

Basketball Drills

2 Ball Dribbling Drill

Purpose: Work on ball handling skills with both hands.

Procedure: Each player has two balls. Start off with stationary dribbling about waist high, as one ball goes down the other ball comes up. Then have the players quick dribble about 4 or 5 inches off of the floor. Finally have the players move up and down the court slowly at their own pace.

Anticipation Drill

Purpose: This drill will help players develop skills for anticipating the pass. (Playing off the ball defense)

Procedure: This drill requires 4 players and one ball. Setup one offensive player on the right block, one offensive player on the left block, one offensive player at the top of the key with the ball and one defensive player three steps ahead of the two offensive players on the block in the middle of the key. The defender should stand in the defensive "ready position" (Defensive stance) with hands ready and focusing on the person with the ball. The offensive player with the ball throws the ball to the person on the left block. The defender must anticipate the throw and step into the passing lane and catch the ball before it reaches the offensive player. Once the defender catches the ball, the player will pass it back to the point player who will then try to make a pass to the right block. Again, the defender should read the pass, step into the passing lane and catch the ball before it reaches the offensive player. At first you can let the defender know which block the pass is going to be made to. Once the defender becomes more experienced at reading the pass, the pass should be made to either block without letting the defender know where the pass is going. Make sure the defender is stepping into the passing lane and not running at the offensive player. Rotate players through so that each has an opportunity to pass, receive and play defense.

Ball Circles Drill

Purpose: Good drill for warming up and working on developing good hand-eye coordination.

Procedure: Each player has a ball and circles it around different parts of the body, exchanging the ball from hand to hand, clockwise and then counter clockwise. On the coaches command players will circle the head, mid section, right leg, left leg and then figure 8 around and through the legs. Move in reverse order back up to the head.

Bull Ring Drill

Purpose: Works on developing better passing skills

Procedure: Form a circle with players standing at least four feet from each other. Place one defensive man in the middle. The object of this drill is to pass the ball to each other without the defensive man touching, deflecting, or stealing the ball, The passer who turns the ball over becomes the defender and the defender takes the passers place. Do not allow passes to a player on either side of the passer.

Bump The Cutter Drill

Purpose: Great for working on off ball defense and deny the pass to the cutter.

Procedure: One offensive player lines up outside the three point area with the ball, one offensive player line up in the opposite corner. The defender adopts the flat triangle position in the key. The offense attempts to cut to the ball. The defender must meet the cutter in the lane, bump the cutter and deny the pass in the key. If the offense gets the ball then one on one is played, offense gets no more than two dribbles. Position cutter and pass at different positions of the court and rotate players through so that everyone has a chance to pass, receive and play defense.

Catch and Pivot Drill

Purpose: To help players learn to move the ball effectively and pivot towards the basket as soon as they catch the ball.

Procedure: Eight players are at one end of the court with one ball. Players form a box with two players in line at each corner of the box. One player starts on the block, one player is at the side of the free throw line, one player is even with the free throw line extended out at the wing, and one player with the ball is on the baseline extended out from the block. A second player stands behind each of the four players. Passing begins counter clockwise with the first player in line stepping up to receive the next pass, pivoting away from the basket and passing to the next spot in the box. After passing, players follow their pass to the end of the line they just passed to. After a few minutes reverse the direction of the passes and pivots.

Chill Drill

Purpose: Great drill for warming up and working on ball handling skills.

Procedure: Each player has a ball and start in the corner of the court with the ball in the right hand. Halfway to midcourt players should execute an inside out move (fake crossover), at half court players execute a reverse spin, and are now dribbling with the left hand. At the far corner players should quickly back dribble five steps, and then continue back to the corner. Moving along the baseline players should execute a crossover dribble and continue to the other baseline corner. At the baseline corner, players should execute a reverse spin and continue back up court, at half court players should execute a stutter step and crossover.

Closeout and Recovery Drill

Purpose: Good drill for teaching defensive communication, recovery and closeout.

Procedure: Divide your players into teams of three players. Line up defensive players underneath the basket with their backs to the floor - one player in the middle and one on each lower block. Line up three offensive players just inside the three point line. One player at the top of the key, and one player on each side of the key even with the free throw line facing the basket. The defense keeps their backs to the floor so they can't see where the offense is positioned. The coach stands out of bounds and makes a pass to one of the offensive players, who once they catch the pass, play to score. As soon as the pass is made the defenders turn and closeout the offensive players. The possession continues until the offense scores or the defense gains possession of the ball. New offensive players rotate in and the offensive team becomes the defense.

Denial Drill

Purpose: Helps teach one on one denial defense

Procedure: This drill requires a passer, a defender and an offensive player. Have the defender try to deny the inside pass. If the pass is completed, the defender should attempt to defend against the offensive player's post moves.

Drop Step Shuffle Drill

Purpose: Works on good defensive positioning and ball handling.

Procedure: Match up players in pairs. One person has a ball and the other will play defense. Have the player with the ball zig-zag up the court. Each time the player with the ball changes directions and hands, make sure that they keep their body between the ball and defender. The defender should make a drop step with the left leg when the offensive player moves to the left and then shuffle along with the offensive player and then make a drop step with the right leg when the offensive player moves to the right.

Fill the Lane Drill

Purpose: Develops good defensive anticipation skills. (Reading the pass)

Procedure: Set-up two defenders at the top of the key (spaced evenly the width of the backboard), three offensive players even with the foul line - one in the center and the other two at the wings around the three point line, and one guard at half court.

Have the guard bring the ball across half court and make a pass to one of the three players, the two defenders must communicate with each other and try to intercept the pass.

Five Corner Passing Drill

Purpose: Great drill for working on passing.

Procedure: Players form five lines in a star alignment. Two players in the front of the line have balls. The players must pass to the player in the front of the line two lines to the right of them. They must hustle and follow their pass to the end of that line.

Four Line Passing Drill

Purpose: Good drill for working on passing, transition and conditioning.

Procedure: This is a full court drill. Line players up in four lines and one baseline. Players progress the ball down the court by passing and moving in their line only. Players in line one are passing to players in line three. Players in line two are passing to players in line four. As players get to the free throw line extended at the opposite end outside players cut to the basket for a pass and lay-up. Inside and outside players exchange lines and players return back down court as outlined above.

Heads Up Drill

Purpose: To improve ball handling techniques and keeping the head up for passing.

Procedure: Minimum of two players spaced 5-8 feet apart (depending on age and skill level). Each player has a basketball and one has a wiffleball or ping-pong ball. Dribbling with your strong hand with proper form, you underhand pass the ping-pong ball back and forth while dribbling. If you miss the ping-pong ball dribble to get it and continue the drill. Switch to your weak hand and continue the drill.

Horseshoe Shooting Drill

Purpose: Great drill for working on shooting, passing and receiving.

Procedure: Players form two lines on the baseline on each side of the key. The first player in one line has a ball, the second player in the other line has a ball. The coach stands on the middle of the free throw line. The player in the front of the line without a ball (player 1) makes a v-cut around the coach and calls for the ball from the player in the other line (player 2). Player 2 passes the ball to player 1 who shoots the basket and rebounds the ball. After rebounding the ball, players pass the ball to the player in front of the line opposite where they came from. As soon as player 2 passes the ball to player 1, the player takes off and makes a v-cut behind the coach and calls for the ball from the front player in the other line and the drill continues.

In and Out Drill

Purpose: Help players develop skills for anticipating a pass. (Playing defense off the ball).

Procedure: This drill requires four players and one ball. Setup one offensive player on the right block, one offensive player on the left block, one offensive player at the top of the key with the ball, and one defensive player two steps ahead of the two offensive players on the blocks and in the middle of the triangle created by the three offensive players. The player on top of the key will try to pass to either player on the blocks. The defender must try to intercept the pass. The defender should not jump at the offensive player, but rather should step in front of the offensive player.

Knockout Drill

Purpose: Emphasizes teamwork - offense and defense

Procedure: Split team into teams of 2 or 3 players. Try to have a least three teams. Play 2 on 2 or 3 on 3 half court, first to score is the winner. The losing team goes off and the team sitting comes into play. The winner always keep possession. Try to only have one team sitting so that they don't sit long.

Leg Circles Drill

Purpose: To teach the players ball control with both hands and to keep their heads up.

Procedure: Give each player a ball. Make sure that each player has a three foot radius of space in which to dribble. Players should all face the same direction, with the coach in front of them. Have the players dribble the ball around one leg at a time, using the right hand to dribble around the right leg and the left hand to dribble around the left leg. After a few minutes in one direction have them switch and dribble in the opposite direction.

Line Dribbling Drill

Purpose: Working on general ball handling skills

Procedure: Player's form 4 lines at one end of the court. Players dribble up the court, and at designated spots (e.g. free-throw line extended, center line), or on a whistle, make one of the following designated moves.

1. Change from speed dribble to control (protection) dribble
2. Crossover
3. Fake crossover
4. Reverse dribble
5. Stutter step

Mass Defense Drill

Purpose: Works on defensive stance and footwork.

Procedure: Player's spread out on the court facing the coach who is standing in front of them.

The coach can use visible or audio cues to make the player's do the following: (Visual cues are better, but younger player's may respond to audio cues initially)

1. Get into their defensive stance.
2. Footfire or pitter patter with their feet (conditioning)
3. Defensive footwork any direction (e.g. left or right slide, drop-step and slide, retreat step, close out).
4. Change hand position - coach might move ball around and have players trace ball, challenge shot, etc.

Mushball Drill

Purpose: Works on free throw shooting and offense/defense close to the basket.

Procedure: Line up one player on each lower block, the rest of the players form a single line at the free throw line, the first person in line has a ball.

The shooter shoots free-throws until he/she misses, scoring one point for each made shot.

Free throw lane rules are followed. On a miss all three players play to score. The person who rebounds is on offense, the other two are on defense. A field goal is worth two points.

Players are not allowed more than one step out of the key. Play continues until someone scores, the ball goes out of bounds, or there is a violation of a player leaving the key. Then players rotate, the player who started on the right block moves to the left block, the player on the left block goes to the back of the line, the free throw shoot goes to the right block and play starts over.

Outlet Drill

Purpose: Works on rebounding and making the outlet pass.

Procedure: Line up all players at the free throw line. Position one player at the three point line even with the free throw line. The first player in line throws the ball off the backboard, rebounds the ball with arms extended, turns and makes a strong pass to the outlet man standing at the three point line. The outlet man then passes to the person in the front of the line. The rebounder goes to the outlet position and the outlet man goes to the end of the line and the drill continues.

Partner Passing Drill

Purpose: Helps players learn to pass effectively and catch properly.

Procedure: Have players pair up facing each other between the free throw lines. Each partner set has a ball. The pairs begin by chest passing the ball accurately and quickly to one another. Make sure players are stepping forward, giving targets and calling for the ball. Then repeat the drill doing bounce passes.

Pass and Run Drill

Purpose: This is a great drill for working on moving to the ball, inbounds passing, shooting and layups.

Procedure: This drill starts with two lines underneath the basket. The lines should be just outside of the free throw lane. A coach should be positioned three feet in front of the basket. A player should be placed on each side of the coach. The first two players in each line have a ball. On the whistle the player on each side of the coach heads to the basket, the first person in line makes a pass to the cutting player for a layup. As soon as the person in line makes the pass, he should run around the coach to the other side and cut to the basket and receive a pass for a layup. The player who shoots should get their own rebound. After each player has gone through the drill from each side, the coach should move back to the free throw line and the drill continues. (No dribbling is allowed).

Pass, Shoot and Rebound Drill

Purpose: Great drill for quickly working on rebounding, passing and shooting.

Procedure: Divide players into groups of three. One player starts as the passer, one player starts as the shooter and one player starts as the rebounder. The rebounder starts with the ball to begin the drill. The rebounder passes to the passer, the passer passes to the shooter, and the shooter shoots, the rebounder rebounds and the sequence is repeated. Run the drill for a certain amount of time and then rotate players. Continue until all players have played each spot. Make shooter relocate after every shot and make the passer find the shooter.

Pepper Drill

Purpose: Drill works on passing and receiving fundamentals.

Procedure: Divide team into groups of 5 players. Player's form a semi-circle around one player. (Note that the player in the middle is one step inside the semi-circle, this ensures that the player must use their peripheral vision to see the players on the ends of the semi-circle). The player in the middle and the player on one end each have a ball. Working clock-wise the player in the middle passes to the next player in the circle who does not have a ball. Once the player in the middle makes the pass, they look for a pass from the first player in line who has a ball. They then pass to the next player in line who doesn't have a ball. This continues until they reach the last player in the semi-circle and then they return in the opposite direction. Rotate players so that each has a turn to be in the middle.

Pin Ball Drill

Purpose: Works on ball handling, hustle and aggressiveness.

Procedure: Players start in a confined area. Each player has two clothes pins clipped on the back of their jersey about shoulder blade level and each player has a ball. On command, everyone goes after clothes pines on everyone else. Players must continue to dribble while attempting to take clothes pin from other player. Player can not remove clothes pin if they lose their ball. Winner is the player with the most pins.

Pollack Drill

Purpose: Work on aggressive rebounding, getting to the ball and controlling it.

Procedure: Three players line-up in the paint. Coach shoots, players rebound and try to put it back in the hoop. No rules within reason. Player who makes it win's and stays in. The other two player's must run one sprint or lap and go to the back of the line. After rebounding player's can not dribble. They must shoot from where the ball is rebounded. Variation, players must make the outlet pass back to the coach.

Possessed Drill

Purpose: Emphasizes ball handling, head up, using both hands, protecting the ball, stutter step, crossover. Defensively, using the sidelines, recovering and trapping.

Procedure: All players line-up on the baseline with a ball to start the game. One player (possessed) is positioned at half court without a ball. The object of the drill is to dribble from one baseline to the other without losing the ball, having it stolen or being forced out of bounds by the possessed. Once a player loses the ball, has it stolen or is forced out of bounds they immediately become possessed. When it gets down to 7 on 3 or 8 on 2 you will be surprised how creative the dribblers can become.

Press Drill

Purpose: Works on stopping the ball, ball pressure and creating turnovers.

Procedure: This is a full court press drill. Line-up your defensive players as follows: 1 - starts on the foul line, 2 - is on the left side at half court, 3 - is on the right side at half court, 4 is in the center at half court, 5 is on the opposite foul line. Once the ball is inbounded, 1 plays defense on the ball. When the player starts to move to a side and is nearing half court, 2 or 3 depending on which side of the court the ball is on will step up and try and trap the ball. If the ball is on 2's side then 3 will move closer to the ball and watch for a pass back or to the middle. 4 will shuffle back a bit, but stay in the middle of the court, waiting to steal any passes down court to the middle or cross court. 5 is still on the foul line unless there are players deep in which case he will move back with them but stay in the middle. 1 and either 2 or 3 try to stop the dribble. Once the ball is stopped, then they try to steal it. If the press is broken then transition to your regular defense.

Pride Drill

Purpose: Great drill to work on transition and conditioning.

Procedure: Drill starts with a 5 on 0 offensive transition and score. On the score, all players sprint to defensive positions and get into defensive stance and execute "foot-fire" or defensive "pitter-patter" until coach passes one of them the ball. Once they receive the ball they return to offensive transition and repeat. After two or three repetitions swap out to new team or bring in fresh players.

Quick Hands Drill

Purpose: Works on grabbing loose ball and holding onto it.

Procedure: Bent at the knees and waist, holding the ball between the knees with one hand in front of the body and one hand behind the body, the player releases the ball and quickly reverses their hands and catches the ball between the legs before the ball hits the ground.

Quick Lay Up Drill

Purpose: Great drill for working on lay ups for beginners.

Procedure: Place a ball on each lower block of the free throw line. Place one player outside of each ball. Place a player in the middle of the lane three feet behind the balls. On go the player in the middle of the lane goes to the ball on the right hand side of the basket, picks it up and makes a lay up, then immediately goes to the ball on the left hand side of the basket, picks it up and makes a lay up. The players on each side of the basket get the rebound and place the ball back on the block so that the player in the middle can continue working from side to side making lay ups. See who many lay ups each player can make in a minute.

Rattle Drill

Purpose: Works on defensive positioning

Procedure: Start players in defensive stance (hold for a few seconds). On go players must move their feet as fast as they can. Player's must be talking and yelling. When coach points in a direction, players quickly move to face that direction and then quickly face back to the center, keeping their feet moving the entire time. Each time the coach points in a direction the players should yell.

Rebound Attack Drill

Purpose: Works on getting your players to aggressively rebound the ball and put back the shot.

Procedure: Divide your players in to teams of three. Two teams line up inside the circle at the free throw line. The coach shoots the ball high up in the air above the circle. The two teams battle for the rebound, the team that rebounds has 7 seconds to get a shot off. If the shot is missed the teams rebound the miss and try to put it back in. The first team that scores stays in and plays the next team.

Shell Drill

Purpose: Teaches team defensive techniques.

Procedure: Four players assume offensive positions at guards, wing and corner positions. Four players assume defensive positions based on the following:

1. If your man has the ball play the ball - push to sidelines, no penetration.
2. If your man is one pass away - play deny stance in the passing lane.
3. If your man is two passes away - play in the key in help position.
4. If your man is more than two passes away - play on the split line in help position.

On ball movement all defensive players move to the correct position. On receiving the pass the offense must always catch and face. When learning this drill have the offense hold the ball for two-second count before passing.

Shotgun Passing Drill

Purpose: To teach players to use their peripheral vision when passing and receiving the basketball so they can see the entire court.

Procedure: Six players are at each end of the basketball court. In each group, one player stands with a ball at the free throw line, facing away from the basket. The other five players position themselves in a semicircle from one side of the free throw line to the other, facing their teammate out front in the shotgun position. One player among the five in the semicircle has a basketball. The drill begins with the player in the shotgun position throwing a chest pass to one of the four players in the semi-circle who does not have a ball. As soon as the pass is made, the player in the semi-circle who began the drill with a ball, chest passes the ball to the shotgun. This drill continues for 1 or 2 minutes and then players rotate clockwise so the player on the right moves to the shotgun position and the shotgun position moves to the left side of the semi-circle.

Shuffle Drill

Purpose: Teaches one-on-one defensive pressure

Procedure: Players stand under the basket in a defensive stance and;

- Shuffle up to the midpoint of the foul line.
- Slide to the right until they reach the end line.
- Shuffle back to half court
- Slide to the left until they reach the end line
- Backstep to the half court line
- Slide to the right until they reach the end line
- Slide to the left until they reach the half court line
- Backstep until they reach the end line

Players should keep their butts down and their heads up. Make sure they don't cross their feet.

Sidewinder Drill

Purpose: Helps determine how well a player is able to change directions and speeds. (Stop and Start)

Procedure: Place two cones ten feet apart. On coaches signal, players move laterally to touch one marker and then move in the opposite direction to touch the other marker.

To make it competitive count the number of times each player touches both cones in a set amount of time.

Speed Lay Up Drill

Purpose: Helps get young players used to making lay ups using the backboard.

Procedure: A player with a basketball stands to the right of the basket. On go the player shoots a lay up using the backboard from the right side. Then miss or make gets the rebound and goes to the left side and shoots a lay up using the backboard. The coach times the lay ups to see how many a player can make in 30 seconds or a minute..

Spider Drill

Purpose: Works on ball handling skills

Procedure: Players start with the ball between their legs. Keeping the ball between their legs they dribble with the right hand in front of the leg, then the left hand in front of the leg, then the right hand behind the leg, then the left hand behind the leg, then repeat. Continue the drill for 3 minutes.

Stationary Dribbling Drill

Purpose: Helps players develop ball control skills.

Procedure: Start with players spread out and facing the coach in two or three lines. Have them begin in ready position dribbling in place with their dominant (Strong) hand while protecting the ball with their non-dominant (weak) hand. Move among the lines and check their balance, make sure their butts are down, backs straight and heads up (not watching the ball). When you shout "change" have them cross the ball quickly over to their other hand. Check their balance, stance, and head again.

Ten Finger Drill

Purpose: This drill works on cutting, passing and shooting.

Procedure: Players form two lines outside the three point line. All players, except for the first in each line have a ball.

The first player in each line runs into the key and v-cuts back to the ball.

Players "show ten fingers" and call to receive the ball from the next player in line. After receiving the pass they square up to the basket and either shoot, dribble / drive for lay-up or dribble into jump shot.

Passer can repeat the move once the shooter has gone to the basket or shot the ball. Shooter rebounds their own shot and dribbles quickly back up the court to the end of the line.

Terminator Drill

Purpose: Teaches ball handling skills

Procedure: Vary space used depending on the size of your group. For groups of 8 to 10 players the area inside the three point line works well.

Each player starts off with a ball and must continually dribble within the designated area while trying to knock away the other players ball. When a player loses control of their ball or goes outside of the designated area they are out of the contest and should step out of the designated area. As the number of remaining players are reduced further restrict the area of play.

Three Man Take the Charge Drill

Purpose: To prepare defenders to step up and take the charge.

Procedure Player one has the ball at the top of the key. Player two stands in the foul line extended area.
1. Player three is a defensive player guarding a chair or cone on the box.
Player one passes to player two and makes a v-cut to the basket (give and go). Player three makes an up switch into the path of the dribbler (player 2). Player three must not switch to soon.

Procedure Player one has the ball on the side of the key. Player two is the other offensive player and stands at the foul line extended area. Player three is the defensive player guarding player two.
2. Player two comes up to set a screen on player one's imaginary defender (or the coach). As player one comes off the screen with the dribble, player three up switches into the path of player one and takes the charge.

Three on Three Blockout Drill

Purpose: Develops blocking out skills for rebounding.

Procedure: Line up three players on top of the free throw line. Line-up another three players just inside of the free throw line. The three players closest to the goal need to block out the other three players. Each team gets a point for a rebound, first team to three wins. Winners stay in and switch to the other side.

Tip Drill

Purpose: Helps develop timing and jumping ability for rebounding.

Procedure: Line up players at the free throw line in a single file line. First man in line throw the ball against the backboard and goes to the end of the line, next man follows and with arms fully extended (use wrists) tips the ball back against the backboard, each following player continues to follow and tip the ball against the backboard with arms extended and then goes to the end of the line to repeat.

Transition Drill

Purpose: Great drill for teaching young players to rebound and pass the ball up the court.

Procedure: Line up three defensive players in the paint. Have one offensive player shoot the ball. The three defensive players rebound the ball and then get out in transition. Have the player who rebounds the ball look up court and pass it to one of the two other players. The player who shot the ball needs to get back on defense.

Two on One No Reach Drill

Purpose: Teaches players to stay in good defensive position. (So many player's don't play good defense, that is they don't move their feet and keep good defensive position but rather they reach in and try to make the steal every time as their man goes by them. We teach our kids to keep in good defensive position and to get the offensive player out of the triple threat position. We will make our steal on the pass or when the offensive player loses control of the ball.)

Procedure: Line up three players at half court. One with the ball on offense and the other two are defenders. The two defenders are not allowed to reach for the ball. They must move their feet and keep good defensive position between their man and the basket using the side lines and the baseline as their extra defenders. Offensive player gets to repeat as offense as long as they make it to within 8 feet of the basket without losing the ball or picking up their dribble. Continue drill until all three player's have had an opportunity to play the offensive position.