

Third Edition

Basketball

STEPS TO SUCCESS

- Passing and Catching
- Dribbling
- Shooting
- Rebounding
- Team Offense
- Team Defense

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Third Edition

Basketball Steps to Success

Hal Wissel



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David M. Wissel
1967–2000**



David's gentle, caring nature touched all who came in contact with him.

David would smile, make you laugh, listen to you, and say good things about you.

The David M. Wissel Youth Foundation has been founded to continue his love for children and to provide disadvantaged youth with opportunities that will foster their growth and development.

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Introduction

Basketball is a team game in which you can help your team by improving your individual skills. Basketball requires integration of individual talent into unselfish team play. It requires the sound execution of fundamental skills, which, once learned, can be connected to the entire game. Basketball drills instill confidence, transfer skills to game situations, and contribute to long-term enjoyment.

Climbing the Steps to Basketball Success

Despite the size, conditioning, and talent of today's professional players, basketball success is still determined by one's ability to execute fundamental skills consistently. Fundamental skills include footwork, passing and catching, dribbling, shooting, shooting off the catch, creating your shot off the dribble, scoring in the post, and rebounding. These fundamental skills are integrated into unselfish team play, including fast break, two- and three-man plays, team offense, and team defense.

Although this book is a resource for teachers, coaches, and parents, it is primarily for the player. Players who love the game continually seek ways to improve their skills. This book focuses on the development of fundamental skills and their integration into team play through individual, small group, and team drills. Disciplined practice of the principles described in this book will improve your skills and build your confidence.

With 12 steps total, this third edition provides a lot of new information for the player. Step 4, shooting (page 71), now includes information on shooting runners, reverse layups, and power moves with additional drills. Three entirely new steps have also been added: step 5, shooting off the catch (page 114); step 6, creating your shot off the dribble (page 128); and step 7, scoring in the post (page 167). In today's game, more emphasis is placed on the spread offense. The international emphasis on using dribble penetration to draw defenders and then passing the ball out to other players for open three-point shots has become a trend. The National Basketball Association (NBA) rule changes that do not allow hand-checking have also contributed to this trend. The pick-and-roll and the pick-and-pop have become popular methods for gaining dribble penetration and then drawing opponents and kicking out to open shooters. Due to this trend, the new edition includes extensive coverage on executing the pick-and-roll in step 10, two- and three-man plays (page 251), and step 11, team offense (page 290) and defending the pick-and-roll in step 12, team defense (page 316).

Many young players become frustrated when they cannot shoot or handle the ball. Confidence in building offensive skills should be emphasized early because they take more time to master than skills that do not involve the ball. More advanced players improve through game competition and individual practice. Strong competition helps the advanced player improve and also reveals weaknesses to be corrected. Average players practice what they do well; exceptional players practice their weaknesses, turning them into strengths. If you have trouble shooting, learn to shoot the correct way and then practice. If you have trouble dribbling with your weak hand, practice dribbling with that hand. You will not only improve your skills, but you will increase your confidence as well.

Success depends on getting players to believe in themselves. Although confidence is greatest after success, you can develop confidence through practice. It is common to think of self-confidence in relation to natural physical talent. It is a mistake, however, to consider physical talent alone. In your playing career, you will come up against players with more physical talent. To have the confidence to defeat them, you must believe that you have worked harder and are better prepared, particularly in your fundamental skills.

Each of the 12 steps in this book takes you to the next level of playing skill. The first few steps provide a solid foundation of fundamental skills and concepts. As you practice each fundamental skill, your progress will allow you to connect skills. Practicing common combinations of basketball skills will give you the experience you need to make quick, intelligent decisions on the court. You will learn to make the right moves in game situations. As you near the top of the staircase, you will become more confident in your ability to play and communicate with teammates.

Follow the same sequence with each step:

1. Read the explanation of the step, why it is important, and how to perform it.
2. Follow the photos or illustrations.
3. Review the missteps, which note common errors and corrections.
4. Perform the drills. Drills appear near the skill instructions so you can refer to the instructions easily if you have trouble with a drill.

Once you feel confident in your ability to perform the skill, have a qualified observer such as a coach, teacher, or skilled player evaluate your technique. This subjective evaluation of your skill will help you identify any weaknesses in technique before you move on to the next step.

The Sport of Basketball

Today, basketball is the fastest-growing sport in the world for many reasons. First, basketball is tremendously popular spectator sport, particularly on television. The televising of NBA games worldwide and of men's and women's college games nationally has influenced many young athletes to participate in the sport. The international growth of basketball has created even more excitement and participation. Currently, over 200 countries have basketball federations.

The nature of the sport keeps people involved. Although basketball was invented to be an indoor sport, it is now played indoors and outdoors in all seasons. Almost 40 percent of play is outside in an unorganized environment.

Basketball is for everyone. Although it is an extremely youthful sport, with teenage males participating the most, it is played by both sexes of all ages and sizes and also by the physically challenged, including people in wheelchairs. Although there are advantages to being tall, there are also many opportunities for the smaller, skilled player. Participation among older players and female players is growing. More girls play interscholastic high school basketball than any other sport, and women's support groups are building networks that will continue the expansion of female participation.

Basketball competition is unique because, unlike other sports, it can be easily modified to accommodate smaller groups, different skill levels, and different kinds of players. Although most organized basketball competition consists of teams of five players, unorganized basketball competition can be played from full-court five-on-five to smaller groups of half-court three-on-three, two-on-two, or one-on-one. Growth in organized three-on-three basketball tournaments has been particularly rapid. The NBA is leading the way by sponsoring NBA Hoop It Up tournaments in more than 60 countries. Individual competition in the form of free-throw and other shooting contests sponsored by schools, clubs, and other organizations has also increased.

Finally, basketball can be played alone. All you need is a ball, a basket, a confined space (such as a driveway or playground), and your imagination to provide a competitive gamelike experience that other sports simply cannot match.

Equipment and Facilities

The circumference of a men's basketball is a maximum of 30 inches (76 cm) and a minimum of 29 1/2 inches (75 cm); a women's ball is a maximum of 29 inches (74 cm) and a minimum of 28 1/2 inches (72 cm).

The backboard measures 6 feet (1.8 m) horizontally and either 3 1/2 or 4 feet (1.1 or 1.2 m) vertically. A rectangular box measuring 24 inches (61 cm) horizontally and 18 inches (46 cm) vertically is centered on the backboard behind the ring (rim), with the top edge of its baseline level with the ring.

The basket is 18 inches (46 cm) in inside diameter and is attached to the backboard with its upper edge 10 feet (3 m) above the floor and its nearest edge 6 inches (15 cm) from the backboard.

The playing court is a rectangular surface 50 feet (15 m) by 94 feet (29 m)—usually 84 feet (26 m) for high schools. Markings designating specific areas of the court are shown in figure 1.

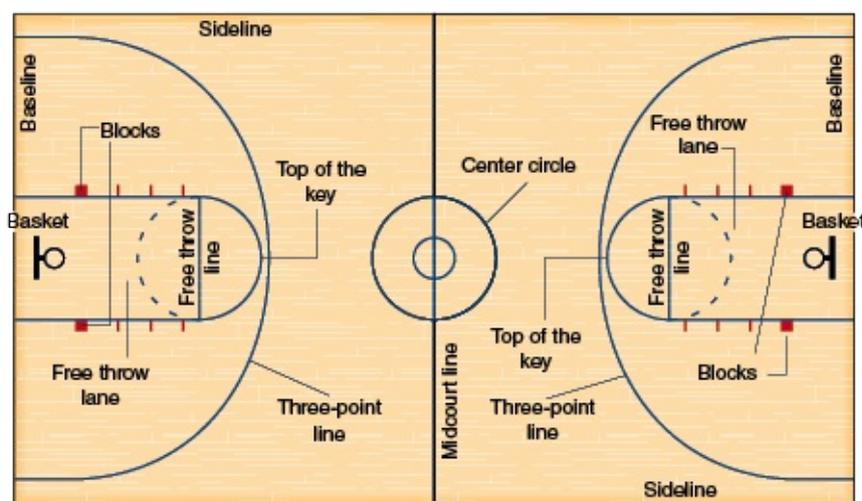


Figure 1 The basketball court.

The free throw line is 15 feet (5 m) from the backboard. On high school courts, the three-point line is marked at 19 feet, 9 inches (5.8 m, 23 cm) from the center of the basket. On college courts, the three-point line is marked at 20 feet, 9 inches (6.1 m, 23 cm). On NBA courts, the three-point line is marked at 23 feet, 9 inches (7 m, 23 cm). On international courts, the three-point line is marked at 22 feet, 1 inch (6.7 m, 4 cm). It is likely the international three-point line will move toward the NBA distance in the next 10 years. The international three-second area has recently been reconfigured to match the NBA shape, going from a trapezoid to a rectangle.

Rules

Currently, several sets of basketball rules are in use worldwide. International rules for competition between nations are established by the Federation Internationale de Basketball (FIBA). In the United States, professional players play under the National Basketball Association (NBA) rules. College men and women play under separate sets of rules as established by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). High schools play by rules established by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS). In recent years, there has been a movement toward uniformity in rules. Differences remain, mostly in terms of length, distance, and time, rather than in substance and content. To foster children's enjoyment and development, modified rules have been devised calling for smaller basketballs, lower baskets, and scaled-down courts.

Professional games consist of four quarters of 12 minutes each. College games consist of two halves of 20 minutes each. High school games consist of four quarters of 8 minutes each. Overtime

periods are used for tie games. The length of youth games is adjusted according to the age of the players.

Shot clocks vary in length for professional, international, college men's, college women's, and high school competition.

Warming Up and Cooling Down

Preparing your body for basketball practice or a game involves two phases: a five-minute warm-up to increase heart rate and basketball warm-up drills.

The first phase of preparing for strenuous basketball activity is to warm up with five minutes of offensive and defensive footwork. This will increase blood circulation and gradually prepare the body for the demands of basketball. Choose from warm-up activities such as trotting, changing pace and direction, and short sprints. Move from baseline to baseline on the court using a third of the width of the floor (lane line to lane line or lane line to sideline). Here are some offensive footwork drills described in step 1 (page 13):

- **Trotting.** Run easily from baseline to baseline and return. Do at least two round-trips.
- **Sprinting.** Sprint to the opposite free-throw line or free-throw line extended, change pace to a trot, and continue to the opposite baseline. Return in the same manner.
- **Change of pace.** Run from baseline to baseline, changing pace as you go. Return in the same manner.
- **Change of direction.** Run from baseline to baseline, changing direction as you go. Begin in an offensive stance with your left foot touching the intersection of the baseline and the lane line on your left. Run diagonally at a 45-degree angle to the lane line on your right. Make a sharp 90-degree change of direction from right to left and run diagonally to the imaginary lane line extended on your left. Make a sharp 90-degree change of direction from left to right. Continue in this manner to the opposite baseline. Return in the same manner.

Defensive footwork drills also make good warm-up drills. For each drill, start with your back to the far basket in a staggered defensive stance with one foot up, touching the baseline, and the other foot spread directly back. Here are some defense-inspired drills described in step 1 (page 26):

- **Zigzag.** Use defensive retreat steps to move back diagonally until your back foot touches the nearest sideline or lane line. Quickly drop-step with your lead foot and use retreat steps to move back diagonally until your back foot touches the nearest imaginary lane line extended or sideline. Continue changing direction at each imaginary lane line extended or sideline as you proceed to the opposite baseline. Return in the same manner.
- **Defensive attack and retreat.** Move backward using defensive attack and retreat steps until your back foot touches the half-court line. Quickly drop-step, moving the other foot back, and move backward to the baseline using attack and retreat steps until your back foot touches the baseline. Vary your attack and retreat steps as you move down the floor. Return in the same manner.
- **Reverse-run-and-turn.** Move backward using defensive attack and retreat steps. Imagine that a dribbler beats your lead foot and you must recover by using a reverse-run-and-turn. Reverse to the side of your lead foot, keeping your eyes on the imaginary dribbler, and run at least three steps before establishing a defensive position with your original lead foot up. From the baseline to the half-court line, make two reverse-run-and-turns starting with your left foot forward. From the half-court line to the opposite baseline, make two reverse-run-and-turns starting with your

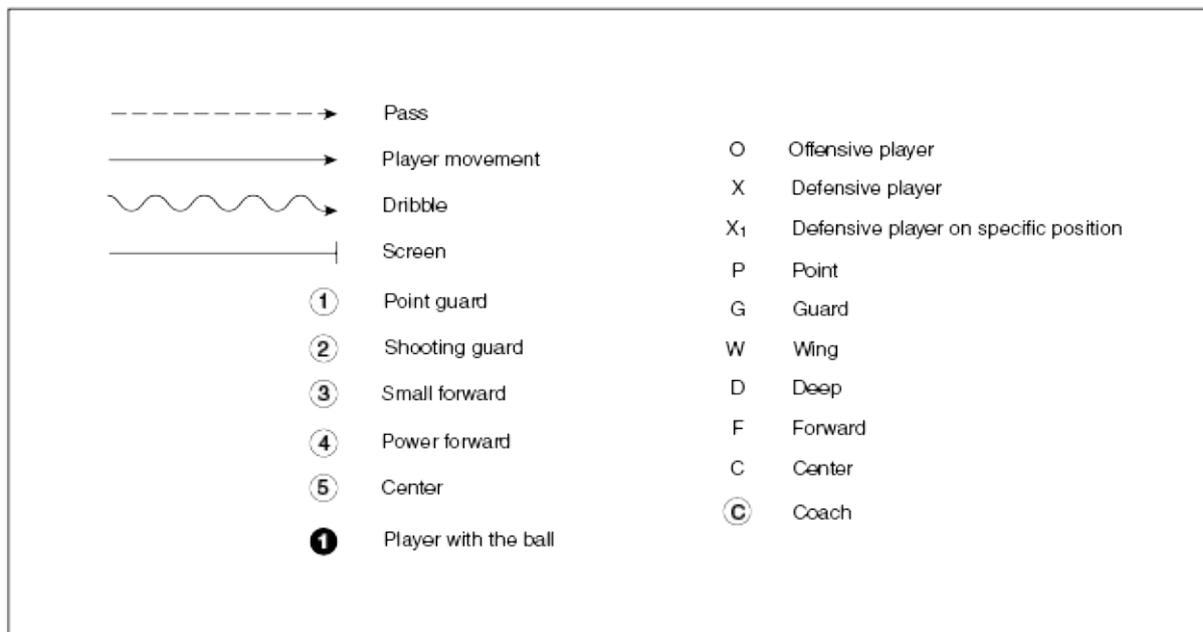
right foot forward. Return in the same manner.

The second phase of warming up includes basketball warm-up drills. The ball-handling warm-up described in step 2 (page 33) and the two-ball dribble drill described in step 3 (page 67) are excellent warm-up drills for the entire body. They also enhance ballhandling and dribbling skills and increase confidence. Step 4 describes several shooting warm-up drills. The hook shot warm-up (page 98) and alternate-hand hook shooting drill (page 99) are excellent for loosening the shoulders while helping develop strong- and weak-hand hook shots. The shooting warm-up drills (pages 78 to 80) help you warm up for shooting while enhancing shooting mechanics, rhythm, and confidence. The one-foot vertical jump training described in step 1 (page 17) and the toss-back passing drill (page 47) described in step 2 are also excellent basketball warm-up drills that improve skill and confidence.

At the end of basketball practice, take about five minutes to cool down. This is an excellent time to stretch because muscles are warm. Choose at least one stretch for each body part.

Key to Diagrams

Note to readers: The court diagram used throughout this book excludes many court markings so that the presentation of players' movements and passes will be as clear as possible. The college three-point line was included to serve as a distance reference point around the basket's perimeter. We hope this streamlined approach in no way hinders applications you wish to make to the NBA, college, or high school level courts.



Footwork

Although basketball is a team game, individual execution of fundamental skills is essential for team success. Shooting, passing, dribbling, rebounding, defending, and moving both with and without the ball are the fundamental skills that you want to master. Good footwork is a prerequisite for soundly executing each of these fundamental skills.

Balance and quickness are closely related to good footwork. Being ready to start, stop, and move in any direction with balance and quickness requires good footwork. Developing good footwork lays the foundation; employing effective footwork lets you keep your body under control so that you can move with timing, deception, and quickness. Height is commonly associated with basketball success, but balance and quickness are the most important physical attributes a player can have. And although you cannot increase your height, you can improve balance and quickness through practice.

Balance means that your body is under control and in a state of readiness to make quick movements. Quickness is an asset only if you can still execute properly. Rushing or hurrying is different from being quick. If you rush, using excessive haste or performing too rapidly, you're apt to make mistakes. Rushing reflects a lack of emotional as well as physical balance or control.

Quickness refers to speed of movement when performing a skill, not just running speed. Quickness is specific to the fundamental skill being performed, such as quick movement of your feet on defense, quickly going for a rebound, or a quick release of a shot.

Good footwork is important to both offense and defense. An offensive player has the advantage of knowing what move will be made and when. Offensive footwork is used to fake the defender, get the defender off balance, move off screens, cut to the basket, avoid charging into a defender, and elude a blockout when going for an offensive rebound.

Developing good footwork is especially important when playing defense. You can try to anticipate moves, but you can never be certain what your opponent will do. Defensive success often depends on the ability to react instantly in any direction to the moves of the opponent, which requires executing defensive footwork with balance and quickness. Good footwork can force your opponent to react to you. It can also enable you to disrupt the offensive poise of your opponent, force low-percentage shots, and force turnovers. You may question just how much you can increase your natural quickness. Quickness is largely determined by genetics. But by thoroughly understanding the basic mechanics of footwork, you can definitely improve your quickness if you work at it.

Footwork is the foundation for executing each of the fundamental skills of basketball with balance and quickness. Have a trained observer—your coach, a teacher, or a skilled player—watch your offensive and defensive footwork. The observer can use the checkpoints in figures 1.1 through 1.12 to evaluate your performance and provide constructive feedback.

Some people have said that Michael Jordan was born with great natural ability and that young players cannot hope to develop his quickness and jumping ability. This type of thinking fails to consider that, although Jordan was naturally gifted, he also worked very hard to improve every facet of his game. Other naturally gifted NBA players capable of equally amazing feats simply lack Jordan's work ethic. Jordan derived sheer joy from playing and was so obsessed with winning that he constantly pushed himself to work harder in practice than anyone else. Jordan was not only regarded as the greatest player of all time, he was also regarded as the greatest practice player of all time. If

can be a model for all of us trying to bring out the best in ourselves.

Balanced Stance

A well-balanced offensive stance enables you to move quickly, change direction, stop under control, and jump. In your offensive stance, your head is over your waist, and your back is straight. Your hands are above your waist with your elbows flexed, and your arms are kept close to your body. Your feet are at least shoulder-width apart, and your weight is evenly distributed on the balls of your feet. Your knees are flexed so that you are ready to move (figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1 Well-Balanced Offensive Stance



Offensive stance

1. Head over waist; able to see rim and ball
2. Back straight
3. Hands above waist
4. Elbows flexed and arms close to body
5. Feet shoulder-width apart
6. Weight even on balls of feet; ready to move
7. Knees flexed

MISSTEP

Your balance is off in a forward direction.

CORRECTION

Flex your knees to get low, rather than bend at the waist, so you are ready to move backward as quickly as you can move forward.

On defense, you must be able to move quickly in any direction and change direction while maintaining balance. The prerequisite is a well-balanced stance. The defensive stance resembles the offensive stance—head over your waist, back straight, and chest out—but your feet are more than shoulder-width apart and staggered, with one foot in front of the other (figure 1.2). Having your head over your waist keeps the center of gravity over its base. Distribute your weight evenly on the balls of your feet, and flex your knees so your body is low, ready to react in any direction.

Figure 1.2 Well-Balanced Defensive Stance



Defensive stance

1. Head over waist
2. Back straight
3. Hands above shoulders
4. Elbows flexed
5. Wide base; weight even on balls of feet
6. Feet staggered, more than shoulder-width apart
7. Knees flexed

MISSTEP

You reach away from your body with your arm, becoming off balance in the direction of the reach.

CORRECTION

Keep your head over your waist, your hands above waist level, and your elbows flexed, with your arms close to your body.

In the basic defensive stance, in which the feet are staggered one in front of the other, the front foot is called the lead foot. This stance makes it easy to move back in the direction of the back foot. Moving back requires only a short step with the back foot as you start to move. Moving back in the direction of the lead foot is much more difficult, requiring a vigorous drop step (reverse) with the lead foot while pivoting on the back foot as you start to move.

Protect your lead foot as you establish your basic defensive stance. Position your lead foot outside your opponent's body, and place your back foot in line with the middle of your opponent's body. This position protects the weakness of your lead foot and also gives the impression of an opening toward your back foot, strengthening your defensive stance.

Defensive players use three basic hand positions. In the first, one hand is kept forward on the lead foot side to pressure the shooter, while the other hand is at the opposite side to protect against passes. In the second basic hand position, both hands are at waist level, palms up, to pressure the dribbler. This position allows you to flick at the ball with the hand that is closer to the direction in which your opponent is dribbling. In the third basic hand position, both hands are kept above the shoulders (see figure 1.2 on page 3). This higher position forces your opponent to make lob or bounce passes that are more easily intercepted. This hand position also readies the hands to block shots, prepares you to rebound with two hands, and helps prevent reaching fouls. When both hands are above the shoulder

take care that they do not spread away from your body, causing you to lose balance. Flex your elbow to keep your arms from reaching out.

When you are guarding an opponent who has the ball, your eyes should be directed at your opponent's midsection. If the offensive player you are defending does not have the ball, one hand should point toward the offensive player, and the other should point toward the ball.

Errors in offensive and defensive stances vary with the individual. Tall players often have great balance problems than shorter players. Typically, a tall player does not spread or flex the knees enough to keep the center of gravity low. To maintain balance in an offensive stance, spread your feet shoulder-width apart and flex your knees so you are ready to move in any direction. If you find that you do not protect your lead foot when in the defensive stance, correct this error by positioning your lead foot outside your opponent's body and aligning your back foot with the middle of your opponent's body. If you find that you are susceptible to your opponent's head and ball fakes, be sure to keep your eyes focused on your opponent's midsection, not on your opponent's head or the ball.

Footwork Drill. STANCE

First assume the offensive stance, and then shift your weight too far back on your heels. Next, lean too far forward, bending at the waist with your weight forward on your toes. Now correct the stance by positioning your head over your waist, moving your hands up and close to your body, distributing your weight evenly on the balls of your feet, flexing your knees, and spreading your feet at least shoulder-width apart.

To Increase Difficulty

- Have a partner try to upset your balance backward by gently pushing on your shoulders.
- Have a partner try to upset your balance forward by pulling you by one of your hands.

Success Check

- Keep your head over your waist to maintain your center of gravity.
- Keep your arms close to your body.
- Stand with your knees flexed, your feet at least shoulder-width apart, and your weight on the balls of your feet.

Score Your Success

Give yourself 1 point for each element of the balanced stance that you are able to execute, for a total of 5 points:

- Head over waist ____
- Hands up and close to body ____
- Weight evenly distributed ____
- Knees flexed ____
- Feet shoulder-width apart ____
- Your score ____

If you increase the difficulty, give yourself 1 point each time you are able to resist your partner's attempt to upset your balance. Attempt to complete three consecutive cycles of the offensive stance without your partner pushing or pulling you off balance.

Your score ____

Footwork Drill. FOOTFIRE

Have a partner give commands. On the “Stance!” command, quickly assume an offensive stance. On the “Go!” command, move your feet up and down as quickly as you can, maintaining correct stance form for 10 seconds or until you hear the command “Stop!” Do three repetitions for 10 seconds each with 10-second rest intervals.

Success Check

- Maintain correct offensive stance form.
- Move your feet quickly.
- Aim for hitting the floor with your feet 40 to 50 times in each 10-second period.

Score Your Success

Give yourself 5 points each time you are able to hit the floor 40 to 50 times in a 10-second period, 3 points each time you hit the floor 30 to 39 times in a 10-second period, and 1 point each time you hit the floor 20 to 29 times in a 10-second period. Hitting the floor fewer than 20 times doesn't earn any points.

Times feet hit the floor, first 10-second period ____; points earned ____

Times feet hit the floor, second 10-second period ____; points earned ____

Times feet hit the floor, third 10-second period ____; points earned ____

Your score ____ (number of points earned; maximum of 15)

Footwork Drill. JUMP ROPE

Start in a balanced stance with your knees flexed and your weight on the balls of your feet. Hold the rope handles with your hands out to your sides at waist level and with your elbows close to your body. Place the rope behind your feet and swing it over your head from back to front. Jump over the rope. Add variety by skipping, jumping on one foot, crossing your arms, and jumping backward.

The best way to start a jump rope program is to jump rope for 30 seconds followed by a 30-second rest interval. Limit this program to 5 minutes, or a total of five sets. As you progress, you can jump for 60 seconds with a 30-second rest interval between sets. Once you have progressed to a 60-second set, see the score your success section to determine your mastery.

To Increase Difficulty

Perform a 60-second set of jumping rope followed by a 30-second rest interval.

To Decrease Difficulty

Perform a 30-second set of jumping rope followed by a 30- to 90-second rest interval.

Success Check

- Maintain a proper balanced stance.
- Keep your elbows close to your body as you swing the rope.

Score Your Success

Count your maximum number of jumps in 60 seconds.

60 jumps or more in 60 seconds = 10 points

50 to 59 jumps in 60 seconds = 8 points

40 to 49 jumps in 60 seconds = 6 points

30 to 39 jumps in 60 seconds = 4 points

20 to 29 jumps in 60 seconds = 2 points

Fewer than 20 jumps in 60 seconds = 0 points

Your score _____

Offensive Footwork

Moving with and without the ball is important to individual and team offense. As an offensive player, you have an advantage over your defender in knowing what move you will make and when you will make it. Moving quickly with balance is the key. Once you develop the skills, you should be able to keep your balance while using footwork and fakes to attempt to elude the defender, who will have difficulty reacting instantly to your moves. Moving continually with and without the ball also demands superior physical conditioning. Successful players master the necessary skills and develop their physical conditioning to excel in this important part of the game.

You need to master eight basic offensive movements: change of pace, change of direction, the one-foot stop and the jump stop, the front turn and the reverse turn, and the two-foot and one-foot jumps.

Change of Pace

Change of pace is a way to alter your running speed to deceive and elude the defender. Change from a fast running speed to a slower pace and then quickly change back to a fast speed without changing your basic running form.

As you run, keep your head up so you can see the rim of the basket and the ball. Take your first step with your back foot, bringing it in front of your lead foot. Run on the balls of your feet, pointing your toes in the direction you are going. Lean your upper body slightly forward and pump your arms forward in opposition to your legs, keeping your elbows flexed. Completely extend your support leg. Get your knee up and your thigh parallel to the floor as you bring it forward. To increase your speed, lengthen your stride to its maximum and increase its speed. To accelerate quickly to a faster speed, push off your back foot forcefully. You have the advantage in changing your pace because *you* decide when to change speeds. With good deception and a forceful push off your back foot, you should be at least a step quicker than your defender immediately after the change to a faster speed.

MISSTEP

You do not make a quick change from slow to fast.

CORRECTION

Push forcefully off your back foot to accelerate quickly.

Change of Direction

Change of direction underlies almost every basketball fundamental, but it is particularly important for getting open to receive a pass. An effective change of direction depends on sharply cutting from one direction to another. To execute a change of direction, step first with one foot and then step with the other foot in the opposite direction without crossing your feet. Begin with a three-quarter step rather than a full step. On your first step, flex your knee as you plant your foot firmly to stop your momentum. Turn on the ball of your foot and push off in the direction you want to go. Shift your

weight and take a long step with your other foot, pointing your toes in the new direction. After the change of direction, get your lead hand up as a target to receive a pass.

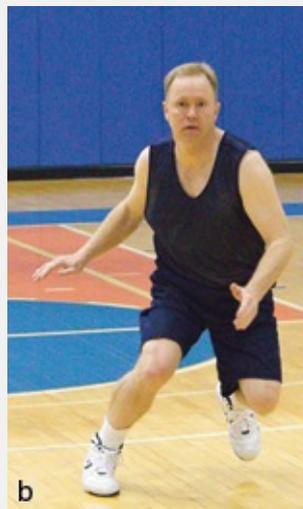
Although changing direction seems like a simple move, it takes concentrated practice to execute sharply and effectively. If you find you have trouble disguising your change of direction and you slow your speed with short steps on your approach, you should use normal running form and concentrate on a two-count move: When changing from right to left, concentrate on a two-count right-left; when going from left to right, concentrate on a two-count left-right (figure 1.3).

Figure 1.3 Change of direction



First step

1. Three-quarter first step
2. Knee flexed



Second step

1. Turn on ball of foot and push off in new direction
2. Shift weight



Third step

1. Take long second step
2. Point toes in new direction
3. Keep lead hand up as target

MISSTEP

You circle your turn rather than make a sharp cut.

CORRECTION

Use a three-quarter first step and flex your knee so you can pivot sharply and push off in the direction you want to go. Then shift your weight and take a long second step.

Stopping

Starting quickly is important, but so is stopping quickly. Inexperienced players often lose balance when trying to stop quickly. Learning two basic stops—the one-two stop and the jump stop—will help you stop under control.

In the one-two stop, the back foot lands first, followed by the other foot. If you execute the one-two stop as you receive a pass or on your last dribble, the foot that lands first becomes the pivot foot. The one-two stop is useful when you are running too fast to use the jump stop, when you are on the perimeter away from the basket, and especially when you are on the fast break.

Use normal running form. To execute the one-two stop (figure 1.4), first hop before the stop. This allows gravity to help slow your movement. Then lean in the opposite direction. Land on your back foot first, and then land on your lead foot. The wider your base, the more balance you will have. Flex your back knee to lower your body to a “sitting” position on the heel of your back foot. The lower you get, the better your balance. Keep your head up.

Figure 1.4 One-Two Stop



Hop and lean back

1. Hop before stop
2. Lean in opposite direction



Land with one-two step

1. Land on back foot first
2. Land on lead foot second
3. Land with wide base
4. “Sit” on back heel
5. Keep head up

MISSTEP

You lose balance going forward, causing you to drag your pivot foot.

CORRECTION

Hop before you stop, allowing gravity to slow your forward momentum. Lean back; land first on your back foot and then on your front foot. Keep a wide base. “Sit” on the heel of your back foot. Keep your head up.

In the jump stop, both feet land simultaneously. As you catch the ball and land with a jump stop, you can use either foot as a pivot foot. The jump stop is particularly advantageous when you are moving under control without the ball, especially when you receive a pass with your back to the basket in the low-post area (within 8 feet [2.4 m] of the basket).

When executing the jump stop (figure 1.5), you should hop before the stop to allow gravity to help

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