



Melchor Individual Training Curriculum (MITC)

Development you can measure

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.***





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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 volley passing)
- Dribbling (straight line and changing directions)
- Shooting (ground and volley shooting)
- 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.





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Reliability

Our drills are:

- Structured by clear distances and setup (e.g., 2 yard wide 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.





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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.





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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 assess, 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 cleanly through the target 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 20 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

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 (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.
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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 (Isolate Each Foot)

- **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) (Isolate Each Foot)

- **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

GRADING METHOD



Each of the 5 Fundamental Blocks (Ball Control, Passing, Dribbling, Heading, Shooting) have multiple activities with variations.

- *Each variation has a test.*
- *Each variation test is allowed 3 attempts.*
- *Each variation test has 5 levels possible.*
- *The highest level achieved in each variation test is taken as the “Highest Level Reached”.*
- *The average of all “Highest Level Reached” within a block are calculated to give you a final “GRADE” for each Fundamental Block.*

EXAMPLE:

Block	Area	Activity	Variation	Attempt 1	Attempt 2	Attempt 3	HIGHEST LEVEL	AVERAGE LEVEL PER BLOCK
Ball Control	Juggling	1) Keep Ups	1a) Feet Only	9 (Level 2)	13 (Level 3)	7 (Level 2)	3	Ball Control Grade = 3/5 (Competent)
Ball Control	Juggling	1) Keep Ups	1b) Thighs Only	8 (Level 2)	3 (Level 1)	5 (Level 2)	2	
Ball Control	Juggling	1) Keep Ups	1c) Head Only	8 (Level 2)	11 (Level 3)	7 (Level 2)	3	
Ball Control	Juggling	1) Keep Ups	1d) Free	7 (Level 2)	9 (Level 2)	5 (Level 2)	2	

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.



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