

Planning your Practices

Don't just come to the gym each week without a plan and think you can just "wing it". You have to plan for success and plan your practices just like a teacher creates a lesson plan for his/her English or math class. Your practice should be like a classroom and you are the teacher.

You should plan each practice

Vary the drills and skills, and the team skills from practice to practice. Certain skills should be practiced every practice, such as the ball-handling and dribbling drills, and shooting drills. Depending on your schedule, the amount of practice time you have and what your specific team needs are, you vary your drills. A rough rule of thumb for our institution is to spend about half the time on individual fundamentals and half the time on team skills. If you are working with younger kids, you might slant this more toward fundamental skills.

- Stretching is important at the start of practice in order to avoid injuries.
- Move quickly from one drill to another and don't spend half of your practice time on one drill.
- Budget your time for each drill. If you are introducing a new drill, play, offence, defence, etc, you will have to allow more time the first time.
- Follow an up tempo exhausting drill with 5 minutes of something less aerobic. Make them work hard, but don't be unreasonable.
- Do your free-throw shooting after an aerobic, running drill when the players are tired, in order to simulate the leg and body fatigue that occurs in the real game setting
- If you have a good assistant, you can plan some time for individual skills with perimeter players on one end of the floor, and your post players on the other end.

Conditioning

"Don't play sports to get into shape. Get into shape to play sports."

Endurance, strengthening, stretching and flexibility all are important parts of playing any aerobic type sport such as basketball. Close games are won late in the game often by the team with the best physical conditioning. When you are tired, your shots come up short, you miss your free-throws, your defence, hustle and rebounding suffer... and these are the things that win games. If you are a quick, full-court pressing and fast-breaking team, you must be in top physical condition and you can win against more talented teams by pushing them to their point of fatigue.

Once practices start, use a program of stretching, followed by running drills that stress aerobic conditioning.