

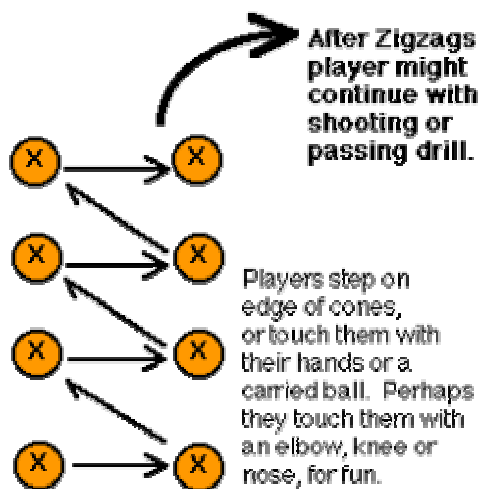
"Zig-Zag 'ometrics"

The "Zig-Zags" are a pattern of cones that you set up to work on speed and the all important "first three steps".

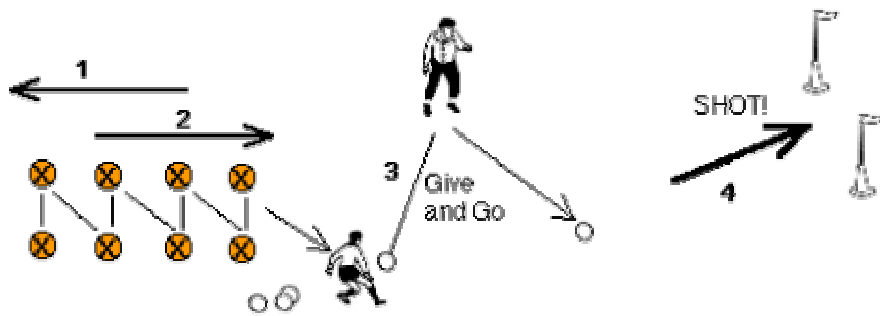
It doesn't matter how great a move or fake is if it isn't followed by a burst of speed to gain space and the advantage! It really all boils down to the first few "explosive" steps. Dutch powerhouse AJAX has scores of little exercises like this one to improve a players acceleration.

I like the "Zig-Zag" cones because it is quick and easy to set up. **Most importantly, you can "tack" the "Zig-Zags" onto almost any shooting or running drill to add to the conditioning.** (see below) Practice time is always limited and this allows lots of drills to become conditioning exercises, as well. Instead of having the players run straight to the goal for a shot or wall pass drill, have them do the "Zig-Zags" first and then go for the shot.

The pattern doesn't have to be exactly like shown in the diagrams. Move the cones around, make some of them further apart. Have the players touch different body parts to the cones to make it a little more interesting and difficult.



- ⚽ This is the basic pattern.
- ⚽ Set up about 8 cones in the pattern.
- ⚽ The player must dart from cone to cone touching each one before exiting the pattern.
- ⚽ Add the "Zig-Zags" onto the beginning of any shooting or passing drill.



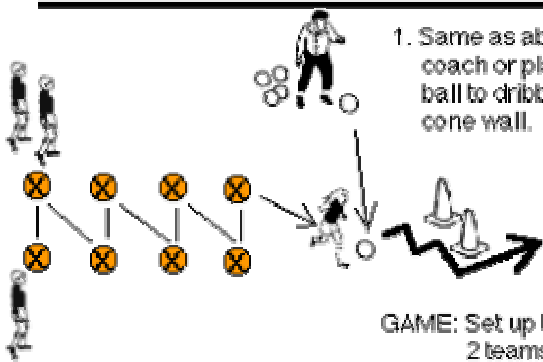
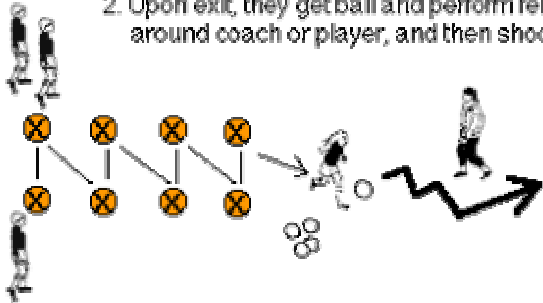
1. Player starts on goal side of zigzags
2. Leaving the ball behind they run up the zigzags, then turn and run them back towards the coach.
3. After the last cone, they get their ball and pass a "give and go" with the coach or another player with a shot on goal.

GAME:

1. Split players into teams of 3 or 4 players.
2. Set up 2 zigzag patterns outside of the 18.
3. Game continues until all balls have been scored.
4. Occasionally add goalies or single defender.

⚽ Here the pattern is added onto a "wall-pass" shooting drill.

1. Players run the zigzag course without the ball.
2. Upon exit, they get ball and perform feint around coach or player, and then shoot.



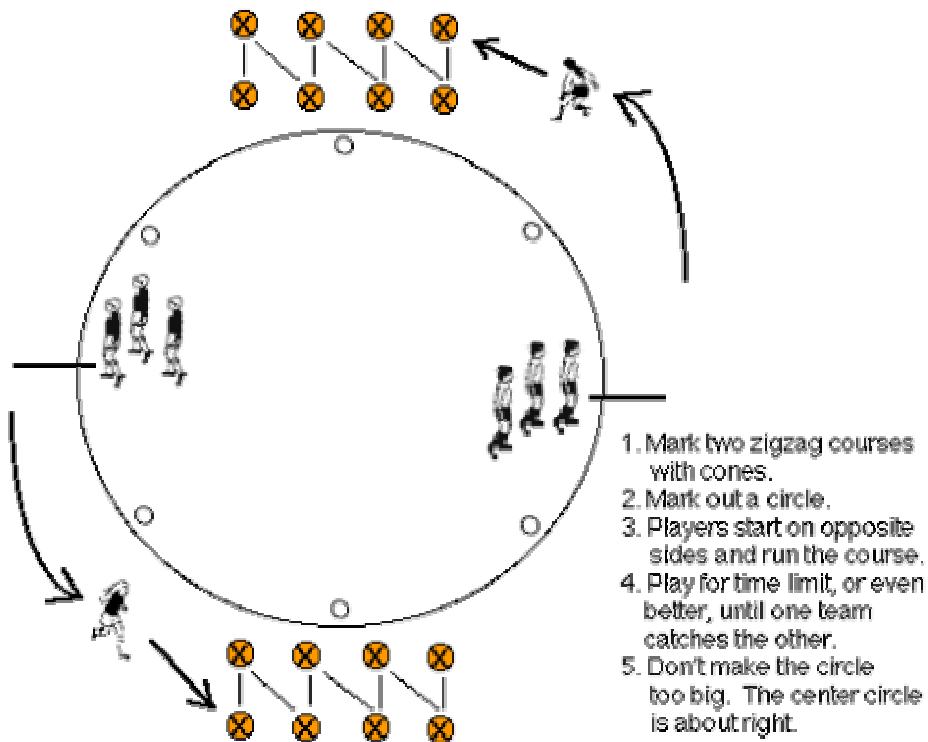
1. Same as above but this time coach or player passes the ball to dribbler and feint is around cone wall.



GAME: Set up two zigzag courses and have 2 teams run the course, perform feint and try to score. Sometimes instead of cones have a real live defender or coach.

⚽ Here the pattern is added onto a shooting drill that emphasizes making a move before the shot.

⚽ This variation has the player receiving a pass, then making a feint, and finally shooting.



⚽ We have all run some variation on this "circle" running relay race. Try this one where they have to run the "Zig-Zag" pattern as well.

⚽ Have the players touch the cones with elbows or noses, just for fun and to add to the difficulty.

⚽ Instead of using the "Zig-Zag" cones try other "obstacles". For instance, lay out a 10 ft clothesline or a line of orange disks and have the players make a dozen 2 footed hops over and back before resuming in the race or drill. Have them do it backwards sometimes. Try arranging 8 "hula-hoops" just far enough away from each other to make it a difficult leap and have the players bound from hoop to hoop before continuing onwards. Be creative, have fun!