36 Basketball Drills
36 Basketball Drills

Written by: Tony Adragna
Basketball drills can be tricky. As a basketball coach, you want to keep your practices interesting and fresh. You don’t want your players coming into the gym dreading practice because they already know what’s on the docket for the day.

With that said, keeping practices interesting and fresh for basketball players is much easier said than done. You have to rack your brain for drills and it’s easy to get stuck on the same drills over and over.

For that reason, we’ve created this comprehensive resource of 36 basketball that you can reference when you’re coming up with your practice plans!
The drills in this category are focused primarily on ball-handling and can be used to improve your players’ handles in practice.

**Stationary Ballhandling (1 ball)**
Stationary ballhandling works exactly how it sounds. Your players have a basketball and these drills are performed while they stay stationary.

**How to perform:**
- **Ball slaps** – Players rotate slapping the basketball with both hands to warm their hands up and get them used to the feel of the ball.
- **Fingertip rotate** – Players will keep their arms straight and throw the ball back and forth with their fingertips. Again, this is used to warm the hands up and get a feel for the basketball.
- **Around the head, waist, and feet** – Players will start by throwing the ball around their head in a circle as quickly as they can. Once they get comfortable, they should switch directions in which they are going. The same is repeated throwing the ball around the waist and the feet.
- **Figure 8** – Players will make a figure 8 putting the ball through their legs (see how to perform)
- **Right hand, right leg** – Players will use only their right hand and dribble the basketball around their right leg. Once they get comfortable, they’ll switch directions on which way they’re dribbling.
• **Left hand, left leg** – Players use only their left hand and dribble the basketball around their left leg. Once they get comfortable, they’ll switch directions on which way they’re dribbling.

• **Figure 8 Dribble** – This is performed in the same manner as the figure 8 above, only the players will dribble the basketball in a figure 8 formation using both hands.

• **Front-to-back pull-back dribble** – Players will start will the ball in their right hand and push the ball as far out in front of them as they can, and then pull it back as far behind them as they can. Then they’ll switch to the left hand.

• **Side-to-side pull-back dribble** – Players start will the ball out in front of them and using only their right hand will dribble the ball from side to side. Then have them switch to their left hand.

• **Dribble moves** - Have the players perform stationary dribble moves
  • Crossover
  • Between the legs
  • Behind the back

---

**Stationary Ballhandling (2 ball)**

Much like the drill above, this drill is performed while the players are stationary, but this time they will be using two basketballs.

**How to perform:**

• **Dribble together** – Players dribble both basketballs at the same time in unison. Have them dribble the balls below their knees, then at their waist, and then shoulder height.

• **Alternating dribbles** – With this one, players will alternate dribbling the basketballs. Have them dribble the balls below their knees, then at their waist, and then shoulder height.
• **Left hand, left leg** – Players use only their left hand and dribble the basketball around their left leg. Once they get comfortable, they’ll switch directions on which way they’re dribbling.

• **Figure 8 Dribble** – This is performed in the same manner as the figure 8 above, only the players will dribble the basketball in a figure 8 formation using both hands.

• **Front-to-back pull-back dribble** – Players will start with the ball in their right hand and push the ball as far out in front of them as they can, and then pull it back as far behind them as they can. Then they’ll switch to the left hand.

• **Side-to-side pull-back dribble** – Players start with the ball out in front of them and using only their right hand will dribble the ball from side to side. Then have them switch to their left hand.

• **Dribble moves** - Have the players perform stationary dribble moves
  - Crossover
  - Between the legs
  - Behind the back

**Dribbling Race**

The object of this drill is to create some competition while enhancing dribbling skills at game speed.

**How to perform:**

• Have dribbling races where players dribble:
  - With their right hand
  - With their left hand
  - Making crossover moves, between the legs, behind the back, etc.

The opportunities with this drill are endless. Get creative and watch your players have fun.
Tennis Ball Dribbling
This is a simple, yet effective ballhandling drill. It works on hand-eye coordination, keeping your head up while you’re dribbling, and focus while dribbling the basketball.

How to perform:
Your players should start by dribbling the ball in their strong hand while throwing the tennis ball up in the air with their weak hand. After an allotted amount of time, switch hands (see how to perform).

As your players get comfortable with this drill, they can perform dribble moves as they throw the tennis ball up in the air (see how to perform).

Dribble moves they can perform are:
- Crossover
- Between the legs
- Around the back
- Double crossover
- Double between the legs
- Double behind the back
- Crossover-between the legs combo

Wall Touches
This drill is performed with a basketball and a wall. It helps to keep the eyes up and develop coordination in your players.

How to perform:
Players touch the wall with the opposite hand as they perform dribble moves.
Dribble moves to perform:
- Crossover
- Between the legs
- Behind the back
- Dribble-dribble-cross
- Dribble-dribble-behind-the-back
- Feel free to get creative with this drill, as well!

(See how to perform)

Killer 150
This drill is designed for your players to perform 150 dribble moves as quickly as possible.

How to perform:
Players are to perform the dribble moves below as quickly as possible, while still maintaining control of the basketball. As time goes on, players should become quicker at completing this drill.

The drill is as follows:
- 25 dribbles at the knee (performed with strong hand)
- 25 rapid fire dribbles (as low as possible w/ strong hand)
- 25 dribble pound, inside out move
- 25 dribble pound, double crossover move
- 25 dribble pound, between the legs then crossover move
- 25 dribble pound, behind the back then crossover move

The ball should always end up back in the strong hand after each move is performed. As your players adapt to this drill, you can make them use their weak hand.
Cone Dribbling
This drill is designed to working on changes of direction and different dribble moves.

**How to perform:**
Set up a line of cones (anywhere from 5-8) on the court. At each cone have your players execute a dribble move.

Dribble moves can include:
- Crossover
- Between the legs
- Behind the back
- Spin move
- Pullback dribble
- Combination moves
  - Double crossover
  - Between the legs then crossover
  - Behind the back then crossover
  - Double between the legs

This is another drill in which the opportunities for creativity are endless.
Agility Drills

The drills in this category are focused primarily on agility and can be used to increase your players’ foot speed, quickness, and overall athleticism.

Dot Drill
This is a drill that will work on increasing foot speed as well as foot-eye coordination.

How to perform:
Mark 5 spots on the floor as if they are the five spots on a dice. Have your players perform each of the following exercises for 30 seconds at a time:

- Two feet hitting every dot, going forward then backward.
- One foot hitting every dot, going forward then backward (go right foot for the first 30 seconds, then left foot for the next 30 seconds).
- Have your players perform 2-1-2 forward and backward, meaning they hit both outside dots with one foot, and the middle dot with both feet, in the 2-1-2 pattern.
- Have your players perform the 2-1-2 pattern forward, perform a 180 degree turn, and perform the 2-1-2 pattern again, completing the 180 degree turn each time their feet hit the two dots.

These are quick exercises, but your players will be worn out quickly and have newfound foot speed if they perform these over time.
Ladder Drill
This drill uses an agility ladder to perform different footwork exercises.

How to perform:
With an agility ladder, there are numerous exercises you can have your players perform. Since these are youth basketball drills, we’ll keep them fairly simple. The moves they can perform are:

• One foot in every square
• Two feet in every square
• One foot in, one foot out
• Two feet in, two feet out
• Two foot hop in each square
• Two foot hop skipping a square
• Two foot sideway hop
• Sideways run in each square
• High knees in each square

As we mentioned, this drill has infinite opportunities of different footwork drills you can use.

Jump Rope
Using a jump rope is one of the best tools you can use to enhance footwork, coordination, and foot speed.

How to perform:
These jump rope drills can be performed in a certain time frame or make the kids perform a certain number of reps. The jump rope exercises are:

• Regular jump rope
• Criss-cross
• Double-jump
• Right leg only
• Left leg only
• High Knees
• Running forward down the court while jump roping
• Coming backward back down the court while jump roping
• Scissored Feet – this is alternating scissoring your feet on every jump

**Air Squat Rip Through**
This is a drill to work on lower strength, as well as ballhandling and ripping the basketball.

**How to perform:**
Place five cones in a straight line down the floor. Have the players dribble to each cone. At each cone, the player should place the ball above their head and perform five air squats. When they are done with the five air squats, they should rip the ball through and dribble to the next cone.
Thedef in this category are focused primarily on defensive movements and how to improve your players’ defensive skillset.

**Twice Around**
This is a drill to work different movements when your players are on defense. This includes defensive stance, sprinting, and backpedaling.

**How to perform:**
Players start in the corner of the court on the baseline. They should:
- Sprint to half court and closeout at the half-court line
- They should then slide all the way across half court
- Then they’ll backpedal down to the opposite baseline
- On the opposite baseline, they will perform a defensive slide all the way to the other side of the baseline
- They will then sprint up to the half court line again and close out
- They’ll slide across the half court line again
- They’ll back-pedal to the baseline they originated at
- They’ll finish with a defensive slide across the baseline again

This drill is performed in a figure-8.

**Toughness D**
This is a drill that works on several aspects of defensive movements as a team. It is led by a coach that is standing where the players can see them.

**How to perform:**
Players all start in a line facing the coach. When the coach blows his
whistle or says start, the players slap the floor, yell “DEFENSE!” and begin to shuffle their feet. The players continue shuffling their feet until the coach gives these commands:

- **Slide & point** – This tells the players which direction to slide. They should continue sliding in that direction until you point the other way or give another command

- **Loose ball** – Players should dive on the floor in front of them, then return to their feet as quickly as possible and begin shuffling their feet again

- **Shot** – Players should close out chopping their feet with a hand up when this command is given, and then return to chopping their feet

- **Charge** – This is how the drill should end, with the players taking a charge and falling on their butts (NOT THEIR WRISTS!).

Players can get fatigued easily in this drill, but don’t let them get by with giving minimal effort.

**Sword Fight**

This is a drill you can use to help teach helping stop dribble penetration from somebody else’s man, and then recover out to your own man.

**How to perform:**

Each player should have a partner that they are lined up across the lane from like in the diagram to the right
The players should slide into the lane communicating “I got your help! I got your help! As they meet in the middle of the lane, they should slap hands, then begin to slide outside the lane communicating “Recover! Recover!” Both of their feet should go outside the lane before they change their direction to start sliding back toward the middle.

**VCU Defense**

This is a drill that works on different defensive movements and toughness aspects of the game.

**How to perform:**
Players start out on the block of the lane. Then they should:
• Sprint to the opposite elbow
• Slide to the other elbow
• Backpedal to the block they started on
• Slide over to the other block
• A player on that block will roll the ball out and the player in the drill should go dive on it
• Then the player that rolled the ball takes a charge from the diver after they get up
• The diver then becomes the next person to roll the ball and the next person begins on the other block.

**Partner Chase**

This drill works on both finishing in transition and transition defense from behind.

**How to perform:**
The offense starts at the volleyball line and defense starts behind them at the half court line. Once the offense breaks for the basket, the defense sprints and tries to back-tap the basketball from the offensive player.
The offensive player’s goal is to make a layup with pressure.

Baseline Block-Out
This drill works on not only blocking out, but holding a blockout.

**How to perform:**
Have your players partner up, and place a basketball on the baseline for each set of partners. Have one offensive player stand at the free throw line, and a defensive player facing him an arms length away.

On the blow of your whistle, the defenders should turn and begin to block their partner out. Contrarily, the offensive player should be trying their hardest to go get the basketball on the baseline.
4-on-4 Blockout
This drill works blocking out and getting the rebound.
**How to perform:**
Have four offensive players line up free throw-line extended and four defensive players line up on the baseline.

Have a coach throw the ball to one of the offensive players. As the ball is thrown, the guy guarding the shooter should close out, and then box out the shooter, while the rest of the defenders should make contact with their man, turn and box him out, then go get the rebound.

This can be turned into a game, only allowing points for defensive rebounds.

Zig Zag Defense
This drill works on turning your man when you are playing defense and beating them to the spot. It also doubles as a ballhandling drill, as the ballhandler has to dribble with defensive pressure.
**How to perform:**
Players partner up, with one playing defense and the other playing offense in the corner on the baseline. The defense should work on moving their feet, playing defense without their hands, and beating the offense to the spot. They should try to turn the offense as many times as possible.

The boundary lines are the sideline and the volleyball line for the offensive player to maneuver around in down the court.
Once the players get down the court, they should go to the other corner, and perform the drill going back down the other side of the floor, with the offensive and defensive player switching their roles.
The drills in this category are focused primarily on shooting the basketball.

**Partner Shooting**
Players alternate shooting and getting their own rebound from anywhere on the court. As the other player is getting the rebound, the shooter should be moving around and spotting up for their next shot.

This drill should get a lot of shooting reps in. Variations could be:
- Shot fake, 1 dribble pull-up
- Shot fake, 1 dribble to the rim
- Shot fake, 1 dribble step-back
Brad Stevens Shooting
In this drill, players execute five different shots:
• Shot in the corner
• 1 dribble pull-up
• Curl to the wing
• Flair to the wing
• 3-pointer in transition.
Read The D Shooting

In this drill, you’ll have players in two lines at the wings. You can run this drill from either side of the floor. Players will execute v cuts and then make these cuts:

- Curl for a layup
- Curl for a shot
- Backdoor for a layup
- Flair to the wing for a shot

Point of emphasis: Players should call out every cut they’re making so the passer knows where to throw the ball.
Doubles
In this drill, there are five spots that players will choose from. These can be anywhere from 15-footers to 3-point shots. The rules are:
• If a player makes two in a row from a spot, they move on to the next spot
• However, if they miss two in a row, they move back a spot
The object is to see how quickly the shooter can make it all the way around.

Depending on the skill level of your players, you can adjust the rules to say that two makes in a row moves you forward, but it takes 3 misses in a row to move back, or vice versa. Let your players have fun with this and see who can beat it the fastest.
Elbow Shooting

In this drill, you have one team of players on one elbow, and the other team of players on the other elbow.

Players will shoot the ball from the elbow, throw it to the next person in line, and then run to the other end of the court, touch the baseline, and then run and get back in line.

This is a great shooting drill, along with conditioning. You can have a time limit, or say the first team to so many baskets wins.
Full Court Shooting

This drill takes at least 9 players to run. Three players start in the middle of the court without basketballs. 3 other players start on one baseline with basketballs, and 3 more start on the opposite baseline with basketballs.

The players in the middle all run to one end where they receive passes for shots.

After the players pass, they run to the other end and receive passes for shots. This process repeats for a set amount of time or until your players reach a certain threshold of makes.
Drive & Kick Shooting

This drill can be run with a player and coach, two players, or an entire team with two lines. It can also be run from either side of the court.

The object is for the 1 to dribble the ball into the paint. As the 1 drives, the two floats to the corner and kicks to the 2 for a three-pointer.

As the 2 catches, they could also shot-fake and do a one-dribble pull-up.
Shooting Off A Ball Screen

This is another drill that many variations can be added to, and can be used for 1 player or an entire team.

The player uses the chair as the screen, and works on shooting off of the dribble/screen.
Close Out Jumpers

This drill can be run from any spot on the floor in which you want your players to work on contested jumpers.

You start with a line under the basket with the basketballs, and a line where you want your players to shoot from.

The players under the basket pass the ball to the player in line & then close out. The player catches the ball and shoots it while his shot is being contested.
Screen Away Shooting

This drill starts with a line at the top of the key and a line on each wing. The ball starts at the top of the key.

The player at the top of the key will throw the ball to a wing, and then screen away for the opposite wing.

The opposite wing will use the screen and come off of the screen with their hands ready. They will receive a pass and shoot the ball.

This drill helps to work on basic motion cuts and shooting off of a screen.

The players can curl, straight cut, flair, or backdoor off of the screens.
Fast Break Jumpers

This drill starts with a line under the basket with the basketballs, and a line out on the wing.

The player under the basket will throw the ball off of the backboard and retrieve the rebound. They will then outlet the basketball to the player on the wing.

The player on the wing will get the basketball and attack the elbow on the other end of the floor. The player that got the rebound will sprint & stay wide down the floor. They will then receive a pass for a jump shot on the other end.

After the shot, the players can come back on the other side of the floor doing the same thing.

You can have the players shoot jump shots, one-dribble pull-ups, layups, and more.
5 In A Row Shooting

Have your players start out 6 feet in front of the basket. Once they make five in a row from that spot, have them take a giant step backward and repeat that process.

Give them a certain allotment of time and see how far back they can get.
10 In 1 Shooting

This is a great shooting drills that encompasses shooting, conditioning, and pressure.

There is a designated shooter and rebounder. Put 1 minute on the clock, and the shooter has that amount of time to make 10 three-pointers.

After each shot, the shooter must run and touch half-court before shooting their next one.
This is a great shooting drills that encompasses shooting on the move, conditioning, and pressure.

There is a designated shooter and rebounder. Put 30 seconds on the clock. After each shot, the shooter will rotate between the short corner and the elbow. They should be planting their inside foot to work on shooting on the move.

You can do this drill from any two spots on the floor, and you can also adjust the amount of time given to the shooters.
Form Shooting

This is a drill that should be performed everyday. It helps players have proper form on their shots.

**How to perform:**
The player holds the ball in their palm, then they bring the ball up, then finish their shot with a follow through. We call this “Ready, Aim, Fire.”

![Image of basketball drills](image)

Mikan Drill

This is another great drill to use to establish fundamentals of layups.

**How to perform:**
Each shot should be a layup, and then rebounded out of the basket and performed quickly.
The shots to perform are:
- One footed layup
- Two footed layup
- Pump-fake then layup
- Reverse layup
These are drills that can be used as games to keep practices interesting and fun.

**Monkey In The Middle**
We all played this game as kids, but it can actually be used as a great basketball drill.

**How to perform:**
Designate a distance two players should be from each other, and have one person in the middle. The person with the ball has to wait until the person in the middle is playing defense on them before they can pass. You should make your players avoid lob passes, and instead make game-like passes around the defense.

This is a great drill that works on passing and defense.

**5-on-4 Catch-Up**
This is a drill that is used to create an advantage situation for the offense and to work on transition scoring. It is also used for the defense to work on stopping the offense when they are at a disadvantage.

**How to perform:**
Have your five offensive players line up across the baseline, and have your five defensive players line up across from them free throw line extended.
A coach will throw the ball to one of the offensive players. Whoever is lined up across from the guy that the ball is thrown to should go and touch the baseline. Everybody else should take off down the court and the offense has a 5-on-4 advantage until the defender gets back.

**5-4-3-2-1**

This is a drill that helps to work on transition offense and defense by playing advantages and disadvantages.

**How to perform:**

Break your team up into two teams for this game. Each team will have two lines on their end of the court, as the diagram below shows.

After the teams are situated, whichever team you designate should get to have the ball first will have ONE player from their team go to the other end of the court to shoot a free throw. The other team will have TWO players around the lane to get the miss or take out a make.

After the first free throw is shot, the two players go down the court in a 2-on-1 situation.
Next, after the 2-on-1 takes place, either the two offensive players score, or the 1 defender gets a stop, one player from each line on that side of the court come into play, and the 2-on-1 disadvantage now becomes a 3-on-2 advantage, and they take the ball the other way.

As you might have guessed, after the 3-on-2 break ends with a score or stop, the other team takes the ball and heads toward the other end, turning their 2-on-3 disadvantage into 4-on-3 advantage. The drill ends after the 5-on-4 advantage is complete. We like to run this drill until a team scores 20 points (normal scoring with 2’s and 3’s on offense). The kids love this drill and they’re working on their transition offense and defense without really knowing it.
3-on-3 Cut Throat
A fun drill to use to play 3-on-3 with a fun twist.

**How to perform:**
Split your guys into three even teams. Hopefully there isn’t more than 3 or 4 guys on a team. If you have side goals, you can split into 6 teams and play full court on the side goals.

Either way, this drill is designed to have three teams of 3 guys. The drill starts with an offensive team and a defensive team on one side of the court playing 3-on-3.

The third team is on the other end of the court preparing to play defense (4, 5, 6 in the diagram below).

The two teams that are on the end of the floor playing 3-on-3 go at it until the offense scores or the defense gets a stop. If the offense scores, they take the ball out of bounds and head to the other end of the court, where there is a new defensive team waiting on them.

If the defense gets a stop, they become offense and take the ball to the other end of the court, where a defense is waiting on them.

If you don’t score, or you don’t get a stop, you stay on the end of the floor that you’re on and wait to play defense until the next possession.
About BBallTools

Basketball Coaching Tools is an online resource center for basketball coaches, trainers, players, and parents.

Our goal is to supply you with excellent resources to help grow the game in a positive way.

Looking for more great resources?

Basketball Shooting: A Guide To Create Great Shooters

Coaching Youth Basketball: The Ultimate Toolbox