

Basketball Training

Off-Court Effort = On-Court Success

Provide exercises for athletes to fold into their weekly fitness routine that will help them **short-term** for basketball season and **long-term** for general fitness and health. Off-court training can allow athletes to advance their skills and still have fun. Set them up for improvement and success!

WAYS TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL TRAINING:

1. Lead a 20-minute warmup session in the school hallway before practice officially begins
2. Challenge athletes to complete “homework” on their own time between each weekly practice
 - Complete a set of exercises 1x, 2x, 3x each week
 - Provide chart for athletes to “check off” when they complete an exercise (can add stickers to the chart)
 - Engage parents to encourage and enforce
 - Reward those who complete their exercises (NOT food!)

WHAT EXERCISES CAN BE USED?

1. Ballhandling Drills

These drills emphasize ball feel/familiarity, hand-eye coordination and ball control.

-Ball Slaps: Hold the ball comfortably out in front of you about chest height. Alternate slapping the ball pretty hard with each hand.

-Finger Tips: Hold the ball comfortably out in front of you about chest height. Pass the ball back and forth using only your fingertips in very quick short passes. Your hands barely come off the ball. Continue passing the ball back and forth from hand to hand while you move the ball up to head level, down your body to your ankles, and then back up to your chest.

-Circles: Spread your legs a little farther than shoulder width apart. Using both hands, pass the ball around your legs as quickly as you can. Do circles around: right leg; left leg; ankles; knees; waist; head

-Dribbles: Feet are shoulder width apart. With the ball in your right hand, begin dribbling on the right side of your body with tiny dribbles at ankle height. Without stopping, dribble a little higher up to knee height, then harder up to waist height, then up to chest height. Repeat with the left hand on the left side of your body.

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2. Shooting Drill

This drill emphasizes proper shooting form and control. It allows for greater repetition than shooting on a hoop, so athletes can make adjustments and get into a rhythm better

-Floor Shooting: Lie on your back and bring the ball up to your chest. Take a shot straight in the air and catch the ball. Repeat several times. This drill enables you to strengthen your shooting muscles. Pay attention to backspin (to create this, your middle finger or index finger is the last thing to touch the ball on your shot). This is also a great drill to reinforce dominant hand and guide hand because players should not shoot with both hands!

When shooting a basketball, remember BEEF:
Balance, **E**yes on the target, **E**lbows aligned, **F**ollow Through

3. Fitness Drills

These are fitness-based drills that can positively impact an athlete's agility and balance on the court.

-Squats: This tried-and-true exercise improves lower-body strength while also increasing hip mobility. Stand with feet slightly wider than hip width. Keeping back straight and knees behind toes, sink hips back and lower into squat until thighs are parallel to ground. Knees should never cross the toes. Extend hips and knees to drive up out of squat position. For an added challenge, hold a basketball straight out in front of your body. Squats can help with defensive stance, jump shot, vertical jump and boxing out.

-Feet-Elevated Hip Bridge: This exercise will improve strength in your hips, which will help with speed, quickness, agility and ability to change direction. Also, it helps reduce lower back pain. Lie on back with knees bent and heels on bench, table or chair and arms on ground to the sides. Extend hips to raise butt off floor to form straight line from knees to shoulders; keep ankles flexed toward shins.

-World's Greatest Stretch: As the name states, this is one of the best stretches you can perform. It improves hip mobility and overall flexibility in the torso, all the way up to the chest. Incorporate this move into your training to see improvement in your balance, speed and agility. Assume exaggerated lunge position with right leg in front. Reach down and place right hand on ground at instep of right leg, open up chest and reach left arm to the sky; hold for one second. Rotate torso and place left hand on ground at instep of right foot, open up chest and reach right arm to the sky; hold for one second