edge to dribble straight forward. No switching feet. No looking down at ball. Head up.

Why: Sharpens cutting, directional control, and single-foot strength.

Coach/Parent Tip: Watch for clean outside cuts at each turn. Encourage steady, controlled pace. Remind them to not look at ball, look at what’s ahead of you.

Fundamental Block 5 - Heading (Two Areas)

Area 1: Standing Headers *Ages 11 & Up Only*



Activity 11: “Coach Toss Standing Headers” (Assisted Activity)

Time: Minimum of 2 sets per variation (1 set = 20 reps)

Task: Stand 3 yards from your coach and target. Coach will gently toss the ball toward your head. Use your forehead to head the ball toward a target (max 1x1 yards). No jumping — stay grounded.

Variation 11a: Head Forward Back to Coach

What: Head the ball straight back to the person who tossed it. Helper should be around 3 yards away.

Why: Builds confidence with clean, controlled headers.

Coach/Parent Tip: Toss chest-high and soft. Watch for forehead contact and balanced body position.

Variation 11b: Head to Corner Targets (Alternate Corners)

What: Head the tossed ball toward a target on your left. Helper should be around 3 yards away.

Why: Trains directional control and neck/shoulder coordination.

Coach/Parent Tip: Encourage full body movement — not just twisting the neck.

Fundamental Block 5 - Heading (Two Areas)

Area 1: Standing Headers *Ages 11 & Up Only*



Activity 12: “Self Toss Standing Headers” (Independent Activity) ****TESTED ACTIVITY****

Time: Minimum of 2 sets per variation (1 set = 10 reps)

Task: Player stand centered in a 1x1 yard box that is 6 yards from full size goal. Player tosses ball over head and heads at the target (Corner target = 2 yard wide gate - Cone placed 2 yard from goal post on each corner) If ball goes through gate it counts.

Variation 12a: Head Forward to Bottom Corner (Alternate Corners - Left/Right)

What: Head the ball straight into the bottom right corner gate.

Why: Builds confidence with clean, controlled headers.

Coach/Parent Tip: Focus on form and directional movement, not power.



Area 2: Jumping Headers *Ages 11 & Up Only*

Activity 13: “Coach Toss Jumping Headers” (Assisted Activity)

Time: Minimum of 2 sets per variation (1 set = 10 reps)

Task: Stand 3 yards from the coach or helper. They toss the ball above you to require a jump. Jump and head it toward a small target (2 yard wide gate) using your forehead.

Variation 13a: Jump & Head Forward Back to Coach

What: Jump and head the tossed ball straight back to the coach. Helper should be around 3 yards away.

Why: Builds proper jumping form, timing, and controlled headers.

Coach/Parent Tip: Toss slightly above head height. Emphasize forehead contact and a soft landing.

Variation 13b: Jump & Head to Corner Target (Alternate Corners)

What: Jump and head the ball toward corner target. Alternate side each rep. Helper should be around 3 yards away.

Why: Trains directional heading and upper-body coordination.

Coach/Parent Tip: Toss slightly off-center. Encourage full-body rotation for accuracy.

Fundamental Block 6 - Shooting (Two Areas)



Area 1: Ground Shooting

Activity 14: “Static Shooting from 12 Yards Out (or Penalty Spot)” (Independent Activity) *TESTED ACTIVITY*

Time: Minimum of 2 sets per foot (1 set = 10 reps)

Task: Place the ball at the penalty spot. Shoot using your laces, aiming for the bottom corner (2 Yard Wide Gate) in each corner of the goal. Ball starts still before every shot.

Variation 14a: Static Shots

What: Shoot from a standstill using your laces — no dribble or setup.

Why: Builds striking technique, accuracy, and power from close range.

Coach/Parent Tip: Remind them to lock their ankle, keep head down, and follow through toward the corner.





Area 1: Ground Shooting

Activity 16: “Touch and Shoot from 12 Yards Out (or Penalty Spot) (Independent Activity)

Time: Minimum of 2 sets per foot (1 set = 20 reps)

Task: Start at the penalty spot. Take a touch to set up the ball, then shoot with your laces into the opposite bottom corner (2 Yard Wide Gate)

Variation 16a: Touch and Shoot

What: One touch to control or set the ball, then strike it into the opposite bottom corner.

Why: Trains shooting in motion. Clean shooting technique, and accuracy.

Coach/Parent Tip: Watch the first touch — it should set up the shot, not slow them down. Remind them to aim low and follow through.



Fundamental Block 6 - Shooting (Two Areas)



Area 1: Ground Shooting

Activity 15: “Static Shooting from 18 Yards Out (or Edge of Box)” (Independent Activity)

Time: Minimum of 2 sets per foot (1 set = 10 reps)

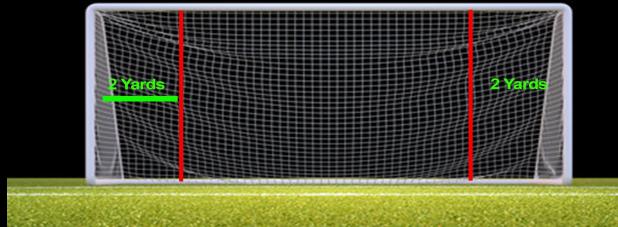
Task: Place the ball at the penalty spot. Shoot using your laces, aiming for the bottom corner (2 Yard Wide Gate) in each corner of the goal. Ball starts still before every shot.

Variation 15a: Static Shots

What: Shoot from a standstill using your laces — no dribble or setup.

Why: Builds striking technique, accuracy, and power from close range.

Coach/Parent Tip: Remind them to lock their ankle, keep head down, and follow through toward the corner.



Fundamental Block 6 - Shooting (Two Areas)



Area 2: *Volley Shooting*

Activity 17: “Self Toss and Volley” (Independent Activity) *TESTED ACTIVITY*

Time: Minimum of 2 sets per foot (1 set = 20 reps)

Task: Stand at the penalty spot. Toss the ball overhead to yourself and strike it with your laces into the opposite corner (2 Yard Wide Gate) in each corner of the goal. Focus on clean technique and control.

Variation 17a: Self Toss & Laces Volley (One Bounce)

What: Toss the ball over head, let it bounce once, then volley into the opposite bottom corner.

Why: Builds timing, foot-eye coordination, and confidence finishing off a bounce.

Coach/Parent Tip: Encourage a smooth toss and calm strike — no need to rush.



Fundamental Block 6 - Shooting (Two Areas)



Area 2: Volley Shooting

Activity 18: “Self Lift and Volley” (Independent Activity)

Time: Minimum of 2 sets per foot (1 set = 20 reps)

Task: Stand at the penalty spot. Use your foot to lift the ball into the air, then volley it into the opposite bottom corner (2 Yard Wide Gate) in each corner of the goal. Stay balanced and controlled.

Variation 18a: Self Lift & Laces Volley (One Bounce)

What: Flick the ball up with your foot, let it bounce once, then strike it into the target.

Why: Builds control, timing, and comfort transitioning from lift to shot.

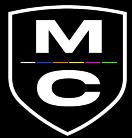
Coach/Parent Tip: Encourage a gentle lift and relaxed rhythm — don't rush the volley.





Melchor 5 Fundamentals Test™

The Melchor Fundamentals Test is a comprehensive evaluation of essential fundamental skills that give players, coaches, and parents an objective and accurate snapshot of a player's current technical ability. Every activity in our system has been carefully designed to reflect the foundational skills players need to succeed in soccer, and our assessments are ***valid, reliable, and research-based***.

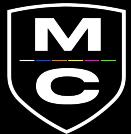


Validity

The tests measure what they claim to measure—**fundamental technical skills** that translate directly to game performance:

- Ball control (juggling, trapping)
- Passing (ground and aerial)
- Dribbling (straight line and with variation)
- Shooting (volley and placement)
- Heading (technique and directional control)

Our activities align with key principles of *representative task design* and *motor learning* theory (Davids et al., 2008), ensuring that skills developed in training are relevant and transferrable to the game environment.

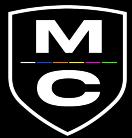


Reliability

Our drills are:

- Structured by clear distances and setup (e.g., 3x3 yard box, 1x1 yard target)
- Scored using objective success counts (e.g., 3 in a row on target)
- Repeatable across attempts and sessions

Therefore, our system provides **consistency in measuring progress over time**, both for individual players and for coaches tracking multiple athletes.



Research-Based

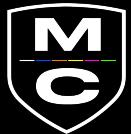
Our system is built upon the principles of **Deliberate Practice**, a research framework pioneered by Dr. Anders Ericsson, which shows that:

"Expert performance is acquired gradually through sustained efforts to improve performance while monitoring feedback and correcting errors."
(Ericsson, K.A., 1993; 2016)

In line with this, each assessment:

- Involves **focused repetition**
- Includes **identifiable levels of ability**
- Encourages **self-assessment or coach-guided feedback**

Research by **Ford, Yates, & Williams (2010)** also supports **isolated technical training** in youth players, showing that structured individual practice enhances skill acquisition, especially in the foundational years.



Melchor 5 Fundamentals Test™

Development you can measure

WHY OUR TESTS MATTER TO YOUTH SOCCER

Players, parents, and even coaches often don't know how to define or measure whether a player is fundamentally sound. Too many people in the soccer community go based off their "experience", their "knowledge of the game", their "eye test". We want to help players, parents, and coaches asses, measure, and properly evaluate players through objective data.

While our assessments don't measure tactical or psychological traits, they provide an **objective snapshot of a player's technical foundation**. This makes them ideal for:

- Setting a developmental baseline
- Tracking improvement
- Guiding individualized training plans
- Providing feedback to players, parents, and coaches



5 FUNDAMENTALS TEST



“Building Block 2” - BALL CONTROL - Juggling

Recommended: Maximum of one test per week. Testing is important to track progress, but more time should be focused on training.

Activity 1: “Keep Ups”

Test: 3 Attempts to get the highest level possible. Must restart if ball hits ground or if wrong body part is used.

Variation 1a: Feet Only

- **Level 1 Emerging:** 0-5 In a Row without dropping ball.
- **Level 2 Developing:** 6-9 in a Row without dropping ball.
- **Level 3 Competent:** 10-13 in a Row without dropping ball.
- **Level 4 Refined:** 14-17 in a Row without dropping ball.
- **Level 5 Fundamentally Sound:** 18+ in a Row without dropping ball.

Variation 1b: Thighs Only

- **Level 1 Emerging:** 0-5 In a Row without dropping ball.
- **Level 2 Developing:** 6-9 in a Row without dropping ball.
- **Level 3 Competent:** 10-13 in a Row without dropping ball.
- **Level 4 Refined:** 14-17 in a Row without dropping ball.
- **Level 5 Fundamentally Sound:** 18+ in a Row without dropping ball.

Variation 1c: Head Only

- **Level 1 Emerging:** 0-5 In a Row without dropping ball.
- **Level 2 Developing:** 6-9 in a Row without dropping ball.
- **Level 3 Competent:** 10-13 in a Row without dropping ball.
- **Level 4 Refined:** 14-17 in a Row without dropping ball.
- **Level 5 Fundamentally Sound:** 18+ in a Row without dropping ball.

Variation 1d: Free

- **Level 1 Emerging:** 1-10 In a Row without dropping ball.
- **Level 2 Developing:** 11-20 in a Row without dropping ball.
- **Level 3 Competent:** 21-30 in a Row without dropping ball.
- **Level 4 Refined:** 31-40 in a Row without dropping ball.
- **Level 5 Fundamentally Sound:** 41+ in a Row without dropping ball.

5 FUNDAMENTALS TEST



“Building Block 3” - PASSING - Ground Passing

Recommended: Maximum of one test per week. Testing is important to track progress, but more time should be focused on training.

Activity 4: “Static Ball & Target”

Test: 3 Attempts to get the highest level possible. Player must be 10 yards away from the target. Target is a gate (2 cones placed 2 yards away from each other). Player must pass through the target or at minimum hit the cones in order to continue. If target is missed completely, player must start over.

Variation 4a: Static Ball + Inside Foot Pass

- **Level 1 Emerging:** 0-2 in a row hitting the target.
- **Level 2 Developing:** 3-4 in a row hitting the target.
- **Level 3 Competent:** 5-6 in a row hitting the target.
- **Level 4 Refined:** 7-8 in a row hitting the target.
- **Level 5 Fundamentally Sound:** 9-10 in a row hitting the target.

5 FUNDAMENTALS TEST



“Building Block 3” - PASSING - Aerial Passing

Recommended: Maximum of one test per week. Testing is important to track progress, but more time should be focused on training.

Activity 6: “Self Toss Volley Passes”

Test: 3 Attempts to get the highest level possible. Player must be 10 yards away from the target. Target is a gate (2 cones placed 2 yards away from each other). Player must volley pass through the target or at minimum hit the cones in order to continue. Volley must be hit before the ball touches ground with the correct part of the foot. If target is missed completely, player must start over.

Variation 6a: Self Toss + Inside Foot Volley Pass (No Bounce)

- **Level 1 Emerging:** 0-2 in a row hitting the target.
- **Level 2 Developing:** 3-4 in a row hitting the target.
- **Level 3 Competent:** 5-6 in a row hitting the target.
- **Level 4 Refined:** 7-8 in a row hitting the target.
- **Level 5 Fundamentally Sound:** 9-10 in a row hitting the target.

5 FUNDAMENTALS TEST



“Building Block 4” - DRIBBLING - Straight Line

Recommended: Maximum of one test per week. Testing is important to track progress, but more time should be focused on training.

Activity 9: “Straight Line Dribble”

Test: 3 Attempts to get the highest level possible. Players must successfully dribble with the outside of the foot between two cones placed 15 yards away from each other and stay inside the lane. The lane is 1 yard wide. If the player leaves the lane, the ball stops, uses the wrong foot, the attempt is over.

Variation 9a: Straight Line Dribble (Right Foot There & Left Foot Back)

- **Level 1 Emerging:** 0-1 in a row staying in lane.
- **Level 2 Developing:** 2 in a row staying in lane.
- **Level 3 Competent:** 3 in a row staying in lane.
- **Level 4 Refined:** 4 in a row staying in lane.
- **Level 5 Fundamentally Sound:** 5 in a row staying in lane.

5 FUNDAMENTALS TEST



“Building Block 4” - DRIBBLING - Change of Direction

Recommended: Maximum of one test per week. Testing is important to track progress, but more time should be focused on training.

Activity 10: “L Dribble”

Test: 3 Attempts to get the highest level possible. Players must successfully dribble with the outside of the foot through the “L” shape without leaving the lanes. The lanes are 1 yard wide. If the player leaves the lane, the ball stops, uses the wrong foot, the attempt is over.

Variation 10a: L Dribble (Right Foot There & Left Foot Back)

- **Level 1 Emerging:** 0-1 in a row staying in lane.
- **Level 2 Developing:** 2 in a row staying in lane.
- **Level 3 Competent:** 3 in a row staying in lane.
- **Level 4 Refined:** 4 in a row staying in lane.
- **Level 5 Fundamentally Sound:** 5 in a row staying in lane.

5 FUNDAMENTALS TEST



“Building Block 5” - HEADING - Jumping

Recommended: Maximum of one test per week. Testing is important to track progress, but more time should be focused on training.

Activity 12: “Self Toss Standing Headers”

Test: 3 Attempts to get the highest level possible. Player must stand centered in a 1x1 yard box that is 6 yards from full size goal. Player tosses ball over head and heads at the target. Target is a gate (2 cones placed 2 yards away from each other) in the bottom corners of a full size goal. If ball goes through gate it counts. If not, attempt is over.

Variation 12a: Self Toss + Head Forward to Corner Target (Alternate Corners)

- **Level 1 Emerging:** 0-2 in a row hitting the target.
- **Level 2 Developing:** 3-4 in a row hitting the target.
- **Level 3 Competent:** 5-6 in a row hitting the target.
- **Level 4 Refined:** 7-8 in a row hitting the target.
- **Level 5 Fundamentally Sound:** 9-10 in a row hitting the target.

5 FUNDAMENTALS TEST



“Building Block 6” - SHOOTING - Ground Shooting

Recommended: Maximum of one test per week. Testing is important to track progress, but more time should be focused on training.

Activity 14: “Static Shooting from 12 Yards (or Penalty Spot)”

Test: 3 Attempts to get the highest level possible. Ball must be placed 12 yards away from the goal. Target is a gate (2 cones placed 2 yards away from each other) in the bottom corners of a full size goal. If player is shooting with right foot, they must aim at left corner. If player is shooting with left foot, they must aim at right corner. If target is missed completely, player must start over.

Variation 14a: Static Shots

- **Level 1 Emerging:** 0-2 in a row hitting the target.
- **Level 2 Developing:** 3-4 in a row hitting the target.
- **Level 3 Competent:** 5-6 in a row hitting the target.
- **Level 4 Refined:** 7-8 in a row hitting the target.
- **Level 5 Fundamentally Sound:** 9-10 in a row hitting the target.



5 FUNDAMENTALS TEST



“Building Block 6” - SHOOTING - Aerial Shooting

Recommended: Maximum of one test per week. Testing is important to track progress, but more time should be focused on training.

Activity 17: “Self Toss and Volley from 12 Yards Out (or Penalty Spot)”

Test: 3 Attempts to get the highest level possible. Player must in a 1x1 yard box. Box must be 12 yards away from the goal. Player must toss ball overhead and strike it with laces into the opposite bottom corner. Target is a gate (2 cones placed 2 yards away from each other) in the bottom corners of a full size goal. If player is shooting with right foot, they must aim at left corner. If player is shooting with left foot, they must aim at right corner. If target is missed completely, player must start over.

Variation 17a: Self Toss and Volley (One Bounce)

- **Level 1 Emerging:** 0-2 in a row hitting the target.
- **Level 2 Developing:** 3-4 in a row hitting the target.
- **Level 3 Competent:** 5-6 in a row hitting the target.
- **Level 4 Refined:** 7-8 in a row hitting the target.
- **Level 5 Fundamentally Sound:** 9-10 in a row hitting the target.

BALL SIZE RECOMMENDATION

Why we recommend **SIZE 5** Balls for all ages.

At Melchor Coaching, our curriculum is grounded in **Deliberate Practice**, **modern motor learning science**, and a belief that young players are capable of adapting to high expectations when coached with purpose and structure.

Why Size 5 for all Ages? Although traditional models recommend smaller balls for youth players, we intentionally use **Size 5 soccer balls** - the standard for adult play - **across all training groups**, for the following reasons:

Research Based Rationale:

1. **Deliberate Practice & Desirable Difficulty**
 - We follow Dr. Anders Ericsson's principle of **pushing beyond comfort zones** to accelerate growth. A size 5 ball adds intentional challenge, which promotes **greater technical focus**, **repetition quality**, and **mental engagement** (Ericsson, 1993; Bjork & Bjork, 2011).
2. **Constraint-Led Skill Development**
 - Modern motor learning research shows that **increased task constraints**, like a heavier ball, **force players to adapt** and find more efficient movement solutions (Renshaw et al., 2019). This builds long-term **coordination**, **body control**, and **touch precision** that transfers more directly to match conditions.
3. **Long-Term Athletic Development (LTAD)**
 - Our curriculum is not just about short-term performance — it's about **developing players who thrive at the next level**. Early exposure to the official match ball improves **familiarity**, **aerial control**, and **striking power** as players mature.
4. **Transferability Across Ball Sizes (Primarily Philosophical)**
 - While most youth development models favor scaled equipment, we take a different approach. At Melchor Coaching, we believe that early exposure to the demands of a full-size ball fosters a level of adaptability, strength, and ball control. In our philosophy, training upward builds resilience. Players accustomed to the weight and movement of a Size 5 ball often feel more comfortable adjusting to smaller or lighter balls than vice versa. Although this concept is currently philosophical and not yet widely supported by empirical research, we are committed to **tracking outcomes**, collecting feedback, and evaluating player development over time to further validate and refine our approach.



BALL SIZE RECOMMENDATION

Why we recommend SIZE 5 Balls for all ages.

Built-In Safety Measures

We take developmentally appropriate precautions to ensure a safe and effective experience for our younger players.

- **No heading activities for players under 12 (per US Soccer and CDC guidelines)**
- **Lightweight size 5 balls used during early stages to reduce physical strain.**



BALL SIZE RECOMMENDATION

Why we recommend SIZE 5 Balls for all ages.

Adaptability is the Goal

By training with the Size 5 ball size from the start, our players:

- Gain confidence facing real-game conditions they will face eventually.
- Build durability and motor control through progressive overload
- Develop a mindset of “figure it out” adaptability - a trait common in top-level athletes.

Our Promise

Every choice we make is intentional, research-backed, and driven by a deep commitment to player development - not shortcuts or gimmicks.



GLOSSARY



Control – Keeping the ball no farther than one step from the foot at all times. This allows for quick changes of direction and immediate response to pressure.

Dribbling – Continuously advancing the ball while moving, typically using the outside of the foot to push the ball forward under control.

Rolls – Moving the ball using the sole (bottom) of the foot, either laterally or backward, often to evade pressure or change direction.

Header – Making contact with the ball using the forehead to redirect or clear it. Used for passes, shots, or defensive actions.

Surface – The part of the body used to execute a soccer technique. Examples include: inside of foot, outside of foot, laces, thigh, chest, and head.

Trap – Receiving and controlling the ball to stop or slow it using a surface like the foot, thigh, or chest. Also called a "touch" or "first touch."

Volley – Striking the ball while it is in the air, before it touches the ground. Usually performed with the laces or inside of the foot.

Deliberate Practice – A purposeful, structured form of practice that involves high repetition, immediate feedback, and a focus on skill improvement through measurable progress.

Progressive Mastery – The systematic advancement through difficulty levels (Novice → Intermediate → Advanced) by demonstrating consistent performance and competency at each stage.

Fundamentals – The core techniques that every player must master, such as passing, receiving, dribbling, shooting, and movement coordination.

Test – A structured evaluation of a player's skill level using clear standards and scoring rubrics to determine progress and placement.

Repetition – Intentional, focused execution of a skill multiple times to build muscle memory and consistency.

Feedback – Information provided by a coach or self-assessment that helps a player correct, refine, or improve performance.

Foot Surface Terminology:

- **Inside Foot** – Used for passing, trapping, and controlled shooting.
- **Outside Foot** – Used for dribbling, curving the ball, and quick touches.
- **Laces** – Used for powerful shots and long passes.
- **Sole** – Used for rolls and stopping the ball.
- **Thigh** – Used for trapping and lifting the ball.
- **Chest** – Used to absorb and control the ball

REFERENCES

1. Ericsson, K. A., Krampe, R. T., & Tesch-Römer, C. (1993). *The role of deliberate practice in the acquisition of expert performance*. *Psychological Review*, 100(3), 363–406. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.100.3.363>
2. Ali, A. (2011). Measuring soccer skill performance: A review. *Scandinavian Journal of Medicine & Science in Sports*, 21(2), 170–183. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1600-0838.2010.01256.x>
3. Bjork, R. A., & Bjork, E. L. (2011). Making things hard on yourself, but in a good way: Creating desirable difficulties to enhance learning. In *Psychology and the real world: Essays illustrating fundamental contributions to society* (pp. 56–64). Worth Publishers.
4. Caccese, J. B., & Buckley, T. A. (2016). Tiered heading exposure and concussion risk in high school soccer. *Journal of Athletic Training*, 51(5), 398–403. <https://doi.org/10.4085/1062-6050-51.6.06>
5. Di Virgilio, T. G., Hunter, A., Wilson, L., et al. (2019). Evidence for acute electrophysiological and cognitive changes following routine soccer heading. *EBioMedicine*, 13, 66–71. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ebiom.2019.03.027>
6. Gómez, M. Á., Lago-Peñas, C., & Pollard, R. (2013). Situational variables. In M. Hughes & I. M. Franks (Eds.), *Essentials of performance analysis in sport* (pp. 259–272). Routledge.
7. Kontos, A. P., Braithwaite, R., & Chrisman, S. P. (2016). Concussion in youth sports: Recent trends and findings. *Current Sports Medicine Reports*, 15(6), 379–385. <https://doi.org/10.1249/JSR.00000000000000315>
8. Lees, A., & Nolan, L. (1998). The biomechanics of soccer: A review. *Journal of Sports Sciences*, 16(3), 211–234. <https://doi.org/10.1080/026404198366740>
9. Lloyd, R. S., & Oliver, J. L. (2012). The youth physical development model: A new approach to long-term athletic development. *Strength & Conditioning Journal*, 34(3), 61–72. <https://doi.org/10.1519/SSC.0b013e31825760ea>
10. Macnamara, B. N., Hambrick, D. Z., & Oswald, F. L. (2016). Deliberate practice and performance in sports: A meta-analysis. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 11(3), 333–350. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691616635591>
11. Newell, K. M. (1986). Constraints on the development of coordination. In M. G. Wade & H. T. A. Whiting (Eds.), *Motor development in children: Aspects of coordination and control* (pp. 341–360). Martinus Nijhoff.
12. Oppici, L., Panchuk, D., Serpiello, F. R., & Farrow, D. (2017). Long-term practice with domain-specific task constraints influences perceptual skills. *Journal of Sports Sciences*, 35(23), 2417–2425. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02640414.2016.1265145>
13. Praca, G. M., Bordonali, H. P., & de Oliveira, L. P. (2015). Relationship between ball control skills and match performance in young soccer players. *Journal of Physical Education and Sport*, 15(4), 653. <https://doi.org/10.7752/jpes.2015.04100>
14. Renshaw, I., Davids, K., Newcombe, D., & Roberts, W. (2019). *The constraints-led approach: Principles for sports coaching and practice design*. Routledge.

