

Our biggest tip is **never criticise your child's skill level at the game or on the way home. Leave that to the coach. Make basketball a positive experience for your kids.**

Below are shooting fundamentals to watch with your kids. Please drum these into kids early. We find bad shooting habits at U14 and older are bad habits for life.

a) Most of the shot's strength comes from the legs. So it is really important to use the legs and release the ball at the top of the jump. The major mistake made by juniors is to heave the ball like a shot put - and this terrible habit stays for the rest of their career. Using the legs will avoid this habit from forming.

b) The feet should be shoulder width apart or just a touch wider. The same foot as the shooting hand (right foot for right handers) can be half a foot forward.

c) Knees bent ready to jump.

d) Chest squared up to basket. This is one of the biggest mistakes players make game day. If the player is not squared up while shooting, it dramatically reduces the shot making percentage.

e) Tell the players to hold the ball, one handed with the palm up, in their shooting hand. This is how the ball should sit in the hand when taking the shot. Keeping the other hand off the ball, bring the ball to the shooting position. Make sure there is a gap above the palm, the fingers are curled and all finger tips are gripping the ball.

f) The shooting forearm should be vertically straight. This is crucial as a straight forearm ensures the shot is straight. Then all the player has to worry about is correct distance.

g) The non shooting hand just steadies the ball. Ex-netballers will often use both hands to shoot. Stamp this bad habit out as it will result in many blocked shots in a game.

h) In preparing to shoot, the knees bend and the shooting elbow comes down as the body becomes a loaded spring. A really important feature for the coach to watch here is that the forearm stays perfectly vertical. Probably the worst habit players develop is to twist the elbow when the player winds up to shoot.

i) Where should the eyes focus? Some players prefer the back of the rim, others the rear. The rear is probably the most common, but whatever is the most successful for the player.

j) As the player takes the shot, the non-shooting arm stays in place while the shooting arm is extended so that the elbow is level with the eyebrow. A common word short-cut here is "elbow to eyebrow". Another common bad habit is for the shooting arm to spring back as soon as it straightens. This will typically result in the shot falling short. So a good training technique is for the arm to stay elbow to eyebrow after the ball leaves the hand.

k) The perfect shot occurs when the ball rolls off the index and middle fingers as back spin is also added. To do this, the shooting hand should end up in a "goose neck" such that the shooting hand is 90° to the shooting arm. Ensure the shooting hand falls straight. Another common bad habit is for the shooting hand to fall to the left or right upon releasing the ball - and the ball will travel in the same direction.

Dribbling

Fundamentals to focus on are as follows:

- Keep a firm wrist and the whole forearm goes up and down with the ball. Don't slap the ball. Don't bend the wrist downwards. If anything, the wrist bends upwards only.
- The fingers should be curled so the ball only makes contact with the fingers, not the palm.
- The dribbler leans forward from the waist to improve speed and balance. The body position for dribbling and defence are very similar.
- The dribbler should control the ball so that it does not bounce higher than the waist. The non-dribbling arm should be in a similar position to the dribbling arm so that it is harder for defenders to attack the dribbler from the weak side.