



coaching made easy

individual body movement and ball skills



BASKETBALL AUSTRALIA FORMED IN 1939

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NATIONAL COACHING AND ACCREDITATION SCHEME

The National Coaching and Accreditation Scheme (NCAS) was established in 1978 with the primary aim of up-grading and expanding coaching expertise across a wide range of sports. Basketball Australia has embraced this scheme since its inception.

This Level 1 Manual is a substantial revision on previous editions and many thanks are due to Mr Ian Ellis for his work as well as the numerous other coaches who have been kind enough to have input. The manual remains the basis of Basketball Australia's NCAS Level 1 course however has been produced in separate booklets to make it easier for coaches to identify specific information they are after.

This manual is not designed to have all coaches around Australia doing the same thing, rather it is to allow coaches at all levels to perform more effectively and constructively. The application of knowledge remains flexible according to the talent and ability of the individual coach and the athletes they are working with.

Good luck with your coaching!

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Basketball Australia

PO Box 7141 Alexandria NSW 2015
Level 3, 256 Coward Street, Mascot NSW 2020
Telephone: (02) 9469 7200 Fax: (02) 9469 7201
www.basketball.net.au

Basketball ACT

PO Box 3268
Belconnen ACT 2617
Telephone: (02) 6253 3066 Fax: (02) 6253 3060
www.act.basketball.net.au

Basketball NSW

PO Box 198
Sydney Markets NSW 2129
Telephone: (02) 8765 8555 Fax: (02) 8765 8588
www.nswbasketball.net.au

Basketball NT

PO Box 42240
Casuarina NT 0810
Telephone: (08) 8945 3761 Fax: (08) 8945 3862
www.nt.basketball.net.au

Basketball QLD

PO Box 1281
Milton QLD 4064
Telephone: (07) 3377 9100 Fax: (07) 3371 7239
www.basketballqld.net.au

Basketball SA

PO Box 29
Findon SA 5023
Telephone: (08) 8444 6444 Fax: (08) 8444 6488
www.sa.basketball.net.au

Basketball Tasmania

PO Box 21
New Town TAS 7008
Telephone: (03) 6228 1822 Fax: (03) 6228 1844
www.tas.basketball.net.au

Basketball Victoria

Box 3, MSAC
Aughtie Dr, Albert Park VIC 3206
Telephone: (03) 9927 6666 Fax: (03) 9927 6677
www.basketballvictoria.com.au

Basketball WA

PO Box 185
Floreat WA 6014
Telephone: (08) 9284 0555 Fax: (08) 9284 0550
www.basketballwa.asn.au





Australia has a proud history in basketball and in 2004 was ranked 3rd amongst all nations. This success is due in no small way to the tireless work of coaches throughout the country, from “learn to play” programs right through to the Boomers and Opals.

The National Coaching and Accreditation Scheme (NCAS) was established in 1978 with the primary aim of up-grading and expanding coaching expertise across a wide range of sports. Basketball Australia has fully embraced this scheme since its inception and has developed, in conjunction with the Australian Sports Commission, a systematic and on-going educational program for basketball coaches.

Basketball Coaching Made Easy has been formulated to provide the background of knowledge and expertise for aspiring Level 1 basketball coaches. This course applies covers general coaching principles and applies them specifically to basketball, with an emphasis on having sound knowledge of the skills and principles of basketball as well as better organisation of practice sessions, appropriate methods of teaching and correcting techniques and methods of analysing an athlete’s performance.

There is a wealth of resources available to coaches – a simple search on the internet will identify many hundred websites with an amazing array of information. There are books and videos on all aspects of basketball coaching and a visit to the National Sports Information Centre at the Australian Institute of Sport is a must for any coach visiting Canberra. Indeed your local library is often a great source of coaching material.

With all this information available a coach could easily find enough drills to fill many years of training sessions! Drills are the “tools of the trade” for coaches but the art of coaching is about the teaching points that you highlight in a given drill. Coaches must focus on the teaching points as these are what make their players better!

The National Intensive Training Program is the key component of Basketball Australia’s national player and coach identification and development strategy. There are full time coaches in each state and territory who deliver the program with the assistance of a strong network of coaches. The NITP has a heavy emphasis on developing individual offensive and defensive fundamentals as well as team principles of play. Coaches interested in learning more about the NITP should contact the head coaches through their state associations.

Whether you are coaching a team of beginners who are just learning to love the sport or a representative team “Basketball Coaching Made Easy” has information relevant to you. For further information on coaching clinics or resources contact your State/Territory Association or log onto the Basketball Australia website, www.basketball.net.au.

Enjoy your coaching!

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Basketball is a sport where effective body movements are critical. Players run, stop, jump, pivot and change direction. It is important players attempt to master these skills to assist them learning the basketball-specific skills to be discussed later in this manual.



Jumping

It is a tremendous advantage for any player to be able to jump. Areas where the ability to jump are advantageous include rebounding, shooting, blocking a shot or intercepting a pass.

Coaches can assist an athlete in this area by emphasising and teaching correct jumping technique. When teaching this skill it is important to develop an effective stance that will generate power. This is achieved by having the feet at least shoulder width apart, knees bent, or flexed, and with body weight evenly distributed. Upon commencing a jump the athlete should take off on both feet to ensure a powerful and explosive movement.

A player's arms assist in the upward movement of the jump towards the basket and should swing forward and upward in rhythm to gain momentum. Arms should be extend upward for maximum reach. At all times the head and eyes should remain up and focused on the target.

When landing, land on the balls of the feet and flex the knees to absorb the impact.

Generally, a player is most balanced when their head is in the middle between their feet, rather than leaning to one side or the other.



Key teaching points

- Knees flexed & weight balanced across both feet
- Swing arms upwards
- Jump straight
- Land on the balls of feet, knees flexed

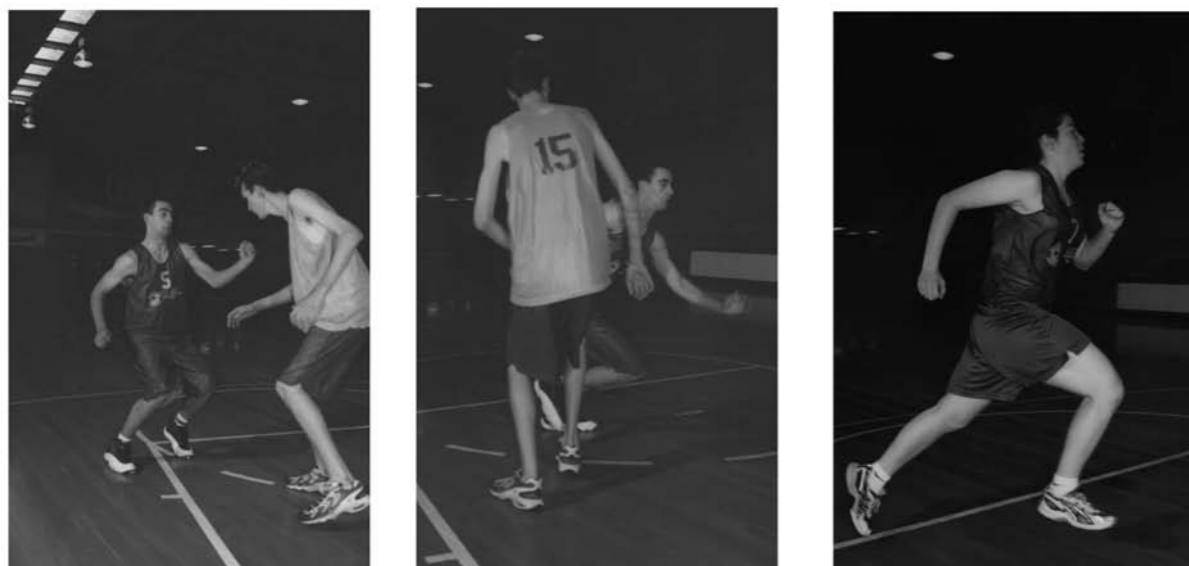




Running

Basketball is a game played at various speeds. This may mean quick explosive movements or the athlete having the capacity to stop or slow down instantly. Effective execution requires correct form and technique. Often offensive players need to free themselves from opponents by changing their pace.

Teaching correct running technique begins with the player in an athletic stance. This will allow the athlete to accelerate quickly. The athlete should run on the balls of their feet with knees bent. Body weight should be evenly distributed to ensure balance with the head kept in the middle of the body. The body should lean slightly forward while the arms should be bent at the elbow. Both the arms and legs work parallel to the body and never cross in front.



Key teaching points

- Athletic stance
- Run on the balls of your feet
- Body weight distributed across both feet
- Arms carried with 90 degree angle at the elbow
- Arms and feet move parallel to the body and never cross

Changing Direction

Basketball is a fast flowing game, which involves quick and sudden changes of direction. Players need to free themselves from their opponents and defenders need to be able to control or react to the movements of their opponents. Other areas where rapid change of direction is required might include the v-cut, pass and cut (give and go), back cut and flash cut. All involve making, rapid changes of direction to lose an opponent. Offensively, a player becomes very difficult to defend either with or without the ball, if they use an effective change of direction.

All changes of direction should be executed out of an athletic running stance. On changing direction the knees should be bent to lower the player's centre of gravity. The athlete should plant there outside foot in whichever the direction the athlete is running, and quickly push off with a sharp change of direction. The most important thing is to push off the "outside foot". Simply put, this means if you want to move to your left step with your left foot first (and push off your right).

To assist this movement the athlete should make an explosive change of pace upon changing direction. This will assist them to free themselves from their opponent.



Key teaching points

- Push off outside foot
- Make sharp and definite changes of direction
- Use correct running form and technique
- Often used with a change of pace





Stopping

Stopping quickly and with good balance is vital for both offensive and defensive players. There are two ways that players may stop: The stride stop and jump stop.

Stride Stop

A stride stop can also be classified as a running stop. In a game it is commonly seen when a player is going too fast to make a jump stop and has to make a sudden stop while on the run.

The player plants one foot to stop while the other foot strides forward before coming to a stop. Throughout this movement it is important to ensure balance.

In this instance the back foot always becomes the pivot foot. The foot that is forward can then be moved.



Key teaching points

- Plant one foot, allowing the opposite foot to stride through
- Nose behind toes
- Protect the ball from the defender
- Stop with balance, ready to stop, shoot or receive

Things to look for

- Head position – make sure it stays between the feet
- Bend in the first leg – This is also called a 2-count stop and the athlete can be encouraged to call out “1”, “2” as their feet hit the floor.

Jump Stop

A jump stop is most often performed when a player is running and receives a pass or decides to pick up the ball when dribbling. It is an important fundamental as it provides players with the advantage of being able to choose either foot as the pivot foot.

To jump stop the player's feet land at the same time. It is also called a 1-count stop and athletes can be encouraged to call “1” as they stop.



Key teaching points

- Feet land simultaneously
- Knees bent
- Nose behind toes
- Head up and eyes up
- Low centre of gravity





Pivoting

Upon stopping with the basketball, it is essential for all players to develop the skill of pivoting. This provides the basis for many fundamental moves including protecting the basketball, gaining rebounding position, passing, faking and driving. Pivoting allows players to move or pivot on one foot to free themselves from an opponent.

One foot is 'anchored' to the floor and the other may move freely. A pivot is a strong step and the athlete should remain in a low stance – it is not a pirouette with straight legs.

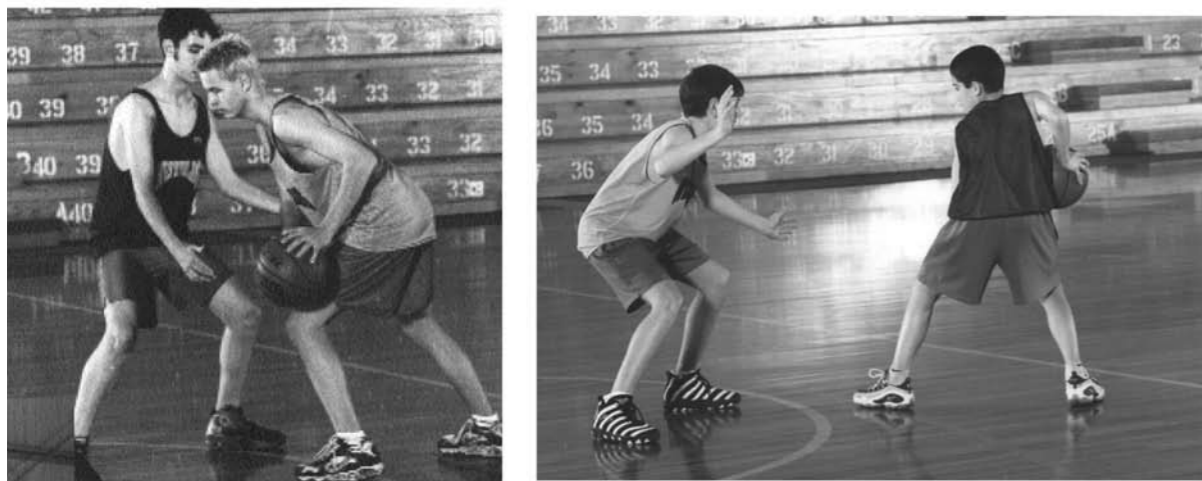
A player with the ball may lift their pivot foot providing they pass or shoot the ball before that foot hits the ground again. If a player wants to dribble, the ball must leave their hand before they lift their pivot foot.

Players must establish a pivot foot. When stopping using a stride stop, a pivot foot is automatically established (see stride stop). When using a stride stop, the first foot to hit the ground is the athlete's pivot foot. Players cannot change their pivot foot once this has been determined.

When pivoting players must assume an athletic stance with knees bent and feet at least shoulder width apart. This will ensure the athlete has good balance. Body weight should be evenly distributed with the head in the centre of the body. It is important for the athlete to pivot on the ball of the foot. Throughout the pivoting action the player should attempt to stay in this strong and balanced stance. This will allow the athlete to execute a pass, shot or drive more effectively.

There are two types of pivots, the forward and reverse pivot. The forward pivot involves pivoting in a forward motion. A reverse pivot is completed in the opposite direction.

The player should also move the ball as they step, to keep it away from the opposition. They should move the ball quickly to avoid the defender grabbing the ball.



Key teaching points

- Strong athletic stance
- Establish pivot foot
- Pivot on ball of foot
- Stay low when pivoting
- Maintain low balanced stance throughout, stepping rather than spinning at the end

It is vital that players learn to effectively handle the basketball using either hand when dribbling, passing and receiving. At all times a player should be working towards handling the basketball without watching it.

Coaches must emphasise the importance of continued practice. The more players handle a basketball the more accustomed and confident they will become. Whether the athlete is the shortest or tallest in the team, effective ball handling is essential.

To enhance ball control the ball should always be handled using the pads of the fingers and the upper portion of the palm (not the base or the heel of the palm). The fingers should be spread around the ball comfortably, covering as much surface of the ball as possible. At all times a player should keep their eyes off the ball. This will further enhance a player's ball control and the ability to see team mates and opportunities that may arise in the game.

Various drills can be used to develop a player's ball handling skills.

Some of the more commonly used drills are covered in the following pages. These drills are particularly useful in that they do not require coach supervision. Players can practice these regularly as part of an on-going training program.

When your athlete's are doing ball handling drills reassure them that they should go as fast as possible and should, at some time, lose control of the ball. If they never lose control of the ball, they are only practicing what they can already do!

Common teaching points for all ball-handling drills:

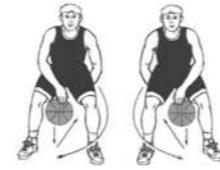
- Head & eyes up
- Use pads of fingers
- Increased speed of execution
- Maintain a strong and balanced stance
- Practice makes perfect
- Keep the head as still as possible and always between the two feet (not leaning to one side)





Figure Eight Leg Wrap

- Ball is moved in a 'figure eight' action around the legs
- Alternates going behind one leg and in front of the other
- Change the direction that the ball travels after a short period



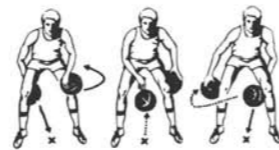
Straddle Flip

- Feet shoulder width apart, knees flexed
- Two hands in front holding the basketball between their legs
- Flip the basketball into the air
- Catch with two hands behind the legs before ball hits the ground
- Continue the action without allowing the ball to hit the floor



Two Ball Alternating Drill

- Using two basketballs, take one and bounce it behind and between your legs
- Keep this ball dribbling on the same hand
- Dribble the other ball around the opposite leg also keeping it in the same hand
- Continue drill alternating the two balls between your legs



Around the Waist

- Take the ball in one hand, take it behind your back and pass it to the other hand
- In one continuous motion rotate the ball around your waist returning the ball to the initial hand
- Pass the ball around the waist in either direction



Around the Head

- Take the ball in one hand, take it behind your head and pass it to the other hand
- In one continuous motion rotate the ball around your head alternating hands
- Pass the ball around the head in either direction
- Keep the head still



Blurr

- Place one hand on the ball in the front of the legs and the other hand on the ball behind the legs
- Flip the ball in the air and alternate the position of your hands back to front and front to back
- Catch the ball before it hits the ground

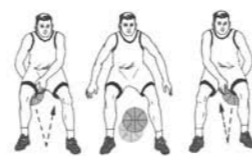


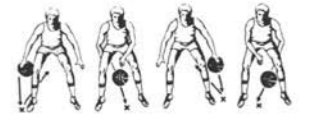
Figure Eight Speed Dribble

- Start dribbling the basketball around and between the legs in a figure 8 shape
- Try to keep the ball as low as possible at all times, emphasising the use of finger tips



Two Bounce Drill

- Take one dribble on one side of your body angling the ball to the back
- Then dribble between the legs and change hands
- Dribble once with the opposite hand on the other side of the body and then dribble between the legs changing hands



Spider Drill

- Take one dribble with the right hand and then one with the left in front of the body
- Take the right hand behind the legs and dribble once, immediately followed by the left also behind the legs
- Then return to the front and repeat the action

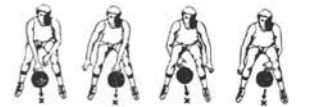
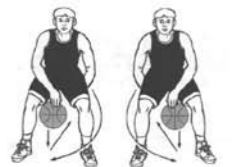


Figure Eight with One Bounce

- Start with the knees shoulder width apart
- Take the ball in one hand and bounce it between your legs and receive it with opposite hand behind your legs
- Then bring the ball around to the front and bounce it between your legs
- Continue the drill alternating hands, or change the direction of the dribble - back to front



Head, Waist & Leg Rhythm Drill

- In one continuous motion wrap the ball around your legs, then waist, then head
- The ball moves up or down the body on each movement around the body



Double Leg - Single Leg

- Start with feet together
- Rotate the ball around both legs
- Step sideward with one leg and rotate the ball around that leg
- Continue the action by bringing the feet together then step sideways with the opposite leg, rotating the ball around that leg





The ability to handle the basketball and move the body appropriately will greatly enhance dribbling skills. Dribbling is a vital skill for all players to master whether they are the shortest or tallest team member. Equally important is the need for a player to be able to dribble using either hand, as good defensive players can exploit any weakness and force players to use their non-preferred hand. Executed proficiently dribble skills can make a player very difficult to guard, as they are able to develop explosive movements with the ball in any direction. Changing hands, changing speed and changing direction greatly enhance offensive efficiency.

Dribbling is used to advance the ball up the court, drive to the basket or to gain a better shooting opportunity. A player may also use a dribble to evade defensive pressure, especially where there are no passing opportunities. It can also be used to improve a passing angle or to make a safer pass.

Dribbling is a skill that can often be overused. Such overuse may result in slowing a team down, making them easier to defend. In general a pass will always travel down the court quicker than a player dribbling will. Other times a player may receive the ball and dribble it before looking for a pass. The best option may then become unavailable.

Indeed in the original 13 rules of basketball, dribbling was not allowed and players had to throw the ball from the spot where they caught it!

Two simple rules may be used especially for teaching inexperienced players:

1. Dribbling should only be used when a pass is not possible.
2. Do not stop your dribble until you have a passing or scoring opportunity.

Tips for teaching dribbling

- Head and eyes up - not on the basketball
- Use pads of fingers and upper portion of palm
- Protect the ball with the body
- Dribble with purpose
- Be able to dribble with either right or left hand
- Don't overuse
- Use a change of pace while dribbling
- Practice makes perfect

Speed Dribble

A speed dribble is a very aggressive dribble used to push the ball up the court fast. It is most commonly seen in a fast break situation where the player dribbling the ball must beat the defence down the court to score. Often players of today are instructed to use only three to four dribbles to push the ball up the court. This allows their team the opportunity to fast break on many occasions leading to easier opportunities to score before the defensive team is fully prepared. It is important that coaches emphasise the importance of this skill and teach each player to dribble the ball hard up the floor.

Proper execution of the speed dribble relies on the player beginning in a strong athletic stance so they can quickly execute a fast and explosive first step. It is the first step that is vitally important to an athlete as this determines whether or not they are initially able to beat their opponent. As the player takes off it is important the ball is pushed out in front and to the side of the body at waist height. The bounce may remain slightly higher than other dribbling skills to cover more ground quickly.

The quickest dribble is to bounce the ball in front and to dribble with alternating hands. This is a more natural, and faster, running style than dribbling the ball to the side. Having the ball directly in front of the athlete also makes it harder for an opponent to come from behind and knock the ball away.

The body should lean forward and into the dribble. Coaches should emphasise the point that the faster the athlete goes the further the ball should be pushed out in front. At all times the dribbler's head and eyes should remain up so they can see the floor and distribute the ball to the open player.

Coaches should stress the importance of maintaining control while using this form of dribble as players may easily lose control. It is essential that athletes know their limits and understand how fast they can go while maintaining control.

Key teaching points

- Keep the ball in front and to the side of the body
- Dribble with pads of fingers and upper portion of palm
- Head and eyes up
- Quick first step
- Maintain control by keeping the ball at waist level
- Dribble with alternating hands for maximum speed





Protection Dribble

Protection, or control dribbling, is most commonly used when the dribbler is under pressure from their defender. It relies on the dribbler keeping their body between the ball and the defender. It is essential for coaches to emphasise the importance of staying in a low, strong and athletic stance, while dribbling with head and eyes up so the dribbler can see any open team mates and then other defenders.

To execute this skill it is important to turn side on so that your body is automatically between the ball and the defender. The ball should be dribbled next to the back foot. The lead foot must step across the ball to cover or protect it from the defence. In addition the arm above the lead foot should be stretched out to discourage the defender if they attempt a steal.

To advance the ball down the court the dribbler should use 'big to bigger' footwork. Whichever direction the player moves (forwards or backwards) the first foot to move should be that foot (eg move the front foot first to move forwards). At all times it is essential that the feet stay at least shoulder width apart.



Key teaching points

- Keep the body between the ball and the defender
- Maintain a low, strong, athletic stance
- Bounce ball next to back foot
- Protect ball with lead foot and arm
- Use "big to bigger" footwork and do not bring the feet together

Hesitation Dribble

A hesitation dribble is also termed a stutter dribble. It is used to confuse the defender into thinking the dribbler is about to stop dribbling or make a sudden change of direction.

The dribbler may make a succession of short and sharp steps towards the defender. (stutter steps). The dribbler slows down so as to hesitate and create uncertainty in the defender's mind. The dribbler then looks to read the intentions of the defender and beat their opponent by making a sudden change of pace and, if necessary, direction. It may involve making a crossover or on-side dribble depending upon the reaction made by the defender. Players may execute this skill raising their shoulders and upper body out of the normal stance, taking one slow dribble, before quickly accelerating. It is important that they keep their knees bent to be able to dribble quickly.

It is important as with all dribbling skills to keep the head and eyes up. Lift shoulders and upper body but keep knees bent.



Key teaching points

- Head and eyes up
- Succession of short and sharp steps
- Hesitate, slowing down
- Read the defender
- Change of pace past the defender



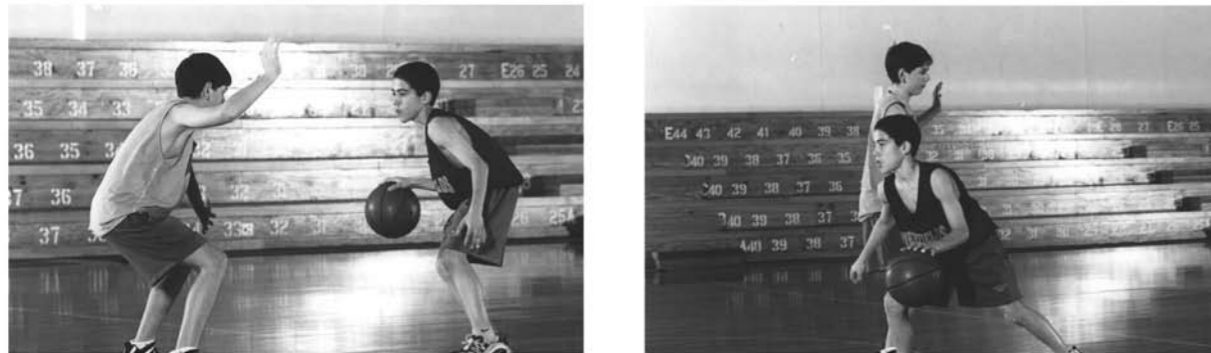


Crossover Dribble

The crossover dribble is the most widely used dribble when changing direction and changing hands. It is a controlled dribble in which the ball is brought across in front of the body from one hand to the other.

The player in possession of the ball plants the foot on the same side as the ball as if to dribble in that direction. The shoulder and arm closest to the defender should be brought forward and down to protect the ball. The ball handler then pushes off the planted foot while dribbling the ball across their body toward the free hand. The ball hits the floor near the opposite foot. The dribbler must keep this dribble low and close to the body.

After the ball has been successfully transferred to the opposite hand, an explosive change of pace is desirable. The ball goes first and then the legs.



Key teaching points

- Push off the outside foot when changing direction
- Change hands with a low (knee height) controlled dribble
- Non-dribbling hand held close to pick up the ball on crossover
- Head and eyes up
- Balance: Knees flexed

Behind the Back Dribble

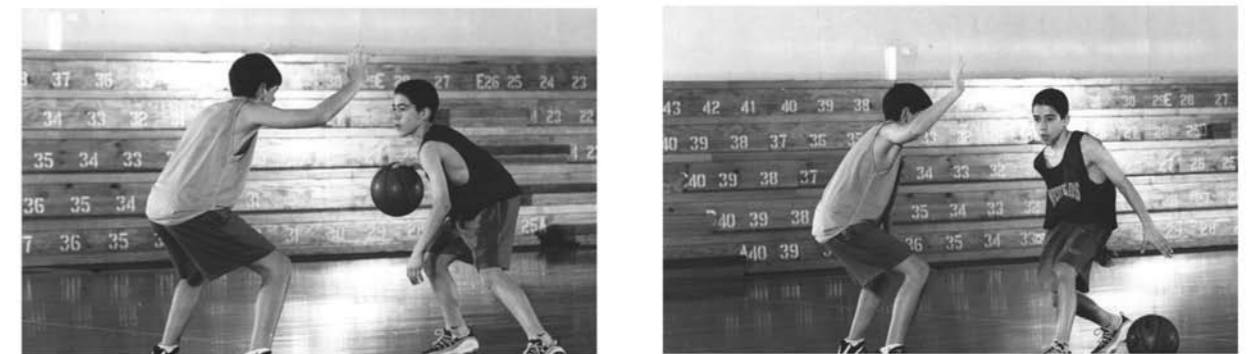
A behind the back dribble allows a dribbler to change direction and hands while keeping their body between the ball and the defender. This particular skill is relatively difficult to perform and takes considerable practice to perfect.

To execute this skill it is important the athlete makes a sharp and definite change of direction. This will help put the body in correct position to execute the skill. Upon changing direction the ball is drawn around or behind the body with the dribbling hand. It is important not to scoop the ball upward or a carrying violation will result. To prepare, players should dribble next to their hip. This will assist the movement of the basketball behind the body. The ball should rotate around the body until the palm faces the direction that the dribbler wishes the ball to go. If dribbling with the right hand the right hand will draw the ball around the body. Upon following through the ball will be pushed in a downward direction ending up bouncing next to the left foot.

A player should work towards being able to execute this skill with head and eyes up. They should also develop this skill so they can achieve this on the run to make this dribble more attacking. Combined with a change of pace this skill may prove a very effective offensive weapon.

The player's hand should hit their bottom to emphasise pushing the ball in front of their body and not to the side.

Players may also change hands by using a "V" dribble behind their back. This is commonly seen in the NBL/NBA and is similar to a crossover dribble (although is generally bounced higher). This is not a move to beat a defender but is a way of changing hands.



Key teaching points

- Head and eyes up
- Sharp change of direction
- Bounce ball next to opposite foot
- Change pace
- Hit bottom with hand as push ball forwards





Between the Legs

A between the legs dribble is a method of crossing the ball from one hand to the other and is generally used when closely guarded. It is very hard to perform this particular dribble on the run, therefore, it is generally executed from another stationary position.

When executing a between the legs dribble it is important to maintain a low and balanced stance. The feet are positioned similar to a stride stop with one foot in front of the other approximately shoulder width apart. The ball should be controlled with the pads of the fingers and upper portion of palm, while the head and eyes should remain up identifying an open team mate in a better position to score, or a defender attempting a steal the ball.

When bouncing the ball through the legs the ball should be pushed downward so that it bounces between the middle of the legs. The opposite hand should be positioned ready to receive the ball. If the dribbler is changing from right to left hand, their left foot should be forward so that the ball is pushed away from the defender.

Players should aim to complete this dribble without looking at the ball.

A good way to practice this dribble is to have players dribbling and then stop using a 'stride' stop. This puts their feet in good position to execute the dribble.



Key teaching points

- Head and eyes up
- Come to a stop
- Stay low and balanced
- Push ball downward, bouncing between the middle of the legs
- Change pace

Reverse Dribble

The reverse dribble is also commonly known as a spin dribble. This skill is used to protect the ball with the body while changing hands. It can be used as an attacking dribble or one used while executing a protection dribble.

To execute, the dribbler plants the foot closest the defender and performs a reverse pivot. While pivoting the dribbler bounces the ball across in front of them and it should bounce near the foot they stepped with. They then change hands on the dribble. The dribbler should always turn away from the defender. It is important that this skill is not executed while there are other defenders close by as the athlete has to turn blind and may be prone to becoming double-teamed.

When turning the dribbler should turn their head first (by putting their chin on their shoulder) so they can see what is behind them.

Combined with a change of pace this dribble can be very effective in beating an opponent. It is important to ensure that if dribbling with the right hand that the left foot is the one planted prior to executing this skill.



Key teaching points

- Head and eyes up
- Keep body between ball and defender
- Plant the foot closest the defender while dribbling with opposite hand
- Turn head first – 'chin to shoulder'
- Reverse pivot
- Change hands protecting the ball throughout
- Dribble ball next to back foot for protection
- Change pace





On-Side Dribble

An on-side dribble fakes changing direction and throughout this action the ball is kept dribbling in the same hand. It is commonly used to make the defender of the ball react and anticipate a crossover dribble.

To execute an on-side dribble using the right hand, the dribbler commences in a straight line. While dribbling the athlete pushes off the right foot and takes a small step to the left with the left foot. At the same instance the ball is brought to the middle of the body using the right hand, while the athlete's eyes and head face left. This clearly shows the defender that the dribbler is about to execute a crossover dribble. The athlete then makes another sudden change of direction pushing off their left foot, stepping with their right. The dribbler needs to roll their hand over the top of the ball to push it back toward the right hand side. In performing this dribble, the ball only hits the ground once.

Throughout this action the defender would be looking to anticipate a cross over dribble and would react by stepping across to take this away. It is essential to keep the ball low and to make the fake crossover look as realistic as possible.

The footwork is reversed to execute an on-side dribble with the left hand.



Key teaching points

- Head and eyes up
- Keep the ball low
- Keep the ball in the same hand throughout
- Step and bring the ball to the middle of the body as if to crossover
- Make a sharp change of direction and continue in the same direction
- 'Sell the fake' by turning the shoulders and looking where they would go if they did a crossover.

Fake Crossover Dribble

A fake cross-over is similar to an on-side dribble in that it is pretending to change direction. The footwork push is the same. The difference is that in a fake crossover the ball hits the floor twice.

To execute a fake crossover with the left hand the dribbler pushes off their left foot and takes a small step to the right with their right foot. As they do this they dribble the ball toward the right (as if doing a crossover). They then push off their right foot and take a step to their left with their left foot. At the same time they dribble the ball (still with their left hand) back to their left hand side.

A great offensive team is generally characterised as having the ability to move the ball quickly and efficiently down the court. While the use of a dribble is essential, passing is by far more efficient and attacking and passing is the fastest method for any team to move the ball.

An effective passing team will be able to create far more scoring opportunities because they will have the ability to move the ball quickly into a position where a good shot may be taken. Passes should always be thrown away from the defender and the passer and receiver should attempt to make eye contact.

Catching the ball is just as important as the ability to throw a good pass. Receivers should show a target (where they want the ball passed) and should generally have their fingers pointing up. Receivers must watch the ball into their hands. Often young players will turn their head or shut their eyes, particularly if they had a finger hurt trying to catch before.

A good exercise for athletes who are "scared" of the ball is to have them put their hands up in catching position and for you to push the ball into their hands (while you still hold it). You can do this progressively harder and then start to throw it from a shorter distance.

Once ready to make a pass the athlete must recognize and execute the appropriate pass for the situation. Some general rules can be followed. When executing a pass from outside the keyway to a player inside the keyway a bounce pass is usually the preferred method. For passes of short distance around the court a chest pass or a one hand push pass. A push pass is needed when closely guarded, to pass around the defender. To make a pass over a lengthy distance a baseball pass may be the most appropriate. When the defence is applying constant pressure, fake a pass to make a pass.

The following types of passes will be looked at throughout this section:

1. Chest pass
2. Bounce pass
3. One hand push pass
4. Baseball pass
5. Overhead pass

Passing tips

- Pass out of triple threat stance
- Make every pass sharp and crisp
- Make eye contact with the receiver
- Pass away from defence
- Use a left hand push pass to pass to the left hand side and a right hand push pass to the right





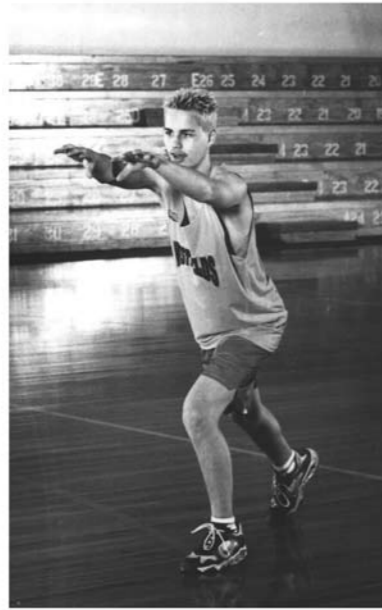
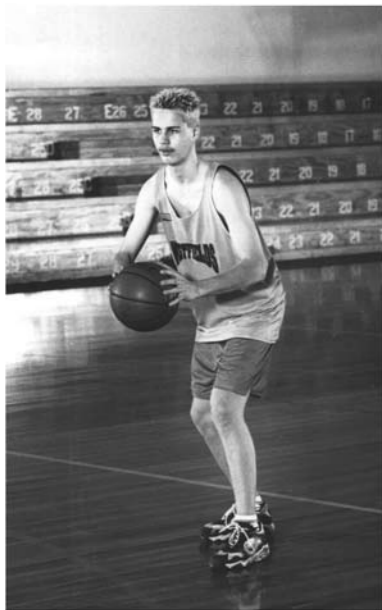
Chest Pass

The two-handed chest pass is one of the most commonly used passes in the game of basketball.

When executing a chest pass it is important to correctly position the hands so that contact is equally distributed on either side of the ball. The ball should be held in the pads of the fingers and the upper portion of the palm, while the fingers should be spread. The thumbs should be behind the ball and the fingers should point generally upwards. This is how the athlete should have caught the ball (fingers up). The player's elbows should be flexed and tucked allowing the ball to be held close to the chest. At all times the player should maintain an athletic stance.

On executing a chest pass the athlete should initiate the pass by stepping forward towards the target and they should release the ball approximately when the foot they step with hits the floor. Arms should move from the flexed position to full extension. Upon following through, the wrists should snap to release the ball. To finish the pass with good follow through the thumbs should point to the floor and the fingers should point to the target. This will provide the ball with more power and accuracy. Athletes should be able to pass while stepping forward with either foot.

Before executing a chest pass eye contact should be made with the potential receiver to ensure they are ready for the pass. All attempts should be made to hit the receiver's target hand which will generally be away from their defender.



Key teaching points

- Form "W"
- Elbows in
- Start with thumbs behind the ball
- Step to pass
- Pass away from defender
- Finish with thumbs pointing to the ground and fingers pointing to the target

Bounce Pass

A two-handed bounce pass is most often used as an attacking pass around or into the keyway. It is an effective method for feeding a post player or post a defender's hands are above shoulder height.

The technique involved during a bounce pass is similar to a chest pass. The underlying difference is that the arms are extended in a downward fashion rather than outward with the thumbs still pointing down and the fingers still pointing to the floor. The passer should aim to bounce the ball approximately two thirds of the distance toward the receiver. This will allow the ball to be caught by the receiver at waist or chest height, generally before the ball reaches its highest point.



Key teaching points

- As for chest pass except pushed down and out
- Aim two-thirds the distance to receiver
- Ball is received on the way up





One Hand Push Pass

A one-hand push pass is executed when a player has to pass around a defender in a certain direction. It is often used for feeding a post player. This pass can be executed as either a chest or a bounce pass depending upon the circumstance. It is probably the most commonly used pass in basketball.

When executing this pass the coach should emphasise the importance of passing out of a triple threat stance. The ball is held at chest height with the passing hand behind the ball with fingers pointing up. The other hand is placed on the side of the ball as a guide and for balance. The wrist is bent back with the ball being held by the fingertips and upper portion of the palm, and fingers should be spread.

The athlete should have their head and eyes up looking to make eye contact with the potential receiver and to read the defender's actions. The player will step past the defender and make the pass. As the player makes the pass the arm behind the ball is extended toward the target. The wrist snaps and the fingers end pointing toward the target.

Athletes must step as they make this pass (as with a chest pass). They must be able to execute three different types of footwork:

- stepping forward
- stepping to the side (with the same foot as the hand you are passing)
- stepping across the body



Key teaching points

- Low balanced stance
- Ball held below shoulder
- Passing hand directly behind ball
- Extend passing arm fully
- Snap wrist of passing arm to complete follow through



Curl Pass

The curl pass is a one handed pass that is particularly effective to pass to post players and is thrown as a bounce pass.

To throw the pass, the passing hand is at the back of the ball with fingers pointing away from the passer. The other hand is toward the front of the ball. The player steps to the side and extends their arm to the side. When throwing the ball they turn their arm so that the passing hand finishes with palm facing down. This puts a little spin on the ball.

Key teaching points

- Low balanced stance
- Passing hand behind the ball, fingers pointing away from body
- Keep two hands on the ball until releasing the ball
- Turn arm so that passing hand finishes with palm facing down

Baseball Pass

A baseball pass is an attacking pass generally used during a fast break situation. It is a pass used to gain distance to find a player wide open who is in a more advantageous position down the court. This is the least accurate of all passes as it takes longer to execute and is thrown over large distances. Therefore, it should not be thrown when the potential receiver, and especially the passer are heavily defended.

To execute a baseball pass the ball is brought to the ear of the player, with the throwing hand directly behind the ball (fingers pointing up). The other hand is at the front of the ball.

The player transfers weight to their back foot and then steps forward to throw the pass. The arm should be fully extended (toward the target) as the ball is thrown.

The other hand comes off the ball and moves straight down (rather than turning their body). The pass should be thrown "side-on".

A baseball pass if executed correctly can provide a team many fast break opportunities.



In this picture, there are three things that could be corrected:

- the ball is too far back (behind the shoulder) which can affect the accuracy of the pass
- they are not side-on (because the left arm is turning the body) which again can affect accuracy
- the legs are relatively straight which may affect the power of the pass

Key teaching points

- Ball drawn back to the ear of the passer
- Step toward target
- Fully extend the throwing arm
- Snap wrist to complete the follow through
- Similar to a baseball pitcher



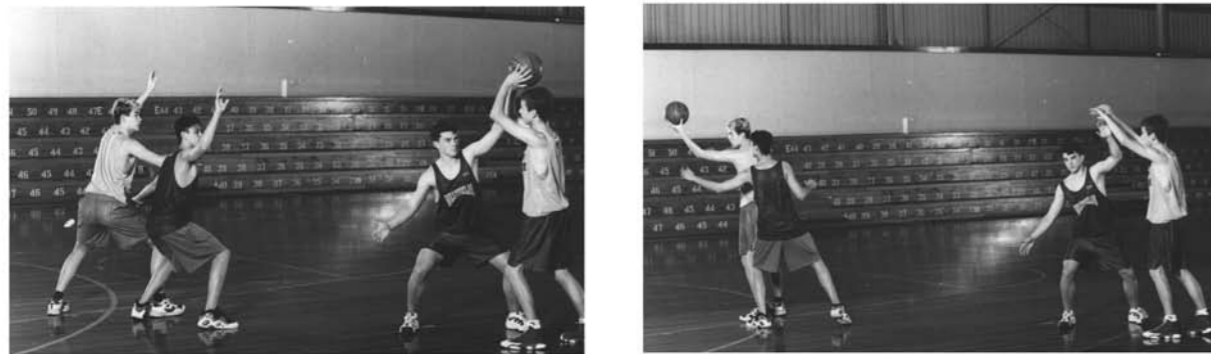


Overhead Pass

An overhead pass is used as an outlet pass to begin a fast break, making a skip pass against a zone or passing to a taller post player with an obvious height advantage. In general it is used to pass over defence, particularly when defenders are carrying their hands at waist level or below.

To be able to execute an overhead pass effectively it is important to teach players correct form and technique. First players should assume an athletic triple threat stance. This will allow the athlete to maintain balance throughout the pass. The hands should be distributed equally on either side of the ball with thumbs toward the back of the ball. During this pass the ball is brought from the chest to the forehead. Ideally the pass will be made from the passer's forehead to a team mates forehead, or where appropriate, target hand. The arms extend outward toward the receiver while both wrists snap to complete the follow through of the pass. Again it is essential for the passer to step forward to pass and receiver to step forward and meet the ball.

It is important that the passer does not put the ball behind their head, as this can be easily stolen by a nearby defender.



Key teaching points

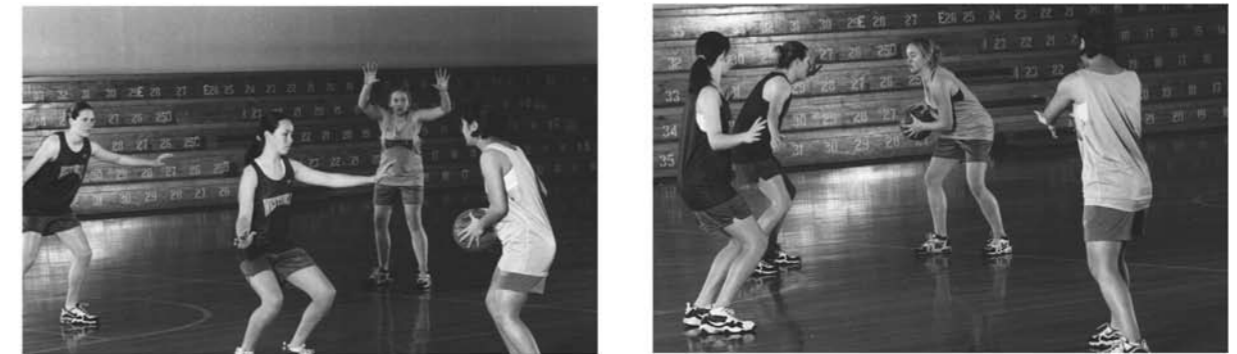
- Ball to forehead
- Ball is held with pads of fingers and upper portion of palm
- Step towards receiver
- Snap wrists to follow through

Catching

Catching is an important fundamental and needs to be taught and practiced. Poor receiving can lead to turnovers, and can hinder continuity on offence.

Potential receivers must focus on the ball and have their hands formed as a target with fingers pointing up. It is important that players watch the ball all the way into their hands. Two hands should be used when receiving the ball. At all times it is important for players to be moving to meet the pass. This will minimise the risk of a defender stepping into the passing lane and stealing the ball.

The ball should be caught with the fingers and upper portion of the palm and not the base of the palm for better control. Players should immediately assume a triple threat stance.



Key teaching points

- Present a target away from the defence
- Step towards the ball (meet the pass)
- Hands ready, fingers spread
- Watch the ball into the hands
- Catch and face the basket





Shooting is a refined skill, which demands considerable attention and practice.

Often young players focus on the scoring of baskets with little emphasis on developing good habits.

The coach must identify the components of shooting and assist players achieving appropriate execution. Of course, then, players must practice, and practice often.

Developing an effective shooting technique begins by establishing a strong, balanced triple threat stance. This should be assumed automatically upon catching the ball and facing the basket. This stance relies on having the feet at least shoulder width apart with weight evenly distributed across both feet. The knees should be bent to provide balance. The shooting foot (for a right handed shooter this is the right foot) should point toward the basket and be slightly in front of the other foot. This athletic stance will provide the necessary power to execute a shot and is referred to as the power phase of the shot. Once the shooter has established a base it is important they face the basket.

It is important to shoot with a high arc as this increases the chance of the shot going in. Good elbow and hand position are critical to shooting with a high arc. It is common to practice this with 'concept shooting', which involves standing near the basket:

- feet in a good balance stance
- with the ball just above the height of the athlete's eyes
- shooting hand beneath the ball, with the wrist "cocked" so that 'wrinkles' are visible
- fingers should be spread
- the elbow of the shooting arm should be directly underneath the ball, at a 90 degree angle, forming an "L-Shape"
- there should also be a 90 degree angle at the shoulder (so that the ball is away from the athlete's body)
- the left hand (which is used to provide balance) should be on the side of the ball.

The athlete then pushes up with their legs, extends their arm upwards, "snapping" their wrist as they release the ball. They should finish with their shooting arm straight (commonly referred to as "lock"), the wrist bent forwards (commonly referred to as "snap") and the fingers still spread.

Obviously players will not start their shot from this position in a game and commonly will have caught a pass or picked the ball up from dribbling. They should cock their wrist early (with fingers pointing up) and when shooting the ball they move through the position described above (they should not lift the ball to their forehead and stop).

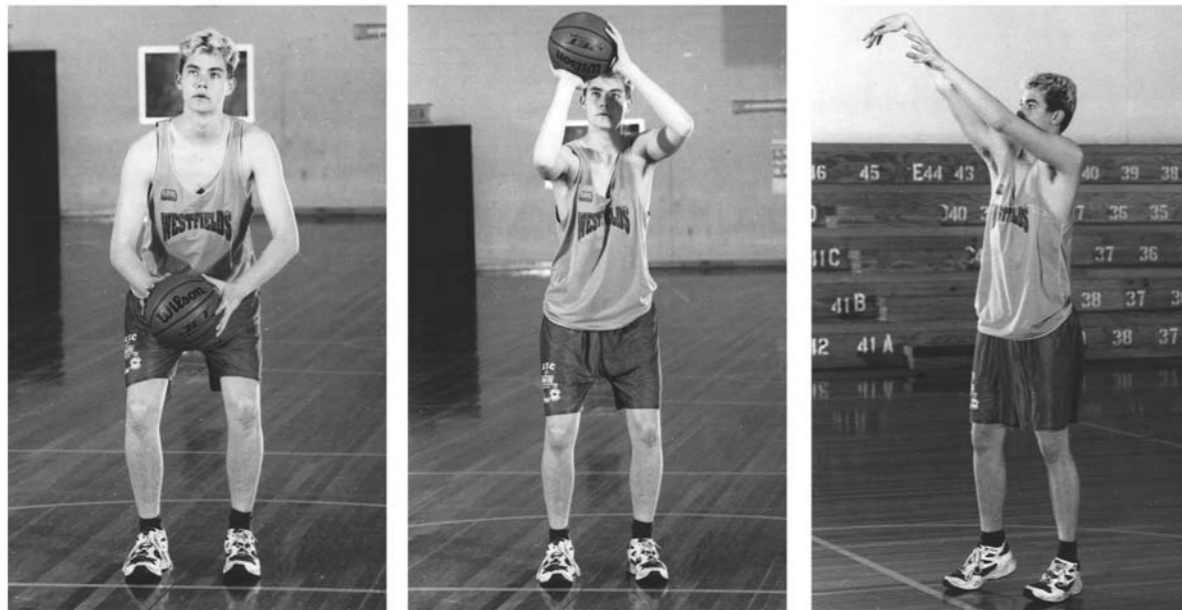
Upon commencing to shoot it is important to first generate power for the shot from the legs. Once this is achieved the follow through becomes critical. The right arm needs to fully extend with the elbow locking upon shooting the ball. The arm must extend upward in a straight line so that the ball is projected straight. Upon reaching full extension of the arm the shooter's wrist must SNAP. It is important when snapping the wrist that the ball rolls off the fingers so that the ball moves through the air with visible back spin rotation. It is a good idea for the shooter to keep their arm up and their fingers pointed towards the ring until the ball reaches the basket. The left hand comes off the ball at the top of the shot and does not apply any force or pressure to the ball other than to stabilise it.





Set Shot

The set shot is most commonly used when players are shooting free throws. It can also be seen when players have sufficient time to catch the ball before being defended. This shot forms the basis by which players learn the fundamentals of shooting before commencing other types of shots. For the set shot to be effective it is important that players square up upon receiving the ball and directly face the basket. The set shot utilises the fundamentals of shooting listed previously.



Key teaching points

- Body balanced – knees bent
- Shooting (lead) foot pointing to ring
- Shooting hand under ball
- Support from non-shooting hand
- Elbow and arm in straight line with basket over lead foot
- Eyes maintained on target (not flight of the ball)
- Thrust from legs
- Movement of arm (up not out)
- Snap wrist forward
- Follow through with fingers

Lay-Up

A lay-up is performed close to the basket either when a player is on a fast break or has driven to the basket.

There are two types of lay-ups. The first (and easiest) is a jump stop lay-up, where athletes dribble toward the basket and come to a stop and then shoots. This is also called a “power” lay-up and is used when there are defenders nearby. It is also good for young athletes.

The second type of lay-up is taken on the move.

When executing a lay-up on the move the athlete catches the ball and lands on one foot, they take another step and jump off the second foot. They must shoot the ball off the foot opposite the shooting hand. This allows the greatest upward extension. Therefore if on the right hand side of the basket and shooting the ball with the right hand the ball is shot following a jump off the left foot. To continue the extension the athlete should bring the right knee upward.

Every player should learn to shoot a lay-up with either hand. On the right hand side of the court the right hand should be used, while on the left the left hand should shoot the ball. When shooting with the left hand the player will jump off the right foot and bring the left knee upwards as the ball is released.



Key teaching points

- Jump off inside foot
- Bring opposite knee up
- Two hands on ball to height of jump
- Left arm protects shot
- High jump, don't broad jump
- Eyes on target
- Wrist cocked back, release ball off backboard, softly





Breakdown for teaching Lay-ups

There are a number of ways to teach correct lay-up footwork. Here is one way:

Have players line up at the block with the coach standing near the basket, under the blackboard. Players start with their feet together and then take one step and jump to clap the coach's hand.

On the left hand side of the floor, step with the right foot (and jump off the right foot) and clap with the left hand. On the right hand side, step with the left foot and clap with the right hand.

After a few tries, give players a ball and they shoot rather than clap the coach's hand. On the left hand side, shoot left handed. On the right hand side, shoot right handed.

Next, players line up one step away from the key, facing the basket, with feet together. The coach stands near the basket again.

Players take one step (landing in the low "block" position), then a second step jumping off the second foot and clap the coach's hand.

On the left hand side of the floor, the first step is with the left foot and clap with the left hand. On the right hand side of the floor, the first step is with the right foot and clap with the right hand.

After a few tries, they shoot instead of clapping the coach's hand.

Next they stand one step away from the key, facing the basket, dribbling the ball, whilst standing still.

When the coach says go, the player takes two steps to the basket. Their first step is with the same foot as the side of the basket they are on (ie if they are on the left hand side, they step with their left foot). They should pick the ball up as that foot is about to land. They then take a second step and shoot. **Always** shooting left hand on the left hand side and vice versa.

The next progression is to start two steps away from the key. The first step is with the foot opposite to the hand they will shoot with. The second step is into the block and with the same foot as the hand they are going to shoot with. They pick the ball up as they take this step. One more step and then shoot!

Next, have players start at the three point line. The coach stands at the "block" with the ball. Players run in, landing their baseline foot in the block and take the ball from the coach. One more step and shoot!

After these steps, they dribble in from the three point line, picking the ball up as their baseline foot lands in the block.

You should progress through these steps relatively quickly. The secret to success is lots of repetition, with the coach emphasising correct footwork.

Jump Shot

Today's game requires all players at elite levels to develop an effective jump shot. Jump shots are not reserved for the elite only. All players should attempt to master this very effective skill. This shot allows an athlete the ability to execute a shot quickly and with more power. It is more difficult for the defender to block this shot. As players develop a jump shot, physical maturation, concentration and practice will increase range and effectiveness of this particular shot.

To execute a jump shot it is important to understand the fundamentals involved in a set shot. It is important to catch the ball in a strong balanced stance so that the athlete can explode into a jumping action. Players should attempt to jump straight upward. Many players fall forward, sideward or backward. This serves to decrease accuracy and allows bad habits to form. Players should attempt to release the ball at or before, the top of their jump to ensure maximum power and accuracy is achieved.

It is important to teach the jump shot in three situations:

1. when stationary
2. off the dribble
3. on the move from a pass



Key teaching points

- Strong balanced stance
- Jump straight
- Keep feet shoulder width apart throughout (see "Set Shot" for further teaching points)
- Extend the arms to the basket and look under the basketball at the target
- Shoot on the way up – releasing the ball by the time the top of the jump is reached





There are currently 5 booklets in the “Basketball Coaching Made Easy” series.

Book 1: Introduction, Role of the Coach, Inclusive Coaching and Sports Science
Book 2: Individual Body Movement and Ball Skills

Book 3: Individual Offensive and Defekive Skills
Book 4: Team Offensive and Defensive Skills
Book 5: Training Drills

Individual Body Movement & Ball Skills

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