

Basketball



Basketball is one of the most popular sports in the world and also one of the most popular SO team sports. Dribbling, passing and shooting techniques, precision, quick reactions, strength, agility, endurance, rules knowledge and team strategies must be acquired before a team can compete at a high level. Basic ball movement, control, and accuracy are the objectives of our basic basketball skills acquisition (20-hour) program.

Although basketball is a team sport, individual skills of every team member must be developed for a successful team. The role of the coach is therefore twofold; first develop individual skills, and then use available skills to play as a team.

SO basketball programs have athletes playing with limited basketball skills. Many can't dribble with their eyes looking at the play, have very low shooting percentages and play an "improvised" game with little advanced strategy. SO basketball games are characterized by dribbling forward until stopped by an opponent then trying to find someone to pass to until close enough to the hoop to take a shot, the rebound is then taken by the other team that repeats the same actions in the opposite direction.

This is mainly due to the low practice time of SO programs (once per week), and the limited opportunities to develop basic skills and team play. Further complicating basketball training is the fact that it's way more fun to play basketball than to practice skills such as dribbling, passing, shooting and rebounding!

Home practice is an important part of acquiring basketball skills, dribbling using both hands (without looking at the ball) can be done at home, however proper technical guidance will be needed. SO players are visual learners and need coaches to demonstrate correct skill execution, and this is an important step before home practices are efficient learning opportunities.

Basic basketball skills are listed in the basic skill (next page). These sheets can be used as a guide, and when all skills are marked “yes”, players can be ready for more advanced team and individual intermediate skills.

Guidelines for using the skill sheet for basketball

1. Playing basketball starts with dribbling without looking at the ball.
2. When dribbling is acquired (it can take more than 20 hours of practice and lots of home practice) catching and passing skills are started. Always include dribbling in a practice. Shooting skills will eventually follow.
3. Follow each step of the skill sheet (one at a time) until all basic skills are acquired. Progress will be directly related to the amount of focused practice time.

Basketball Basic Skills

Basic Skill: Dribbling (eyes up) YES NO Comments

Sub Skills (never looking at the ball)

Left and right stationary
Dribble 15 in a row in 10 sec.

Left and right moving slow
Dribble 15 in a row in 10 sec.

Left to right moving
15 total in 10 sec.

Basic Skills: Passing and receiving YES NO Comments

Sub Skills

Passing 10m apart 10/10

Receiving 10m apart 10/10

Moving 5m apart 10/10
Receiving

Moving 5m apart 10/10
Passing

Basic Skill: Shooting YES NO Comments

Sub Skills

Lay up both hands 3/5

Shots inside 3-point line 1/3

Free throws 1/3

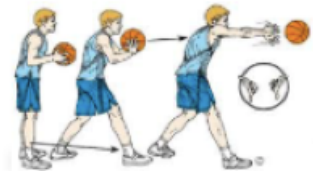
**When athletes achieve all “YES”, they have acquired basic skills.
Expectations are critical to skill acquisition.**

20-hour acquisition

Skill Breakdown: Examples of priority elements to focus on during practice

Spend time on each one until acquired

1. Dribbling: One hand/ switch – Hard dribble – **Looking up** – Finger control – Moving forward – Moving backward – Slow and fast
2. Passing/Receiving: Air – Bounce – Chest height – Overhead – Wrap around – Arm/wrist action – Stepping – Moving – Dribbling and passing – Short and long



3. Shooting: Eye on target – Body stance – Grip – Other hand – Delivery – Ball path - Follow through - Fast catch and ready to shoot position – Free throw – Moving and jump shots (different angles) – Footwork - Backboard

4. Team skills: Blocking out body position – Arms – Eye direction - Rebounding – Grab - Hands - Protect



The key is to practice one skill at a time, and focus on learning to dribble properly with both hands first. After 20 hours, dribbling won't be at the expert level but will be good enough to have something to build on for the future.



Home training:

Dribbling, passing and receiving and even shooting are possible to practice at home. Start with dribbling skills as in the following example.

Home Dribbling Practice example (20 minutes)

20 dribble with the right hand
20 dribble with the left
repeat 5 times with both hands
5 min. break
20 dribble with right hand walking straight
20 dribble with the left hand walking straight

Don't look at the ball, try dribbling hard, and keep ball on fingers (not palm). Repeat as often as you can. The goal is to dribble with both hands without looking and moving in all directions.

Similar types of practice can be done for passing and receiving, lay ups, and shooting if you have a basketball hoop at home or in a park near you.

Basketball example: Focus SO skill training (1h)

Warm Up 15 minutes (Run, agility, stretching)

Teaching Skills 30 minutes

(SO athletes are visual learners and therefore, always use a demonstration, slow down demonstrations when introducing a new skill, and use hands to guide movements when necessary)

Dribbling: (left and right) (repeat 3 - 5 times) (always looking up and not at the ball)

1. One hand 30 seconds each (waist high)
2. Dribble from left to right and back for 30 seconds
3. Figure 8 30 seconds each

Changing Expectations in Special Olympics



Full Court Ball handling: (on each hand) (repeat 3 – 5 times)

- Walking forward dribble (waist high)
- Walking backward dribble
- 1/2 Speed forward Dribble
- 1/2 Speed backward Dribble
- Full Speed Dribble
- Zigzag course dribble

Game scrimmage 10 minutes

Cool down 5 minutes

Conclusion:

Basketball teams are dependent on the skills of each player. Acquiring basic skills requires time and focused practices, and there is no getting around that fact. Although SO athletes prefer to play basketball games, they are limited in their progress and enjoyment when they have finite skills. Using the basketball skill sheet is an excellent way to learn basic skills and encourage athletes to practice often. Many of these skills can be practiced at home, and the more time spent on focused training, the better each SO athlete will become.

In generic basketball, size is a big advantage, although size doesn't matter as much in SO basketball. Height is not as important as in generic games, mainly due to the lower skill level of players. Skills provide a clear advantage in SO basketball over size, another reason to have focused skill acquisition training.

We have witnessed many programs using 20-30 minutes of their practices to warm up, stretch and do some agility exercises. However, time on the floor should be spent on specific basketball skills, and this is why it is so important to use Club Fit sessions to develop strength, agility, flexibility and endurance instead of taking skill acquisition time from practices to do so.

Home practice sessions are necessary to improve individual player skills. The more they practice the better the athletes will be. Using practices to demonstrate correct executions is required in SO sports, and adding generic players to the practices will help to provide better examples. When players have acquired basic basketball skills, coaches can prepare players to play as a team.

Lesson Plan
Basic Skill Acquisition Program
(weekly or monthly)

Sport _____ Athlete Name: _____

Program Expectations

1- Weekly Practice (attend all practices)

Day (S) _____ Time _____

Location _____

“What the group is working on”:

2- Club Fit 100% attendance (Including Functional Testing exercises)

Day _____ Time _____

Location _____

“What you need to concentrate on”:

3- Basic Skill Development Homework (4 times per week - 1 hour per day)

Skill _____

“Individual Home Practice Objectives”