

Footwork

Basics Skills & Drills

THINGS TO REMEMBER

Proper footwork promotes balance, quickness, and readiness to make something happen on the court. Being proficient at this skill will improve a player's performance both offensively and defensively. The following list of teaching points should be emphasized at every practice.

Footwork Teaching Points:

- Proper balance
- Foot positioning – feet shoulder-width apart and slightly staggered
- Knees bent – weight in center of body
- Low center of gravity
- Head up – see the court
- Ready to move

TRIPLE THREAT POSITION SKILL

- Provides a player the option to pass, shoot, or dribble
- Position the basketball in the “shooting pocket” with shooting elbow over knee
- Have “strong hands” with possession of the basketball so that defenders cannot easily knock the ball away

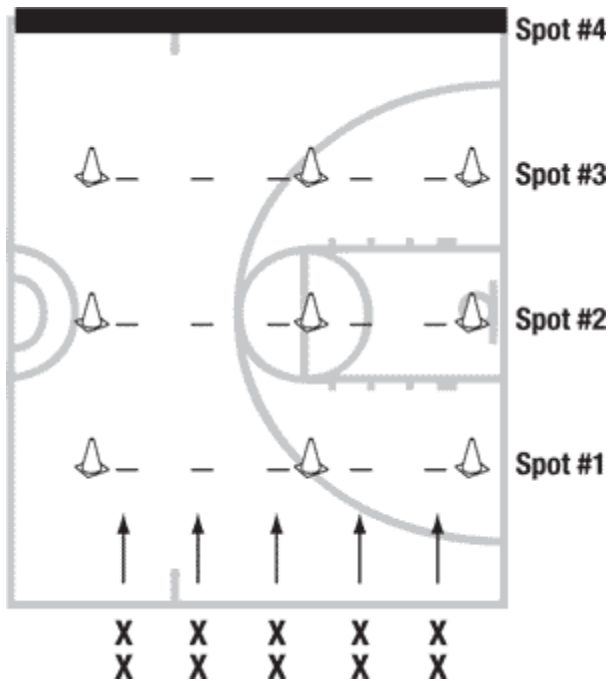
JUMP STOP POSITION SKILL

- Allows a player to establish a pivot with either foot off a dribble or pass
- Leap/jump should be low to the floor (like sitting in a chair), not a high jump
- Both feet hit floor at the same time – good balance
- Land on floor in triple threat position
- Use when catching a pass; teach “ball in air/feet in air” concept

FRONT PIVOT AND REVERSE PIVOT POSITION SKILL

- Lift heel, protect ball, stay low, and lead with elbow
- Allows a player to pivot in one or more directions by keeping one foot planted on the ground
- Allows an offensive player to move away from defenders, while protecting the basketball
- Skill is also important for setting screens and rebounding

FOOTWORK LINE DRILLS



Description:

- Players form lines on baseline or sideline – two players deep
- Use cones or mark the court for starting/stopping spots – minimum 3 spots
- No basketball necessary – players dribble and hold imaginary basketball
- Players will start/stop on voice command or whistle
- Players should stop at each spot with jump stop and land in triple threat position
- Pause between stops/starts to check for proper balance
- Second player in line starts as the preceding player leaves first spot

Rotate the following footwork line drills:

- Jump Stop/Triple Threat
- Jump Stop/Triple Threat/Right Front Pivot
- Jump Stop/Triple Threat/Left Front Pivot
- Jump Stop/Triple Threat/Right Reverse Pivot
- Jump Stop/Triple Threat/Left Reverse Pivot

Have each player raise his or her hand in the air that coincides with the desired pivot direction. This will help each player pivot in the correct direction.

Variation: Add basketballs after your players understand the above concepts. Allow them to practice the above skills after picking up their dribble and receiving passes.

PIVOT DRILL

Ball Requirements: no basketball required

Description:

- Players should spread out in your practice area – no basketball necessary
- Players start in triple threat position, protecting an imaginary basketball
- Instruct players to establish a pivot foot
- Practice half-turns and front/reverse pivots
- Repeat with opposite foot established as the pivot

***Variation:** Add basketballs and defenders after your players understand the above concepts. Allow them to practice the above skills after picking up their dribble and receiving passes.*

PIVOTING WITH A DEFENDER DRILL

Ball Requirements: one or two basketballs required

Description:

This drill teaches players to evaluate shooting, passing, or dribbling options before automatically dribbling upon receiving a pass:

- Players should form two lines on the baseline: offensive and defensive
- Offensive player starts near the block area and takes two to three steps toward middle of lane area to set up his or her defender before a strong V-cut to the wing area to receive a pass
- Defensive player allows offensive player to receive the pass
- Offensive player receives the pass and “squares up” to the basket in triple threat position
- Offensive player should pivot against soft defense and keep the basketball away from the defensive player; do not allow dribbling
- Offensive player should hold the ball no longer than four seconds (to teach the five-second violation)
- Offensive player passes the basketball back to the coach when instructed
- Players return to the back of the lines and rotate offensive/defensive positions

***Variation:** If your team has two coaches, work two players on each side of the basketball goal. This allows your team more repetitions.*

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

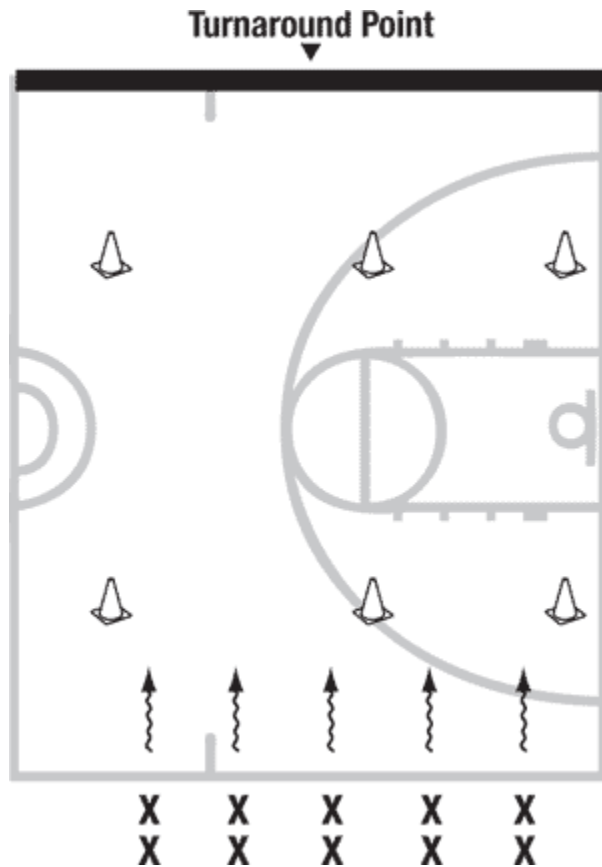
Description:

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

Shooting

Basics Skills & Drills

THINGS TO REMEMBER

One of the greatest thrills in the game of basketball is seeing the ball pass through the net. To become a good shooter, a player must develop proper shooting mechanics.

Shooting Teaching Points:

- Square up shoulders to the basket
- Ball on fingertips, not palms
- Opposite hand should be lightly placed on side of ball (balance/weak hand)
- Practice **BEEF** principles:
 - **Balance**
Learn to prepare for the shot by stopping with the feet set, knees slightly bent, ready to jump (good triple threat position)
 - **Elbow**
Proper shooting alignment; ball should be directly over the elbow with the wrist cocked
 - **Eyes**
Pick a spot (front of the rim, back of the rim, etc.) and focus on that target as the shot is being attempted
 - **Follow through**
Release the ball smoothly, completely extend the arm, and snap the wrist, which should create good backspin on the basketball

LAY-UP STEPS DRILL

Ball Requirements: no basketball required

Description:

Instruct your players to shout “STEP-HOP-SHOOT” when performing this drill. Mirror this drill to practice left-handed lay-ups.

- Allow players to spread out in your practice area, at least four to five feet apart
- Players start in triple threat position, holding imaginary basketballs with heads and eyes up on the target
- On the STEP command, players step with their left foot (right-handed lay-ups)
- On the HOP command, players raise their right knee and right arm toward the basket (visualize a string connecting a player’s right arm and right leg)
- On the SHOOT command, players extend their right arm as they shoot an imaginary ball

CEILING SHOOTING DRILL

Ball Requirements: one basketball for each pair of players

Description:

Encourage your players to yell “SWISH” when the basketball is shot. Allow at least five repetitions before rotating.

- Pair up players and have them spread out about six to eight feet apart
- One player in each pair will get down on the floor (shooter), and lie on his or her back
- Instruct your shooters to place their shooting elbow on the floor and against their body
- Shooting hand should be spread wide
- The shooter’s balance/weak hand should not touch the basketball
- Non-shooting partner will place the basketball on the shooter’s hand
- As the basketball is shot, shooters should focus on a full extension and proper follow through, creating good backspin
- Non-shooting partner will catch the shot

***Variation:** If coaching kindergarten through second-grade players, you should allow the shooters to use their balance/weak hand.*

WALL SHOOTING DRILL

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

Description:

This is a great drill to keep idle players busy while running a drill on the court that may not involve your entire team.

- Player stands about four to five feet away from the wall
- Help the player find a reasonable shooting target on the wall
- Player assumes triple threat position
- Player shoots the ball at the target, concentrating on elbow in and full extension
- Player should finish the shot up on his or her toes with proper follow through, creating good backspin

Variation

If coaching third- through sixth-grade players, allow them to shoot using only their shooting/strong hand.

TWO LINE SHOOTING DRILLS

Ball Requirements: one or two basketballs required

Description:

The two line shooting drills incorporate the following fundamental skills of basketball: shooting, dribbling, rebounding, footwork, passing, and receiving. Players rotate lines after each turn. After several repetitions shooting from one side of the goal, change the designation of both lines and shoot from the other side of the court.

- Players form two lines opposite the goal in each corner of practice area: a shooting line and a rebounding line (use cones or chairs to mark a starting point)
- Shooting line: Assume triple threat position, showing ready hands to receive a pass
- Rebounding line: Players should block out an imaginary defender and rebound the ball above their head
- The player from the rebounding line secures the rebound and dribbles to a designated cone, makes a good jump stop landing in triple threat position, and uses proper passing techniques when passing to the next shooter in line
- Shooter receives the basketball and performs the drill as instructed by a coach

1. Lay-ups

Stress jumping off the proper foot and using the backboard (STEP-HOP-SHOOT)

2. Pull-up Off the Dribble

Set a cone at desired shooting spot (stress good jump stop and use of backboard when shooting from appropriate angle)

3. Pull-up Off the Pass (catch & shoot)

- Two lines: a dribbling/passing line and a shooting line
- Set a cone at desired spot for the dribbling player to perform a jump stop and pass to the moving shooter
- Set a cone at desired shooting spot
- Dribbler should use different dribbling moves to get by imaginary defender (crossover, whirl pivot, behind the back)
- Shooter should cut to shooting spot, receive the pass, and shoot a 5-10 foot jumper (no dribble)
- Shooter rebounds his or her own shot
- Shooter dribbles to a specific cone, jump stops, and passes to the next player in line

Other Variations: If a shot is missed, players should keep rebounding and shooting until a basket is made. For third- through sixth-grade teams, consider adding a second basketball.

FORM SHOOTING DRILL

Ball Requirements: three basketballs required

Description:

This drill's purpose is to encourage proper shooting mechanics by shooting close to the basket. Three players can perform this drill at the same time. Form three lines, as those waiting their turn can mimic proper shooting techniques. Allow at least five repetitions before rotating.

- The first three shooters in line will spread out around the basket, no farther than two to three feet from the basket
- Shooters should assume triple threat position and have eyes on the target
- Each shooter will position the basketball correctly using only one hand (his or her shooting/strong hand), with the ball directly over the elbow and wrist cocked
- When shooting, players should hold their follow-through for two to three seconds

***Variation:** Allow shooters to add their balance/weak hand.*

INDIVIDUAL SHOOTING DRILL

Ball Requirements: three basketballs required

Description:

Three players can do this drill at one time. Emphasize “ball in air/feet in air” concept, good pivot and “square up,” and following the shot. Allow players to shoot for one minute before rotating out.

- Spread three players out around the basket, with their backs facing the goal
- Have players toss the ball in front of them to simulate a pass (show them how to pass it to themselves with backspin)
- Players will receive the pass, reverse pivot toward the goal, and shoot
- Players will rebound their own shot and repeat process

THREE PLAYER SHOOTING DRILL

Ball Requirements: four basketballs required

Description:

This drill is best suited for fifth- and sixth-grade players. Two groups of three can do this drill at the same time. You will need two basketballs per group. Allow the shooters 30 seconds before rotating.

- Each player in the group of three will rotate from shooter/to rebounder/to passer.
- Shooter starts at wing area (about 8-10 feet from goal)
- Shooter makes a V-cut to the block area and explodes back up to wing area for a short bank shot
- Shooter should show passer a hand target
- Passer makes a good two-hand chest pass to shooter
- Shooter pivots, “squares up,” and shoots the basketball
- Rebounder secures each shot and passes the basketball to the passer
- This cycle is repeated over and over until time is called

***Reminder:** A great V-cut requires a change of pace. The shooter should go half-speed toward the block and full-speed back up to the wing area.*

PARTNER SHOOTING DRILL

Ball Requirements: two basketballs required

Description:

Two pair of players can do this drill at one time. Allow pairs to shoot 30-45 seconds before rotating out.

- One player in each pair will shoot and follow his or her shot
- After securing the rebound, the shooter will pass to his or her moving partner (moving with a purpose, not running aimlessly)
- Partner shoots, follows his or her shot, and repeats process

***Variation:** Shooter must score on a put-back before passing to his or her partner. You could also allow shot fakes and one to two dribbles that go somewhere.*

V-CUT JUMPERS DRILL

Ball Requirements: two basketballs required

Description:

This is a great shooting drill that allows lots of shooting opportunities. Use cones or chairs to represent desired shooting spots. Emphasize the following: hard cuts and “selling” the fake, proper receiving techniques, good footwork to “square up” to the basket, proper shooting mechanics, and following the shot.

- Players form two shooting lines under the goal at the free-throw lane extended (behind baseline)
- One basketball in each line
- A coach stands 10-15 feet away, facing the goal and shooting lines
- A player in one of the lines will pass to the coach and make the instructed cut to a specific shooting spot
- A coach will pass the basketball to the player who will catch and shoot (after a coach passes to a player in one line, the player in the other line repeats the process)
- Shooters will rebound their own shots and give the basketballs to the next players in the lines
- **Three shooting options:**
 1. Baseline/Corner Spot - Players take two to three short steps from block area to center of lane area (under the basket) before making a hard V-cut parallel to the baseline. Player receives the pass for a short baseline jumper.
 2. Wing Spot - Players take two to three steps from block area to center of lane area (under basket) before making a hard V-cut to wing area. Player receives the pass for a short bank-shot.
 3. Elbow Spot - **MOVE** the two lines opposite the goal in each corner of the practice area (same as two line shooting drills), with a coach standing between the two lines. A player will pass the basketball to a coach and take three to four steps straight toward the baseline before making a hard V-cut to the free-throw line extended. Player receives the pass for a short elbow-jumper.

Variation: Allow a shot fake and one to two dribbles that go somewhere before the shot.

Passing & Receiving

Basic Skills & Drills

PASSING AND RECEIVING BASICS SKILLS

Things to Remember

Passing and receiving a basketball allows a team to effectively move the ball quickly around the court. A team that has players with strong passing and receiving skills will spread the defense and be hard to guard. This strength should help create open shots, which will hopefully lead to more scoring opportunities.

Passing Teaching Points:

- Two hands on the basketball, with fingers on the sides of the ball
- Ball in middle of body
- Step toward target
- Push thumbs through ball and snap wrists, creating backspin on the basketball
- Extend arms completely as you follow through toward target

Receiving Teaching Points:

- Both hands up in ready position – show a target
- Step toward the ball when passed – meet the pass
- “Ball in air/feet in air” concept – leads to jump stop, triple threat position, and ability to pivot with either foot
- Look the ball into the hands

BASIC TYPES OF PASS

Overhead Pass

- Basketball is held with two hands above head
- Passer targets the receiver’s chest area

Two-Hand Bounce Pass

- Basketball is held with two hands at chest level
- Passer aims for a spot on the floor about two-thirds (a little more than halfway) of the way to the receiver
- Passer targets the receiver’s chest area

Two-Hand Chest Pass

- Basketball is held with two hands at chest level
- Passer targets the receiver’s chest area

DISTANCE PASSING DRILL

Ball Requirements: One basketball for each pair of players.

Description:

Be sure to incorporate all three basic passes into this drill.

- Pair up players and have them face each other six to eight feet apart
- Instruct players to pass the basketball back and forth using a chest pass
- After several repetitions, have each player take one to two steps backwards and continue passing
- Continue moving players back until they are passing from a challenging distance

FIRING LINE DRILL

Ball Requirements: one or two basketballs required

Description:

Be sure to include all three basic passes. If your team has two coaches and 8 to 10 players, divide your players into two groups.

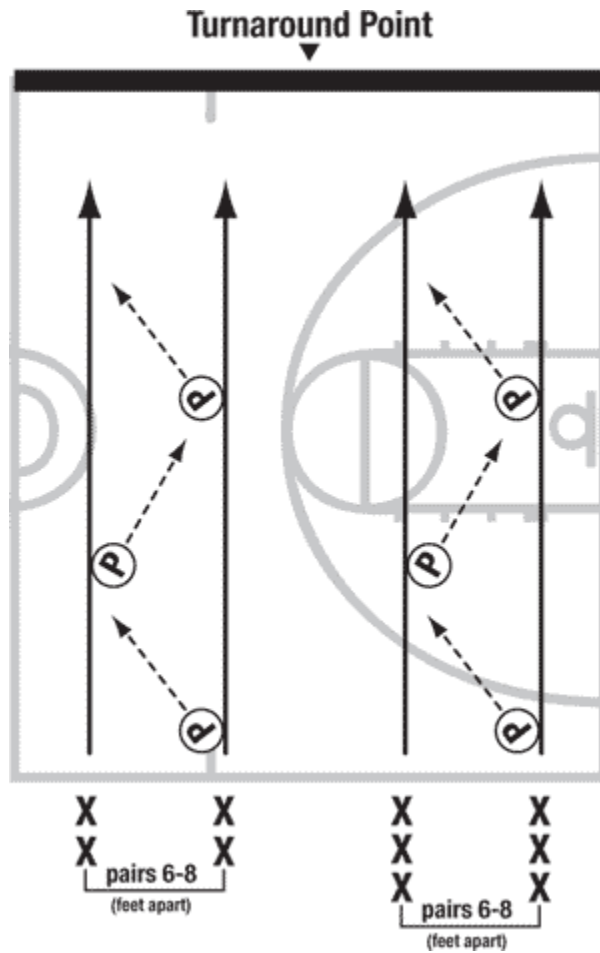
- Players form one line, standing two to three feet apart
- Appoint one player as the drill leader, who stands parallel to the line of players
- With one ball, the drill leader begins the drill by throwing a chest pass to the first player in line
- After the player makes a return pass to the drill leader, the drill leader passes to the next player in line
- This passing and receiving pattern continues up and down the line
- As players become proficient at this drill, the drill leader should increase the speed at which he or she is passing the basketball up and down the line
- To encourage teammates to be alert at all times, drill leader should begin to randomly pass the ball to everyone in the line

Variations

For kindergarten and first- and second-grade teams, a coach should serve as the drill leader. For third-graders and above, you could add a second basketball when your players have mastered this drill.

TWO LINE PASSING DRILL

Ball Requirements: two basketballs required



Description:

This drill's purpose is to help players pass to a moving target. It also works on receiving the basketball while on the move. Two pairs of players can perform this drill at one time.

- Pair up players and have them face each other six to eight feet apart
- Establish a starting and turnaround point
- One player in each pair needs a basketball
- Using defensive slides, players move up and then back down the court
- While sliding, instruct players to pass basketball back & forth using a chest pass
- Players pass the ball immediately upon receiving the ball

Variations

Both players running up and down the court, rather than sliding. You may also require the receiver to perform a jump stop upon catching the basketball and immediately passing it to his or her moving partner.

PLAYER IN THE MIDDLE DRILL

Ball Requirements: two basketballs required

Description:

This drill's purpose is to promote the use of ball fakes and pivots when passing to a teammate. It also encourages active hands and quick feet from the defender (player in the middle). Two groups of three players can perform this drill at one time.

- Offensive pair in each group stand six to eight feet apart
- Offensive players are not allowed to dribble and must stay at their designated spots
- Defender (player in the middle) can get no closer than two feet to the offensive player
- Offensive players pass the basketball to one another, using ball fakes and pivots (NO lob passes are allowed)
- If the defender touches the pass, the player who threw the pass becomes the defender
- If an offensive player throws an errant pass, he or she becomes the defender