

# **Ball Handling**

## ***Basics Skills & Drills***

### **THINGS TO REMEMBER**

An adept ball handler and dribbler can make things happen on the court. Mastering these skills can help create open shots, obtain better passing angles, and lead to fewer turnovers. A great offensive player must be able to handle the ball!

### **Ball Handling and Dribbling Teaching Points:**

- Dribble with fingers, not palms – similar to typing on a keyboard
- Proper body position, with knees bent and body flexed at the waist
- Keep head up – see the court
- Protect the basketball – use arm bar
- Work both hands – be able to go right and left
- When picking up a dribble, end with a jump stop landing in triple threat position

### **Basic Dribbling Skills**

#### *Control Dribble (Use against defensive pressure)*

- With body turned to the side, dribble basketball near the back knee
- Keep the dribble low and compact, below the knees
- Non-dribbling arm should be held out in front of the body to protect the ball from defenders – arm bar

#### *Speed Dribble (Use to push the ball up the court and on fast break situations)*

- Dribble is pushed out in front of the body but controlled
- Dribble is higher and softer

#### *Retreat Dribble (Use to avoid defensive pressure and to keep dribble alive)*

- Dribble backwards (hop back) to avoid pressure
- Dribble requires a change in speed and change in direction
- Dribble teaches players not to habitually pick up their dribble when heavy, defensive pressure is applied

#### *Crossover Dribble (Use to break down a defender; good penetration move)*

- Dribble must be kept low when crossing over from one hand to another, keeping it away from the defender
- Use head and shoulder fakes to help “sell” the move
- Goal is to get the defender on his or her heels
- Explode to the basket with speed dribble after the crossover

*Whirl Pivot Dribble (Use to avoid defensive pressure and to dribble by defender)*

- Pull the basketball through low during the pivot
- Keep the basketball in the same hand until completing the pivot
- Pivot should be low and quick with head up
- Explode to the basket with speed dribble after the whirl pivot

*Behind the Back Dribble (Use to break down a defender; good penetration move)*

- Use head and shoulder fakes to help “sell” the move
- Pull the basketball hard both around and through the body
- Slap opposite back thigh during the exchange

**NOTE:** Hand quickness, keeping the head up, and ball control should be emphasized during all ball handling drills.

### **BALL SLAMS DRILL**

**Ball Requirements:** one basketball per player or divide your team into two groups

**Description:**

With feet shoulder-width apart, have players slap the basketball with fingers spread wide. Encourage them to try and knock the air out of the basketball. Players should “slam” the ball by rotating their right and left hands.

**NOTE:** Hand quickness, keeping the head up, and ball control should be emphasized during all ball handling drills.

### **FINGERTIP DRILL**

**Ball Requirements:** one basketball per player or divide your team into two groups

**Description:**

With feet shoulder-width apart, players pass the basketball from hand to hand in front of the body using only the fingertips. Move ball from ankles, to knees, to waist, to chest, to head, and to above head using the fingertips. Encourage players to keep their arms straight.

**NOTE:** Hand quickness, keeping the head up, and ball control should be emphasized during all ball handling drills.

### **AROUND THE WORLD DRILL**

**Ball Requirements:** one basketball per player or divide your team into two groups

**Description:**

With feet together, players pass the basketball around their body. Start with the ankles, to knees, to waist, to head.

**NOTE:** Hand quickness, keeping the head up, and ball control should be emphasized during all ball handling drills.

### **LEG WRAPS DRILL**

**Ball Requirements:** one basketball per player or divide your team into two groups

**Description:**

With feet shoulder-width apart and one foot slightly in front of the other, players pass the basketball around their front knee or ankle.

**NOTE:** Hand quickness, keeping the head up, and ball control should be emphasized during all ball handling drills.

### **FIGURE EIGHT LEG WRAPS DRILL**

**Ball Requirements:** one basketball per player or divide your team into two groups

**Description:**

With feet slightly wider than shoulder-width apart, players pass the basketball behind their left leg with the right hand. The left hand then takes the basketball and passes it behind the right leg. Variation: This drill can also be performed with a dribble.

**NOTE:** Hand quickness, keeping the head up, and ball control should be emphasized during all ball handling drills.

### **FIGURE EIGHT QUICK DROPS DRILL**

**Ball Requirements:** one basketball per player or divide your team into two groups

**Description:**

With feet slightly wider than shoulder-width apart, players should hold the basketball between their legs with one hand in front of their bodies and the other hand behind their bodies. Players should drop the ball while switching hands from front to back. Encourage players to catch the ball before it hits the floor.

**NOTE:** Hand quickness, keeping the head up, and ball control should be emphasized during all ball handling drills.

### **FRONT-TO-BACK QUICK DROPS DRILL**

**Ball Requirements:** one basketball per player or divide your team into two groups

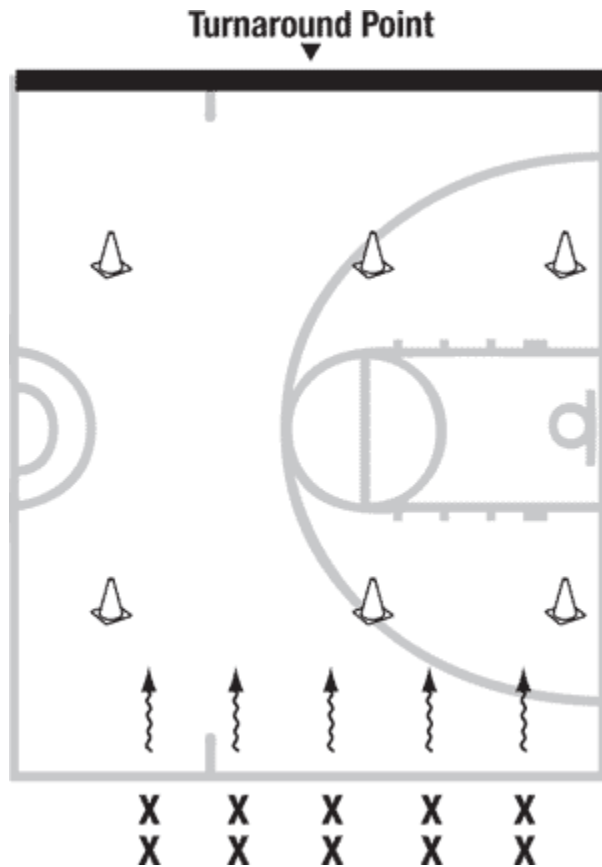
**Description:**

With feet slightly wider than shoulder-width apart, players should hold the basketball between their legs with both hands behind their bodies. Players should drop the ball while switching both hands from back to front. Encourage players to catch the ball before it hits the floor.

**NOTE:** Hand quickness, keeping the head up, and ball control should be emphasized during all ball handling drills.

## **DRIBBLING LINE DRILLS**

**Ball Requirements:** three to five basketballs required



During all dribbling line drills, you should stand in front of the players to teach, encourage, and evaluate each player's performance.

- Players form lines on baseline/sideline (two players deep) - one basketball per line
- Use cones/chairs to represent stopping/starting points or change-of-dribble spots
- Players will begin the drills in triple threat position
- Players will start/stop/change dribble on voice command or whistle
- Pause between stops/starts to check for balance, arm bar, and if head is up
- At the turnaround point, require jump stops with pivots
- Work opposite hand on return dribble
- Players should end drills with a jump stop, giving basketball to next player in line

**NOTE:** Encourage your players to keep their heads up during all dribbling drills. You should hold fingers high in the air showing different numbers and have your team shout the number of fingers shown. This will help players to keep their heads up and not look at the basketball.

**Speed Dribble**

Dribble full speed from one end to other (remember to have players jump stop & pivot at turnaround point). Right hand down and left hand back.

**Speed Dribble/Control Dribble**

Speed dribble followed by an on command, stationary control dribble followed by speed dribble (repeat).

**Speed Dribble/Retreat Dribble**

Speed dribble followed by an on command, two to three dribbles backwards against imaginary defender followed by speed dribble (repeat).

**Speed Dribble/Crossover Dribble**

Form lines opposite one another on both sides of the practice area. On command, players speed dribble toward each other and do a crossover dribble upon meeting teammates. After crossover, players explode up the court with speed dribble.

**Speed Dribble/Control Dribble/Whirl Pivot Dribble**

Begin with speed dribble. On command, players come to control dribble. On command, players perform whirl pivot followed by speed dribble (repeat).

**Two Ball Dribble (emphasize keeping the dribble low)**

Two balls/player. Dribble both balls simultaneously (one with each hand).  
Walk --- Speed dribble --- Speed dribble with alternating dribble

**GO-STOP-CHANGE-GO**

On GO command or whistle, speed dribble right-hand  
On STOP command or whistle, control dribble with right hand  
On CHANGE command or whistle, change control dribble to left hand  
On GO command or whistle, speed dribble left hand

**Sit Dribble**

Players sit on the floor with their legs spread and practice dribbling using their fingertips. Players should work both hands. Players should dribble 30 seconds before rotating out