
TOP 20 Basketball Tips, Tricks, and Secrets – for Youth and Advanced Basketball Players

Learn How To Get More Playing Time, Improve Skills, And Become A Better Basketball Player!

Written by NBA Player Development Coach – Don Kelbick

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About the Author

Don Kelbick is an NBA player development coach that works with very successful players like Raja Bell, Bruce Bowen, Carlos Arroyo, Rasual Butler, and many other college and NBA players.

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In 2 years as a high school coach, his teams produced 6 Division I players and was ranked #1 in Florida 28 out of a possible 34 weeks. In addition to coaching, he has scouted for NBA teams and served as a general manager in the USBL.

Don currently focuses on individual player development at the college and NBA level. He also writes articles and works behind the scenes at www.breakthroughbasketball.com.

You can visit his personal website at:
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Tip #1 - How can I get myself out of a shooting slump?

Shooting slumps are something all players encounter and have to deal with every season. They can be confusing, break your confidence and, at times, may seem never ending.

I will give you some things NOT to do to get you out of your slump. First, don't over-analyze. Shooting is largely mental and you don't want to put yourself into "analysis – paralysis." That is when you examine yourself so closely that you tie yourself up in knots and can't perform the skill you are trying to examine. Next, everyone will have ideas of what to do. Don't listen to them. Everyone sees things differently. As well meaning as they might be, you will get different ideas from everyone and their suggestions will only confuse you more. Don't start chasing or creating shots that aren't there or attempt to do things you are not good at and above all, don't doubt yourself.

What DO you do? Above everything else, remember that just because you have a few bad days doesn't mean you have forgotten how to shoot. You can shoot perfect shots and they just don't go in. You're human and things like that happen. Shooting is a skill of failure. If you are a jump shooter and you miss 55% of your shots, people will call you a great shooter. You have to get through the misses to get to the makes. Since shooting is very much mental, once you are at peace with that thought, your stress level and anxiety will decrease and you will find your comfort zone again.

In a game situation, slumps are sometimes created not by flaws in shooting but by shot selection. It is possible the shots you are taking are not the best shots for you. Take a few lay-ups, work to take open shots and recapture your confidence and rhythm. Don't worry about game situations and the effect of makes and misses. That is your coach's job. Relax and play. You can't force your shot to come back; you have to allow it to return. Do the things in a game you are comfortable doing, contribute it with the other aspects of your game. That will allow your confidence to return and your shooting with it.

If you feel you are truly in a slump and your shot feels uncomfortable to you, go back to basics. Practice close to the basket. Work on your form from 5 feet and gradually move back as you are comfortable again. Then go back to the basic shooting drills you have done in the past. Always go back to something familiar to help you feel comfortable. If you think there is something technically wrong with your shot, don't try to diagnose the flaw yourself. Go to someone you trust (and only one person) and have him make evaluation and suggest a correction. Once you decide to make a change, stick with it. You want every shot to be the same and if you change your shot every time you have a bad day you will never master your shot. If you make a change, practice it enough to make it automatic. That means 100's of shots. You have to be able to shoot it without thinking.

As you go through your slump, you have to keep the right mental attitude. The only way you can play without missing shots is not to shoot at all. You must understand that if you are going to shoot the ball, you are going to miss some. But then again, how many shots will go in if you don't shoot any?

Tip #2 - How do I become a better 3-point shooter?

The obvious answer is to practice. The question becomes what to practice. Shooting revolves around rhythm and form so that is where the answer lies.

It might sound strange but to become a better 3-point shooter, you have to practice a lot, close to the basket. Take 100's and 1000's of shots 12' from the basket. The purpose for this is to really ingrain your shooting form from an area you can shoot comfortably and have some success. It doesn't make a difference what drills you do or how you practice it as long as the primary thrust of the work is your form.

Once you have your form ingrained, gradually move back. If you get to a point where you feel the rhythm change or your form start to change, that is the limit of your range. Stay at that spot until your shot feels like it did at 12'. Once it feels comfortable again, shoot several hundred until it becomes automatic again.

Once it feels automatic again, start to move back again until you reach the limit of your range and shoot continually from that spot. Once you feel comfortable from behind the 3-point line, you can start doing drills that will make you more proficient.

Players struggle from behind the arc because they have to change their shot to get the ball to the basket. This not only makes the shooter inconsistent from the 3-point line but it affects his shot from everywhere. Remember, to be a good shooter, you have to take the same shot every time, no matter where you shoot from.

For more articles, tips, and drills on shooting you can visit our site by clicking on the following link: <http://www.breakthroughbasketball.com/fundamentals/shooting.html>

Tip #3 - How can I become a "clutch" foul shooter?

There are no "clutch" foul shooters. There are only shooters that accept the challenge of making foul shots and those that are afraid of it.

First, you have to understand and believe that all foul shots are the same. A foul shot in the summer with no one else in the gym is exactly the same as a foul shot in your championship game with 10,000 people in the stands. The ball is the same; the foul line is still 15' from the rim. The basket is still 10' off the floor. The only thing that has changed is your thought process.

Each time you step to the foul line, your objective should be the same, "Make the shot." Whether it is practice, in the first minute of the game or with 0:01 left on the clock with your team down a point, your objective is, "Make the shot." If you start to think, "If I make it we win, if I miss it we lose," your shot will not have the comfort you need for you to be successful.

Take every shot the same way. Have a routine that you use every time you shoot a foul shot. Then, regardless of the situation, step to the line, settle into your routine and shoot the ball. Make or miss,

do the same thing on your next shot and every shot thereafter. Once you let the ball go, your part of the shot is over. You cannot will the ball or direct the ball into the basket. Once you let it go, the ball will take a path determined by the fundamentals of your shooting form. The most important thing is that you shoot it as comfortably as you can. Don't let pass misses enter into your thoughts and don't change your shot because you missed one. Rely on your routine to make each shot the same and comfortable and "Make the shot."

For more articles, tips, and drills on foul shooting you can visit our site by clicking on the following link: <http://www.breakthroughbasketball.com/fundamentals/foulshooting.html>

Tip #4 - How can I feel more comfortable dribbling against pressure?

It is all confidence and knowledge. Practice builds confidence. Find the most challenging ball handling drills you can, do them at full speed until you are comfortable. I really love 2 ball drills. They are very challenging and develop both hands. Do the drills while running up and down the court as opposed to being stationary. You can learn them and get comfortable with them while staying in one spot, but once you start to get comfortable, start moving up and down the court. This will give you confidence that you have the ability to dribble in all situations.

Once you have that confidence, step back and understand what the game is all about. There is a difference between dribbling and ball handling. Ball handling implies effectiveness. What are you trying to do with your dribble? You should be trying to advance the ball and get it in a good offensive situation. Understand that pressure is trying to prevent you from doing that. Most pressure tries to force you to the sideline. That tells you to work to keep the ball in the middle of the court. Most pressures try to get you to turn your back on your basket. Work hard to be good at protecting the ball while facing the basket. Most pressures try to get you to change your tempo. You should realize at what speed you are most effective and work to play that speed.

Once you understand what the pressure is trying to do to you and you have enough confidence that you can dribble the ball under difficult circumstances, handling against pressure will become a breeze.

For more articles, tips, and drills on ball handling and dribbling you can visit our site by clicking on the following link: <http://www.breakthroughbasketball.com/fundamentals/ballhandling.html>

Tip #5 - How can I better apply my drill work in games?

That is answered in 1 word – Imagination. When you go out to practice, do you just practice or do you think about where your skills will fit in a game situation? Use cones, chairs or anything else you can find. Use them not only as obstacles but as teammates, opponents, defenders, etc. Imagine yourself in game situations, "Where's my defense?", "Where's the help?", "Where are my teammates?", "How do I get the ball here?". Use all those thoughts as you practice alone and you will learn to recognize them in games.

Tip #6 - If I only have an hour, what should I practice?

First and foremost, you should go out to practice with a plan. Having only an hour to practice doesn't give you much time. Know what you are going to work on and for how long. For determining time, you can use a clock, number of repetitions, number of makes or bring some music with you and work for a certain amount of songs. Anything to help you keep track so you know when to move on to the next task.

You have to determine for yourself if you are going to work on weaknesses or shore up strengths, both are important. But, regardless of what you decide you want to work on, two things that should be done at every workout are shot repetitions and ball handling. Do those at the front of your workout so you know that you will get them in. Use ball handling drills to warm up. Challenge yourself and work up a good sweat. Stretch your comfort level and don't worry about losing the ball. Move on to shooting and do drills that will get you a high volume of shots. Really run after the rebounds (that will help your conditioning) and shoot close to the basket. That will help you get off more shots in a shorter period of time.

Once you have that done, work with some combination drills that allow you to work on several skills at once, such as dribbling through a line of chairs and then pulling up for a jump shot.

Remember, in an hour, you can't work on everything. Pick 1 or 2 things in addition to ball handling and shooting, one strength, one weakness, put them in a plan and go to work.

Tip #7 - I get really nervous before games, how can I feel more comfortable?

Nervousness before games is normal. Anxiety and uncertainty of what is to come in the game will cause even the best players to tremble a bit. Bill Russell, who won 11 championships with the Boston Celtics said he would throw up before every game of his career due to nervousness.

Most nervousness comes from doubt. Wondering what the other team is going to do and are you good enough to play against them. Before going out to play, try closing your eyes and try to visualize yourself playing well. Keep in mind that you practice hard everyday and you work to improve. Games are like a test in class, they will tell you how well you are doing and what you need to work on. Look at games, not as something that you pass or fail but as a learning experience that will tell you what you need to practice.

Tip #8 - I work hard in practice but the coach doesn't seem to notice me. How can I get the coach to notice me and get more playing time?

To get in the game, you have to do 2 things in practice, outwork everyone and do only what you can do. John Wooden, former coach at UCLA used to say, “Be careful, while you are showing me what you can do, don’t show me what you can’t do.” Learn from your coach what his expectations are for you and what your role is. Play inside of that framework. That doesn’t mean you can’t try to expand on those things but don’t step outside your ability in an effort to catch your coach’s eye. Work inside your role to become the best you can be in that job. Outwork everyone who has a similar role.

Have you taken the time to talk with your coach and ask them what you can do to help the team? Have you asked your coach about your role so you thoroughly understand their expectations?

This is key! Most players do what “they” think is right and try to be great at everything. They don’t take the time to understand what’s important to the coach. For example, perhaps the coach would give you more playing time if you took better care of the ball and became one of the best rebounders on the team. They might not even care if you score. To get more playing time, you simply have to outwork everyone else on the team when it comes to rebounding. You just don’t know until you communicate with your coach.

Once you get in a game, how much you play will be determined by how well you do your job and what kind of success your team has while you are on the floor. Coaches tend to play, not the best players, but the players that they trust. Show your coach you will accept a role and let him know what he can expect while you are on the court and you will see your playing time increase.

Tip #9 - How do I get my shot off quicker?

Consistent shooting is a combination of technique and rhythm. Doing the same thing the same way every time is what makes a good shooter. Doing that thing in a rhythm that comfortably allows all the necessary pieces come together at the right time is just as important as technique. Trying to do anything, such as speeding up your shot, that changes your technique or upsets your rhythm will result in a bad shot.

That being the case, the answer to getting your shot off quicker lies in what you do before you get into your shot. First is your thought process. Too many players catch the ball and then they look to see if they have a shot. You should know if you are going to have a shot opportunity before you even catch the ball. Know where your defense is, where your teammates are and be in an area you are comfortable shooting from before you catch the ball. Next, get your body into shooting position before you receive the ball. Catching, then putting the ball in shooting position, then getting low so you can explode into your shot takes too much time and adds too many moving parts to your shot. If you can get yourself into shooting position, knees bent, plant foot forward, hands ready before you catch will allow you to go right up with your shot without resetting. This will allow you to get your shot off quicker but stay in rhythm as you shoot.

Tip #10 - I am usually the smallest player on the court, how do I play against bigger players?

Basketball is a game that uses many physical aspects and height is certainly one of them. Contrary to popular belief, lack of size is not necessarily a detriment as much as it forces you to develop different skills.

The most important thing is to have a good handle on what you are good at and what you are not good at. If you are good at going to the basket, you must be selective in your opportunities. There might be some players you can go over (just watch the Knick's Nate Robinson go over everyone in the lane) but more often than not you will have to rely on quickness (see Allen Iverson). You might want to look into developing some shot that might be particular to your size, such as a floater or a teardrop lay-up. You have to be aware of who is defending in the lane as well. If Ben Wallace is guarding the basket, it might not be a good idea for you to go in there. However, if there is no shot blocker, it might present some opportunities to challenge the post at the right time with the right shot.

Once the defense believes that you might go to the hole (and you only have to prove it once or twice a game), he will step back and might open up perimeter shot opportunities. Concentrate on cutting to areas where you can score from and work on a quick release, catch and shoot when you are open, move the ball when you are not.

Most importantly, be very aggressive when you don't have the ball. Make your man chase you when you don't have the ball. Run your man off screens, constantly cut and screen. Smaller players have to be more active and cagy. Force fatigue onto your opponent. That will break his will and give you a real advantage when you have the ball.

On defense, you have to be aggressive and use some basketball smarts. When other teams (at least good ones) get a handle on how you play defense, they will force matchup problems and will post you up. If they don't know how you are going to play, you can remove that issue. Play the ball hard, then back off, double down to the post and recover, force the dribble away from the screen, cut off the baseline and draw a charge. Be creative in how you play, make them find you and adjust to you instead of attacking you.

Tip #11 - How can I figure out what a good shot is?

When shooting, the only thought that should enter your mind is "make the shot." Actually you shouldn't have any thoughts in your mind when you shoot, but what ever is in there, you should believe – absolutely convinced – that whatever shot you take is a good shot. While in the act of shooting is not the time to doubt yourself. After the shot, when you have some time to reflect, is when you evaluate and learn.

On the whole, I think there are 3 criteria to determine a good shot:

Are you open?

Is it a shot you can make?

Is it off of execution with your teammates?

In most cases, if the answer to those 3 questions is, "yes," let it fly.

There certainly are some other, game specific, criteria – such as end of game situations, foul issues or specific personnel situations (if you are playing with Shaq, make sure he gets the ball) but leaning about to how to handle those situations is why your team practices everyday.

Tip #12 - What is the most effective way to play against defenses designed to stop good shooters (such as man to man chaser or a box and 1)?

If you are a shooter and the defense is geared up to stop you, you have to play within yourself, use your teammates and let the game come to you.

Defenses are not designed to only make you miss; they are also designed to make you try to do things you are not good at. Play to your strengths. Don't all of a sudden start making dribble moves if you are not good at it. Try not to take shots you are not confident you can make.

Adapt a big picture, whole game outlook instead of a play-to-play outlook. Turn the defenses pressure against them. Move constantly and make them chase you. Use your teammates and run the defense off 2, 3, 4 picks on every play. Eventually what will happen is the defense will wear down and become less effective. They might have to substitute and put a less effective player in the game or change the defense all together. You are then prepared to take advantage of the situation.

This will take a little time. Be patient, which is why you have to look at the whole game instead of play to play. It won't happen for you in the first minute of the game, maybe not in the tenth minute. Keep working and eventually the defense will break down. If you "chase the game," lose patience, or try to do things that you are not good at; that might affect your confidence and prevent you from taking advantage of the defense when the time comes.

Tip #13 - How can I defend someone who is much quicker than me?

This is one of the challenges of the game. Trying to equalize a physical mismatch is certainly one of the more difficult aspects of the game.

The easy answer is, don't let him get the ball. But, like most things in life, that is easier said than done. With all the responsibilities you have when playing defense off the ball, such as weakside help, rebounding, etc., unless your coach puts you in a specific defense for that, like a chaser or box and 1, it is difficult to deny your man the ball without hurting your team's overall defense.

Remember two basic rules of defense, don't let them score and your job is to dictate to the offense. Assuming your man has the ball, let's develop a plan. First, if your man is quicker than you and can put the ball on the floor, the further you play him from the basket, the higher the probability that he will beat you. Therefore, give him plenty of room if he is outside his scoring area. You have to toughen up as he gets into an area where he can hurt you so you have to get help. Alert your

teammates how you plan to play your man and that you will need help if you get beat on the dribble. As you toughen up, dictate to him and make him do what you want him to do and don't allow him to do what he wants to do.

If he has the ball in the middle of the floor, choose which side you want him to go toward. It can be toward his weak hand, it can be toward your best help defender, it doesn't matter. Just get him out of the middle of the court and keep him out. If he has the ball on the wing, drive him to the corner. If he has the ball in the corner, drive him to the baseline.

All of this has 2 effects. First, it shrinks the court. If he is quicker than you, the more room he has, the more his quickness becomes an advantage. By shrinking the court, it gives him limited room in which to use his quickness and goes a long way toward making it less effective. The second thing it does is it helps your teammates know where to find the ball and makes it easier for them to help you. Team defense beats individual offense every time.

Tip #14 - How can I avoid getting trapped with the ball?

To be good on offense, you have to think like the defense. To avoid getting trapped, the first thing you have to do is understand where you are going to get trapped and stay out of those areas. Defenses like to trap anywhere they can use a line as an extra defender. Those places can be in the corners in the backcourt, so they can use the endline and the sideline to help, just over mid-court on the sideline, so they can use the sideline and the mid-court line to help, in the corner in the frontcourt, so they can use the baseline and the sideline to help. Stay out of those areas and NEVER give up your dribble if you are in one of those areas.

If you are in the backcourt, use the dribble to aggressively advance the ball up the court. Don't spend time going side to side and don't turn your back to the defense. By trying to aggressively advance the ball, you will push the trap up the floor and leave you plenty of room to pass out if your dribble gets stopped.

As you come up the court, never never never stop once you come over the mid-court line. If you do, you become a prime candidate to be trapped. You can't go backward because of the mid-court line, you'll be pushed against the sideline and you'll be too far from the players who can help you so you won't be able to pass. Instead, train yourself to get at least 10 feet deep into the frontcourt whenever you cross the mid-court line.

When in the frontcourt, don't drive the baseline unless you can get to the basket. As you move up in competition, more teams will try to force the ball to the baseline. This provides them with a convenient trapping opportunity, especially with small guards. With all the big players in the lane, guards will have a difficult time trying to throw the ball out of a trap on the baseline.

Lastly, practice so you are comfortable dribbling under pressure. When trapping, defenses want you to pick up the ball and turn your back. If you do that, you will make the defense's job much easier. Keep your dribble alive and attack the defense. If you can get the defense to back up, breaking the trap will be easy. One of the most effective dribbles against a trap is the backup dribble. If you can

get the trappers to follow you, you can explode forward through the trap and they will be very hesitant to trap you again.

Tip #15 - How can I get my teammates to pass me the ball?

The first thing you have to realize is that you can't control the actions of others. Your teammates not passing you the ball is probably not an indication of what they think of you of a player but more the way that they see the game. If you react as many players do, "if they are not going to pass me the ball, I'm not going to pass them the ball," they might then react that way as well.

Usually, when players don't get the ball it is for one of two reasons. Either you are not aggressive enough in getting open or you are too unpredictable and they don't know where you are. Some players will run all over the court to try and get the ball. While the work ethic is admirable, this works against them because their teammates can't find them.

There are certain things you do well. Work hard to get yourself in a position to do those things. When the ball finds you, do what you are comfortable with. Don't overdo things or try things you are not good at to try to make an impression. Do only what you are good at. As you have success at those things, your teammates will start to look for you in those places and situations. If you shoot well from the wing off the pass, get yourself in a position to get your shot on the wing and your teammates will look for you there. Come off a down screen or a flare to get yourself open. When you get the ball, shoot it. If you don't have a shot, look for someone else to pass the ball to instead of trying to create something that might not be there.

Of course you must do the same for your teammates. If a teammate is open in an area he is good at, sometimes you have to pass up your shot to get him his shot. Your teammates will appreciate that and will repay your unselfishness with returning the favor.

You must understand that this is a process that will take a little while. Changing behavior is difficult. Just keep playing your game, having success and soon you will have the ball whenever you want.

Tip #16 - If I want to improve, how often should I practice and how often should I play?

They are certainly both important and the answer depends on the time of the year. Coaches have a saying, "Teams are made from October to March, players are made from March to October." Once you start your team practice, there is little time for personal improvement. Coaches are more concerned, as they should be, with the team as a whole and the things that are necessary to have a good season. That leaves commitment of the player in the off-season as the primary way of improving.

After the season, take a couple of weeks off to allow your body and your mind to recover from the

grind of the season. Then get back to it. I know that it is really hard to say, “no,” when you go out to practice and someone comes from the other end of the court and says, “We have seven and we need you to play 4 on 4.” If you want to improve, you may have to say, “No,” more than you want. That does not mean that you can’t do both. However, you have to make sure that you put the time aside to practice. If you are going to do both, it is better to practice first. When you are finished with your WHOLE practice plan, then you can make yourself available to play. When I played in college, I used to do my skill workouts in the morning and early afternoon and then I would play at night. If I felt tired or worn out, I would not play at night but I always got my practice in.

During the period of time after the season around April, I think you should work skill practice 4 days for every 1 day that you play. Do skill work Monday and Tuesday, play Wednesday, skill work Thursday and Friday, take Saturday off and then start all over again with skill work on Sunday and Monday, etc. As mentioned above, that doesn’t mean that you can’t play on skill days, as long as you get your skill work in first. On play days, you should not do your skill work. Just enjoy the games and evaluate how effective your skill work is doing.

As you move later into the off-season, possibly around June, rearrange your schedule to work your skills 3 days for every 2 days you play. Do your skill work Monday, play Tuesday, skills Wednesday and Thursday, play Friday, take Saturday off and get back at it on Sunday. You should start to see the results of your skill work in your increased playing opportunities.

As you move closer to the pre-season, possibly August, adjust your schedule to where you work on your skills one day to every one that you play. Do your skill work Monday, play Tuesday, skills Wednesday, play Thursday, skills Friday, play Saturday and take Sunday off.

Once you start the preseason, in September, play as much as you can but set aside at least 2 periods per week to keep your skills sharp. Once you have started to improve, it doesn’t take that much to maintain your gains. Be sure you get in enough shooting and ball handling to keep you sharp. Playing does not give you the same opportunity to reinforce your skill work so you need to find time to do so.

Once your season starts, find 3 days to stay a half hour after practice to stay sharp. Because the team is the priority during the season, it is important to be fresh for each practice. For that reason, it is better to do your personal work after practice.

Tip #17 - What can I do to become more explosive?

Explosiveness comes from 2 areas. The first area is physical. The second area is mental. Strength and technique go together.

Explosiveness cannot be developed without conditioning and strength. So, get in the weight room and work hard. Ask a trainer specifically what exercises you should do and at what weight level you should work at. How many days should you work? How much work should be in the weight room and how much should be in another conditioning area, such as sprinting or running?

When practicing your skills, keep explosiveness in the front of your mind. Take long dribbles; cover more ground with each step. Keep yourself in an explosive position with your body low and your knees bent. Be aggressive with every move. Put both hands on the backboard when you take lay-ups. Jump as high as you can on every jump shot. Simulate the skill that you want to be better at and isolate it to work on it. If you want to be an explosive rebounder, practice the individual pieces that will make you be a better rebounder (jumping, extending to get the ball, etc.) and exercise those aspects individually, trying to get 100% out of your body and your mind.

Once you can do these things without thinking, your body will take over in games and you will explode beyond what you think you are able to.

Tip #18 - At what age should I start to weight train?

Weight training is a very important part of basketball training. My best advice is to wait until you are at least 15 years old. Your body goes through major changes in your teens. One of those changes is an increase in hormones that allow your muscles to grow and develop strength. Once those changes start to take place your weight workouts will become more productive and effective.

Tip #19 - What type of weight training is best for basketball?

Basketball combines a rare combination of speed, quickness, explosiveness, strength, and endurance. There are many effective programs out there and even more CRAPPY ones. We're going to discuss some important aspects of weight training you should consider before choosing or starting a program.

Reps & Sets - A weight workout is constructed with 2 components, repetitions (reps) and sets. Repetitions are the number of times you move a weight, 1 lift equals one rep. A set is a group of repetitions. If you are going to do 3 sets of 10 reps it means you are going to perform an exercise 10 times, take a break, do 10 more, take a break, and do 10 more and that will end that exercise.

There are many different types of weight training. Power lifters do a low number of reps and a high number of sets at the maximum amount of weight that they can possibly lift (possibly 15 sets of 2 reps). Body builders might do a high amount of sets but with more reps (possibly 10 sets of 8 reps). A distance runner might do a low number of sets with high reps (possibly 2 sets of 20 reps). Heavy weight, low reps, high sets build bulk. High reps, low sets, low weight builds endurance.

Recovery – Recovery can be just as important as the actual workout. If you do not give your body enough recovery time, you will not see results from your workouts and you can actually get weaker and your performance can decrease significantly. By rule of the thumb, you should allow at least 48 hours in between workouts for that muscle. For example, if you did squats on Monday, wait until

Wednesday, before you do any lifting with your legs again.

Recovery is also the rest you have between sets. You need more rest time for the more strenuous, lower rep sets. For less strenuous, higher rep sets, you'll need less rest in between sets. The approximate times will be listed below in the next section.

Explosiveness, Strength, & Endurance - every athlete needs to incorporate these three aspects into their workouts in order to improve their athletic ability and performance.

For explosiveness, you'll likely want to do 3 to 4 sets of however many reps you can perform within 10 to 20 seconds. Once you start to go past this time frame, you start to work on endurance and you will not be able to maintain the speed needed to improve your explosiveness. As a result, this will train your body to do the movement slower. There's a saying that goes "Train Slow, Be Slow." When performing the lift, you want to be controlled and explosive. An example of this might be "Squat Jumps." For explosive exercises, you should rest 2 to 5 minutes between sets.

For strength, you'll want to do about 3 sets of 6 to 12 reps. For strength, you need 1.5 to 3 minutes of recovery between sets. Even though you are training for strength, you still want to be fairly explosive with the movement. With the positive (concentric) part of the movement, you want to get it up as fast as possible (1 second count) while controlling the weight and using GOOD form. The negative (eccentric) part of the movement should be controlled and slightly slower (2 to 3 second count) than the positive part of the movement.

Here are some examples of positive (concentric) movements versus negative (eccentric movements):

Bench Press – Lowering the bar to your chest would be Negative (Eccentric) movement. Raising the bar or pushing the bar off your chest would be the Positive (Concentric) movement.

Squat – Lowering down into the squat position would be the Negative (Eccentric) movement. Pushing up towards the starting position would be the Positive (Eccentric) movement.

For endurance, you'll want to do 2 sets of 15 to 25 reps. For endurance, you should rest 30 second to 90 seconds between sets. You should still perform these movements controlled, but with lighter weights that will allow you to perform higher repetitions.

Lift until Faulty Form, Not Exhaustion!! - It's also very important to do every lift with great form. Don't lift until exhaustion. Lift until faulty form. The second you see or feel your form start to go, STOP! Too many times, athletes will sacrifice good form to get out a few extra repetitions or lift heavier weight. All they're doing is programming bad information into your brain. This only programs your body to perform that movement the wrong way which will lead to bad performance. When you constantly do this and it comes time to perform this movement in athletics, your brain is

going to remember the faulty, inefficient movement and that's what will happen. If you continue to lift until exhaustion with faulty movements, this will hinder your performance athletically and lead to injury.

If you're constantly jumping with bad form or squatting with bad form, this will do you absolutely NO good when you try jumping during a game or doing a defensive slide. All your body knows to do is the faulty technique.

Training with Sports Specific, Functional Movements - Remember, to train for basketball, you also want to do basketball specific workouts. A bicep curl may not do you much good compared to a Squat (Strength for Jumping), box jumps (Explosiveness for jumping), clap push-ups (Upper body explosiveness for passing). Doing bicep curls all day isn't going to do you much good when you get on the basketball court. That's why it's important to do functional exercises.

Remember, you're training to be an athlete, not a body-builder. You shouldn't be spending 10 sets on chest and 10 sets on calves. 3 to 4 sets focusing on a major muscle group is more than enough. Often, you'll see athletes do 10 sets of bench press and 10 sets of squats when this is just wasted time. It may help build muscles, but it's not doing anything for you athletically. **TRAIN SMARTER, NOT HARDER.**

START with LOW reps & LOW weight - When first starting a workout, you should also start out light and work your way up. Too much tension on muscles that have not been used before or used for a few months can damage ligaments and connective tissue which can take a long time to recover and lead to other injuries

Train Antagonistic Muscles – Antagonistic muscles come in pairs. For example, your tricep and bicep are antagonistic muscles. You should train them evenly. Otherwise, this will lead to muscle imbalances which leads to injuries.

Two other pairs are your chest & upper back and abs & lower back. If you do too many chest & abs exercises in proportion to your upper back and lower back, this will lead to muscle imbalances. As a result, you could get slouched shoulders, a rounded neck, and a rounded back. This also leads to pain and injuries which can take a lot of time and money to fix.

So, if you do 3 sets of push ups, it'd be a good idea to do 3 sets of a bent-over row. If you do 3 sets of abs, it'd be a good idea to do three sets of the superman exercise.

Workouts - As for workouts, some will do full body workouts 2 to 3 times a week. Some will alternate days between lower body and upper body and workout 4 to 6 times a week.

There are also different ways to approach these workouts. Some will emphasize explosiveness and strength right after the season and gear towards endurance training once the season gets closer. Some programs have you work on explosiveness, strength, and endurance all in the same week.

Here is some sample workouts that we have seen used that combines all aspects:

Monday – Upper Body (Explosiveness)
Tuesday – Lower Body (Explosiveness)
Wednesday – Upper Body (Strength)
Thursday – Lower Body (Strength)
Friday – Upper Body (Endurance)
Saturday – Lower Body (Endurance)

- or -

Monday – Full Body (Explosiveness)
Wednesday – Full Body (Strength)
Friday – Full Body (Endurance)

Once you enter the preseason, work out 2 times per week. You can work upper and lower body at the same workout as long as you don't work out on consecutive days. Once the season starts, start to lift on days where you don't have a game the next day and preferably when you have a day off following. It should be a combo lift and it is ok to lift upper and lower body on the same day. Don't lift on off days. Allow your body to rest. The season can be long. Once the season ends, give your body a few weeks off and start the cycle again.

Customization - Every person has different strengths and weaknesses and should adjust his or her program to work on the weaknesses and maintain the strengths. For instance, you may be really strong, but need to work on your explosiveness. You would need to emphasize more explosive exercises into your workout. You could also be really explosive and quick, but lack strength. You may want to focus more strength while maintaining their explosiveness.

Everybody probably knows the kid who could bench 300 pounds, but when he is on the athletic field, he's a complete wuss. You could easily box them out, out-muscle them for a rebound, or blow by them when they're trying to block you on the football field. Yes, strength does help, but it does you absolutely no good if you have NO explosive power and NO functional strength. That's why it's important for athletes to be well-rounded and to work on their weaknesses.

If you seem to be pretty well-balanced, take the same approach to a workout. Have a balanced workout with strength and explosiveness.

If you're new to working out, it'd be good to get a good base of strength then employ some explosive movements.

Before jumping right in - Make sure to do some research and educate yourself so you don't end up hindering your performance or hurting yourself in the long run. When it comes to weight training, you need to think SAFETY FIRST. I can't tell you the number of kids that have injured themselves

while trying to lift too much too quickly without SUPERVISION from a trained expert. So please contact a personal trainer, physical therapist, or a weight lifting coach before starting any training. Otherwise, you could end up hurting yourself and have a nagging injury the rest of your life!

We plan to provide with products that will give you more information on conditioning and strength training on basketball in the near future.

Tip # 20 - How can I get recruited to play in college?

It used to be that if you were good enough, all you had to do was play and the coaches will find you. With all the changes in recruiting rules that is no longer the case. Now, you have to go where the recruiters go.

Playing in the off-season has become the most important thing a player can do to become recruited. Playing on an AAU team, going to “showcase camps” have become mandatory if you want to play in college.

Here are some do’s and don’ts if you want to get recruited to play in college.

Do’s:

Start your search early. Colleges identify prospects as early as 8th and 9th grades. You should do the same. Research schools you think you might be interested in. Keep in mind that there are many levels of play. Not everyone can play at Duke or UCLA. Investigate a cross section of levels, Div. I, II and III. Also look into NAIA and Jr. Colleges. Contact the Head Coach at schools you are interested in and ask his advice and let him know of your interest. Keep in mind that the higher the level of play, the more letters they get. High level schools will disregard letters from Seniors and many will also not pay attention to Juniors. They consider that late in the process and they have already made decisions on who they want to recruit. As you move down in level, the later your letters will have an effect.

Visit a local college and talk to the coach. Learn about the recruiting calendar, eligibility standards and find out where they go to evaluate players. Ask him which camps and tournaments they scout at. All colleges subscribe to recruiting services that give college coaches a database of recruitable players with evaluations. By going to the right camps and tournament, will not only help you be visible to colleges but they will also give you an opportunity to be seen by the people that provide these recruiting services.

Ask your coach for help. Have him evaluate your ability; make recommendations of what level you might be able to play at. Ask him to contact schools and write recommendations. If your school films the games, make arrangements to get a copy of every game film.

Excel in the classroom. In spite of what you might hear in the media, every college player goes to class (though some are better students than others). The eligibility rules are very strict and precise and difficult to get around. If you don’t have good grades, you won’t be

able to play. Given a choice, every coach would rather have players that they don't have to worry about in the classroom. This is something you are in control of; don't let poor grades be an issue that eliminates you from consideration.

Don'ts:

Don't wait too long to get active with colleges. Too many players miss opportunities because they think coaches will just come and see them so they don't reach out to schools before it is too late. No one will recruit you if they can't see you play. Don't wait until your season is over.

Don't send unsolicited game film or highlight films. Colleges get 100's of these every year. If they get a game film from you and they don't know who you are in advance, odds are they will not get watched. Highlight films serve no purpose for a coach. When evaluating, coaches want to see mistakes as well as successes. They want to see how you react in negative situations as well as positive ones. Game films are best, but only after you talk to the coach and you know he is going to watch it.

Don't pay a person or a service for the promise of getting you recruited. In college basketball, services that charge the player a fee in return publicizing them and guaranteeing that the player will get recruited are not taken seriously. Mostly, their information is discarded in favor of information from people that they feel are more reliable. In the same regard, don't pay someone to make a highlight film for you. These are also not held in high regard by coaches and often go unwatched.

Don't have a parent call a coach and give an evaluation. Most coaches will be cordial and polite, but unless your parent is a coach, they will not consider this a reliable source. Coaches understand that you are their child and they are acting in your best interest, but as a parent, they cannot objectively evaluate your ability. In addition, most parents don't have the knowledge or background to understand the difference in levels of play or the needs of a particular program.

For more tips, drills, and articles about player development, you can visit this link:
<http://www.breakthroughbasketball.com/fundamentals/basketballfundamentals.html>

We continually add new information to www.breakthroughbasketball.com, so be sure to routinely check back.