

Basketball Practice Drills

<http://www.basketball-plays-and-tips.com/youth-basketball-drills.html>

Clap pass

Here's a youth basketball drill to help with passing and awareness. Begin the drill with your players in a circle around you. Then, as you pass the ball to random players, each player must clap before they catch the ball.

Players must sit out if: they don't catch the ball, they don't clap or they clap when you fake a pass to them.

To make this basketball drill a bit harder, you can bring a second person into the circle to pass a second ball with you.

Keep It Bouncing

This youth basketball drill improves dribbling skills while playing a fun game. Have the players spread out and while they dribble, have them try to tap other players' balls out of bounds. A second dribble is not allowed. When a player loses a ball out of bounds, they must do five push ups or run one lap. Then they can again join the group. Be sure your players keep their heads up and use both arms. They become much better dribblers the more they try to tap away other players' balls (instead of just protecting their own ball).

You can vary the drill by making the court smaller or bigger.

Red Light Green Light

Improve dribbling with this youth basketball drill. Start the team at the baseline. Each player has a ball. The coach says "green light" and the players start to walk and dribble. When the coach says "red light", the players stop. When "red light" is said, the players can pick up their dribbles.

You can vary the drill with walking backwards, using opposite hands or making it a race. You could even penalize any errors in dribbling by making the offending players go back to the start.

Bean Bag Game

A youth basketball drill utilizing half-court that helps dribbling control where players must be able to continue dribbling the ball while picking up and dropping bean bags. One team begins at mid-court with another team at the corners of each baseline. Each team has one ball. Put some bean bags in a pile in the key circle. On the coaches command, one player from each of the three teams dribbles into the key, and, while still dribbling, bends down and picks up a bean bag. Each player must then dribble back to their team while still dribbling, deposit the bean bag and give the ball to their next teammate. This process continues until all the bean bags are gone, then they are able to steal bean bags from the other teams. After two minutes the team with the most bean bags wins. Only one bean bag is able to be taken at one time. Make sure all players keep dribbling all the time.

You can add some variations to this youth basketball drill: add in more teams, add more players into each team, extend the time of each game, etc.

Speed Lay-up Drill

A youth basketball drill to work on lay-ups using the backboard. It improves the skill of getting the rebound and putting it right back up and eliminates the bad habit of putting the ball down in the key. The coach times player for 1 minute. Player 1 starts with the basketball and stands to the right of the basket. The coach says "go" and player 1 shoots a lay-up (using the backboard) from the right side as the team counts aloud the number of shots made and also offers encouragement. Whether the shot is missed or made, the player then goes to left side. Continue alternating sides as the team counts how many are made in one minute. The coach may decide to give stronger players 45 seconds and weaker players one minute. Players shouldn't dribble between shots.

You can vary this youth basketball drill by having the players stay on the right side for one minute continuously instead of alternating sides. Then have them work the left side for one minute.

Ball Scramble

This is a drill that works on reaction to loose balls. The players start spread out across court and each player has a ball. On the coach's command, all players drop the ball and run to half-court or bleachers, and then return. The coach removes one ball while the players are running. The player that loses their ball is now out. As the players diminish, start to reduce the playing area and really encourage going after the ball and hustle. Run this drill for 5-10 minutes and reward the winner by allowing them to sit out the next round, sprints, etc.

You can vary this drill by removing more than one ball at a time.

Who's afraid of...

This fun youth basketball drill involves your whole team and teaches everyone to dribble under stress. Start the drill with one player standing at half-court with a ball. Have them call out, "Who's afraid of..." (insert their name here). All the other players have their own balls and try to reach the opposite side of the court without getting "caught" by the one at half-court. Anyone caught by a tap on the back helps the one in the middle the next time.

If you don't have a ball for each player, you can vary this youth basketball drill by grouping them into teams of two. They stay together by holding hands as one of them dribbles the ball.

Zigzag Defense

This drill practices one-on-one defense and dribbling against defensive pressure. Players are divided into pairs and given a lane down the basketball court in which they are to stay. One player dribbles the ball while the other defends, forcing the ball handler from one side to the next by staying low and square to the dribbler's body and preventing the dribbler from dribbling straight up the court. The player with the ball must advance slowly upcourt by dribbling from one side to the next, crossing over effectively when the side is reached. Players should alternate between dribbling and defending in order to benefit from this drill.

Wing-to-Wing Drill

This drill teaches girls how to catch a ball while driving to the lane and then put up a shot. All members of a team line up at one wing in single file. The coach stands underneath the hoop with the basketball. Players take turns running toward the hoop and catching a pass from the coach as they approach. The players can choose how they score, either with a layup, a jump shot or a pump fake leading to a layup or short shot. The coach takes the rebound and prepares to pass to the next player while the one who has shot runs over to the right wing. The drill is repeated from the right side.

Full Court Layups

Full court layups are a well-known basketball drill. Players should form two lines of equal length. Each line should assemble at one end of the court where the baseline meets the sideline on the right side. The first two players in each line have balls. The first player in each line should begin dribbling and running toward the opposite basket, then taking a right-handed layup, getting his own rebound, and passing the ball to the next person in line. The second player in each line should do the same, but begin when the player in front of her reaches half court. After six to 10 minutes, players should move their lines to the left side of the court for left handed layups. Full court layups work on speed, ball handling, and lay-up skills.

Pass and Replace

This drill is a good warm-up drill that can be used to loosen up and practice shooting and passing. It also helps form some basic understanding of how set formations and plays work to move the ball and create openings. Six players are required for the play and are numbered one through six. Player 1 stands under the basket facing the court, with player 6 behind her. Player 2 is on the left wing and player 5 on the right wing, and player 3 stands on the left baseline with player 4 on the right baseline. Player 1 starts the drill by passing the ball to player 2, then running to take her spot. Player 2 passes to player 3 and runs to her spot and so on, until player 5 receives the ball. Player 5 then drives in for a layup. Player 6 collects the shot and repeats the drill, with player 5 replacing player 6 underneath the basket. This should continue until all six players have shot a layup.

3-on-2 2-on-1 Fast Break Drill

The 3-on-2 Fast Break Drill emphasizes ball handling, passing, shooting, and defensive skills. Begin with two players on defense in the back court. One player should be positioned at the top of the key, while the other defender should be positioned in the paint. Three offensive players should set up at the other end of the court, one in each passing lane. The player in the center lane should have the basketball. The fast break begins when an outside wing yells, "Outlet!" The center player then passes the ball to the player who called for the ball. The three offensive players run a fast break on the two defenders, attempting to score.

When the shot goes up, the shooter sprints to the opposite end of the court to play defense. The two former defenders now run a 2-on-1 fast break. The other two offensive players remain at the opposite end of the court to play defense against the next group of three. To maximize effectiveness, this drill should be run continuously. This requires at least nine players so that individuals can rotate in and out of positions seamlessly. This drill will not only polish fundamental skills, it is also a great conditioning tool.

BASKETBALL PREGAME DRILLS

Jog and Pass Drill

Divide the team equally into two sides and form a line at half court, facing one another from opposite sidelines. Have one ball start in the hands of the first player on one side, and have that player pass to the first player in the other line. The original ball handler then runs across the court to the other line and joins in the back. The new ball handler passes back across to the first player in the other line and runs across to join the back of that line. This can carry on as long as the team likes; the drill is intended to warm up the leg and passing muscles

Layup/Jump Shot Drill

Have the team form two lines, each positioned behind the three-point line about 5 feet to either side of the top of the key. Give the ball to the line on the right side, with the first player dribbling in for a layup. Another player from the left side line runs down to collect the layup rebound. The shooter runs back to the rear of the line on the left side, and the rebounder passes the ball to the next person in line on the right side. This continues for a full rotation or two, until every player has served both as a shooter and a rebounder. To make this exercise a jump-shot routine, move each line about 5 feet closer to the baseline, then have the left side pass to the players on the right side, shooting a layup from the area of the foul line. This time, the shooting player collects his rebound and returns it to the left side, while the passing player joins the back of the shooter's line.