

12 Individual Shooting Drills to Develop an Exceptional Shooter



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2-Minute Floaters

How the Drill Works:

A player repeatedly attacks the rim for 2 minutes finishing at the basket with a floater. On each drive, they must vary the distance and angle of the shot.

Purpose:

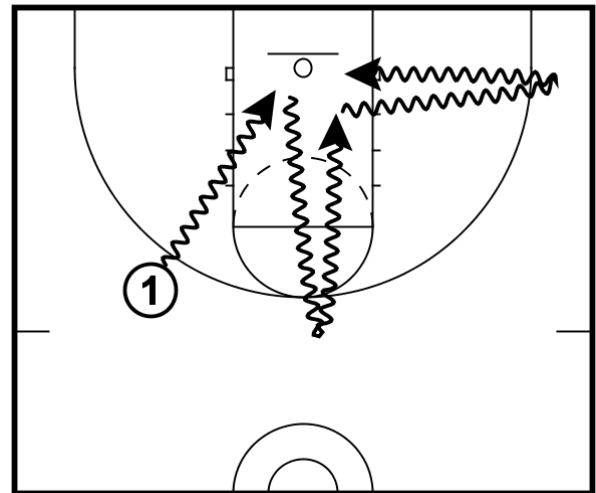
This drill allows players to practice their floater. A move every player should be constantly trying to develop - especially guards.

You will need:

- One basket.
- One basketball.

Instructions:

1. Pick a starting position somewhere outside the three-point line.
2. Drive towards the basket and finish with a floater. This involves pushing the basketball up in the air at a higher arc than usual from approximately 5 - 10 feet away from the hoop.
3. Immediately rebound the basketball, retreat to anywhere outside the three-point line, and then attack and finish with a floater once again.
4. The drill continues in this manner for 2 minutes.



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Variations:

Time of Drill - If you want to go for longer than two minutes, go for it. If you want to decrease the time to only one minute, go for it.

Angle and Distance - As long as you're retreating to random spots behind the three-point line, the angle and distance you release the shot from will vary naturally.

Type of Floater - Switch between finishing off one foot and 2-foot contact.

Coaching Points:

- Make sure you're releasing the basketball high into the air to get over a defender's hand.
- The drill should be done at a fast pace.
- For advanced players, practice using your weak hand to finish.

Elbow Pull-Ups

How the Drill Works:

A player moves between the two elbows performing pull-up shots using one or two dribbles. This continues until they've made a set amount of shots.

Purpose:

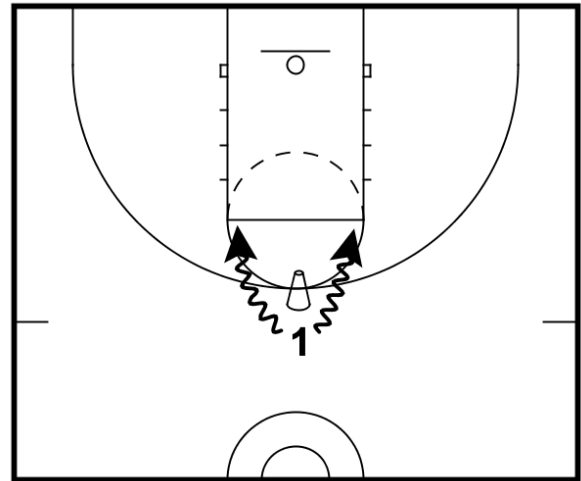
This drill works on a shot all guards must have - a pull-up midrange shot at the elbow area. This is a dangerous area of the floor for guards to be in, and the shot can be utilised on the fast-break or in half-court play.

You will need:

- One basket.
- One basketball.

Instructions:

1. Start at the top of the key with a basketball.
2. Take one or two dribbles to one of the elbows and then raise up for a shot.
3. If you have a rebounder, backpedal to the top of the key, receive the pass, and then perform the same shot from the other elbow.
4. If you don't have a rebounder, collect the basketball, return to the top of the key, and then perform the same shot on the other elbow.
5. This continues until you've made a total of 20 shots.



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Variations:

Shot Fake - Before you attack the elbow, use a shot fake to practice getting your opponent in the air or out of position.

Number of Made Shots - Instead of making 20 shots, you can make the number higher or lower depending on your current skill level.

Coaching Points:

- Make sure you're not travelling on the initial step towards the elbow.
- If you're adding the shot fake, stay down and only bring the basketball up to eye level.
- Make sure you're retreating to the three-point line after each shot.

Fly-By Shooting

How the Drill Works:

Staying behind the three-point line, a player will pump fake, take one dribble to the left or right, and then shoot a three-pointer.

Purpose:

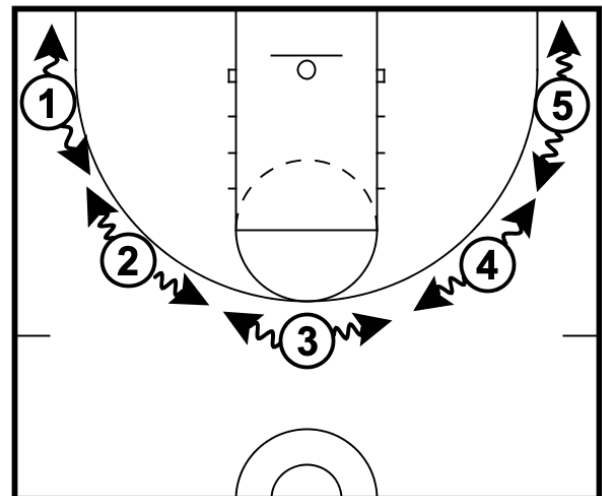
A key coaching tactic against great three-point shooters is to “run them off the three-point line” by sprinting out and leaping to block / distract the shooter. This drill works on side-stepping the defender and then shooting the open three-point shot.

You will need:

- One basket.
- One basketball.

Instructions:

1. Start behind the three-point line at the top of the key.
2. Spin the basketball to yourself (or receive the pass from a partner), catch it, pump fake, and then take one side-step dribble either left or right before shooting the three-point shot.
3. If you make the shot, repeat the process and take a dribble to the other side.
4. If you missed the shot, repeat the same shot again.
5. After you've made both shots, move to the next shooting spot.
6. The goal is to make one shot dribbling to each side from each of 5 spots – top of the key, each of the wings and each corner (10 made shots in total).



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Variations:

Seven Spots - If you want extra repetitions, shoot from the two slots as well.

Shot Distance - Young players can perform this drill from midrange, approximately 15 feet from the basket (free-throw range).

Number of Made Shots - If 10 isn't enough for you, double the amount of made shots and make two shots from either side at each spot.

Coaching Points:

- Make sure you're balanced on each shot. You don't want to be fading away when shooting.
- When performing the pump fake, stay low and bring the basketball up to your eye level. And make sure to quickly look at the rim to get used to 'selling' the fake.
- Of course, this drill is easier with a partner to rebound for you. So if you have a friend, teammate, parent, or coach willing to help you out - use them!

Mikan Drill

How the Drill Works:

A player starts under the basket and makes layups using the backboard. After each layup, they rebound the basketball and alternate sides to score a set number of baskets.

Purpose:

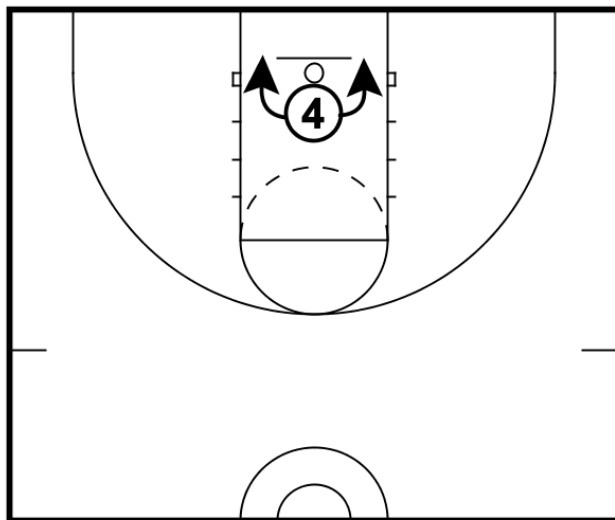
This drill is great for improving finishing around the basket for all players, especially centers and forwards. It helps develop coordination, rhythm, and feel around the basket.

You Will Need:

- One basket.
- One basketball.

Instructions:

1. Start under the basket with the basketball, facing the baseline.
2. On the right side of the basket, make a layup with the right hand off the backboard jumping off your left leg (inside foot - outside hand).
3. Quickly rebound the basketball and then make a layup on the left side of the basket with your left hand, jumping off your right foot (again, inside foot - outside hand).
4. Continue in this manner by alternating sides with each shot until you've made 20 layups.
5. After making 20 shots, start under the basket again but facing the half-court line this time instead of the baseline.
6. Now repeat everything by making reverse layups until you make 20.



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Variations:

Regular and Reverse - Make sure you practice facing both directions when running the Mikan drill. This will work on regular layups and reverse layups.

One Dribble - When working with young players, allow them to take one dribble before finishing the layup.

Coaching Points:

- As you get more comfortable, increase your speed by rebounding the basketball out of the net and finishing on the opposite side as quickly as possible.
- Do your best to keep the basketball at shoulder height for the duration of the drill.
- As you improve, practice adding some spin to the basketball by flicking your wrist.

Perfected

How the Drill Works:

A player starts shooting from spots close to the basket and then progresses further out. A certain number of perfect swishes must be made from each spot before moving back.

Purpose:

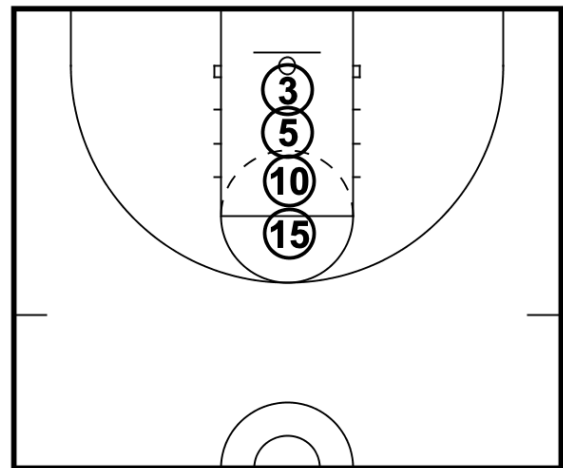
This is a great drill to start every practice / workout with. It focuses on developing correct shooting technique (especially arc) by taking shots close to the rim.

You will need:

- One basket.
- One basketball.

Instructions:

1. From 3 feet away from the basket, shoot until you've made 10 perfect swishes.
2. From 5 feet away from the basket, shoot until you've made 7 perfect swishes.
3. From 10 feet away from the basket, shoot until you've made 5 perfect swishes.
4. From 15 feet away from the basket (free-throw line), shoot until you've made 3 perfect swishes to complete the "perfections" drill.



Variations:

Shooting Positions - You can start in the middle of the key and progress along the middle towards the free-throw line, or change the shooting position with each shot, as long as you're at approximately the same distance until the set number of shots is made.

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Made Shots - Instead of counting perfect swishes, younger and inexperienced players can count regular made shots.

Coaching Points:

- The goal is to have picture-perfect shooting for on every shot.
- Make sure you're completely extending your shooting arm, flicking your wrist, and raising up onto your toes on each shot.

Plus / Minus

How the Drill Works:

Starting on 3 points, a player shoots free-throws in this fun drill. When they make a free-throw, they earn a point. But when they miss a free-throw, they lose two points.

Purpose:

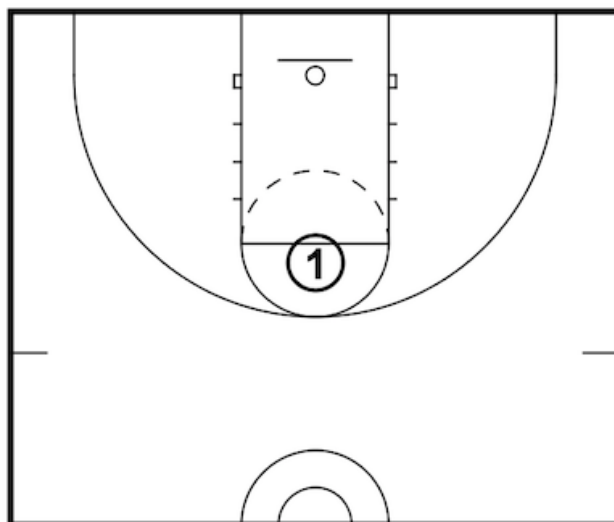
Free throws are arguably the most important shot in basketball. This drills forces players to concentrate on making free throws and simulates the pressure of a game.

You will need:

- One basket.
- One basketball.

Instructions:

1. The player shooting starts the game on 3 points.
2. Start shooting free throws, making sure to complete your full free-throw routine before taking each shot.
3. For every made shot, they get one point added to their total.
4. For every missed shot, they lose two points from their total.
5. The goal is to reach 10 points before falling to zero points.



Variations:

Starting Points - Vary the starting number of points depending on the skill and age level.

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Plus / Minus – Vary the amount of points added or deducted on a made shot and missed shot depending on the skill level and age of the player.

Target Points - Change the number of points they're shooting for depending on age and skill level.

Coaching Points:

- Take your time and make sure to complete your full free-throw routine on each shot. Just as you would during a real game.
- Focus on your shooting routine. Do your best not to focus on the pressure of each shot.

Spin-Back Shooting

How the Drill Works:

A player repeatedly spins the basketball back to themselves and shoots from different spots inside the three-point arc for a set period of time.

Purpose:

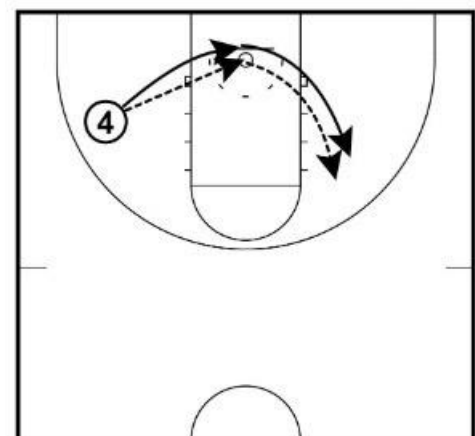
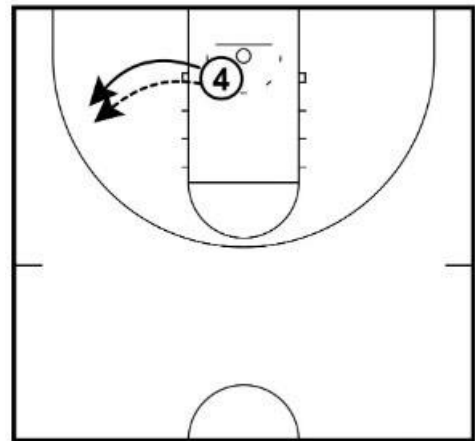
This is a simple yet effective drill that a player can do on their own. It gives them many shooting repetitions in a relatively short period of time. Fundamentally, it's a good drill for working on your shooting footwork and shooting form.

Setup:

- One basket
- One basketball
- Any device with an alarm

Instructions:

1. Start under the basket with the basketball.
2. Spin the basketball to a random spot outside of the key but inside of the three-point arc, and follow to catch the basketball after it bounces one time off the floor.
3. On the catch, quickly move the basketball into your shot pocket, pivot correctly on the catch, and set your feet ready to shoot immediately.
4. Shoot from this spot and proceed to collect your rebound.
5. After rebounding, spin the basketball to another spot outside the key but inside the three-point arc and repeat the process.



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6. Continue this for a specific amount of time making sure to keep track of the number of made shots.
7. To track progress, write down the number of shots you make each time you do the drill.

Variations:

Time Limit - This drill can be run anywhere from 1 minute to 10 minutes each turn. My recommendations: Youth - 1-2 minutes. HS - 3-4 minutes. College or Pro - 5 minutes or more.

Three-Point Shots - Depending on the age and level of the shooter, this drill can also be run shooting three-point shots only.

Coaching Points:

- Ensure you're shooting with great form on every shot attempt to prevent developing poor shooting habits.
- Shots must be taken at game speed.
- Focus on footwork during this drill. This includes maintaining balance, using the correct pivot foot, setting your feet, squaring your body, and avoiding drifting sideways or fading away when shooting.
- Get as many shots up as you can in the set amount of time. As soon as you collect the rebound, you should immediately be spinning it to a different spot.
- Mix up where you spin the ball to your spot. Take many shots from as many different spots. Don't spin the ball to the same two or three spots every time.
- Players must be sure not to follow the basketball immediately after the follow-through or they'll end up leaning forward and off balance. Finish the complete follow-through before pursuing the basketball.

Suicide Shooting

How the Drill Works:

A player will run a conditioning suicide with the basketball and must make a free-throw line pull-up shot on each trip down the floor.

Purpose:

This drill is mainly used for improving level of fitness, but also work on shooting, dribbling, and making shots when fatigued and under pressure.

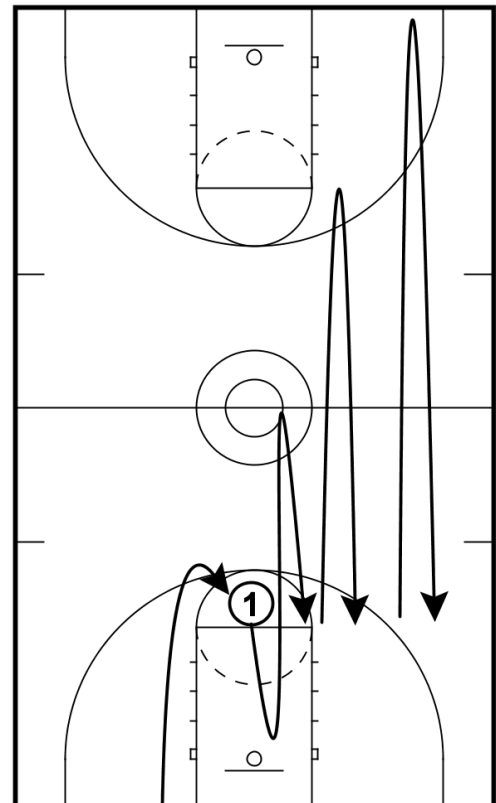
You will need:

- A full-size basketball court.
- One basketball.

Instructions:

Rules: You must make a pull-up shot from the free-throw line after each trip down the floor: free-throw line, half-court, opposite free-throw line, and opposite baseline.

1. Start on the baseline with a ball.
2. Dribble to the free-throw line, then turn around and take a jump shot.
3. If you make the shot, rebound the basketball, dribble to the next line (half-way), and then return to the free-throw line for another shot.
4. If you miss the shot, you must rebound the basketball and shoot again.
5. The drill continues in this manner until 4 shots are made (one after each of the different trips down the floor).



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Variations:

Don't Need to Make the Shot - If you're only counting makes, the drill can result in the player running approximately 15 lengths of the floor if they're a poor shooter. To make things easier, have them move on to the next line even if they miss the shot.

Shot Distance - Instead of using the free-throw line, use the three-point line for the shot location.

Sideline or Middle - Instead of sprinting up and down the middle of the court, players take the shot and then sprint down the sideline. Do this if there are other people on the opposite end of the court you're practicing on.

Coaching Points:

- To work on your ball-handling, only use your weak hand to dribble during the drill.
- This is a fast-paced and high intensity drill. Players should be running the floor hard when they're moving between lines.
- Maintain focus and try not to get frustrated after missed shots.
- Show target hands and slow down when catching to shoot to ensure you're taking a balanced shot and not falling forward.
- Practice shooting from the 1-2 step and the hop.
- Make sure your foot touches each line. Don't cheat yourself!

Transition Shooting

How the Drill Works:

A player tosses the basketball from the half-court to a random spot within their shooting range, runs to catch the ball after it bounces off the floor once, and then takes a shot.

Purpose:

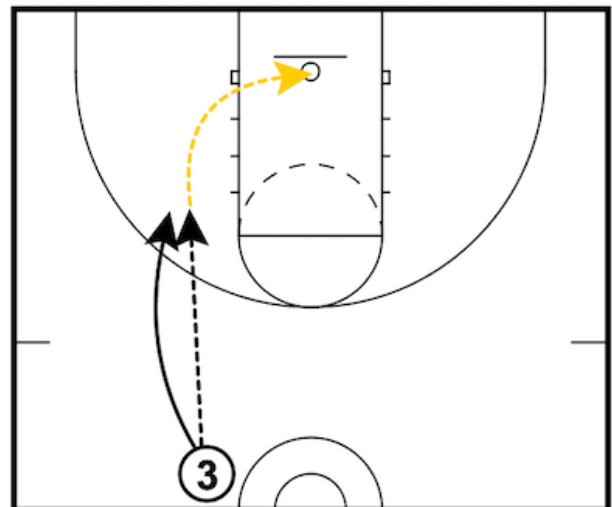
A simple drill players can do by themselves if you have one half of the court available. It focuses on catch and shoot situations in transition after sprinting. Making sure to maintain good balance and shooting with correct form.

You will need:

- One half of a basketball court.
- One basketball.

Instructions:

1. Start at the center of the court.
2. Lob the basketball out in front to a random spot within the shooting range, then sprint to catch it after it bounces once off the floor.
3. Immediately shoot after the catch, without dribbling.
4. Collect the rebound and then quickly dribble back to the half-way line to repeat the process.
5. Continue the drill in this way until you make 10 shots.
6. At least 2-3 sets should be finished with small breaks in between.



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Variations:

Dribbling Cones - Set up a few cones down one side of the court and then complete several dribbling moves when you're dribbling back to the half-way line.

Other Shots - This drill can also be used to perform one-dribble pull-ups, drives to the basket, etc.

Number of Makes - Instead of making 10 shots, you can choose to make more or less.

Coaching Points:

- This drill must be performed quickly. Sprint to catch the basketball and make sure you're working hard to get back to get back to the half-way line.
- Focus on correct shooting form with every shot, and shoot like you would in a game.
- Pay attention to balance. Get your feet set properly, square your body to the rim, and avoid drifting sideways when shooting.
- Try to shoot from a different spot on the floor on every repetition. Toss the basketball to different sides and make sure you vary the distances you're shooting.
- Only shoot in your comfortable range. If you can't shoot from three-point distance with good form, don't take those shots in this drill.

Triangle Shooting

How the Drill Works:

A player takes three different shots from 5 spots on the floor. From each position, a player needs to make three shots before moving on to the next spot.

Purpose:

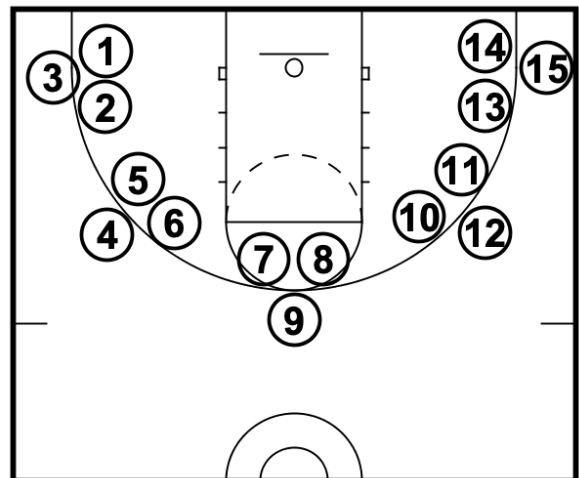
This drill works on a variety of shots from the perimeter. This includes shooting off the dribble from either direction, and off the catch.

You will need:

- One basket.
- One basketball.
- A player / coach / parents to rebound if possible.

Instructions:

1. Start in the corner, on the 3-point line, with a basketball.
2. You must make 3 shots from this position before moving on to the next one.
3. The three shooting spots:
 - a) left one-dribble pull-up
 - b) right one-dribble pull-up
 - c) catch and shoot jump shot
4. There are 5 spots on the court (corner, wing, top of the key, opposite wing, and opposite corner) and you must make these 3 shots from each of them. Finishing with a total of 15 shots.



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Variations:

Distance - Younger players can start from midrange distance, about 15 feet from the basket (free throw range).

Coaching Points:

- Pay attention to your shooting form on each shot.
- Avoid drifting sideways when on the one-dribble pull-up shots.

Triple Double

How the Drill Works:

A player shoots from five different positions around the perimeter. First, they need to make three shots from each of the 5 perimeter spots. Once they've done that, they reverse back the other way and must make two in-a-row from each of the 5 spots.

Purpose:

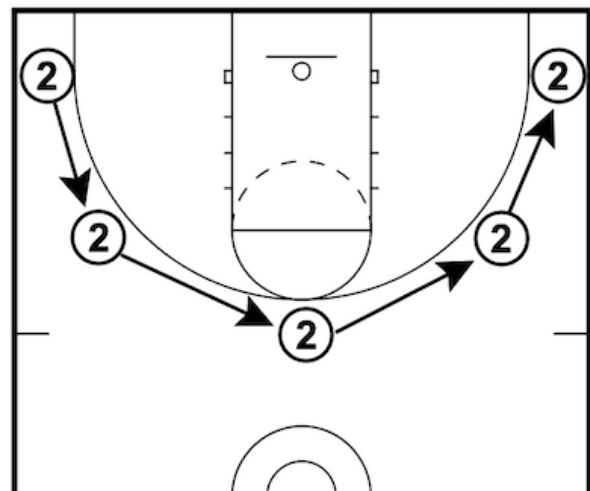
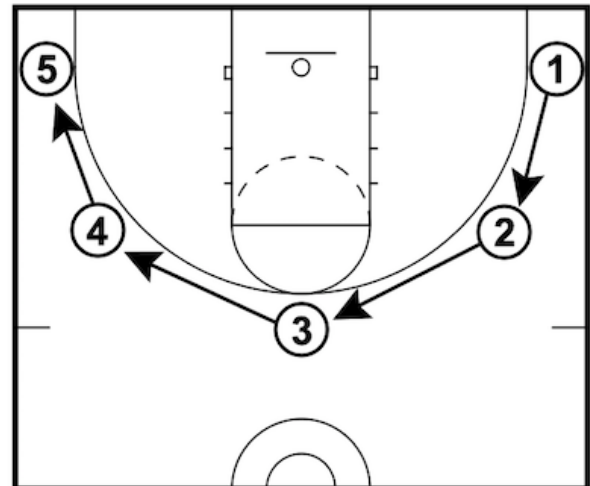
A shooting drill to get up a lot of repetitions in a short amount of time. Also, getting a player to make multiple shots in a row will allow them to experience pressure while shooting.

Setup:

- A player (the shooter) starts at one of the corner spots with one basketball.
- A coach, parent, or teammate is needed as the passer for this drill.

Instructions:

1. The shooter starts the drill with a shot from the corner spot, and must make a total of three shots from this spot before moving on to the next position around the perimeter.
2. The shooter rotates positions by making three shots from each of five spots around the perimeter to finish in the opposite corner.
3. The shooter then continues to shoot from the same corner spot, now attempting to make two shots in a row.
4. The shooter then rotates in the opposite direction by making two shots in a row



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from each spot before moving on to the next one.

5. Once the player has made two shots in a row from all 5 spots, the drill is over.

Variations:

Shot Distance - Change the shooting distance depending on the age and ability of the players. The cones can be placed on the 3-point line when working with older players, or inside the 3-point area when working with younger players or the post players.

Increase or Decrease Shots - If 3 shots is too much, or making two in a row is too difficult, feel free to change these numbers to make it easier or harder.

Coaching Points:

- As this is a shooting drill, the players' shooting form is paramount. Make corrections to any poor technique you see.
- Pay attention to the time needed for a player to finish the drill. However, the drill should be completed regardless of the time elapsed, in order to build the shooter's mental toughness.
- This is a great drill for understanding which players are good at making shots under pressure.

Walking Form Shooting

How the Drill Works:

A player repeatedly shoots the basketball up in the air, holds their form, and then walks a few steps to collect the basketball and repeat the process.

Purpose:

This shooting form drill allows players to focus on their technique with as many repetitions as they would like to do. It's a drill that can be used anywhere!

You will need:

- One basketball.
- At least a few metres of space to practice (backyard, driveway, gym, etc.)

Instructions:

1. Players start by shooting the basketball up in the air to rim height and then hold their follow through.
2. Once the basketball bounces, players can lower their follow through.
3. They then walk forward a few steps to grab the ball and then immediately repeat the shooting form process with another shot.
4. This process continues for a certain amount of time.

Coaching Points:

- Your only focus should be on your shooting form. Make sure you're using the correct technique, exactly the same with each shot!
- The ball should only be landing a metre or two in front. Don't throw the ball out too far.
- Make sure you read our guide on shooting form before completing the drill. It's important to understand how to shoot correctly first.