



BALL HANDLING SKILLS & DRILLS

MASTER THE FUNDAMENTALS

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 & 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.
- **Jump stop** - when picking up a dribble, end with a jump stop landing in triple threat position.

BASIC DRIBBLING SKILLS

- **Control Dribble:** Use against defensive pressure. Body turned to the side, dribble near back knee, low and compact below knees with an arm bar.
- **Speed Dribble:** Use to push the ball up the court and on fast breaks. Pushed out in front of body, controlled, higher, and softer.
- **Retreat Dribble:** Use to avoid pressure and keep dribble alive. Dribble backwards with change in speed and direction.
- **Crossover Dribble:** Use to break down a defender. Keep dribble low, use head and shoulder fakes, explode to the basket with a speed dribble.
- **Whirl Pivot Dribble:** Pull basketball low during pivot, keep in same hand, low and quick with head up, explode out.
- **Behind the Back Dribble:** Use head/shoulder fakes, pull basketball hard around and through body, slap opposite back thigh during exchange.

BASIC DRILLS

- **Triple Threat Dribbling:** Practice switching ball into a dribble and across the body without moving feet, keeping low hard dribbles with eyes and head up.
- **Dribbling:** Move from triple threat to one-hand dribbling (front-to-back pulls, fake crossovers, between-the-legs, and behind-the-back crossovers).
- **Ball Handling:** Rolling ball around feet and legs (figure eights), moving ball without ground contact, and doing the same while dribbling.
- **Protecting the Basketball:** Offensive player with back turned protects ball inside a confined circle against a defender trying to knock it out.
- **Low Pound Dribble:** Keep below knees using fingertips (20 right hand, 20 left hand, 20 crossover low pounds).
- **Two Ball Dribbling Drills (Advanced):** Dribble two balls simultaneously in rhythm, opposite rhythm (machine gun), high/low combinations, and around the body or legs.
- **Dribbling Efficiency Drill (Advanced):** Walk forward and backwards while powerfully driving the ball between your legs.
- **Crossover Dribbling:** Respond to directional cues with crossovers (in front, behind, or between legs) while calling out numbers to keep eyes up.
- **5 Dribbling Maneuvers:** Hesitation, Crossover, Inside/Out, Trap Dribble, and Trap Dribble with Crossover.

FUNDAMENTAL WARM-UP DRILLS

- **Ball Slams Drill:** Slap basketball with fingers spread wide, trying to knock air out while rotating hands.
- **Fingertip Drill:** Pass basketball hand to hand in front of body using only fingertips from ankles to above head.
- **Around the World Drill:** Pass basketball around the body starting at ankles, knees, waist, and head.
- **Leg Wraps Drill:** Pass basketball around front knee or ankle with feet shoulder-width apart.
- **Figure Eight Leg Wraps Drill:** Pass basketball behind legs using alternate hands (can be performed with a dribble).
- **Figure Eight Quick Drops Drill:** Hold ball between legs, drop and switch hands from front to back, catching before it hits the floor.
- **Front-to-Back Quick Drops Drill:** Hold ball between legs behind body, drop and switch hands to the front.

DRIBBLING LINE DRILLS

- Players form lines on baseline/sideline with one basketball per line.
- Start in triple threat position, executing start/stop/change of dribble on voice command or whistle.
- Check for balance, arm bar, and head-up position (coach holding high fingers for players to call out).
- Require jump stops with pivots at turnaround points, working opposite hands on return.
- Additional line variations: **Speed Dribble**, **Speed/Control Dribble**, **Speed/Retreat Dribble**, **Speed/Crossover**, **Speed/Control/Whirl Pivot**, **Two Ball Dribble**, **Go-Stop-Change-Go**, and **Sit Dribble**.

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