

Footwork

Every player must learn proper footwork to become a good player. He/she must learn how to execute the jump-stop, forward and reverse pivot, and make certain cuts without the ball, such as the V-cut. He/she must learn the "triple-threat" position.

Offensive Stance

"You always want to be in a good "basketball position" or stance. From this position, it is easier to start and stop, change direction and pace, jump, shoot, pass, catch and dribble. You should have your weight on the balls of your feet (the front part of the foot near the toes) and the feet should be shoulder width apart with the knees flexed. When you actually have the ball on the perimeter, use the Triple Threat Position so you are in a position to either pass, shoot or dribble. " Pivoting When you are stationary on the court, the rules say you can move one foot around, as long as the other foot (the "pivot foot") remains planted on the floor.

This is the essence of pivoting. All players must be skilled at pivoting. There are two types of pivots, the forward pivot and the reverse pivot (or drop-step). All pivoting is done on the ball of the foot. You do not want to become flat-footed or have your weight back on your heels. The ball of the pivot foot must be in contact with the floor at all times and must not slide sideways. When you pivot, just actually spin around on the ball of your pivot foot. If you pick up your pivot foot, or change your pivot foot to your other foot, you will be called for a traveling violation.

Pivoting drills:

Start with the left foot as pivot foot. Pivot forward 15 times like you are stomping on bugs as you go. As you find your balance, increase the rotation to a half turn. Now backward pivot 15 times. Switch pivot foot. Forward pivot 15 times. Backward pivot 15 times.

Pointers :

- You must keep your head up with eyes forward.
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- Have your knees bent a little.
- Your pivot point must not change.
- Your pivot foot does not slide.

How to Stop

There are two ways to stop, the one-two step landing and the jump-stop. Learning the one-two step landing 1. When doing the one-two step landing (after a sprint or speed dribble), one foot lands first (the back foot) and then the second foot lands. The back foot becomes the pivot foot. When stopping, let the second foot to land extend wide from the back foot for better balance.

Learning the Jump Stop

The jump stop is a useful offensive footwork that can be used at the end of a dribble or to receive a pass. At the end of a speed dribble, young players will often come to a stop out of balance and create a turnover. Ending the speed dribble with a jump stop will help prevent the traveling violation. The jump stop is executed by the player, who is on the run, taking one small step and then landing on both feet simultaneously in proper balance (not leaning forward). The nice part about the jump stop is that either foot can be used as the pivot foot.

Changing Direction and Speed

To change direction, plant the opposite foot (the one opposite the way you want to cut), and then push off the inside part of that foot in the direction you want to go. For example, if you want to make a sudden cut to the left, plant the right foot and push off from the medial (inside) part of your right foot, changing your direction to the left.

Faking and Cutting

You should learn to that just about every offensive move (and some defensive ones too), should be preceded, or "set up" by a good fake to get the defender to lean the wrong way. This is true, whether you are making an offensive jab-step, or you are coming off a screen, or just about to make a pass. A little "mis-direction" move, like making a ball fake, shoulder or head fake, foot fake, or just an eye fake can open a lane for you to drive, cut, shoot or pass.

The jab step

Outside, perimeter players should learn the jab step (or drive step) as a fake to set up either the drive to the hoop, or to create spacing for the outside shot.

Defensive Footwork

Defense is played mainly with the feet. You must move your feet quickly to stay in front of the offensive player. You must use a correct defensive stance. You must know how to slide (sideways, forward and backward). You must know when to turn and sprint. You must know how to "close-out" on the offensive man and play good "on-ball" defense.

Defensive Slides

When guarding your opponent, slide your feet sideways, using quick, short steps, and don't get your feet crossed. Don't hop. If you get beaten in the open floor, don't reach-in and swipe at the ball like a matador (I call it the "o-le" move), as the opponent moves by you. And don't just yell for help... turn and sprint after your opponent. Once you get in front of her again, get back into your defensive stance

Drills

Have all the players line-up on the end line, with adequate spacing. Start this drill at slow speed initially. Have the players jog down the floor slowly. When you blow your whistle, they come to a jump stop. Yell "go" and they start again. Every time you blow the whistle,

they jump stop. Do this back and forth, up and down the court. When they look like they are getting the hang of it, have them sprint and do the drill. Then give them a ball, and dribble slowly down the floor, doing jump stops. Eventually work up to the speed dribble and jump stop.

Receiving the pass with a jump stop. Form two sets of lines, one at an end line, the other at half court, with the lines facing each other. This drill is good for learning to receive the pass with a jump stop, and is also a good passing and conditioning drill.

Passers make good chest passes. Make sure they don't lob these passes. Passes should have good speed. The passer then follows his pass and sprints to the rear of the opposite line. The receivers move toward the ball and receive it with a jump stop, and hold the triple threat position briefly, and then make the pass to the next player in the opposite line, follow the pass, and get into the opposite line.

Make sure passes are crisp, and the receivers are coming to the ball and are jump stopping. Check their triple threat position. Players should be sprinting to the opposite line... get a little conditioning in here too.

4-Corners Footwork Drill This drill teaches a few things at once, the jump-stop, reverse pivot, and crisp passing. It starts with 4 lines, a ball at the front of each line. The 4 lines begin in 4 corners of a square, about 25 feet apart facing each other

On the whistle, all 4 lines speed dribble toward each other with a target near the top of the arc. All 4 players jump-stop about 3 feet before they collide (forming a small circle) and reverse pivot to face the line to their right or left (decided prior to whistle), and make a chest pass to the person at the front of the line. Passers go to line they passed to and next 4 players go as soon as they receive the ball. Timing is important so that all 4 lines are passing, jump-stopping, and beginning at the same time.

Here is a drill that has the players executing all of these moves (jump stop, pivoting, v-cut, and passing plus take a shot, follow the shot for the rebound, and make a good pass.

Start the drill with the player in the line on the right wing cutting sharply toward the corner, where he makes a jump-stop, and then does a reverse pivot, and then cuts to the block. There he makes a V-cut back out to the elbow or free-throw line extended area. There he does a forward pivot and receives the pass in triple threat position. Finally, he takes the shot, follows his rebound, gets the rebound and passes to the next person in the passing line who does not have a ball. He follows his pass to the rear of the passing line. The passer goes to the rear of the shooting line.

Pointers:

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- Make sure the jump-stop and pivots and cuts are executed correctly.
- Jump-stop: hop and land on both feet simultaneously.
- Reverse pivot: After the jump-stop, pivot on the inside (left) foot toward the open floor.

- V-Cut : A cut made in the shape of a "V". The first leg of the "V" can be slow. The last leg of the "V" is quick. When making the V-cut, plant the inside foot hard, and step off quickly with your other foot in the direction of your final cut.
- L-Cut : A cut made in the shape of an "L", often along the lane (or "lane cut"). Diagram B, LC. The cut can be made up the lane, or down the lane (from the wing position). Use footwork similar to the V-cut.
- Forward Pivot: At the end of the V-cut, make a sharp forward pivot by pivoting on the baseline (right) foot, and face the passer and receive the pass in triple threat position.
- At first, go through the drill slowly with the players, instructing and executing each move for them. Have the players go slow-motion at first, then speed it up once they start becoming proficient.