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RAPTORS BASKETBALL

SHOOTING FUNDAMENTALS

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“ I strongly believe that the most successful basketball teams are the teams that play the game for the true values the game has to offer. Among those values are: teamwork, sacrifice, team and self-discipline, giving a 100% effort, supporting each other through good and bad times, trust, loyalty, respect and playing for the joy of the game. Even in today’s game, players want to be on teams like this.

Teams that have these values will accomplish small miracles. It certainly is necessary to have talent, but talent alone does not make a team. Great talent may also win ball games, but unless they have team values they will not have the same impact and they will not be remembered in the way you would like. ”

Rob Babcock



Toronto Raptors Basketball Development is focused on growing the game of basketball throughout Ontario and Canada through education, instruction and skill development by delivering programs that offer fun and enthusiasm for the game of basketball, the NBA and the Toronto Raptors team. To learn more about Basketball Development programs, visit WWW.RAPTORS.COM/BASKETBALLDEVELOPMENT.



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SUMMARY

1. **You don't have to be a great athlete to be a great shooter.** You do have to have at least average coordination and strength. You can improve yourself in these areas.
2. You must **master the basic shooting fundamentals.** There are always variances in what or how the fundamentals are taught, but most coaches teach the same basic things. The important thing is to master them.
3. Many players are good shooters in practice and poor shooters in games. **You must try to duplicate game conditions when you practice.** That means shooting when you are tired, shooting under pressure, and shooting with distractions.
4. Many players master the fundamentals, but can't relax or concentrate. Don't overlook working on these areas.
5. **Once you have mastered the fundamentals, confidence becomes crucial.** The brain records every make and miss. Make sure you make a lot more than you miss. Plan your practices accordingly. A good rule is: if you miss 2 in a row, move in and don't move out until you make 3 in a row. Don't set yourself up for a bad shooting workout. Don't shoot after lifting weights or if your legs are too tired. To shoot well, your body has to be ready. If you are having the occasional bad day, then stop shooting and work on other areas of your game. You should never have a bad shooting workout. Leave every workout with the confidence that you are a good shooter.



“ Our goal is to win a championship and to get to that goal you've got to build your philosophy from the ground up with every single person and player on the staff as well as with every fan. And it doesn't happen overnight, but it will happen.” **ROB BABCOCK**

(LEFT: Raptors GM, Rob Babcock, enjoys teaching the fundamentals of the game to future young basketball stars.)



SHOOTING FORM AND TECHNIQUE

The following points are critical to developing your shot. It is important to concentrate on perfecting these basics before attempting to learn different types of shots.

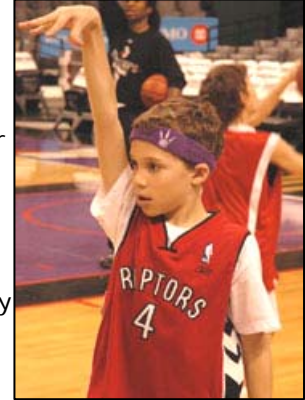
1. **Fingertip control** – Do not let your palm touch the ball. The ball should be controlled by the fingertips at all times. This will help in controlling the direction and obtaining a good backspin.
2. **Your shooting hand controls the ball** – The opposite hand is used for balance, and control up until the release. Be sure that your opposite hand is on the side of the ball and not in the way of the flight of the ball.
3. **Elbow Alignment** – Your elbow (on the shooting arm) should be close to your body and lined up with the target. If your elbow moves out and away from your body it may change the direction of the flight of the ball.
4. **Release-Follow through-Flip-Finger spread** – The release of the ball should be with your wrist and not entirely with your arm. If you use your arm too much, you will have trouble controlling the distance of the ball. The final release should see the support hand drop off, and the shooting hand follow through with a flip of the wrist. The fingers should be spread and the follow through should remain until the ball goes through the net.
5. **Target** – There are many different ideas on what you should look at when you shoot the ball. Here are three acceptable targets, depending on your shooting needs and desires.
 - a) *THE FRONT OF THE RIM* – This helps for determining the direction, but sometimes hurts your distance and arc. If you use the front of the rim as your target, you should visualize the ball dropping down over the front of the rim.
 - b) *THE BACK OF THE RIM* – Some coaches suggest this for players who continually shoot the ball too short. The problem is you may shoot the ball too long and your target may be blocked from your view.
 - c) *THE IMAGINARY CENTRE OF THE CIRCLE* – This involves picking the spot that the ball will pass through for a perfect swish. You then visualize the ball passing through this invisible spot. This method takes a great deal of concentration, but if mastered produces the best result.
6. **Arc** – It is important to have a good arc on the ball. This increases the chance of making the basket, by increasing the area of the target. A flat shot has to be a perfect shot to go in. If you have a flat shot, you can improve it by shooting over an artificial barrier to increase your arc (e.g. a friend with a broom). The best way to improve our arc is by learning to shoot for a swish.
7. **Rotation** – The ideal shot has a backspin to the ball. This backspin is what gives you the good touch on the ball. With good rotation, you increase the chances of getting a bounce up if the ball hits the rim. The rotation is created with the fingertip control and follow through. You can check your rotation by lining the seams of the ball perpendicular to your fingers, and flipping the ball up to check the rotation.
8. **Concentration** – All the correct fundamentals are not enough if you do not have good concentration. We will cover concentration drills later.





FORM DRILLS

1. **FORM SHOOTING (WITHOUT A BALL)** – this drill is to evaluate your form. Take an imaginary shot and watch your form. Shoot in a mirror to check your elbow. Start the drill in slow motion to check all of your fundamentals.
2. **FORM SHOOTING (WITH THE BALL)** – This is also to evaluate your form. Shoot the ball straight up in the air. Watch the rotation of the ball. Watch your follow through. Do as many repetitions as needed to develop consistent fundamentals.
3. **FLIP DRILL** – Stand right next to the basket and shoot with one hand. Do not use your legs. Concentrate on your form (especially the flip of the wrist and follow through). Work on getting your eyes on the target and shooting for a swish. Work your way around the basket, but stay close. Work on bank shots, too.
IMPORTANT – Be sure that the ball comes down off the backboard when shooting a bank shot. Pick your spot on the board and be sure to keep your eyes on that spot. See how many you can make in a row. If you have a partner, make a competition out of the drill.



JUMP SHOT (WITHOUT THE DRIBBLE)

It is important to note that you should not attempt to shoot a jump shot until you have mastered the basic fundamentals, and you have developed enough physical strength to shoot the shot.

1. **Incorporating your legs into the shot** – The ideal jump shot is merely a normal fundamental shot with a jump added. The jump is to help you shoot over another player. The rest of the shot should remain the same.
2. **Rhythm** – The toughest thing about shooting the jump shot is the timing of the jump and getting your shooting motion to coordinate with the jump. The following are extremely important:
 - a) Your stance should be balanced and comfortable.
 - b) You should release at the peak of your jump.
 - c) You should not float (come down at the same spot that you jumped from)
3. **Distance** – When you are learning the jump shot, start in very close and begin with a small comfortable jump. You should stay in close until you get your timing down, then slowly move your way out. **NEVER SHOOT OUTSIDE OF YOUR RANGE.** This will hurt your fundamental form, and confidence. As you increase your distance, let your legs do more work to help get the ball to the target. If you use your arms more to increase your range, you will give up accuracy and consistency.
4. **Coming off picks** – the important thing to remember in using a pick is to come off the pick closely to lose the defender. The second thing is to guard against floating.
5. **Preparing for the shot** – In coming off picks and in open court shooting, you need to prepare yourself for the shot as soon as you realize that you are open. When you know that the pass is coming, prepare your feet, body, and hands so that you are immediately prepared to go into your shot.



JUMP SHOT DRILLS

1. *SPOT SHOOTING* – Make your own pass (use a toss back, a wall, or a backspin bounce... if you have a partner, use one player as a rebounder-passer). Start in close and work your way around the basket. When you have become proficient at that distance, then move out 3 feet.
2. *POSITION SHOOTING* – Pick a spot (in close to start). Shoot from the same spot until you have made a certain %, then move.
3. *TIME DRILLS* – Shoot for a minute from one spot, then move. Count the number of made shots in a minute.
4. *CHAIR DRILLS* – Use chairs or cones to simulate coming off a pick.
5. *FOLLOW THE LEADER* – One player shoots the jump shot, then rebounds his shot and passes back to player #2 at the same spot. #1 then moves to another spot to receive the pass from #2 after he rebounds his shot.
6. *WORKING ON FOOTWORK* – Pick 2 shooting positions. #1 shoots from position 1. #2 rebounds and passes to #1 at position 2. Then continue back to position 1. Go for 30-60 sec. and rotate. Concentrate on preparing your feet and legs before you receive the pass.
7. *FULL COURT SHOOTING* – Using 2 or more baskets, #1 shoots, #2 rebounds and outlets to #1. #2 runs to the spot at the next basket. #1 dribbles to the middle and then passes to #2 for the shot.

JUMP SHOT (WITH THE DRIBBLE)

Shooting with the dribble involves a lot more skill and balance, but once you learn the technique of moving the dribble into the shot, the rest is exactly the same.

1. **Using the dribble as a take-off for your jump shot** – At first, you will need to come to a balanced stop, collect yourself, and then take your shot. As you develop your skill you should make the dribble a part of the shot. As the ball comes off the floor, it should go right into your shot preparation. The last dribble before you shoot should be a harder dribble, to help get into the shot quicker. Once you master this, your release will be much quicker.
2. **Protecting the ball** – One common fault that players have is showing the ball too much when shooting off the dribble. The ball must be brought up on the side of the body to protect it from the defender. After you have cleared the defender, then you adjust it to go into your shot. It is especially difficult to line up your shooting elbow when shooting off the dribble (even harder when dribbling with the shooting hand).
3. **Taking the dribble to the basket** – It is to your advantage to take the dribble to the basket for a pull up jumper. This will allow you to shoot closer, and get the defender off you. When you dribble laterally for the shot, you allow the defender to stay close, and you get no closer to the basket.
4. **Open court dribble** – When shooting off the dribble it is important to have your speed under control and gain balance before you attempt the shot. In the open court under a full speed dribble, you must learn at what speed you are able to stop and get off a controlled shot. You must also learn to get a rhythm with your dribble when you see the possibility of a shot.



JUMP SHOT DRILLS

1. *RHYTHM DRIBBLE-SHOT* – Start in close. Dribble the ball in a stationary protected stance. Work on establishing a rhythm with a 3 dribble-hard dribble and shot. Stay in close and work with the left and right dribble. Slowly work your way out.
2. *DRIBBLE JUMPERS* – position and spot – this is run the same as position and spot shooting except that you use one dribble before the shot. Be sure that the dribble is going to the basket.
3. *DRIBBLING OFF PICKS* – Same as above, except use a cone or chair for a pick. In this case, you may be using a lateral dribble for the shot.
4. *FULL COURT DRIBBLE SHOOTING* – Using 2 or more baskets, you dribble to determined spots at each basket. Work on stopping at the spot and shooting under control. Increase the speed of the dribble as you improve.
5. *FULL COURT FOLLOW THE LEADER* – Same as above, except with 2 people in competition. If the leader misses and follower makes, then the follower takes the lead.
6. *FULL SPEED DRIBBLE* – Using 2 baskets and full court, pick a shooting position at each basket and dribble full speed to that spot. Work on reaching that spot, gaining control and shooting a balanced shot. If you cannot shoot a balanced shot, lower your speed.
7. *1-1 FULL COURT* – Rules explained later in rule book. This is a great game and a great way to learn to shoot off the dribble.

THE 3 POINT SHOT

The 3 point shot is a valuable tool in today's game and the ability to shoot will help your value as a player. The problem is that too many players attempt the shot that are not proficient at it. The following are important to consider for the 3 point shot:

1. You must have the range to shoot it comfortably. You can increase your range with weight training and learning how to use your legs and arms more.
2. You must know what your range is and at what times of a game your percentage should allow you to take the shot.
3. You must know how to get your feet set behind the line.
4. Practicing the 3 point shot does not mean practicing long range shooting. Most players will increase their range by 2-4 feet during a game because of adrenaline.

3 POINT SHOT DRILLS

1. Spot shooting at the 3 point line.
2. Coming off the pick at the 3 point line.
3. 2 man full court shooting – using the 3 point line.
4. Penetrate and dish drill (with receiver setting up at the 3 point line).
5. Full court 1-man shooting (shooting the 3 point shot on the dribble).



FREE THROWS

Free throws are an important part of every game and can be the deciding factor. Most problems with free throw shooting are mental. A free throw is like any other normal stationary shot.

1. Technique – Don't change your normal shot. Follow the regular shooting fundamentals. If a jump shot is a better shot for you than a set shot, then shoot a jump shot.
2. The following steps are important to follow:
 - a) **Preparation** – get lined up with your elbow – get your hand dry, make sure communication with the coach is finished.
 - b) **Relaxation** – Take a deep breath – do whatever relaxation technique that works for you.
 - c) **Visualization** – shoot a free throw in your mind.
 - d) **Routine** – find a comfortable routine and use it consistently.
 - e) **Concentration** – find a concentration technique that works for you and use it.
 - f) **Positive thinking** – You must approach the shot as another point, not a potential miss.



FREE THROW DRILLS

1. *REPETITION* – shoot until you make it; see how many you can make in a row.
2. *GAME SHOOTING* – Shoot 2 at a time at intervals in your workout.
3. *PERCENTAGE SHOOTING* – shoot 10 or 20 or more (keep your percentage).
4. *DEVELOP FT GAMES* – e.g.: bump out, FT ladder, FT elimination, percentage contests, etc.



PRE-GAME WARM-UP

Most shooters need a proper warm-up before a game. You are often restricted due to: facilities, time and team procedures. The goals to reach before a game are:

1. **Be physically prepared and rested** – stretch well and don't do anything on game day that will tire you out.
2. **Be mentally prepared** – This is different for each player.
3. **Get your touch** – This should involve a shooting workout during the day and a proper pre-game warm-up procedure.
4. In the locker room:
 - a) stretch
 - b) do ball handling drills
 - c) form shooting – in air or off a wall
 - d) concentration and relaxation techniques
 - e) visualization exercises

CONCENTRATION

Without good concentration, you can never be a great shooter. Each person is different. Some have no problem concentrating, while others need help. Concentration for basketball shooting should involve:

1. **Visualization** – this is a step-by-step procedure where you perform the shot in your mind. This will help your form, increase your confidence and your concentration.
2. **Repetition and routine** – these are both great for improving your concentration.
3. **Narrow the target** – Get your eyes up to the basket early, and shoot for a swish.
4. **Non-basketball concentration** – These can be obtained from classes or books.

CONCENTRATION DRILLS

1. *VISUALIZATION*
2. *CONCENTRATION AND RELAXATION EXERCISES*
3. *SHOOTING WITH DISTRACTIONS*
4. *BLIND SHOOTING*
5. *SHOOTING WHEN YOU'RE TIRED* (full court 1-1)



SHOOTING CHECKLIST - 7 MOST COMMON PROBLEMS

PROBLEM #1 Ball is consistently short	
<i>Major reasons:</i>	<i>Remedies:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Legs are tired ○ Legs are not being used enough ○ Not concentrating on arc ○ Poor follow through ○ Eyes following ball ○ Poor concentration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rest legs ○ Concentrate on swish ○ Flip drill ○ Close in shooting
PROBLEM#2 Ball is inconsistently short and long	
<i>Major reasons:</i>	<i>Remedies:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Using arms too much ○ Floating ○ Not releasing at peak of jump 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Flip drill ○ More concentration on wrist and follow through ○ Rhythm shooting with dribble ○ Close in shooting
PROBLEM #3 Ball is going left or right of target	
<i>Major reasons:</i>	<i>Remedies:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Not following through to target ○ Twisting wrist out or in ○ Elbow not aligned ○ Floating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Flip drill ○ Form shooting ○ Spot shooting (come down on take-off ... no floating)
PROBLEM #4 Ball has no touch (not getting the bounce)	
<i>Major Reasons:</i>	<i>Remedies:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Poor rotation ○ Poor arc ○ No fingertip control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Form shooting ○ Check hand for dirt on palm
PROBLEM #5 Bank shots are off	
<i>Major Reasons:</i>	<i>Remedies:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Watching rim instead of target ○ Ball not hitting target on way down 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Watch target ○ Increase arc
PROBLEM #6 FG % is down	
<i>Major reasons:</i>	<i>Remedies:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Poor shot selection ○ Shooting off balance ○ Shooting out of range ○ Shooting with too much defensive pressure ○ Trying shots that you have not mastered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Remove the player from the game ○ Re-evaluate your shot selection
PROBLEM #7 Your shot is off during a game, and your team needs you to score, and your coach tells you to keep shooting	
<i>Remedies:</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Look to drive and get shots closer to the hoop ○ Use the backboard more ○ Try to get to the FT line ○ Post up more ○ Use your offensive skills to set up your teammates ○ Increase your concentration ○ Concentrate on other areas of your game 	