

## Dynamic Warm-Up Drills

In the following sections you will find skills, drills and games that will help you teach the fundamentals of basketball. For some of the drills you will find links to our online instructional videos to help you better understand and see them in action.

### **Warm-Up & Fundamental Movement Drills/Games:**

Dynamic stretching i.e. skipping, carioca, high knees, lateral slides, etc. should be done at the beginning of practice. Static stretching should be done at the end of practice.

***“Follow the Leader” (K-3rd Grade):*** Basic game of follow the leader. You start off as the leader and get them moving. Jogging, sliding, jumping, lunging, skipping, the options are limitless. After they get the idea of the drill let the players take turns being the leader.

***“Coach Says” (K-3rd Grade):*** Game is similar to “Simon Says” but instead you have them perform tasks when “Coach says”. Things like jump on one foot, do 5 defensive slides to the left, show me Triple Threat position, jump stop, skip hop, etc. Use your imagination. When a player reacts when a command is given without “coach says” in the command, that player is out until the game is over.

***“Foot Fire” (K-2nd Grade):*** Spread players around the floor in a ready, defensive position. On your command, yell “Heat em up”. This signals to your players to start pumping their feet like pistons of an engine. When you say right your players will turn to the right; when you say left they will turn to the left. You can make this a game by mixing up your cadence, and the players who turn the wrong way will be “out”. Add variations to this drill by having the players slide to the specific direction you point to. Introduce the defensive drop-step and slide by pointing to the back corners of the gym (diagonal).

***“Red Light, Green Light (K-3rd Grade):*** Have all players line up on the baseline without a ball. On your call of “Green Light” players begin running towards the other baseline. Have them walk for the first couple of rounds. On “Red Light” the players must stop either with a stride stop or jump stop and get into the “ready threat” position. Continue drill to the other end of the court.

***“Frogs in a Pond” (K-2nd Grade):*** Place cones a couple of feet apart all the way across the court from sideline to sideline. Instruct players that they are now frogs who must jump across the pond (court) Start with having players jump with two feet from cone to cone. Then have them try jumping from one foot and land on the other foot from cone to cone.

***“Run to the Spot” (K-3rd Grade):*** Designate several areas around the court such as 3 point line, free throw line, low block, elbow, you can mark these with cones to make it easier. The players start close to you and on your command, they run to the spot you call out as quickly as possible and back. Emphasis is on starting in an athletic stance, a quick first step, and speed.

***“Run and Jump” (All Grades):*** All players spread out across base line. Have them run towards other baseline, on your whistle the players jump or leap from one foot and land on both feet. Focus should be on landing low and balanced. Give points to players who don't fall forward and who land balanced and low. Do several rounds.

***“Form Running” (4th-10th grade):*** Have players line up in five lines on the baseline. On coach's command, the first five players will execute one of the following form running movements, i.e. jogging,

high knees, butt kickers, slides, back pedal, carioca, skipping, hopping etc.

**“Mirror Shuffle” (All Grades):** Pair up players. Have players face each other along the baseline. No ball is needed. Have one player start as the defensive player. Players get into the defensive stance. The offensive player simply jogs in a zig zag manner down to the opposite baseline. The defensive player shuffles/slides to keep in front of the offensive player. When they get to the baseline players switch roles and proceed back to the start line. You can progress and add the ball into the drill. The offensive player dribbles zig zag down the court.

### **Footwork:**

Footwork is of utmost importance in all sports, but particularly in the game of Basketball.

It is recommended that players execute footwork as follows:

- Maintain a balanced position
- Move along straight lines whenever possible
- Change directions sharply
- Execute combinations of footwork patterns and fakes with and without ball

When introducing players to the fundamentals of footwork, start without the ball - it distracts beginning players and should only be introduced when players can correctly perform fundamentals without the ball.

**“Ready Position”** - The ready position is a balance stance that provides a strong base and therefore enables players to initiate movement in any direction.

To get a in a ready position, emphasize the following:

- Feet shoulder width apart
- Weight distributed evenly on balls of both feet
- Bend ankles, knees and hips
- Head up looking forward, back fairly straight
- Hands ready

**“Triple Threat Position”** - The triple threat position is an extremely important stance in basketball, as all offensive moments originate from this position. This should be one of the first things you teach your players, as it is something they will always use.

Whenever a player catches the ball, they should always face the basket and get into “Triple Threat” stance. This stance allows them to be an offensive threat. From the “Triple Threat” position, the player can 1. score 2. pass or 3. dribble - note that this is the order of the three that should be taught. Players should always look to the hoop to score to pose a threat, pass to an open teammate and dribble only to improve passing angle or to drive to the basket.

To get into the **“Triple Threat”** position, emphasize the following:

- Feet are shoulder width apart
- Shooting foot slightly ahead of non-shooting foot
- Weight is evenly distributed on balls of feet
- Knees bent, butt down, back slightly flexed
- Hold ball in shooting position

## ***Running***

Players need to be able to run forward, backward, change pace while running and change direction while running.

**Change of Pace Running** - change of direction running is the basis of many offensive and defensive maneuvers. For example, players often need to change from running forward to running backward, or vice versa when getting back on defense.

It is recommended that that players change direction as follows:

- Slow down, plant outside foot in the direction opposite of the new direction.
- Flex knee of the planted leg, and drop the hips to lower the body's center of gravity.
- Push forcefully off the outside foot, and simultaneously take a short, powerful step in the new direction.

## **Change of Direction Running Drills:**

**Relay Races (All Grades):** Players divide into groups of three or four, and line up at the baseline. The first player in each line runs backward from the baseline to the half court line, forward from half court line, backward from opposite baseline back to half court line. The next player begins, and the sequence is repeated.

**Whistle Drill (All Grades):** In this drill, players react to a whistle. On the first single whistle, players start running from the offensive ready position. At each single whistle players change direction. On the first double whistle the drill ends.

## ***Stopping***

Stopping in basketball is one of the most important fundamental skills. There are number of methods of stopping in basketball: the jump stop, stride stop and stutter stop.

In the **Jump Stop**, both feet land simultaneously and slightly staggered, making either foot available to be the pivot. In the **Stride Stop**, the feet land one after the other and are staggered, making the first foot to contact the floor the pivot foot. In a **Stutter Stop**, the land after a series of stuttering (rapid fire) steps to close out on offensive players and limit forward momentum.

When teaching the **Jump Stop**, emphasize the following:

- Player begins in a ready position and moves forward
- Body lowers, two feet land simultaneously, slightly staggered
- Body lowers, knees bend, arms balance
- Player ends up balanced sitting in their "Imaginary Chair"

When teaching the **Stride Stop**, emphasize the following:

- Player begins in a ready position and moves forward
- Body lowers, feet land one after the other, slightly staggered
- First foot to contact floor becomes the pivot foot
- Body lowers, knees bend, arms balance
- Body in ready position

When teaching the **Stutter Stop**, emphasize the following:

- Player begins in a ready position and moves forward
- Body lowers, feet slow down through a series of stutter steps
- Body lowers, knees bend, arms balance
- Body in ready position

### ***Pivoting***

Pivoting is one of the most important, basic skills a player must master. Pivoting occurs when a player rotates his/her body position, maintaining balance with one foot in constant contact with the floor.

Once a pivot foot is established it cannot be changed. For this reason, it is recommended that you teach kids to catch the ball with their hands, eyes and feet - in other words, catch with a jump stop so their pivot foot is not pre-determined.

A player can use a **Pivot** to:

- Protect the ball from a defensive player
- Improve view of the court while under pressure
- Square up to the basket
- Improve passing or driving lane
- Beating the defense by pivoting around him/her

When teaching the **Pivot**, emphasize the following:

- Keep pivot foot stuck to the floor
- Stay low
- Pivot quickly and aggressively
- Lead with elbows and ball
- Stay in "Triple Threat" stance

Types of pivots:

1. **Front Pivot** - in the front pivot, a player turns forward while pivoting on one foot. The player does not lose sight of the basket and remains in "Triple Threat" position throughout the entire movement.
2. **Reverse Pivot** - In the reverse pivot, the player turns their back away from where they were. Again, the player must remain in a "Triple Threat" position so they can protect the Ball.

### **Footwork Drills:**

**"Red Light, Green Light" (K-3rd Grade):** Have all players line up on the baseline without a ball. On your call of "Green Light" players begin running towards the other baseline. Have them walk for the first couple of rounds. On "Red Light" the players must stop either with a stride stop or jump stop and get into the "ready threat" position. Continue drill to the other end of the court.

**"Dribble Pivot - Squish the Bug" (3rd - 10th Grade):** Form 5 lines on the baseline. Each player should have ball in ready position. On coach's signal, the first 5 players dribble to the free throw line extended area (can also use cones) with right hand and perform a jump stop or stride stop. After the players execute the jump stop, they will perform a front pivot on their left foot ending in a ready position facing coach. On coach's command players will then perform an inside pivot on the same left foot ending in the position they started in. On the next coach's command, the players at the free throw line extended area will continue the drill onto the half court line and perform the same sequence of pivots. The next five players will execute drill to the free throw line extended area and continue following the first group. The

drill will end at the opposite baseline that the drill started at. At each line (i.e. free throw extended, half court and baseline) players will execute the pivot. On the way back, players will perform the same drill using their left hand and right foot as their pivot foot. Video available [here](#).

***“Pivot Drill” (All Grades):*** Players assume a “Triple Threat” position, on the coach’s command players perform both front and reverse pivots to protect the ball from the imaginary defender. Add defender to drill to make more game like.

***“Stop and Pivot Drill” (All Grades):*** At designated lines or cones on the court, have each player perform a jump stop or stride stop and perform either a front or reverse pivot. You can also have players start dribbling and stop at random signal or whistle.

***“Red Light, Green Light W/ Ball” (K-3rd Grade):*** Have all players line up on the baseline with a ball. In “Triple Threat”, on your call of “Green Light” players begin dribbling toward the other baseline. Have them walk for the first couple of rounds. On “Red Light” the players must stop either with a jump stop or stride stop and get into the “Triple Threat” position. On your command, have players perform either a front or reverse pivot. Emphasize staying low and being strong with the ball. On “Green Light” the players continue dribbling under control until the next “Red Light”. Continue drill to the other end of the court.

***“Multi Skill Warm-up Drill” - “Coach Pat’s Drill” (2nd - 10th Grade):*** Partner players into twos and spread the groups of two across the sideline or baseline. There will be 1 ball per partner group. On Coaches command, the first player will dribble 8-12 ft. and perform a jump stop. The player will then perform a front or reverse pivot toward their partner and execute a bounce, chest or over the head pass (Coaches’ discretion). After the player makes the pass, s/he will hustle back to the place where they started. Meanwhile, their partner is executing the same steps of the drill. The drill continues for 3-5 minutes. Add variations to the pivot and types of passes. Video available [here](#).