

JP STEVENS
SOCCER
STRENGTH
PROGRAM



Finding a balance in your soccer workouts is the best way to turn yourself into an all-around player—and strength training is the foundation of that process.

“Strength is a quality that underpins everything,” says Jordan Webb a strength and conditioning coach for Major League Soccer's Chicago Fire. “It underpins endurance, agility, speed—it underpins power production, everything you need to be an athlete. I think that body strength is probably the quality that is most important for any soccer player, no matter the position.”

Doing strength workouts will help keep your body strong and powerful, and in turn can help boost your speed, agility, and stamina—all while adding some extra oomph to your shot too.

Here's a look at some of the best moves to add strength and power to your game.

Trap Bar Deadlifts



How to do it: Stand in the center of the trap bar, knees shoulder-width apart. Lower your hips down and grab both handles, keeping your head forward and your chest up. Stand up with the weight and use your heels to push up. As you rise, push your hips forward as you reach the top of your movement, then lower down to start position and repeat. Do 3-4 sets of 7-10 reps.

What it does: Using the trap bar will make lifting easier on the lower back—and it will allow you to use more weight compared to traditional deadlifts. Less stress on the spine and back can help decrease injuries for soccer players and the move will add back and lower body strength.

Barbell Back Squats



How to do it: Start with your feet shoulder-width apart and rest the squat bar on your shoulders. With your chest and head up, keep your hips back and lower your body down, bending your knees down towards the floor. Stop when your hips are just below your knees, then push back up to the starting position. Do 3 sets of 8-10 reps.

What it does: Squats help build strength in your lower body, and can actually improve hip flexibility, which is crucial for soccer players. It will hit your quads, hamstrings, and calves, building up your legs. Webb uses squats as one of the primary lower body lifts for his players, including trap bar squats. “I think a good kind of indicator of where you want to be is if you can trap bar squat one-and-a-half times your bodyweight,” says Webb

Dumbbell Lateral Lunges



How to do it: Start standing with your legs wide, about shoulder-width apart. Holding a dumbbell in each hand (5-15 pounds), lunge to one side, and as you do it, lower the dumbbells towards the ground. Once you reach that spot, push hard off the leg and back to the starting position.

What it does: Since soccer players are constantly running, lunges can help boost your strength, flexibility, and mobility in your legs. The exercise will also help your core, lower back, and obliques.

Dumbbell Step-ups



How to do it: Start by standing in front of a solid, stable bench or a box while you're holding dumbbells at your sides. Bring one leg up onto the bench, making your thigh parallel to the floor. Step up onto the bench while keeping the dumbbells at your side, leaving your trailing leg just off the bench. Step down. Repeat for 10-15 reps.

What it does: The exercise increases strength in your legs, quads, and thighs, along with your glutes and hamstrings. All the work done on the hamstrings is crucial for soccer players—the stronger and more stable your hamstrings are, the more power you can get from your legs on the field.

Bench Press



How to do it: Lie down on the flat bench with the bar resting on the rack above your eyes. Grab the bar with both hands, making sure you have a full grip and straight wrists. Unrack the bar straight up and move the bar over your shoulders. Lower the bar to your chest while keeping your forearms vertical. Press up and lift the bar from your chest straight into the air, locking your elbows at the top of the movement.

What it does: Soccer players often overlook upper body strength, but a strong chest and strong shoulders can be greatly beneficial for players, especially when they need to press through defenders. The bench press helps build the chest muscles, increases pushing strength, and will strengthen your triceps

One-Arm Dumbbell Rows



How to do it: Using a flat bench, place dumbbells on the floor on each side of you. Place your right leg on the end of the bench and lean forward on your right arm, which should be placed at the front of the bench, and make your upper body is parallel to the floor. Use your left hand and pick up the dumbbell from the floor. Pause at the top of the lift and be sure to contract your back muscles to maximize muscle growth at the end range of motion.

What it does: The dumbbell rows work the mid-back muscles, as well as your lats, traps, and biceps. Do 2 sets of 10-15 reps for each side of your body.

Kettlebell Swings



How to do it: Start with the kettlebell on the floor between your feet, which should be about shoulder-width apart. Bend your knees and get into a squat-like position while keeping your back flat. Grab the kettlebell with both hands. Using your legs and glutes, explosively extend your hips as you swing the kettlebell between your legs and bring it up to eye level. Make sure you use your legs and hips to push the movement—this isn't a shoulder exercise. Repeat continuously for 10-15 swings. Use 20-25 pounds to start.

What it does: Kettlebell swings work out a range of areas, including the core, hips, glutes, and shoulders, plus it helps with explosive power movements, something soccer players need when they are on the field. The swings will work your hamstrings as well as muscles in your back.

Turkish Get-Ups



How to do it: Using a dumbbell or kettlebell, start lying on your back on the ground, with your right knee bent, foot flat on the floor, with your left leg extended straight out. Hold the dumbbell/kettlebell in your right hand, and have your left arm extended at a diagonal angle on your side, with your palm down on the floor. Extend your right arm with the weight and press it straight up, directly above your shoulder. Then push your hips up, bend your left knee and bring the leg behind you, putting the knee down on the floor under your hip. At this point your right knee should remain bent and out in front of you, foot flat on the floor. Then lift your upper body into a lunge position and stand up. Reverse the movements and go back to starting position. Do 2-3 sets of 8-10 reps on each arm.

What it does: Increases shoulder mobility, lower body stability, and core strength, which in turn helps you with speed, agility, and power as a soccer player. The exercise helps with hip flexibility, which is crucial for soccer players when changing directions and speeds on the pitch.

Goblet Squats



How to do it: Hold a kettlebell or dumbbell up in the middle of your chest, under your chin, with your feet shoulder-length apart. Then squat down while keeping your back straight, then come back up to starting position. Do 2 sets of 8-10 squats for the exercise.

What it does: This exercise will work a number of areas in your lower body and helps activate your hamstrings, quads, glutes, and core. The move puts less stress on your back and spine, plus it adds lower body strength.