



# Improving Your Offensive Skills & Techniques

*Developing and mastering basketball skills is not easy task. It is a never ending process requiring countless hours of practice and refinement.*

Basketball is not a game of offenses and defenses, but a game of effort and execution. Before any offense or defense can be implemented, players must possess basic basketball skills. Offensive fundamentals can be broken down into two categories: with and without the ball. With the ball or ball handling skills include shooting, pivoting, passing, and dribbling. In playing without ball, players must move with a purpose. These techniques include creating leads (getting open to receive the ball), setting & using screens, post flashes and basket cuts and rebounding missed shots.

## Shooting Techniques

### Physical Fundamentals

Shooters are made, not born. Good shooting requires constant practice.

Keep the ball close to chest in a triple threat position ready to pass, dribble or shoot.

Gather yourself and be on balance before shooting.

Take off on the proper foot, which is the opposite foot from the shooting hand.

Hold the ball high with wrist back and elbow pointing at the basket.

Use fingertip control shooting a soft shot. Use medium arch with natural backspin for most shots.

Use the center of the rim as a target area.

Correct follow through is essential for accuracy. As the ball is released, the wrist should snap down and slightly outward with the arm fully extended. Keep arm extend until ball is in the basket.

Use of legs is important in shooting. The longer the shot, the more knee bend is required.

### Mental Fundamentals

The secret to good shooting is countless hours of hard work and determination.

Shoot with confidence. Passing up a good shot is just as bad as shooting a bad shot.

Practice the shots which you expect to get during a game.

Know your shooting range. No wild or hope shots.

Don't keep experimenting. Practice and develop your own natural shot.

Shoot with rhythm and coordination.

Follow your shot. Rebound.

Acknowledge and compliment the passer. Complimenting the passer will result in receiving more and better passes.

## Dribbling Techniques

### Physical Fundamentals

In open court, use a head up, speed dribble pushing the ball ahead using a waist high dribble.

When closely guarded use a low, controlled dribble.

Assume a low bent knee stance with head and eyes up at all times.

Use a spread hand, low dribble using finger tip control.

Always dribble with the hand away from the defender.

Protect the ball by keeping the body between the ball and the opponent.

Employ changes of pace and direction to get past a defender.

*Front Crossover* – switching from one hand to the other in front of the body.

*In and Out* – this is a fake front crossover dribble. A front crossover dribble is started with a strong head and shoulder fake, but instead of switching hands the ball is retained in the same hand continuing dribbling in the same direction.

*Behind Back* – switching from one hand to the other behind the back.

*Spin* – switching hands by turning back to the defender using a reverse pivot.

*Between Legs* – switching hands by bouncing the ball between the legs.

Always end the dribble with a shot or pass.

### **Mental Fundamentals**

Develop the ability to dribble and change directions with either hand.

When used properly, the dribble is a real asset to a team. However, used improperly it can wreck a team from both a morally and technically.

Never dribble when it is possible to pass. Too much dribbling ruins team play.

Dribble with a purpose. To advance the ball, drive to the basket or to avoid trouble.

Never trap or one bounce dribble.

The dribble is the slowest means of advancing the ball down the court on a fast break.

Stay away from the corner trap zones.

Avoid dribbling violations such as double dribble, palming the ball and traveling.

On long passes always lead the receiver to the basket. Never pass directly to them.

## **Passing Techniques**

### **Physical Fundamentals**

Take pride in your passing and work hard to perfect all types of passes.

*Chest* – two handed pass thrown from chest level.

*Bounce* – a pass that bounces off the floor to a receiver.

*Baseball* – a long distance, one hand over arm pass.

*Push Pass* – a one handed pass thrown from the shoulder usually off a dribble.

*Two Hand Overhead* – a two handed pass thrown from directly overhead.

*Behind Back* – a one handed pass thrown behind the back.

*Lob Pass* – over the top pass, leading the post or receiver to the basket.

Passes should be sharp and accurate. Do not "float" the ball to the receiver.

Eliminate all unnecessary movements like winding-up.

Close the distance and pass through or by the defender not over.

Do not telegraph or stare down you receivers, use split vision and fake in the opposite direction of the intended pass.

Pass to a specific target such as a hand or finger not to the person. Target is usually on the side opposite the defender.

Move with a purpose after making a pass. Cut, screen, rebound, etc. do not stand still.

### **Mental Fundamentals**

A great passer is a valuable asset to a team.

Levels of passing:

*Level One.* Throws the ball to an area just to get rid of it. Common among beginning players.

*Level Two.* Just throws the ball toward a teammate no matter if they are ready to receive it or not. This is why players get hit by the ball during practice when just standing around.

*Level Three.* Surgeon. Passes to a specific target (hand or finger). Leads receivers into good shots. Rarely throws the ball away.

*Level Four.* Magician. A rare individual that can create open shots for teammates. Makes no look passes. Never throws the ball away.

Maintain proper spacing. Most passes should be made within the 12' to 15' range.

Never pass or save the ball under the opponent's basket.

Move the ball. The ability to anticipate and make good, quick passes cannot be over emphasized.

Be clever, not fancy. Clever passes will receive praise while fancy ones will bring ridicule.

Don't just pass to get rid of the ball. Always have a definite purpose in mind.

Do not pass to anyone who does not verbally or with body language call for the ball.

The ability to move the basketball and hit the open man is a characteristic found in all great players and teams.

## Offense Without the Ball Techniques

### Physical Fundamentals

Move with a specific purpose. Each movement should result in a pass reception, screen, good rebounding position or a chance to score.

Work for the ball, do not stand and call for it. Use fakes, change of pace and direction to get open.

Meet all passes. Receive the ball with the inside foot forward for protection. Catch the ball with finger tips and pivot into a triple threat position.

Set and use proper screens. Run your defender into the screen. When setting a screen be stationary and maintain vision on the ball.

Be alert to execute the pick and roll against defensive switches.

Back cut to the basket when the defender overplays or takes their eyes off you.

In executing a back cut, cut all the way to the basket. Do not head fake and fake out the passer.

Run wide lanes on fast breaks.

Offensive rebounding is mainly an individual effort requiring agility and movement.

Assume every shot will be missed, and gain inside position.

*Step in Front* – technique of gaining inside position by simply stepping around a defender who does not box out.

*Arm-over* – move that can be use to step around a defender who boxes out.

*Spin Move* – technique used to combat and gain inside position against a strong defensive rebounder.

Want the ball! Hustle and determination play important roles in rebounding offensively.

### Mental Fundamentals

Ability to fake direction of movement is as important as faking a shot or pass.

It is a must to keep your defender occupied to prevent sagging and double teaming.

When setting screens be stationary. It is up to the receiver to run their defender into the screen.

Be alert for situations in regard to out-of-bounds, jump balls, free throws, sudden presses or executing any maneuver that can help the team.

Study the moves of your defender and the habits of other defensive players who might guard you in order to decoy them or set them up for your own moves.

When rebounding offensively, you must be aggressive and develop an attitude as well as an instinct for the ball.

When a shot is taken establish good rebounding position or maintain defensive balance if assigned.

On offensive rebounds, timing is just as important and height or jumping ability.

Never get caught too far under the basket where you are only in position to catch the ball if it goes through the basket.

## Things to Remember About Offense

1. Winning basketball is a team effort with all five teammates receiving help from one another.
2. Offensive fundamentals must be mastered before any offense can be run. A play, no matter how good, will never be successful unless it is executed properly.
3. Move the ball with sharp, accurate passing. Pass to the open man. You will be surprised how many times that's you.
4. Get open for shots before you receive the ball. Work for the ball, do not stand and call for it.
5. Meet all passes assuming a triple threat stance (shot, drive, & pass) upon receiving it.
6. When over-played by a defender, back cut to the basket and shoot over any defender that sags off.
7. Avoid the trap or one bounce dribble. Always stop your dribble with a shot or pass.
8. Never dribble when it is possible to pass. Too much dribbling ruins team play.
9. Develop pride in your passing and work hard to perfect all types of passes.
10. Take good shots. Make sure no teammate is open for a better shot.
11. Assume every shot will be missed and rebound. Getting second and third efforts are imperative.
12. Without the ball, move with a purpose. Each movement should result in creating a lead, setting or using a screen, basket cut, or rebounding position.
13. Free throw shooting is a repetitive, neuromuscular skill, the more you practice, the more accurate you will become.
14. Use the change of pace and direction effectively to get open. Make sharp cuts and avoid moving in arcs.
15. Acknowledge and compliment every assist, save, clutch rebound or other valuable play by a teammate.
16. Back cut to the basket or clear out when a teammate dribbles towards you.
17. Posting up is not limited to just big players, look for all teams to exploit size mismatches at any position. On mismatches is much better to take your defender inside than to go one on one outside.
18. It is better to be a second late than a second early on offense.
19. Always know how much time and how many time outs are left in a game.
20. Bill Russell, one of the most dominant players ever to play the game, is a reminder how great you can become without being a high scorer.