

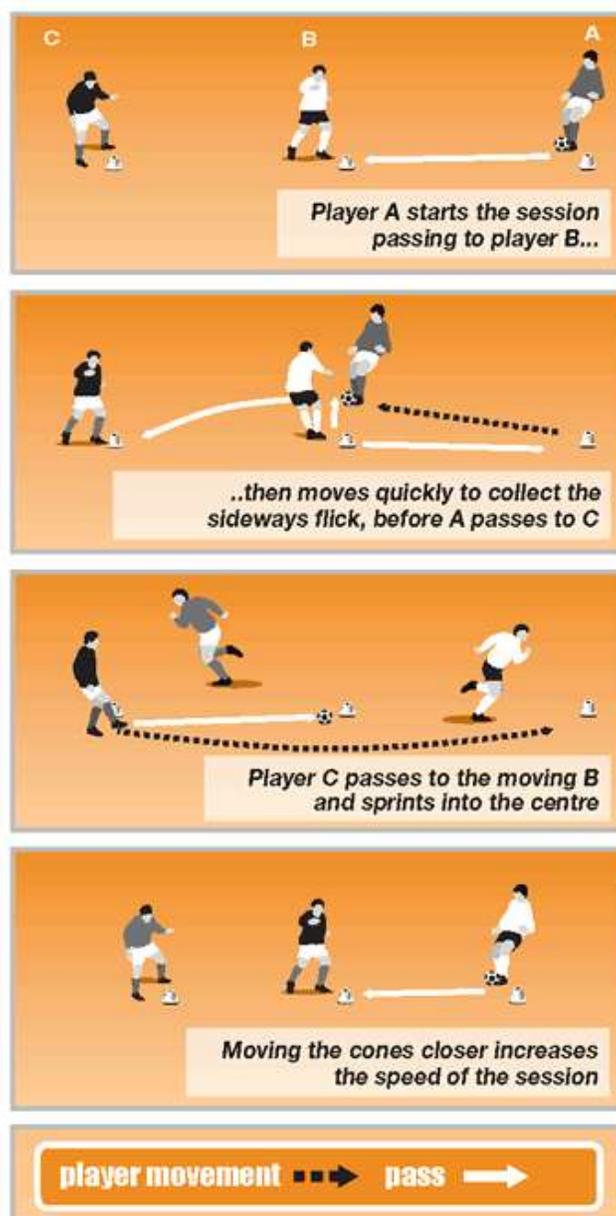
Tiki-taka, the Barcelona way

How to bring Spanish sparkle to your team's passing ambitions...

Simple passing sessions are invaluable in so many ways. Not only do they enhance technical skills, but by adding variables such as one or two-touch or changes in passing distance, players have to use anticipation and reactions rather than simple "eye to ball" co-ordination.

This means that when the mechanics are slowed down in a match, players will be able to operate with increased natural accuracy, touch and weight.

It's an exercise that can be played with any age group – just change the distances to suit your players.



How to set it up:

- Place three cones in a straight line, with a gap of six yards between each – depending on the skill level of your players.
- Three players – A, B and C – position themselves, one on each cone.

Getting started:

- Using two-touch - with quick passing and a lively tempo - player A passes short to B who flicks to the side, for A to run on to, and pass to C. B runs to where A started.
- C controls and passes longer to player B, who is now at the far end.
- Play for three minutes, then move the cones in by a yard, and continue.
- Keep reducing the distance between the cones every three minutes until they are two yards apart. The play here should be fast and players must control and pass quickly.
- Progress the drill to one-touch – this is when you are getting your players to really take on board the tiki-taka principle – control is vital, as is direction of the pass.
- Also experiment with using different distances between cones in the same line. For instance, make A to B eight yards, and B to C four yards. This gives a greater variety of distances for your players to be passing through, and more to think about. But remember the focus should be on quick passing and one or two-touch play.

Developing the session:

- Create an area 12 yards long by eight yards wide.
- Keep players in groups of three and play 2v1, in which the two players are attackers and the lone player is a defender.
- Starting at the top end, get the attackers to try to pass their way down the pitch without the defender gaining possession of the ball. Begin so that the defender cannot tackle, before progressing into opposed play.