

10 drills for a complete practice

Ten drills written by coaches for coaches: warmup, finishing, footwork, ball movement, rebounding, transition, special situations and a constraint scrimmage. Each drill has setup, how it runs, coaching points, and ways to make it harder or easier. Run them in this order and you have a 90-minute practice.

01 • WARMUP • 5 MIN • 10 PLAYERS • BASKETBALLS (2 PER PLAYER)

Two-Ball Warmup Pound Series

Setup. Players spread out with two balls each, standing in a wide athletic stance.

How it runs. Players pound-dribble both balls at the same time at a controlled, moderate pace for a short set, focusing on even rhythm between both hands rather than speed, activating both hands and forearms before the rest of practice.

Coaching points

- Keep both balls at the same height and rhythm. This is about coordination, not speed.
- Stay low and relaxed. It's a warmup activation, not a max-effort two-ball drill.
- Build the pace gradually only if the rhythm stays clean.

Make it harder: Move into a full two-ball skill drill once the warmup is done.

Make it easier: Use a single ball for players not yet comfortable with two-ball coordination.

02 • WARMUP • 8 MIN • 1 PLAYER • BASKETBALLS

Mikan Drill Both Hands Progression

Setup. Player under the basket with room to pivot to both sides.

How it runs. The player alternates finishing layups on the right and left sides of the rim without catching the ball in between, moving continuously around the front of the rim. After a set number of reps, progress to the same pattern with a jump hook.

Coaching points

- Keep the footwork correct on every rep: the correct foot takes off for each side.
- Keep the ball high and out of a defender's reach throughout.
- Move to the jump hook only once the basic layup pattern is smooth.

Make it harder: Add a defender applying light, non-live pressure.

Make it easier: Slow the pace and stay on the basic layup pattern.

03 • FOOTWORK & AGILITY • 8 MIN • 1 PLAYER • CONES

T-Drill Defensive Agility

Setup. Cones set up in a T shape: one forward, two to the sides at the top of the T.

How it runs. The player sprints forward to the top of the T, shuffles to one side cone, shuffles all the way across to the other side cone, shuffles back to the center, and backpedals to the start, as quickly as possible with proper technique at each change.

Coaching points

- Stay low through every lateral shuffle. Don't stand up to move faster.
- Touch each cone with a hand for a legal rep.
- Backpedal under control at the end rather than turning and sprinting.

Make it harder: Time the pattern and have players beat their own best with clean technique.

Make it easier: Walk through the pattern while the sequence and technique are learned.

04 • TEAM OFFENSE • 10 MIN • 4 PLAYERS • BASKETBALLS

4-Man Passing Shell with Cutting

Setup. Four players spaced in a diamond or square, one ball moving continuously.

How it runs. Players pass around the shape and cut to the basket after every pass, with the nearest teammate filling the open spot. Repeat continuously so every player passes and cuts many times in a short period.

Coaching points

- Cut every single time. This builds an automatic habit.
- Fill the open spot with purpose. A slow fill collapses the spacing.
- Keep passes crisp and accurate even as the cutting adds movement.

Make it harder: Add one or two defenders to make the passing and cutting decisions live.

Make it easier: Slow the pace while the pass, cut and replace pattern is learned.

05 • TEAM OFFENSE • 12 MIN • 5 PLAYERS • BASKETBALLS

Drive-and-Kick Read Series

Setup. Ball handler at different starting spots, live or coached help defense, shooters spaced around the perimeter.

How it runs. The ball handler drives hard toward the rim from different starting spots, draws help, and reads which shooter the rotation has left open, delivering an on-time kick-out pass instead of forcing a shot into the help.

Coaching points

- Attack downhill with real pace. A drive that doesn't draw help creates nothing.
- Read the help rotation, not a predetermined target. The open man changes with the coverage.
- Deliver the kick-out with good footwork. Don't fling it off balance.

Make it harder: Add a second help defender for a more complex read.

Make it easier: Walk through the read with token help defense before going live.

06 • REBOUNDING • 10 MIN • 2 PLAYERS • BASKETBALLS

Live Box-Out 1v1

Setup. Two players. A coach or shooter puts up shots from different spots.

How it runs. A shot goes up from a random spot and both players fight for position and the rebound. The defender focuses on a legal box-out first before pursuing the ball, and both compete at full effort.

Coaching points

- Legal contact only. It's a positioning battle, not a wrestling match.
- Call 'shot' the instant the ball is released as the cue to box out.
- Whoever wins should immediately look to score or outlet.

Make it harder: Keep a running score over a set number of reps.

Make it easier: Remove the live contest and have the defender show the box-out position first.

07 • REBOUNDING • 10 MIN • 4 PLAYERS • BASKETBALLS

Defensive Rebound Outlet Read

Setup. Rebounder secures a defensive rebound with a live defender applying immediate pressure.

How it runs. After the rebound, the player reads the pressure: if a guard is open, outlet immediately; if the lane is open, advance it themselves; if heavily contested, pivot and protect until support arrives.

Coaching points

- Make the read in the first half-second. A slow decision lets the defense set up.
- Protect the ball with strong pivots under pressure.
- Talk loudly with the outlet target so the timing is clean.

Make it harder: Add full-court pressure right after the rebound.

Make it easier: Walk through each of the three decisions before combining them live.

08 • TRANSITION / FAST BREAK • 10 MIN • 6 PLAYERS • BASKETBALLS

Numbered Fast Break (1-2-3 Lanes)

Setup. Three or more players in a full-court break, each aware of their numbered lane.

How it runs. Whoever gets the rebound or steal becomes lane 1, the middle ball handler, and pushes up the floor. The next two players out fill lanes 2 and 3 on the wings regardless of position, so the team fills lanes by who is available, not by fixed position.

Coaching points

- Whoever gets the ball is lane 1. Don't wait for the point guard.
- Fill the open wing lane immediately.
- Sprint at full speed to claim your lane before a teammate fills it.

Make it harder: Add a fourth trailer lane once three lanes are automatic.

Make it easier: Have a coach call out lane numbers before making it fully live.

09 • INBOUNDS PLAYS • 8 MIN • 5 PLAYERS • BASKETBALLS

Baseline Quick-Hitter Layup (BLOB)

Setup. Players spread near the basket, inbounder ready to pass immediately.

How it runs. The instant the ball is live, a designated cutter sprints backdoor to the rim before the defense is organized, and the inbounder delivers a quick, direct pass for a layup.

Coaching points

- Speed is the whole point. The action should take a second or two.
- The inbounder is ready to pass the instant the official hands over the ball.
- Use it against a defense that is slow to organize after a dead ball.

Make it harder: Add a backup kick-out to a shooter if the defense takes away the layup.

Make it easier: Walk through it against a defense that starts set so the read still holds up.

10 • SCRIMMAGE / GAME PLAY • 15 MIN • 10 PLAYERS • BASKETBALLS

Constraint Scrimmage: Two-Pass Minimum

Setup. Live 5-on-5 half-court play. A coach or player tracks passes each possession.

How it runs. Play is fully live, but every possession needs at least two passes before a legal shot. A violation is a turnover. The offense has to move the ball and read rotations instead of settling for isolation.

Coaching points

- Move the ball with purpose, not just to satisfy the rule.
- Cut and relocate constantly. Standing still makes two passes harder.
- Play full defensive effort regardless of the offensive constraint.

Make it harder: Raise the minimum to three or four passes as habits improve.

Make it easier: Drop to a one-pass minimum for a team still building ball movement.

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