

The most important fundamental skill a basketball player can possess is the ability to accurately shoot. Unfortunately, the majority of today's players don't fully understand the importance of accurate shooting. All they have to do is look at the premier scorers in the NBA and they will discover that all of these players are good to excellent shooters. Many younger players do not fully understand how accurate shooting can benefit their game.

So here is the key question:

## **WHY CAN'T MOST OF TODAY'S PLAYERS SHOOT?**

The answer is very simple:

## **COACHES ARE TEACHING IT WRONG**

The Pro Shot System works because:

- It is biomechanically correct (all parts of the body work together to form a tension free and fluid shot)
- It is simple to understand and apply
- It is almost effortless

## **PRIMARY COMPONENTS**

### **The Turn**

As an initial baseline, the best way to explain feet position is to imagine your body like a dial on a wrist watch. The feet should be turned to around 10:00-10:30 for right-handed players and 1:30-2:00 for left-handed players (square two ways!!). However, each player WILL be different and there will be variety from this initial standard based upon body type.

The first reason to use this shooting component is it aligns the shot. Stand at the free throw line with both feet lined up to the basket (this is how a player is supposed to shoot according to most coaches!!). Now place both arms down at the sides and then raise the shooting arm. Notice the shooting hand is off to the side approximately 3-inches in comparison to the rim. Any shot from this position will always be a few inches off if shooting in this manner (square to the basket).

The second reason lies with the concept of shoulder and neck tension. When a player shoots with both feet facing (square to) the basket, they will naturally become a two shoulder shooter. In other words, both shoulders will be used almost equally when shooting. When this happens, tension is the immediate result which leads to a significant decrease in accuracy.

### **Rythm: "The Dip"**

Dipping the ball when receiving a chest pass is a natural rhythm and it gives a shooter additional power on the shot as well. Once the player catches the pass, the shooter generally dips the ball from the waist to the thigh and then springs back to shoot. The motion should be fluid and effortless.

When a player dips, only the ball, hands and forearms dip. Where many players get confused is that some players will try dipping their entire body (very common with girls). This leads to an off-balance and tense shot.

A player does NOT need to dip on three occasions (no need to dip because you are already IN a dip (at the bottom of the motion)):

- 1) When the chest pass is poor and is caught below the thigh area
- 2) When the bounce pass is caught below the thigh area
- 3) When shooting off the dribble

## **Sweep (& Sway)**

The “Sweep and Sway” is a very simple, but effective technique that will help the shoulders to relax while giving the shot additional arc. Please note that while this is a **crucial** element in accurate shooting, it is never mentioned by basketball coaches when teaching shooting. The players using the Sweep and Sway are the best shooters year after year in college and professional basketball. This particular technique is a **MUST** for all players.

When shooting, your feet should “Sweep” in front of your body (much like a broom). This allows your shoulders to “Sway” back. It is imperative to shoot many shots without the ball to get used to the feet forward and the shoulders back. The Sweep and Sway is the hardest of the six primary components to “master” simply because it is the only component a player uses the major muscles in the body (shoulders, glutes, lower body etc.). The best way to acclimate yourself to shooting with a Sweep and Sway is to practice the motion daily without the ball for 5-10 minutes. A player should also focus on keeping the feet narrow when landing. The best shooters in the world are narrow shooters.

The implementation of the Sweep and Sway is pretty simple, the further you move back from the basket, the more Sweep you use (more you come forward). When shooting from the free throw line, you will Sweep only a few inches. With a three pointer you will need to Sweep six inches to a foot depending on overall strength level (the more body strength, the less need to sway).

## **Shooting Hand (Index Finger)**

Whichever finger is in the center of the ball is, generally, the final body part to touch the ball (the ball WILL roll off of that finger). It is absolutely imperative to place the index finger in the middle of the ball. It is the strongest, and straightest, finger on the hand).

## **Off Hand**

The off-hand (the non-shooting hand) is a critical part of shooting accuracy. It basically brings the shot together by serving as a guide for the shot, but more importantly it helps to balance the entire body.

Players may demonstrate a variety of poor off hand mechanics from pulling it to the side or down (this causes the player to be off balanced) or pulling it above the shooting hand (which forces the player to tense). Improper use of the off-hand can affect shooting accuracy by as much as 30-40% for younger players due to a lack of strength and coordination.

The concept is to lightly touch the off-hand below the shooting wrist during the release. The touch allows the shooter to be in the same off hand position each and every time.

## **Eyes**

The eyes are easily one of the most misunderstood aspects of shooting. Generally, poor shooters stare at the rim. Many of the greatest shooters of all-time actually watch the flight of the ball.

FTF is short for Follow The Finger. Players should look at the rim but NOT stare at it. Focus on the rim as a whole. As the ball reaches eye level, the focus switches to the index finger. Follow the finger up and through the release.

# ADDITIONAL COMPONENTS

## **Catching The Ball**

The best shooters catch in back of the ball with “ten fingers up” (pointing to the sky).

When you catch a pass under the ball, dipping becomes very difficult because of tension. The wrist to the bicep become tense and the dip slows to the point that it usually stops just below the chest (or the wrist is “pre-cocked”).

By catching in back of the ball, the dip becomes rhythmic and power dramatically increases. As the ball dips down and springs back up, the hand will now naturally come under the ball at the start of the release.

## **Shooting Grip Loose**

When holding a ball, the wrists and hand needs to be relaxed. Too often many players hold the ball so tightly it appears as if they are trying to strangle the ball.

There are two areas of the body that people generally feel the most tension—the neck and shoulder region and in the wrists and hands. It is vital a shooter relaxes the wrist and hands when shooting. A good rule of thumb is to hold the ball lightly when shooting and hold it tighter when being closely guarded by a defender.

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<sup>i</sup> ALL credit to Pro Shot System.