

## Individual Skill Development: The Key To Team Success

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BEING A FORMER college coach and current instructor who specializes in individual skill development, I have been involved with teaching and training countless numbers of players at all levels. With today's youth being bigger, faster, stronger and more athletic, the game of basketball has risen to new heights.

One constant that remains is the ability to improve individual offensive skill levels. Skill can be the great equalizer to physical status and can separate the great players from the good players — and the good players from the average players.

When I'm working with a young player, my goal is to improve his or her skill level in key areas such as shooting, ball handling, footwork, cutting balance, post work and use of screens.

Incorporating some time-tested "basketball concepts" into the workouts enhances the client's ability to improve their basketball IQ as well.

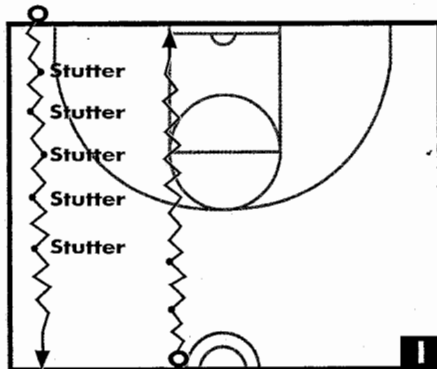
During these training sessions and in any drill that my players are participating in, I strongly emphasize repetition, focus and fundamental technique with each and every drill to achieve maximum results. These concepts are continuously stressed no matter if the drill is individual or team orientated.

### BALL HANDLING DRILLS

During workouts, we'll begin by incorporating ball-handling drills to improve ball-handling balance and dribbling versatility through a series of escape moves.

The first drill we utilize is a stutter-hesitation dribble drill. While the players are doing this drill, be sure to observe and emphasize four basic dribbling rules:

1. Dribble with vision.
2. Dribble below the knee.
3. Maintain a low dribbling base.
4. Dribble the basketball using only the wrist and fingertips.



**DIAGRAM 1: Stutter-Hesitation-Explosion Dribbling Drill.** The player begins on the end line of the court and takes two right handed dribbles forward and with the third dribble, shuffles his or her feet forward in a left-right combination. Immediately after the third dribble, the ball handler explodes out with a speed dribble to half court, using only the right hand.

At half court, the dribbler alternates hands and dribbles back to the original end line while using only the left hand and utilizing the same stutter-hesitation-explosion concept.

Repeat the drill for 4 to 6 repetitions.

### OTHER DRIBBLE MOVES

★ **Escape Dribble Drill.** The following escape dribble is performed from the inside out. The ball handler takes two forward dribbles and turns the basketball halfway to the middle of his or her body and pulls the ball outside the right leg and then exploding out with a speed dribble forward to half court. Repeat the drill going back left handed.

★ **Step-Back Dribble (Back-Off Dribble) Drill.** Incorporate the step back or Back-Off dribble by taking two forward dribbles with the right hand and step with the opposite knee (left) forward, then pull back aggressively to create distance and explode out by speed dribbling to half court. Repeat the drill going back left handed.

★ **Cross-Over Dribble Drill.** Incorporate the cross-over by having the dribbler take two right handed dribbles forward and then cross the ball over to the left hand, keeping the ball below the knees to half-court. Repeat the drill going back from half-court to the end line with the left hand.

★ **Double-Move Drill.** Double-moves are used to decoy the defender and then escape with a secondary dribble move. The dribbler takes two dribbles with the right hand going forward and crosses-over from right to left and then left to right in the sequence thus creating what is known as a double-cross-over move.

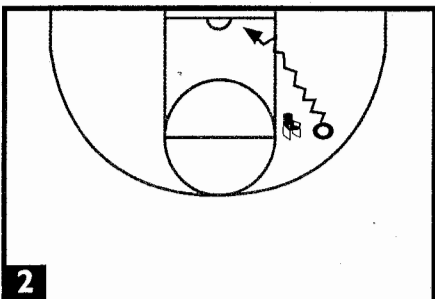
★ **"Killer Cross-Over" Drill.** You can train your ball handlers to develop a "killer cross-over" move by taking two forward dribbles with the right hand and then dribble between the legs going from right to left. The dribble then crosses the ball in front of his or her body from left to right and explodes forward using a speed dribble to half-court.

### ATTACKING-THE-BASKET

Another skill that we heavily emphasize through drills is a dribble-attack toward the basket from both the left and right elbows.

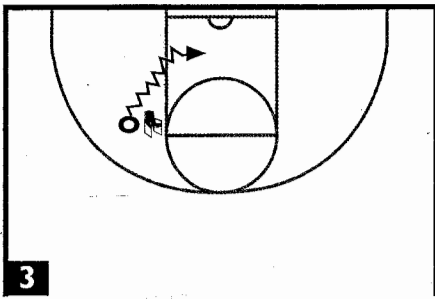
Starting at the elbows, we'll utilize a cone or a chair at each elbow to reinforce sweeping and dribble-driving to the basket with good balance. We commonly call these types of drills "chair sweeps." **DIAGRAM 2: Chair Sweeps Drill (From The Right Elbow).** Begin by placing a ball on the chair (or on top of the cone, if you're using cones) and instruct the player to get low and square-up to the chair.

The player grabs the ball off the chair while staying in a low stance and gets into a protected position with the



2 ball on his or her left-side hip.

The player sweeps the ball below both knee caps and pushes the ball out in front with one dribble, planting the left foot and driving the right leg up for a right-handed layup.



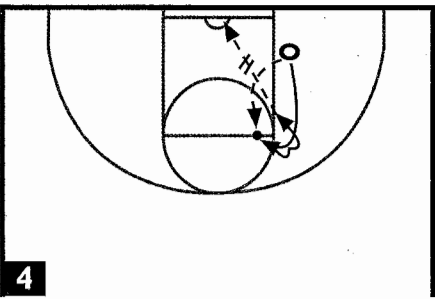
3 **DIAGRAM 3: Chair Sweeps Drill (From The Left Elbow).**

Repeat the drill 5 to 10 times and go to the opposite elbow utilizing the left hand and planting the right foot, driving the left foot and leg up.

Emphasize footwork, balance and angles to the backboard.

### “SWEEP ESCAPES”

This drill incorporates skills that combine ball handling, balance and shooting into a drill called “Sweep Escapes.” This drill also involves pivoting, ball protection and dribble pull-up shooting. It’s a great drill for developing intermediate skill shooting, escape dribbling and balance.



4 **DIAGRAM 4: Sweep Escapes.** The player begins with a ball and is positioned on the right low block, facing half-court. On the coach’s command, the player spins the ball out to the

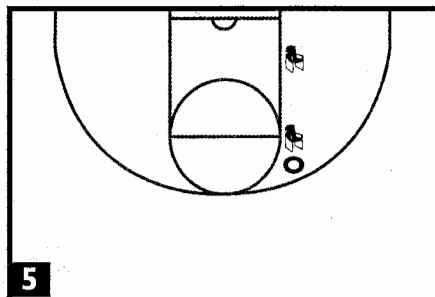
elbow and pivots inward with his or her right foot while getting into a low protection stance with the ball on his or her left side.

The player sweeps the ball across his or her body and takes one hard right-hand dribble forward, shooting a perimeter jump shot.

Repeat the drill 5 to 10 times, rotating to the opposite elbow, pivoting in with the left foot to the left side.

### SKILL SHOOTING

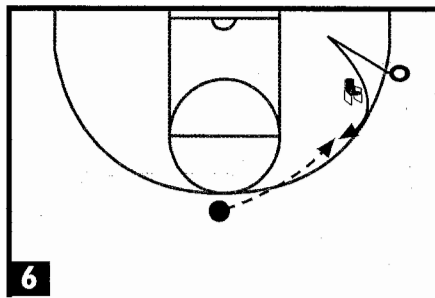
The following drills improve a player’s ability in shooting, creating space and developing good balance.



5 **DIAGRAM 5: Jump Stop, Intermediate Shooting.** Set up two chairs or cones, one at the right low block and the other at the right elbow. The player positions himself or herself in front of the chair at the elbow, and on the coach’s command, grabs the ball and sweeps it from right to left.

The player takes one or two dribbles forward and comes into a two-footed jump-stop at the mid-point and shoots a bank shot.

Repeat the drill 5 to 10 times, rotating to both the left and right sides.



6 **DIAGRAM 6: Catch-And-Shoot Using Screens.** This drill emphasizes cutting and catching the ball with proper foot balance, stance and setting up your defender to get an open look off screens. You can vary the angles of the screens by placing a chair at different angles.

The chair is positioned as a screener and the receiver or shooter is positioned on the wing while the passer is set up at the top of the key.

Instruct the shooter to first step the defender down toward the block to move him or her and develop a better angle for the screener. The shooter then cuts off the screen (in what would be a “shoulder-to-shoulder” position), having his or her hands ready to catch and pivot on the inside foot and shoot.

Repeat the drill 5 to 10 times while varying cuts such as fades, straight cuts and flares (on both sides).

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For more information, contact **Bree Greenawalt** ([breeg@lesspub.com](mailto:breeg@lesspub.com)) (261) 787-4480 ext. 408)