

WALKING FOOTBALL KEY RULES

Looking to play Walking Football and want a quick overview of the laws? This document will take you through all the key rules you need to just play.

Please note, these are not extensive and are aimed at sessions to get people started with Walking Football. Outside of competition, there is flexibility to adapt how you play to suit the needs of those participating. The full set of laws can be found here.

1. You must walk

- Walking is defined as 'always having at least one foot in contact with the ground' and relates to the motion of all players moving around the pitch.
- A player who is not walking will award an indirect free kick to the opposition.
- A goalkeeper is exempt from this rule whilst in the action of making a save.
- A penalty kick is awarded to the opposition on the fourth accumulated not walking offence committed by a team which will then reset to zero.

2. Teams consist of 5 to 7 players

- A match is played by two teams. Each team usually consists of between 5 and 7 players with up to 5 substitutes. However, you may need to adapt this during your session to your participant numbers.
  - It is important you consider the size of the pitch and number of participants playing to ensure a safe playing environment.
- The number of substitutes made during a match is unlimited and a player may return after being substituted.



3. The playing pitch and goals are small sided

- Walking Football may be played with or without barriers but without barriers is recommended as the safest option.
- The playing area must be rectangular. The following dimensions are recommended. Most small-sided pitches will already have these marked out or you can do this yourself using cones or markers.

Number of Players	Length	Width
5-a-side and 6-a-side	25-50m	16-25m
7-a-side	50-60m	30-40m

- Penalty areas should be marked with a semi-circle of 6m radius drawn from the centre of each goal line. Within each penalty area, a penalty mark is made **6.5m** from the midpoint between the goal posts.
- The following goal post measurements are recommended.
  - Distance between the posts is 5m (maximum) – 3m (minimum)
  - Distance from lower edge of the crossbar to the ground is 2m (maximum) – 1.2m (minimum)
- Most pitches will already have these at the venue, or you can get portable ones. These must meet British Standards and be anchored securely to the ground during play as per Health and Safety requirements.
- Where natural turf is not used the surface must be smooth, flat and non-abrasive; the use of wood or artificial material is recommended.



4. Use a ball that's right for you

- Walking Football is generally played using a size 5 ball. However, you can also use a size 4 or even a futsal ball which is smaller and has a lower bounce (recommended for indoor use).
- Choose a ball that suits your group.

5. No heading. The ball must remain below a certain height

- There is a height restriction which cannot be less than the height of the crossbar and not greater than 2 metres. If the ball rises above the designated height restriction, an indirect free kick is awarded.
- Any save or block from a goalkeeper that rises above the designated height restriction, before leaving the pitch, will result in a side-line kick in or roll-in for the opposing team.

6. No throw-ins. The ball is kicked or rolled in

- A kick-in/roll-in is awarded when and where the whole of the ball crosses over a touch line. It is awarded to the opponents of the player who last touched the ball.
- Where the playing area is surrounded by barriers, there are no kick ins/roll-ins. When the ball leaves the field of play, play is restarted with a goal kick, by the goalkeeper whose half of the pitch was in when leaving the field of play.

7. Non-contact. No tackling.

- Tackles, challenges, and other contact will result in an indirect free kick to the opposition.
- Particular caution should be taken to avoid accidental contact from behind or alongside opponents, where their awareness is reduced.



8. All free kicks are indirect

- Free kicks can be awarded for disobeying the rules and are always indirect. This means a goal cannot be directly scored from the free kick.

9. Only goalkeepers in the penalty area

- Players cannot go into the semi-circle around the goal unless they are the defending goalkeeper.
- A penalty kick is awarded if a defending player deliberately enters their own penalty area or a goalkeeper deliberately exits their own penalty area.

10. There is no offside rule

- A player can receive the ball anywhere on the pitch outside of the penalty areas at any time in line with other laws of the game.

11. Safety

- A player must not use equipment or wear anything that is dangerous.
- All items of jewellery must be removed.
  - The exception to this rule is if a plain wedding band is not able to be physically removed it is permitted to be covered.
- Shin pads and appropriate footwear must be worn.