

# BASKETBALL SKILLS

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## Stable, Strong Stance

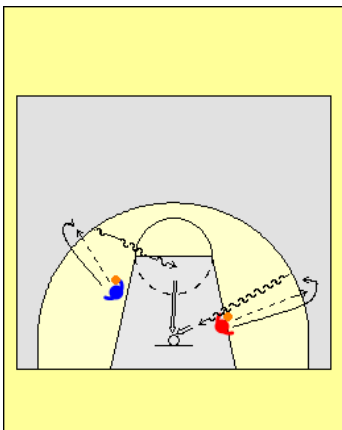
The first snowfall of the winter is always a reminder to pay a little more attention to the road conditions. This is especially true for new or younger drivers who do not have lot of experience driving under these conditions. Drivers in slippery conditions need to:

- Control their speed when they approach an intersection or other traffic. No sharp turns or breaking at high speeds.
- Be prepared for the other vehicles to stop or turn in front of them at any time.
- Be alert- constantly scan, anticipating what is going to happen.

Many younger and inexperienced players need to play basketball with the same caution as driving on icy road. Many players try to play at speeds which they cannot control. This leads to poor decisions, travels, poor shot selection, charges, turnovers and occasionally injuries. As their strength, skill and size improve they will be able to play at faster speed. The faster their operational speed becomes the better they will be able to play, but when learning too much, speed kills.

What follows is a progression for players to learn how to play under control and yet still be effective in attacking the basket. It is important to simplify the options to make decisions and execution easier. As the player's confidence grows, more speeds and options can be added. It will also illustrate how to take players through Phase A, B, C and D of teaching.

When first introducing a skill, the initiation stage, it is important to allow the players to practice at their own speed. They require a good demonstration of what the skill should look, feel and sound like. Allow them to process the information in their own way before providing too much feedback. It is also important that they understand why the skill is being done in a certain way. This will help them in formulating the skill in their mind. This is why the old idea of whole-part-whole is important. The whole shows the why. Using a games approach can also be effective in showing the why.

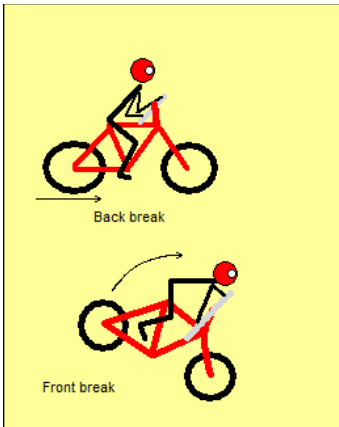


### **Self-Toss to One, Two Power Layup or Dribble Jump Shot**

The players toss the ball with back spin to a perimeter position somewhere outside the three-point line. Upon catching the ball and scanning the basket, the player drives to the basket for a one to two power lay-up. If attacking the foul line, the player does a dribble jump shot. These should be accomplished with a maximum of two dribbles. The foot work on the layup is a one, two count, with the outside foot hitting first, closely followed by the inside foot.

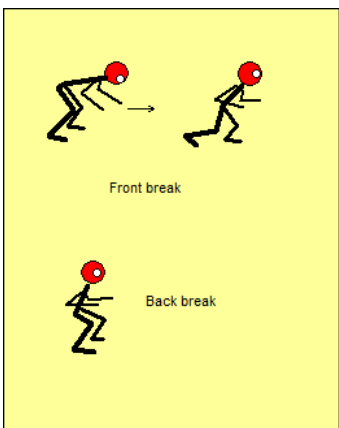
The quick one, two pull up jump shot is preferred over the hop to a jump stop when going for the dribble jump shot. It is quicker and

does not allow the defence to recover.



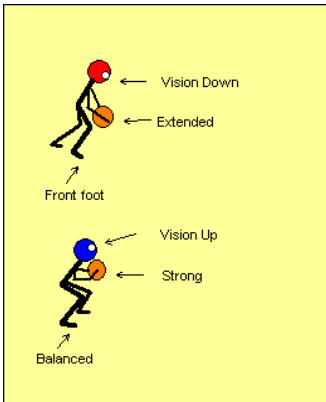
### Stopping

The first bike a child rides has breaks on the rear wheel. The brake was applied by peddling backwards. When travelling at speed and applying the back brakes, a slide would happen to learn control. More advanced bikes have hand brakes, one for the back and one for the front. When traveling at a high speed and slamming on the front brake the momentum carries forward (over the handle bars).



These same concepts apply to players when running at speed. If they try to stop quickly using the front of their feet, they will continue to rotate forward. They will either fall over or take an extra step to maintain their balance.

If they learn to stop by sitting down and using their back break they can remain on balance.



### Being Strong with the Ball

When coming to a stop with the ball, players need to quickly get into a strong position:

- Their vision is up
- Their weight is over the top of their feet
- Their elbows are under the ball, the wrist is flexed and the ball is tight to the body. They are a spring ready to uncoil.

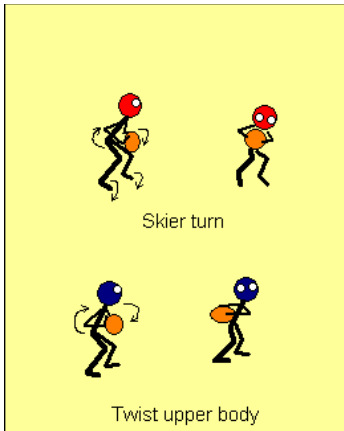
This allows them to:

- Absorb contact and remain on balance
- To pivot in any direction
- To make a strong, pass or shot

### The player who stops in a weak position will often:

- Have their eyes looking down
- The arms are extended with the ball down low or up high
- The weight is on the front of their feet. They often will have taken an extra step to catch their balance.

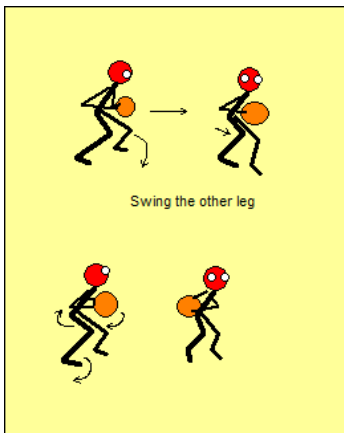
## Pivoting



### Twisting with the Ball

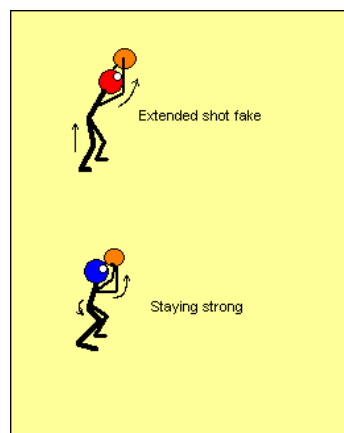
Players will often need to twist to protect the ball. This may not be a full pivot. Players who move the upper body, but not the lower body often get in caught in an off-balanced position.

Coaches use the analogy of the movement a skier makes when transferring weight from one ski to the other. There is a weight shift and the feet and hips both turn. Picture most sports where power is being generated. It is the twisting of the hips that produces this power and keeps the player in a strong position from which they are still explosive.



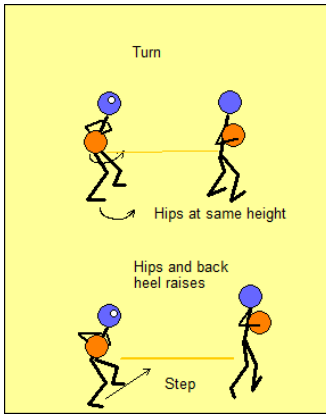
Too often when players pivot they are focusing on twisting their foot and swinging the other leg around. This often leads to dangerous twisting of the knee and the player ending up in a poor biomechanical position. They have no balance or power.

A pivot generates from the hips, The same skier twisting starts the motion of the pivot; one foot slides forward or back. This keeps the player in a strong position and safe since the knee and the toe are pointing in the same direction.



From this strong position players need to be able to pivot and fake. Often when faking, players will put their body off balance or weak by extending the ball, arms and legs.

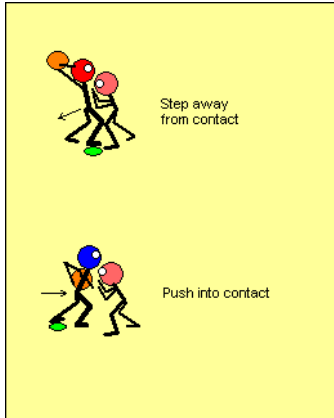
To stay strong when faking, players need to disassociate the action of the upper body from their lower body. When the ball is being raised, the lower body is lowering or sitting down. The faking with the eyes and shoulders is often more effective than raising the ball too high. Do not lose the C formed by the bicep, forearm and wrist. This keeps the player strong to shoot at any time.



### Stepping Versus Pivoting

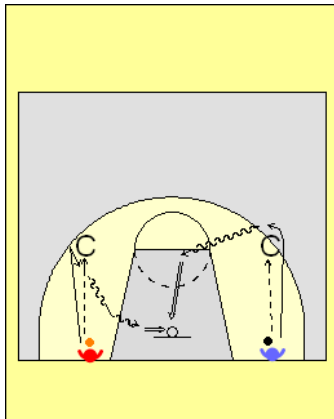
Many players actually step instead of pivoting. Stepping actually puts the player in an unbalanced position as the weight has shifted forward onto one foot. In a pivot the weight remains over top of both feet and the hips stay level.

In general, the pivot foot should be the foot opposite from the defence. Also, never put the ball behind the pivot foot.



### Why the Outside Pivot Foot?

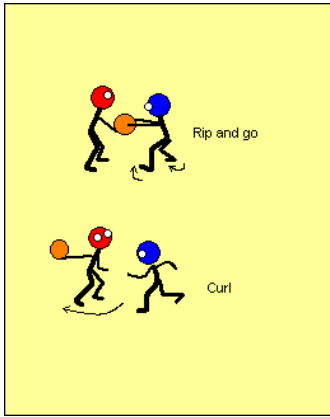
- It allows the players to carry a little more speed. A straight two-foot jump stop requires a lot of strength to come to a complete balanced stop.
- The player is stepping into the contact. If a bump occurs they can push into it. If the inside foot is used they often have to step back to gain their balance and power. This puts them in a weaker position.
- They can KOB (keep on back) the defender by cutting them off on the second step.



### Applying the Skill Against Imaginary Defenders

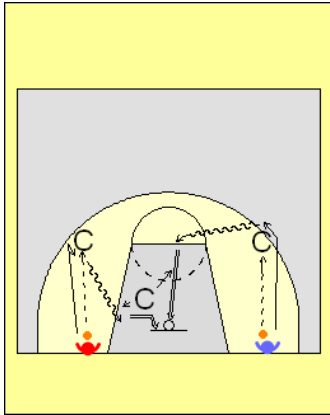
After having time to practice the skill at their own pace, players are ready to apply the skill in a game-like situation against imaginary defenders. This is an excellent drill to work on: the middle jump shot and baseline one, two power lay-up off a dynamic one-on-one from a wing catch.

The player starts on the baseline and passes the ball to the coach. Depending on the how the coach holds the ball the player either takes the ball baseline or middle. The coach controls the move. Mix it up.



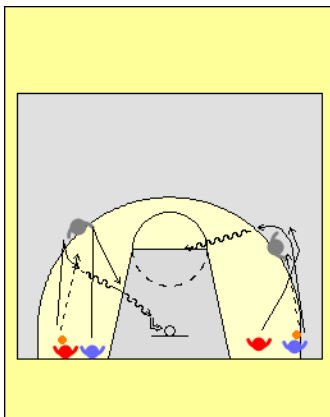
If the coach holds the ball out to the side, the player rips the ball and goes baseline. It is important to work on proper footwork to prevent traveling. A little skier hip turn puts the player in a strong athletic position before the dribble.

If the coach holds the ball behind them, the offensive player curls, takes the ball for the middle dribble jump shot. Try to take the ball from the coach with the outside foot down. This allows for a stronger and tighter curl. If the inside foot is used, the next step will lead to wide turn since it is with the outside foot.



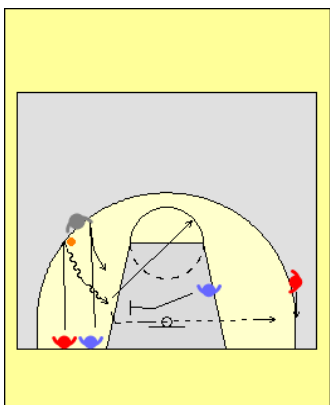
### Coach as a Guided Defender

Once the players have the correct technique, it is important that they apply the skill against a guided defender. Often the coach is the best person to do this at first as the other players may not have the body control to prevent rough or dangerous play. Eventually they will be able to assume this role if instructed properly.



### Apply the Skill Against a Live Defender

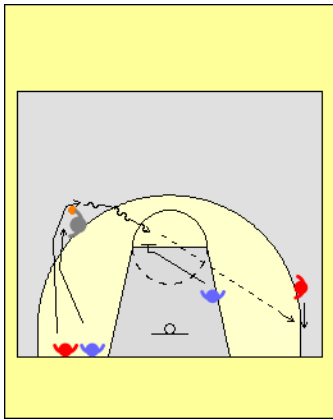
The offensive and defensive players line up on the baseline. When the ball is passed to the coach, both players run to the coach. The offensive player must read if it is the lay-up or curl by where the coach is positioned with the ball. The defender must slap the coach's other hand if it is the lay-up and chase the offensive player if it is the curl. In both situations the offensive player has a brief one-second advantage on the defender. If the player executes properly they should not lose the one-second advantage and make the basket.



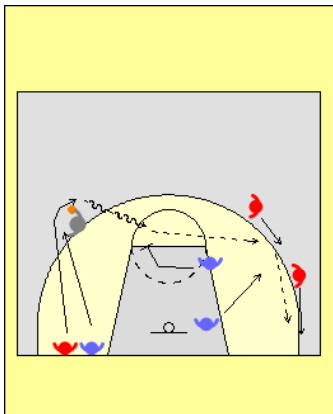
### Dynamic start to two-on-two

The players must read what to do when the defence rotates to take away the one-second advantage. By passing the ball to the open player the advantage is maintained. It is important that after passing, the passer exit the key to open space. Too often players who penetrate stand after passing and clog the key.

This pass does not have to be a fast pass. This is where the player can come to a one, two stop and pivot if need be. The accuracy and strength is more important when first learning than the speed of release.

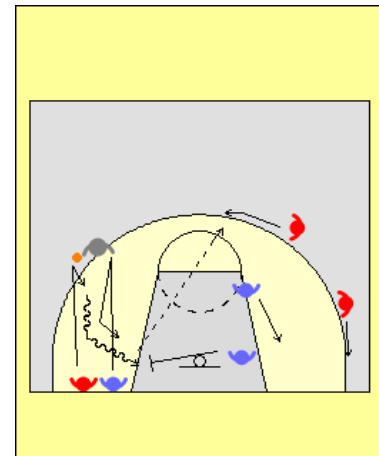


The same is true when penetrating to the middle. If need be, come to a balanced stop.

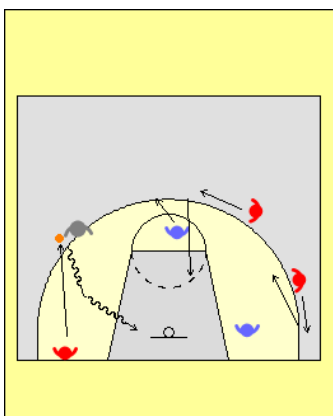


### **Dynamic Start to Three-on-three**

By adding another pair, the offensive player who gains the one-second advantage must read who is open when the defence helps. The coach controls if it is a baseline or middle penetration and the players are working on defence and offence at the same time. These can be teaching or learning drills depending on

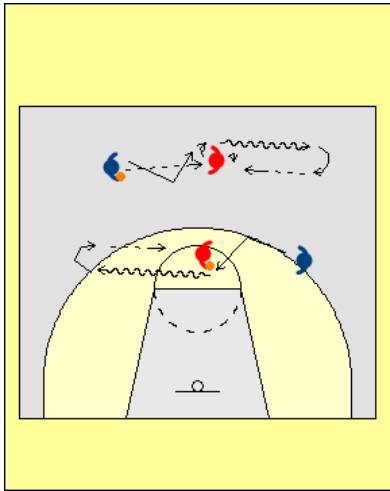


where the coach feels the players are in their development. Be sure to work from both sides of the court. It is also a good idea to let players transition out of this drill. To turn it into a competing drill the coach can have the players keep score. Use a games approach.



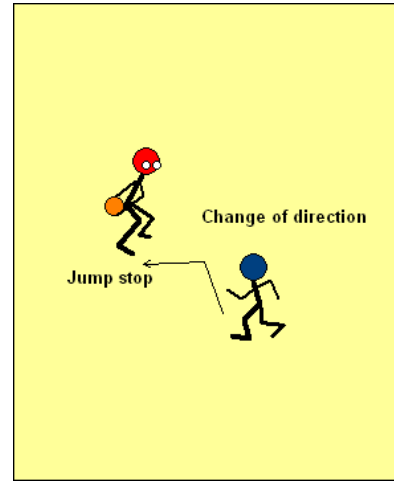
### **De-load – Three-on-two Secondary Cuts**

The coach must often de-load an activity rather than continue to load it. Here we have eliminated one defender. The player who drives pretends that help has come and they must come to a one, two stop. The other offensive players have moved on penetration. Once the offensive player pivots, the other offensive players must make a secondary cut based on what their defenders have done on the original cut. By eliminating the on-ball defender, it gives the offensive players a chance to have some success early. Load the third defender back into the drill when ready. These are good learning drills. Allow the players to play through mistakes. To compete allow transition. Scoring occurs for making use of the desired skills and concepts.

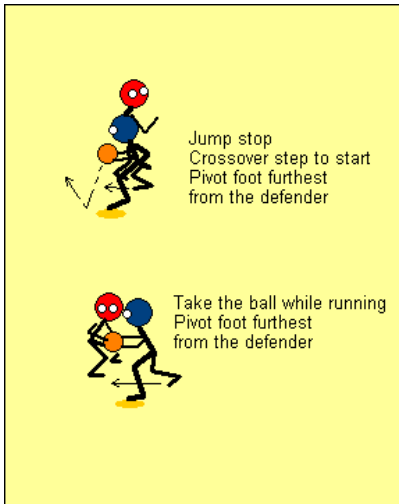


### Change of Direction Dribble Starts

Each pair of players has one basketball and spreads out in space. The players face each other from a distance of about three metres. The player without the ball shows their hands indicating a pass from the player with the ball. Upon receiving the pass the player with the ball holds it on the side near one hip. This indicates the movement of the player who made the pass.

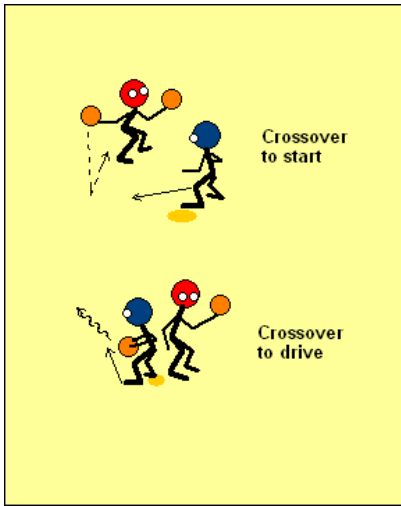


The player starts their movement away from the side of the ball, makes a change of direction cut back to the side of the ball, taking a handoff with a jump stop. Come to a complete stop. When first learning, the players will go too fast and end up travelling. In any fundamental drill being taught the intent is to start by teaching proper footwork. The players should start their dribble with a



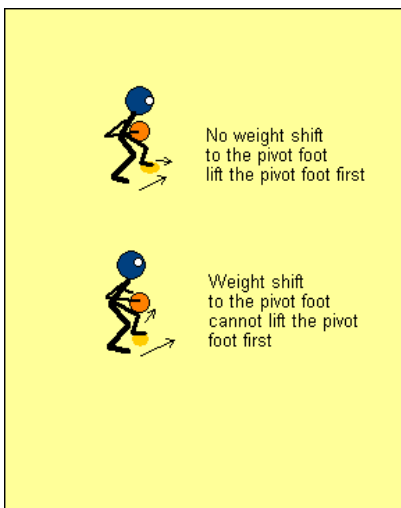
crossover step. The pivot foot is the foot furthest from the defence. This will allow the player to make space, but also resist any contact by the defender. This is a very important concept that players need to learn. The ball must leave the hand before the pivot moves. The player will dribble twice, jump stop and pivot to face their partner. When the partner shows hands the drill is repeated. Be sure to have the partner alternate the hip the ball is placed on.

In the second version of the drill the players need to work on taking the ball without stopping. The pivot foot is the outside foot. This allows the player to smoothly take the ball and put it down with a crossover step. Again the player goes for two dribbles, stops, pivots and passes when the hands are shown.

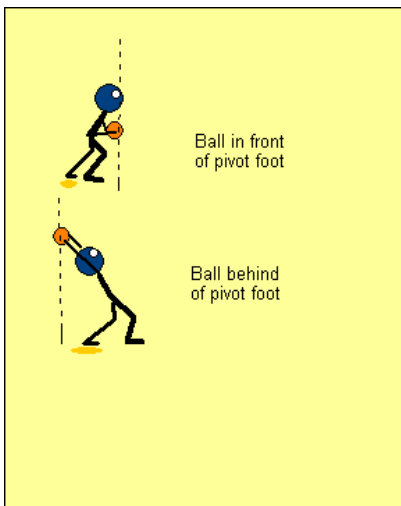


### Crossover Starts

Each player has a ball and faces one another from about one meter distance. The player executing the footwork passes their ball to the partner. Both balls are held out at shoulder height. The partner drops one ball. The player must start with a crossover step to retrieve the ball. The foot furthest from the ball moves first. Only two steps are required- the crossover step to start and the second step to square up. Next, the player must begin their dribble to the basket with a crossover step. This time they will use the outside foot to move first. The purpose of the drill is to learn to start with crossover steps. It is important to go slowly at first as players will often want to slide or lift the pivot foot before moving.



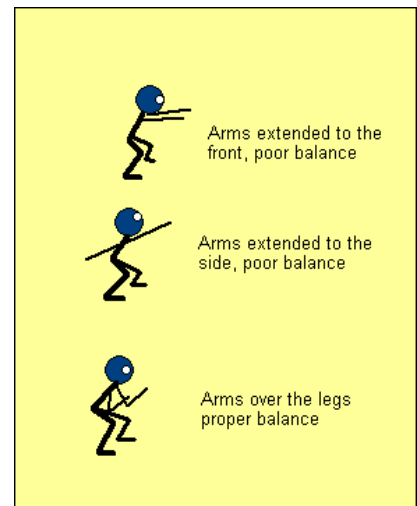
A key teaching point is to have the players emphasize a weight shift to the pivot foot. If this is done correctly it is impossible to move the pivot foot first. If no weight shift occurs, the pivot foot will lift or shuffle.



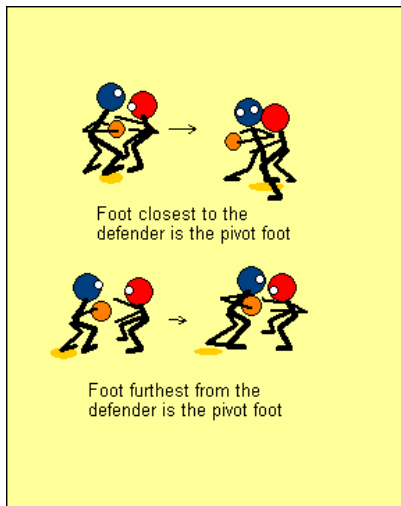
### Relationship of the Ball to the Pivot Foot

The player with the ball wants to keep the ball in front of the pivot foot. This allows the player to remain on balance.

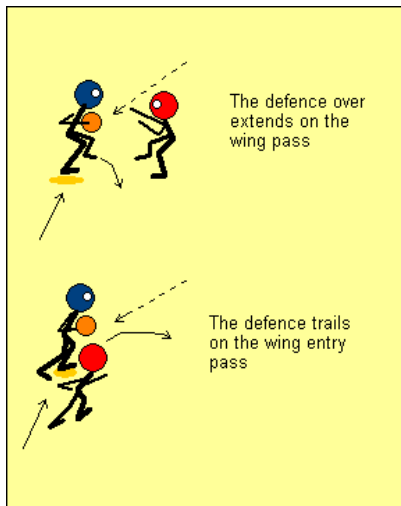
**Note:** Balance is when the player is in a bent athletic position with the arms over top of the knees. The position of the arms is crucial in staying on balance.





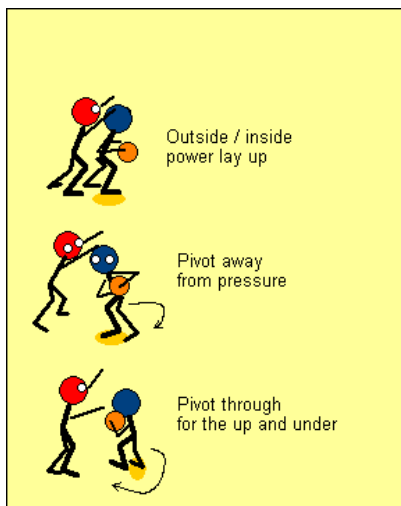


Players need to learn that the foot furthest from the defence is the pivot foot. This allows the offensive player to create space to avoid the pressure defence. It also allows the offensive player to push or resist any contact from pressure defence. When the foot closest to the defender is used as the pivot foot, the defender can step over top of the pivot foot and make the offensive player put the ball behind the pivot foot. There is no space in which to move. This very often leads to a dirty pass, one that does not help the offence create or maintain a one-second advantage.



When catching a wing entry pass, if the defence over-extends the player should use the foot opposite from the defence as the pivot foot. The player rips the ball low and starts to attack the basket with a crossover step.

If the wing player anticipates the defence trailing on the wing entry, the offensive player wants to catch the ball with the foot furthest from the defence as the pivot foot. The player uses a crossover step to attack the middle in one action, not stopping the ball. By using the outside foot the player can push off to resist and contact, but more importantly make the next step to the middle. If the ball was taken with the inside foot it is next to impossible to step to the inside on the next step.



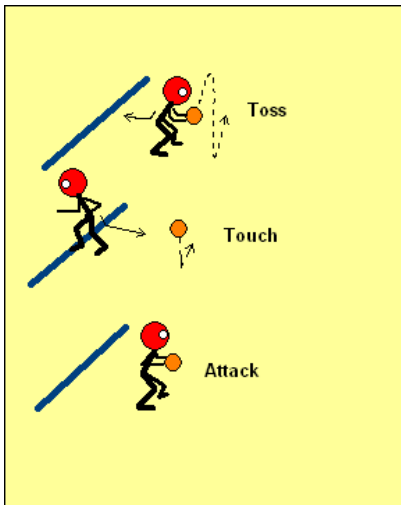
When attacking the basket, if a defender is present, it is recommended that the offensive player use an outside/inside power layup. This allows the offensive player to:

- Push against any contact from the defender.
- Cut off the defender with the last step
- Come to a balanced stop
- Fake before shooting
- Pivot away to create a pass if the defence covers the basket. The outside foot is the pivot foot- the one furthest from the basket.
- If the defence over-plays the passing lane, the offensive player can re-pivot for the up and under, at the unprotected basket.



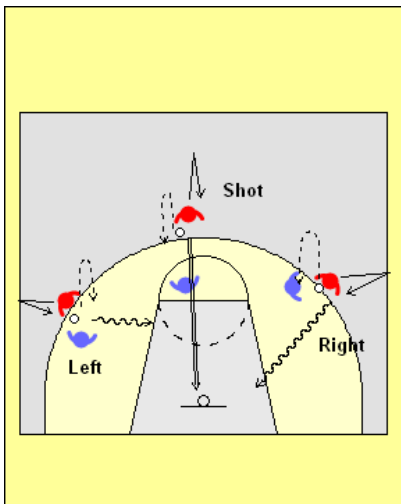
When offensive rebounding, if the offensive player cannot immediately put the shot back up, the pivot foot furthest away from the defence is the pivot foot. This allows the rebounder to make space for pivoting and passing.

## DRIBBLE START, JUMP-STOP AND JUMP-SHOOT



### Self-Toss and Touch

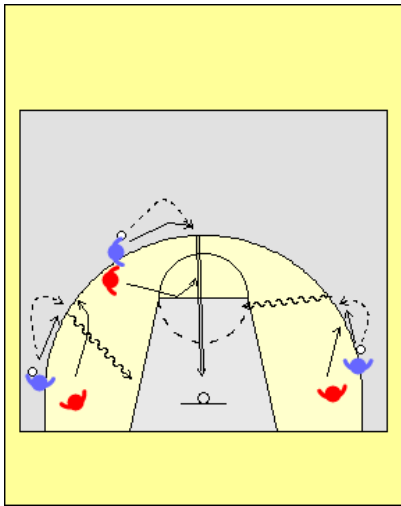
One way to introduce the jump stop to receive the ball is to have the players practice a self-toss and touch. The player tosses the ball up in the air with back spin. Before catching, the player pivots and goes and touches the sideline (it can be any designated touch line). On the return, the player catches the ball with a two-foot jump stop. This allows the player to use a crossover to start their move to the basket.



In Phase A, the players practice on air going right, left and shooting the ball. Give them time to figure it out for themselves. This is very important when first learning a skill.

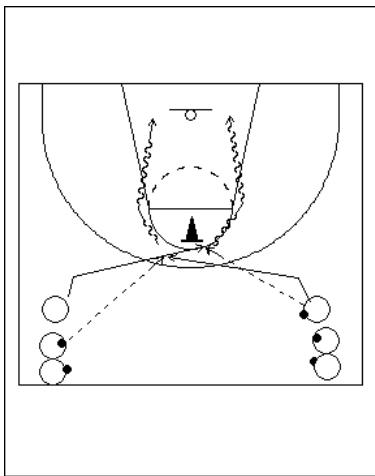
In Phase B, the coach provides the guides to the players. The player can go right, left or shoot.

In Phase C, the defence is live. Have the defender move from a help or deny position into ball defence.



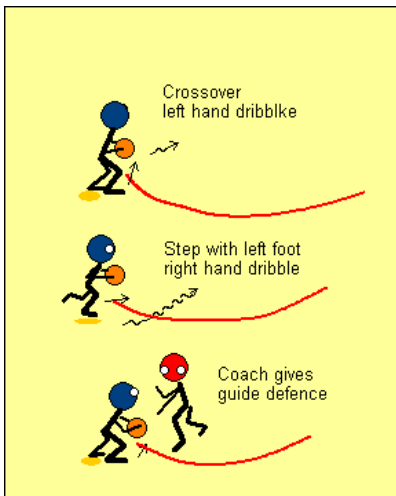
### Self-Toss

The players can also work on self-toss where they do not have to touch a line. This simulates a pass coming from the top to the wing or from one side to the other when a player cuts to the top. As before have the players go through the four various phases. Here they are working on the crossover move, the curl or the shot.



### Cross the Lane

The players line up in two lines outside the three-point line. Every player has a ball except the first player in one line. The first player makes a broken line, change of direction move to cut to the top of the three-point line. Be sure to show hands to indicate when ready to receive the ball from the passer. The first player in the opposite line times the pass to arrive just as the player is at the top. The player anticipates the defence over-playing and makes an immediate crossover move back in the direction they started. Finish with a jump shot or an outside/inside power layup. The player who made the pass makes a change of direction and cuts to the top to receive the next pass. Be sure not to cut until the player with the ball makes eye contact.



The next skill is to anticipate the defence trailing. Here the player catches the ball on the outside foot and curls to the basket. Attack the paint; do not dribble the ball to a spot outside the key. Do not stop the ball in either move. The intent is to take advantage of poor defensive positioning and create an immediate one-second advantage.

### Phase A – Do the Skill on Air

The player is working on catching the ball a) crossover move - on two feet facing the basket; rip the ball low and using a crossover move to attack the basket; b) curl – catch the ball on the outside foot,

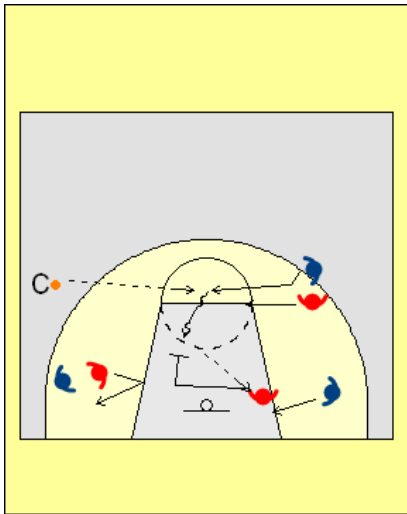
crossover with the inside foot as the ball is dribbled at the basket. Key points: eyes up, show target hand to catch, make use of the proper footwork.

### **Phase B – Coach Guides**

The coach guides the offensive player play giving a defensive read. This is helping the player with anticipation and making the proper read as to which move to use. It also helps the player attack the basket and not drift wide. The passer also has to work to make the pass in rhythm, proper timing and speed.

### **Phase C – Live Defence**

The drill is now executed by adding a live defender who is trying to stop the offensive player. The key is to anticipate the defensive action so that the offensive player can create the one-second advantage. It is best to give the offensive player a number of repetitions in a row. This way they can explore the different options.



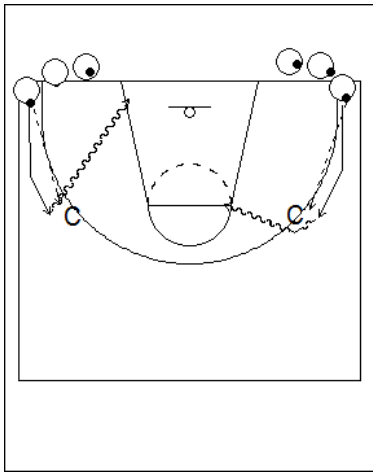
### **Phase D – Use in a Game-Like Situation**

Use this cut to start a two-on-two or three-on-three situation. Once the offensive player creates the one-second advantage they must read the next defender. Should I shoot or pass the one-second advantage on to a teammate who is open?

### **Other Ways to Load the Drill:**

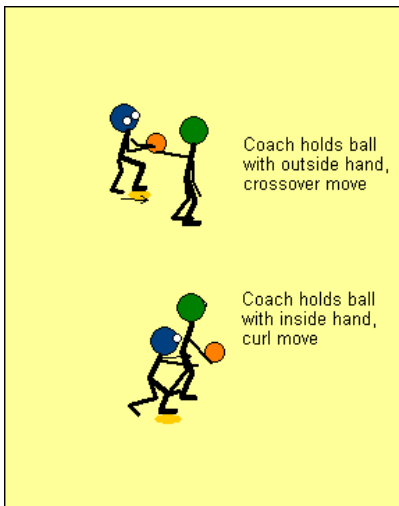
It is often a good idea to have a coach available for a pass. If the offensive player does not have a good pass encourage the player to pass.

**Note:** The same drill and progression can be used to practice cuts from the corner to the wing.



### Corner to Wing Cuts

Each player has a ball and lines up in two lines on the baseline. Two coaches line up at the attack spot (place where the three-point line and foul line extended meet). The first player in line passes the ball to the coach and runs up to receive a hand off. If the ball is in the outside hand of the coach, the player takes the ball, does a crossover move to attack the basket. Finish with an outside/inside power layup. If the coach holds the ball with their inside hand, the player curls behind the coach taking the ball with the outside foot and performs a dribble jump shot in the key. No more than two dribbles.

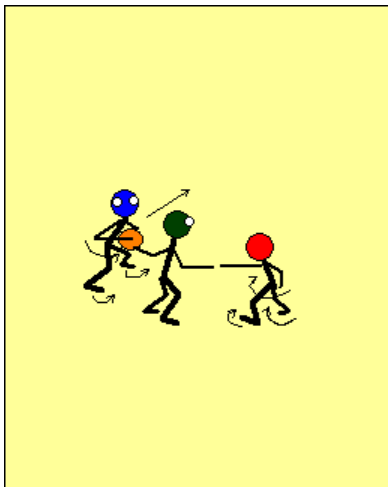


### Phase A – On Air

The coach has the players work on one move at a time, perfecting the footwork.

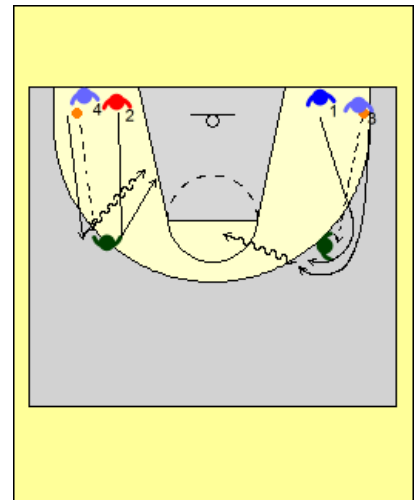
### Phase B – Coach Guides

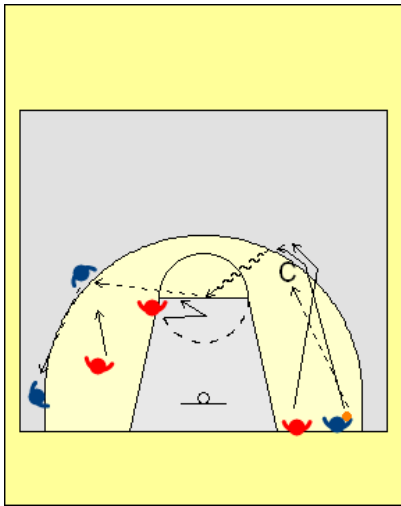
The coach mixes up between the curl and the crossover move.



### Phase C – Live Defence

Next, there is a second line of defenders to the inside of the offensive players. On the pass, both players run out to the coach. If the coach holds the ball with the outside hand the defender must touch the inside hand of the coach before playing defence. This creates a one-second advantage for the offensive player. If the ball is held with the inside hand, the defender must circle behind the offensive player who is going to take the dribble jump shot.

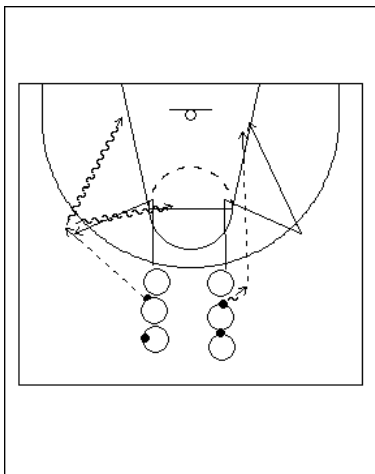




**Phase D – Use in a Game-Like Situation**

Here the same drill is used to initiate a three-on-three situation. The coach gets to decide the direction of the one-second advantage by where they hold the ball for the offensive players. Build in transition. Allow the teams to transition after the make or miss.

**Note:** This drill can also be done from other positions on the floor to simulate different cuts.

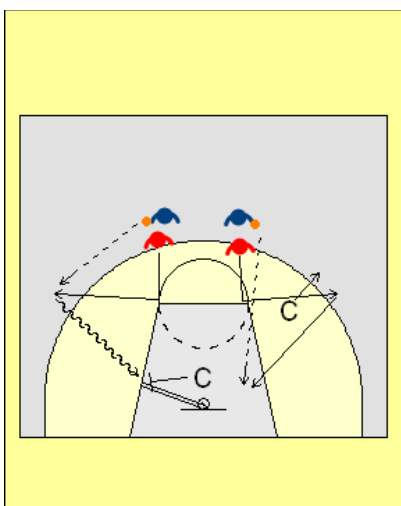


**Pivot/Flare**

**Phase A – On Air**

This drill works on footwork to catch the ball from a different angle. Two lines are formed at the top of the three-point line with every player with a ball except the first player in each one line. The first player in line cuts to the elbow and does a jump stop. The player does a pivot to open up to see the passer. The player then shows their hands as they cut to the attack spot to receive the pass. It is important that the pass is delivered when the player is outside the three-point line and able to catch the ball with a jump stop facing the basket. The pass is made and the player visualizes the defence either giving them a crossover move to the baseline or a crossover move to the middle. The

player can pull up for the jump shot or use the outside/inside power layup. The player also practices the back-door cut. The player should never catch the ball where they cannot be effective. If, when getting to the three-point line the player is not open, both the passer and the cutter need to recognize that it will be a back-door cut. The back-door pass is delivered in the key or a lob to the corner of the backboard on the side of the cut.



**Phase B – Coach Guides**

- The coach can give the player on the catch three reads:
- Play on the high side – crossover and attack the baseline
- Play on the low side – crossover and attack the middle
- Sag on the catch – shoot the ball
- Deny the pass – go backdoor

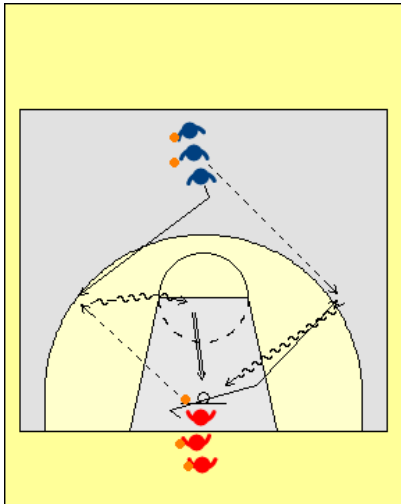
The coach can also give a read to the player after the catch. If the coach shows a chest in the drive line to the basket, the player should stop and shoot the ball. If the coach shows only an arm in the drive line, the player should do an outside/inside power layup. If the coach is not in the area the player can do the normal layup.

### Phase C – Live Defence

Have the players compete against a live defender. Again, it is best to let the player stay on offence for three or four repetitions in a row. This gives them a chance to use different moves and learn from them. If they have no shot they should learn to pass back to the coach rather than practice taking bad shots.

### Phase D – Use in a Game-Like Situation

Start a two-on-two, three-on-three or four-on-four situation with this cut and read. Once the play starts the player must learn to play one-on-one within the team. They can shoot or transfer on the one-second advantage to someone else.



#### Alternate Wing Entry, Flare

##### Phase A – On Air

Form two lines with every player with a ball except one player in the top line. The first player can choose to go in either direction and make a flare cut to the attack spot. The timing of the pass must be perfect. Catch the ball with a jump stop so the next step is a crossover step in either direction. The player anticipates the defence by visualizing the action of the defence. The player goes either middle or baseline. On the middle drive, the jump shot is taken. Baseline, the outside/inside power layup is used. After passing, the player at the bottom cuts out to the attack spot looking to receive a clean pass from the next player at the top. Catch the ball to start with a crossover in either direction. Players alternate.

### Phase B – Guide

The coach can give the offensive players reads on the catch.

## LAYUPS

### LAYUP FORM – Phase A



#### One, Two Power Layup

This layup is very important skill for players to learn who are driving into traffic. The footwork is the same as the regular lay-up starting with the outside foot followed quickly by the inside foot. The only difference is that the player does not continue to drive the outside foot up; they take off on both feet.