



# STRENGTH TRAINING FOR SOCCER PLAYERS PART 1

## PERFORMANCE

*After a seven-week  
strength & Plyometric  
program*

- Ball striking distance  
increased 10%

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*After fourteen-weeks*

- Ball striking distance  
increased 27%
- Vertical jump  
increased 19%

*- Journal of Strength and  
Conditioning Research*

## **3 Great Strength Exercises for Soccer**

### **1. Single Leg Squat**

### **2. Banded Pull-Ups**

### **3. Band Anti-Rotation**

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In sports training, and especially with soccer training, the conventional wisdom is that strength training and conditioning for developing athletes is a big no-no. Many parents, coaches, and players might believe that there is no need for strength training because it will “stunt their growth”, or they think of “strength training” and a picture of a big, bulky, and slow body builder pops in their head (which are the qualities we want to avoid as soccer players).

The reality is that, unless you are training specifically for it, it is very difficult to bulk up like a body builder. Strength training and conditioning when it comes to athletics, specially soccer, means something very different. It is our jobs as performance coaches to help players, parents, and coaches to buy into strength training as an integral component to training for soccer.

### **Performance:**

Outside of skills and abilities, functional strength is what separates a good player from a great one. By increasing your total body strength, you’ll find it easier to dribble the ball while maintaining high levels of functional speed throughout the entirety of a game which we can all agree can be a great competitive advantage, especially in the final minutes searching for a goal.

Soccer players as we know are in constant motion on the field. Developing lower body strength and explosive power through strength training, paired with on field explosive sprint work will allow you to dynamically move with breakneck speed extremely quickly leaving your opponents left in the dust. Increasing upper body strength (specifically shoulder and anti-rotational strength) can benefit soccer players as they will be better at holding off other players as battling for position gets more important as the level of play increases, as well as help maintaining your balance during explosive cuts and changes of direction occur.

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Keep in mind that, although this article is focused on strength training with regards to soccer players, I am by no means saying that it should come at the expense of other forms of training. Strength training should be worked into a well-balanced training schedule, allowing your athlete to develop all of their soccer specific skills and abilities.

Young athletes go through many challenges as teenagers. Their bodies are changing, and their peers might be at a more advanced stage of physical development. This gives them an advantage on the field that your player might not have (yet). Strength training can greatly help close this gap, improving your player’s game to the point where they feel confident and playing to their full potential. Not only that, parents and coaches can all rest assured that their players will be at a far less risk of injury than other players by going through a well-developed, results oriented, and safe strength training program tailored to the physical demands of soccer.