



Fitness Activities



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



Ages: 8 to 9

Key Idea

General Fitness

Description

Gather players into a group. Have a ball ready. “I want everybody to run in place at a slow pace. Now a bit faster. Now everyone stop.” Choose a player to demonstrate a bounce pass. “That was a good pass. Now I need all of you to pass the ball to each other and practice passing and catching.” Have kids pass two times each. Next, have them perform a leg stretch. “Those four activities we did are a part of basketball, but they also are ways to improve your fitness. Each activity helps to improve a different area of fitness. Running improves your cardiorespiratory fitness, passing helps your muscular strength and your muscular fitness, and stretching helps your *flexibility*. Throughout the season we’ll be learning more about fitness in our fitness circles.”

Key Idea

Safety

Description

Gather players into a group. Choose one player to act out being injured (limping) and have a second player get a coach to report the injury. “What did you see happening?” Listen to their responses. “When you get injured, it will probably look like what was acted out. If it hurts, you should stop and let me know right away. Don’t pretend it doesn’t hurt. Most times injuries are not bad, but sometimes they can be serious. If you get hurt even a little, I need to come over and check your injury. If you see a player who looks hurt or in pain or if you saw her get injured, let me know. Telling me if you’re hurt helps me keep you safe during games and practices.”



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Ages: 8 to 9

Key Idea

General Fitness

Description

Gather players into a group. “Everyone think of a hill. Get a picture of a hill in your mind. Close your eyes and see it in your mind. You see it? Now pretend we’re all bicycling up that hill. We start at the bottom and slowly climb. We have to work harder and harder as we make it to the top. Then we gradually start pedaling back down the hill, which is not as hard as going up. That hill is the way your body will move every practice. We start slow with a warm-up. As you ride up the hill, this is how we move in the middle of practice. Toward the end of our practice, we gradually start to come back down the hill, slowing our bodies down. This is called the cool-down. A warm-up and cool-down are important parts of healthy fitness.”

Key Idea

Flexibility

Description

Gather players into a circle sitting down with their legs stretched in front of them. “Think of stretching a rubber band as far as you can. What happens if you stretch the band too far?” Listen to their responses. “That’s right. It breaks. Muscles work in sort of the same way. Stretching your muscles too far can tear and injure them. But it’s important to stretch your muscles for them to be flexible. Everyone reach forward and try to touch your toes, but stretch only until you feel a slight pulling in your leg muscle—make sure it doesn’t hurt.” Tell them to hold the stretch for 10 counts without bouncing. “Stretching your muscles is important to keep them flexible, but you shouldn’t feel pain. The main basketball muscles to stretch are the front of your thighs (quadriceps), the back of your thighs (hamstrings), the back of your lower legs (calves), your shoulders (deltoids), and your arms (biceps, triceps).” Demonstrate stretching each muscle group.



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Ages: 8 to 9

Key Idea

Healthy Habits

Description

Gather players into a group. “Everyone run in place for 15 seconds. Ready? Go! . . . Now stop! Whenever we run and dribble during our practice, our body starts to get warm. When our bodies get really warm, what do you think happens to cool them off?” Wait for their responses. “Our bodies start to sweat. Sweat is the water that comes out of all the pores in your skin. Then the sweat evaporates into the air. Since your body sweats to cool off, what do you think we need to put back into our bodies?” Wait for someone to say “water.” “That’s right. Drinking enough water every day is an important healthy habit. You’ll need to drink more water if you’re running and playing a lot. I want to challenge all of you to drink one glass of water a day for every year of your age. How many is that? . . . Eight? Nine? I know you can drink that many glasses a day!”

Key Idea

Safety

Description

Gather players into a group. “Pretend you’re a ‘player in a bubble.’ Walk around and work at not bumping into your teammates to make sure their bubbles don’t break.” Keep kids in a confined area. Time them for one minute. “Now we’ll do the same thing while jogging.” Time for 30 seconds. “It’s important not to run into other players—that is a foul, even if it’s an accident. It’s important to play as safely as you can. Thinking about the other players’ bubbles will help you stay in your own space during practices and games.”



Fitness Activities



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Ages: 8 to 9

Key Idea

Cardiorespiratory fitness

Description

Gather the players into a circle. “Remember the hill we imagined we bicycled up a few practices ago? We start slow going up, then go faster toward the top and come slowly back down. Let’s start up that hill by running in place slowly, getting a little faster, faster, and now really fast. Now start to slow down. A little slower. Slower. And stop.” Run with players to model. “That was a short version of moving during our practice. We run faster to make our heart and lungs stronger; this is called cardiorespiratory fitness. We start slowly and then gradually slow down at the end of the practice to help our hearts pump blood and carry oxygen from our lungs to our muscles.”

Key Idea

Cardiorespiratory fitness

Description

Gather players into a circle and give one child a ball to hold. “What does the heart pump to the whole body?” Listen to responses until someone says “blood.” “What does the blood carry to the muscles?” Listen until someone says “oxygen.” “We’re going to pretend that the ball is oxygen and that you’re big blood vessels or tubes that carry the blood. Pass the ball to the person next to you.” Each player should touch the ball until the ball completes the circle. “The oxygen in your blood starts at your heart and travels to your lungs, legs, arms, and brain.” Try assigning a part of the body to each player. “Playing basketball helps your heart and lungs get better at getting oxygen to your muscles—this is called cardiorespiratory fitness.”



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Ages: 8 to 9

Key Idea

Muscular Strength and Endurance

Description

Gather players into a group in their own space. “We’re going to move different directions in our own space. I will point to a direction and the whole group should jog slowly in that direction. When I put my hand up, everyone stop.” Point to directions of: forward, one side, the other side, and backward. “When you jog in different directions, you use different muscles. It’s important to improve your muscular strength and endurance in all your muscles in your body. We can do that by running, passing and dribbling the ball, and spreading out on the court.”

Key Idea

Training and Conditioning

Description

Gather players into a circle. “Everyone run in place for 10 seconds. . . . Now stop. Now run in place for 20 seconds. . . . Stop. Next we’ll run for 30 seconds. . . . Stop. When you run, you’re improving your body’s physical conditioning in your heart, lungs, and muscles. Every time you play basketball a little bit longer and let your body get a little more tired, your body improves its physical conditioning. When your body has better conditioning, you can keep up with opponents and play longer without getting too tired.”



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Ages: 8 to 9

Key Idea

Muscular Endurance

Description

Gather players into a group. “Stand with your arms straight out from your sides. Give enough space so you don’t bump your neighbor. Circle your arms like this.” Demonstrate. “Keep going until you get very tired, then stop.” Wait until the last player stops. “Do your arms feel tired? That is called muscle fatigue. Muscles can keep moving and tightening only for so long before tiring out. The longer you can play before your muscles tire out, the more muscular endurance you have. You can improve your muscular endurance by playing basketball.”

Key Idea

Healthy Habits

Description

Gather players into a group. “What are healthy habits?” Listen to their responses. “Why do you need to practice healthy habits?” Listen to their responses and encourage discussion of how healthy bodies and minds are important to sports. “Practice healthy habits every day to take care of your bodies—the same way you practice basketball to improve your skills and get to be better players. Keep the list of healthy habits in your mind.” Have a list of examples written on a piece of paper clipped to a clipboard, including brushing your teeth; no smoking, alcohol, or drugs; eating healthy foods; and getting plenty of sleep. “Check each item off when you have done that habit during the day.” Have a pen to actually check an item off the list. “Every day start your list over again. Doing all the habits daily keeps you healthy.”



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Key Idea

Training and Conditioning

Description

Split children into two or three groups. Give each group a ball. Instruct them to make a circle, then dribble and pass to others in their group. Continue for one minute, then bring everyone together. “Let’s say that activity finished our practice. Now you’re finished with practice for the week. What could you do tomorrow to stay active and practice skills that are similar to or the same type of thing we do in practice?” Listen to their responses. Discuss running, dribbling, and other ball-handling skills. “Your body loses its conditioning when you stop using it! It’s important to stay active outside of basketball practices. This helps keep you fit for basketball.”

Key Idea

Healthy Habits

Description

Gather the players into a group. “What kinds of food do you think are the best to eat when you play basketball?” Listen to their responses. Encourage discussion to talk about the difference between healthy foods and unhealthy foods. Healthy choices include fruits, vegetables, grains or cereals, lean meats, plant proteins, and nut butters. Discourage soda, high-sugar foods, fatty meats, chips, and fried foods. “Your body needs all types of food to be healthy. Let’s think of three healthy snacks you could eat that would give you energy to practice.” Listen to responses and encourage everyone to contribute. Vote on whether the foods they name are the best choice or not. “Eating healthy snacks that give you extra energy to play basketball is a healthy habit you should be practicing every day.”



Passing



Time: 10 minutes



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Ages: 8 to 9

Type

Game

Activity

Players play a 2 v 2 game as a team, focusing on making good passes in setting up good shots.

Activity Description

Play 2 v 2 half-court games. Teams earn a point only when they complete a pass before shooting. Players can dribble three times before passing.

Rotate players accordingly so that all players have a chance to play offense and defense.

Questions

Coach: What is the goal of the game?

Players: To make good passes to set up baskets.

Coach: What do you have to do to be successful at passing?

Players: Catch the ball, then pass the ball right to your teammate.

Coach: What types of passes are there?

Players: Overhead, bounce, and chest pass.

Coach: How do you play as a team?

Players: Work together and talk to each other.

Variations

Play 3 v 1, 3 v 2, or 2 v 2 half-court games, depending on the skill proficiency of your players.

If a team makes a basket, they get the ball again (for the second turn only).



Passing



Time: 10 minutes



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Ages: 8 to 9

Type

Skill Drill

Activity

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to make overhead, bounce, and chest passes.
2. Practice passing.

Activity Description

Pair up players. Practice the three types of passes.

Tips

Passing

- “Step in the direction of the pass.”
- “Elbows in.”
- “Follow through—fingers pointed to target.”

Catching

- “Target hands.”
- “Eyes on the ball.”
- “Reach.”
- “Pull it in.”

Dribbling

- “Dribble to move forward.”
- “Pass on the move.”
- “Control the ball.”
- “Lead your partner.”



Passing



Time: 10 minutes



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Ages: 8 to 9

Type

Skill Drill

Activity

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to dribble.
2. Practice dribbling and passing.

Activity Description

Pair up players. Partner 1 dribbles 8 to 10 times and then passes to partner 2. Partner 2 starts dribbling forward and then passes over to partner 1, who is moving alongside.

Partners continue to move forward, dribbling and passing. Partners should try different types of passes (e.g., bounce, chest).

Tips

Passing

- “Step in the direction of the pass.”
- “Elbows in.”
- “Follow through—fingers pointed to target.”

Catching

- “Target hands.”
- “Eyes on the ball.”
- “Reach.”
- “Pull it in.”

Dribbling

- “Dribble to move forward.”
- “Pass on the move.”
- “Control the ball.”
- “Lead your partner.”



Receiving



Time: 10 minutes



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Ages: 8 to 9

Type

Game

Activity

Players will move to open positions on the court to receive passes in the triple threat position and are prepared to shoot, pass, or dribble.

Activity Description

Play 2 v 2 half-court games. Teams must pass at least twice before shooting. Players cannot dribble. All restarts are made at half court.

Questions

Coach: What was the goal of the game?

Players: To get open, be prepared to shoot, pass, or dribble.

Coach: What did you and your teammates have to do to be successful?

Players: Make quick and accurate passes. Catch the ball under control. Move to an open space.

Coach: What did you do to keep the defense from stealing the ball or blocking your shot?

Players: Protected the ball by keeping body between the defense and the ball. Held the ball firmly with two hands; used the body to protect the ball. Used quick passes.

Coach: Once you received the ball, what was the best way to hold it so the defense didn't know whether you were going to shoot or pass?

Players: Holding the ball as if you're going to shoot (triple threat Players), with one hand behind the ball and the other at its side.

Variations

Play 3 v 1, 3 v 2, or 2 v 2 half-court games, depending on the skill proficiency of your players. Rotate players accordingly so that all players have a chance to play offense and defense.

Once players receive a pass, they should ball fake and jab step, then focus on making a quick, accurate pass to a teammate. Players shoot when they're open after their team has completed at least two consecutive passes.



Receiving



Time: 15 minutes



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Ages: 8 to 9

Type

Skill Drill

Activity

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to receive the ball in triple threat position.
2. Practice receiving passes in triple threat position.

Activity Description

Players in fours practice passing from point to wing, to baseline, to a high or low post. Mark positions with tape or markers. Players pass, then move to another position. Players receiving the ball must:

- Present a target for the passer.
- Receive ball in the triple threat position and jump stop.
- Give a ball fake with a jab step before passing.
- Perform a quick, accurate pass to a partner.

Tips

- “Target hands.”
- “Triple threat.”
- “Ready position.” (Be ready to fake out opponent with the option to shoot, pass, or dribble.)
- “Hand position.” (Hands in shooting position on the ball.)
- “Holding position.” (Hold the ball to the side of the hip.)
- “Fake a pass, then make a pass.”
- “Step toward your target.”
- “Elbows in.”
- “Fingers pointed at your target.”

Variations

To simplify this practice, have players focus on presenting a target to the passer, receiving the ball in triple threat position, and making quick, accurate passes, but don't have them perform a jab step and ball fake.



Shooting



Time: 10 minutes



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Ages: 8 to 9

Type

Game

Activity

To attack the basket by receiving a pass, squaring to the basket, and scoring. Players score as often as possible.

Activity Description

Play 3 v 3 half-court games. Players must complete two or more consecutive passes before attempting a shot. Encourage players to make quick passes, to use target hands, and to call for the ball. They cannot dribble. All restarts are at half-court. Players earn one point for each shot attempted and two points for each basket scored.

Teach the rule on lane violations.

Questions

Coach: What was the goal of the game?

Players: To score following two consecutive passes.

Coach: From where on the court did you score most of your points?

Players: Close to the basket.

Coach: Why is it better to shoot from a position close to the basket, rather than far from the basket?

Players: More likely to score when closer—higher percentage shot.

Coach: Besides shooting from a close range, what else did you do to successfully perform a shot?

Players: Squared shoulders to the basket; elbow under ball and close to body, one hand behind the ball and the other at the side of the ball; staggered stance with knees slightly bent; followed through, aimed.

Variations

Play 3 v 1, 3 v 2, or 3 v 3 half-court games, depending on the skill proficiency of your players. Rotate players accordingly so that all players have a chance to play offense and defense.



Shooting



Time: 15 minutes



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Ages: 8 to 9

Type

Skill Drill

Activity

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to shoot.
2. Practice shooting.

Activity Description

Players in pairs shoot three shots from each of five spots marked around the basket (about six to eight feet away). Partners rebound the ball and pass accurately to shooters, who provide a target, receive the ball in triple threat, square up, and shoot. The goal is to score on two out of three shots at each spot.

Tips

- “Square up.”
- “BEEF.”
 - “Base firm.”
 - “Elbow under ball.”
 - “Extend arm.”
 - “Follow through or flip wrist.”

Variations

To simplify: Change the shooting goal from making two of every three shots to shooting from two different spots for 30 seconds, or simply shooting three shots from each spot.



Offensive Teamwork



Time: 10 minutes



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Ages: 8 to 9

Type

Game

Activity

Players support their teammate with the ball.

Activity Description

Play 2 v 2 half-court games. Players must complete at least three passes before shooting. They receive one point for three consecutive passes, and two points for every field goal.

Teach rules on the jump ball.

Questions

Coach: What was the goal of the game?

Players: To support the player with the ball.

Coach: What did you have to do to provide support?

Players: Move to an open space; get away from our defender.

Coach: How were you able to get away from your defender?

Players: Using cuts and fakes.

Coach: Was it easier to get away from defenders when you were moving quickly or at just a normal speed?

Players: Quickly.

Coach: When you were trying to get away from defenders, was your first quick step or jab step toward them or away from them?

Players: Toward them.

Variations

Play 3 v 1, 3 v 2, or 2 v 2 short-court games, depending on the skill proficiency of your players. Rotate players accordingly so that all players have a chance to play offense and defense.



Offensive Teamwork



Time: 15 minutes



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Ages: 8 to 9

Type

Skill Drill

Activity

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain creating passing lanes.
2. Practice providing support for teammates by creating passing lanes.

Activity Description

Play 3 v 1 games. Offensive players move to open space. Defenders play cooperative to active defense. Use offensive positions on one or both sides of the basket. Players pass, then move to an offensive position (point, wing, baseline, or high or low post) adjacent to the ball. Players should provide a target for receiving the ball, receive it in triple threat, and use a ball fake before passing. Emphasize using quick jab steps to create passing lanes.

Tips

- “Quick cuts.”
- “Fake a pass, make a pass.”



Position and Footwork



Time: 10 minutes



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Ages: 8 to 9

Type

Game

Activity

Players will provide support for their teammate with the ball using a ball fake and a jab step, or a cut. The goal is to create space in the attack by creating passing lanes.

Activity Description

Play 2 v 2 half-court games. Players must complete at least three passes before shooting. They receive one point for three consecutive passes, and two points for every field goal.

Questions

Coach: What was the goal of the game?

Players: To support the player with the ball.

Coach: How were you able to support the player with the ball?

Players: Using a ball fake and a jab step, move quickly.

Coach: Is a zigzag or curved pathway better when performing a cut?

Players: Zigzag.

Coach: Can you describe the angle of these cuts using letters of the alphabet?

Players: V and L.

Coach: Why would V- or L-cuts be better than curved?

Players: It's harder for the defender to stay with you.

Coach: What did you do if your defender was closely guarding you?

Players: Used a cut to get away.

Coach: When would a V-cut be most effective, close to the lane or away from the lane?

Players: Away from the lane by 10 to 12 feet.

Coach: When would the L-cut be most effective?

Players: Close to the lane near the baseline.

Variations

Play 3 v 1, 3 v 2, or 2 v 2 short-court games, depending on the skill proficiency of your players. Rotate players accordingly so that all players have a chance to play offense and defense. Players must complete at least three passes before shooting.



Position and Footwork



Time: 15 minutes



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Ages: 8 to 9

Type

Skill Drill

Activity

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to execute V-cuts and L-cuts.
2. Practice V-cuts and L-cuts.

Activity Description

Play 2 v 2 games with the focus on players using V-cuts and L-cuts, receiving passes, and using jump stops and the triple threat position. Sequence:

- O₁ ball fakes, jab steps, and passes to O₂, who V-cuts as O₁ is ball faking.
- O₂ catches the ball in a triple threat position using a jump stop.
- Repeat three times and rotate.
- When all four players in a group have practiced the V-cut three times, go through the rotation again, this time practicing the V-cut on the opposite side of the basket.
- When all four players have practiced the V-cut on both sides of the basket, go through the rotation again, using the same sequence to practice L-cuts on both sides of the basket.

The defense should play passive, cooperative defense.

Variations

To simplify: Begin with no defense.



Shooting



Time: 10 minutes



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Ages: 8 to 9

Type

Game

Activity

Players attack the basket by using a power dribble and score only in the lane.

Activity Description

Play 3 v 3 half-court games. All shots must be in the lane, on drives.

Questions

Coach: What was the goal of the game?

Players: Score in the lane.

Coach: What's an effective way to drive to the basket?

Players: Drop step and dribble.

Coach: What should you do on a drive when it's congested in the lane?

Players: Stop and shoot if open, or pass off.

Coach: How should your dribble change when someone is guarding you?

Players: Keep the ball closer to your body and keep the ball between yourself and the defender.

Variations

Play 3 v 1, 3 v 2, or 3 v 3 games, depending on the skill proficiency of your players.

Players can't dribble—except to drive to the basket.



Shooting



Time: 15 minutes



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Ages: 8 to 9

Type

Skill Drill

Activity

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to use a jump stop prior to shooting.
2. Practice shooting off of jump stops.

Activity Description

Play 1 v 1; defenders play cooperative defense. Players with the ball use a ball fake, jab step, and drive to the basket. They jump stop about two feet from the basket and shoot.

Tips

- “Arm should look like a yo-yo.”
- “Ball down, eyes up.”
- “Two-foot jump stop.”
- “Eyes on target.”
- “In the square, in the basket.”

Variations

To simplify: Begin with no defense.



Shooting



Time: 10 minutes



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Ages: 8 to 9

Type

Game

Activity

Players will attempt to score in 15 seconds or less.

Activity
Description

Play 1 v 1 games. The player with the ball starts at the foul line. Check the ball (the defensive player starts with the ball and gives it to the offensive player when they are ready to play). The offensive player begins in triple threat position. The offensive player gets two points for every basket scored off a jump stop, and one point for every basket scored otherwise.



Passing Lanes Drive to the Basket Shooting



Time: 10 minutes



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Ages: 8 to 9

Type

Game

Activity

Players will attempt to score on drives to the basket.

Activity Description

Play 3 v 3 half-court games. Teams must make three consecutive passes before shooting. Players are allowed to dribble when needed.

Questions

Coach: What was the goal of the game?

Players: To score on drives.

Coach: When should you drive?

Players: When you have an open lane to the basket and no teammate is open for a good shot.

Coach: Players off the ball, what was happening when you weren't able to create a passing lane to support the ball handler?

Players: Couldn't get away from defense; couldn't get a good angle to cut; ball handler too far away; too many players in one place.

Coach: What should ball handlers do under these circumstances?

Players: Dribble to reposition themselves to create an open passing lane or move closer to the basket.

Coach: Should you dribble toward your teammates or away from your teammates?

Players: Away.

Coach: Why should you dribble away and not toward?

Players: Opens up more space for teammates to move.



Passing Lanes Drive to the Basket Shooting



Time: 15 minutes



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Ages: 8 to 9

Type

Skill Drill

Activity

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to use a drop step and drive to the basket.
2. Practice the drop step and drive.

Activity Description

Play 2 v 2 games with a cooperative defense. Players with the ball will ball fake, jab step, then drop step and drive to the basket.

Passive defenders try to shut down passing lanes.

Offense off the ball use various cuts to create a passing lane. For each 2 v 2 game, two other players will coach.

One will coach the cooperative defenders to close down the lane; the other will coach the offense to reposition themselves to create open passing lanes. Switch roles after three attempts.

Tips

- “Quick cuts.”
- “Drop and drive.”
- “Watch the belly button of the player attempting to fake.”
- “Anticipate.”



Drive to the Basket Shooting



Time: 10 minutes



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Ages: 8 to 9

Type

Game

Activity

Players use drop steps and drive to the basket.

Activity
Description

Give two points for every basket scored off a drop step and drive, and one point for every basket scored otherwise.

Variations

Play 3 v 1, 3 v 2, or 3 v 3 games, depending on the skill proficiency of your players.



Defense



Time: 10 minutes



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Ages: 8 to 9

Type

Game

Activity

Defenders work to keep the opposing team from scoring and to win the ball through on-the-ball defense.

Activity Description

Play 3 v 3 half-court games. Use a competitive defense.

The offensive team can't dribble and must complete at least three consecutive passes before shooting.

The defensive team scores one point if the offensive team does not complete three passes.

Questions

Coach: What did you do to keep the opposing team from scoring?

Players: Closely guarded opponent, rebounded so they wouldn't get a second shot.

Coach: What defensive position or actions interfered most and kept your opponent from scoring?

Players: Keeping your body between opponent and goal. Being sure you can always see the ball. Guarding opponent closely. Keeping hands and feet moving; playing active defense.

Variations

To use as a Game 2: Same as Game 1, except play 2 v 3 half-court games.



Defense



Time: 15 minutes



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Ages: 8 to 9

Type

Skill Drill

Activity

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain proper on-the-ball positioning.
2. Practice on-the-ball defensive positioning.

Activity Description

Pair up players. The player with the ball dribbles forward in a zigzag pattern. The defensive player maintains proper defensive posture and attempts to block the offensive player's forward progress. The defender tries to steal the ball without fouling or cause a turnover. Players switch roles after one length of the court.

Emphasize that defense is attitude.

Tips

- "Medium body posture."
- "Active hands and active feet."
- "See the ball."



Defense



Time: 10 minutes



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Ages: 8 to 9

Type

Game

Activity

Defenders play good on-the-ball defense.

Activity
Description

Play 1 v 1 games with active to competitive defense. Offensive players can dribble, but as soon as they pick up the dribble, defensive players move closer and use active hands and feet.



Defense



Time: 10 minutes



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FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



Ages: 8 to 9

Type

Game

Activity

Defenders will prevent the offensive team from passing, receiving passes, and scoring using off-the-ball defense.

Activity Description

Play 3 v 3 half-court or short-court games. Players can't dribble and must make at least three consecutive passes before shooting. Defensive team receives one point for each turnover and two points for each steal without fouling. Treat fouls like violations—the other team gets the ball.

Questions

Coach: How did you position yourself to prevent the offensive team from passing?

Players: Overplayed toward potential passing lanes; closely guarded player with the ball.

Coach: How did you position yourself to deny a pass?

Players: Overplayed toward the ball; kept hand in passing lane.

Variations

To use as a Game 2: Same as Game 1 except play 2 v 3, with players focusing on off-the-ball defensive positioning. Rotate players accordingly so that all players have a chance to play offense and defense.



Defense



Time: 15 minutes



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Ages: 8 to 9

Type

Skill Drill

Activity

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain proper off-the-ball positioning.
2. Practice off-the-ball defensive positioning.

Activity Description

Paired-up players practice off-the-ball defensive positioning (partners can also coach each other). As an option, you can have a player with the ball waiting to pass to his or her offensive teammate.

Tips

- “Medium body posture.”
- “Active hands and active feet.”
- “See the ball.”
- “Anticipate.”



Defense



Time: 10 minutes



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Ages: 8 to 9

Type

Game

Activity

Defenders try to deny offense from making successful passes; offense tries to make six consecutive passes.

Activity Description

Play 2 v 2 games using a competitive defense. For each 2 v 2 game, two other players serve as coaches. One offensive player begins at the point, the other at a wing position. The ball starts at the point. From a triple threat position, the ball handler uses a ball fake to give his or her teammate a chance to get open; or the ball handler dribbles to open a passing lane if necessary. Rotate after a turnover or after six consecutive passes. One player-coach gives feedback for the on-the-ball defense; the other player-coach gives feedback for the off-the-ball defense.



Defense Rebounding



Time: 10 minutes



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Ages: 8 to 9

Type

Game

Activity

Defenders try to prevent the offensive team from scoring and from rebounding missed shots. Defenders try to win the ball by rebounding.

Activity Description

Play 3 v 3 half-court games. Players can't dribble and must make at least three consecutive passes before shooting.

The defensive team receives one point for winning or rebounding the ball after only one shot.

Questions

Coach: What was the goal of the game?

Players: To prevent scoring and prevent a second shot.

Coach: What did you do to prevent a second shot?

Players: Got the rebound after the first shot.

Coach: How did you position yourself to get the rebound?

Players: Moved between offensive player and basket.

Variations

Play 2 v 3 or 3 v 3 short-court games, depending on the skill proficiency of your players.

Or repeat this game with an offensive focus. In this case, the offensive team would earn a point for each shot attempt and rebound. You'd want to instruct your offensive rebounders to protect the ball, and to tip the ball to the basket or assume a shooting position as quickly as possible, like a pogo stick.



Defense Rebounding



Time: 15 minutes



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FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



Ages: 8 to 9

Type

Skill Drill

Activity

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to box out to rebound.
2. Practice boxing out and rebounding.

Activity Description

Play 3 v 3 games with 2 v 2 under the boards and a shooter and an outlet. The shooter shoots the ball. On the release, X_1 and X_2 turn and box out their offensive players. X_3 (the outlet) moves right or left, depending on which side of the basket the rebound occurs.

The player rebounding the ball turns and passes to X_3 . Repeat three times, then rotate teams. Also consider rotating duties within the teams—for example, the outlet person and the shooter become rebounders. The defenders try to successfully outlet three times in a row.

Tips

- “Create a stable wall between opponent and ball.”
- “Elbows out—palms wide, feel for opponent.”
- “Put buttocks under opponents.”



Passing Give-and-Go



Time: 10 minutes



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Ages: 8 to 9

Type

Game

Activity

Players attack the basket through the give-and-go; passing and cutting to the basket, looking for return passes and good shots.

Activity Description

Play 3 v 3 half-court or short-court games. Teams must make at least two passes before taking a shot. Shots must be within five feet of the basket. Offensive players pass and cut to the basket, presenting a target if they're open. If they receive the ball as they're cutting to the basket, they shoot.

Questions

Coach: What was the goal of the game?

Players: To pass and cut; to present target if open.

Coach: What happened when you were able to get open?

Players: Ball was returned and shot was attempted.

Coach: How did you get open?

Players: Used a ball fake, ran ahead of defender, kept body between defender and ball on way to basket.

Coach: What did the other offensive player do to create an open lane for you to attack the basket?

Players: Moved out of the lane.

Variations

To use as a Game 2: Same as Game 1, except play 3 v 1, 3 v 2, or 3 v 3 games, depending on the skill proficiency of your players. Rotate players accordingly so that all players have a chance to play offense and defense.



Passing Give-and-Go



Time: 10 minutes



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Ages: 8 to 9

Type

Skill Drill

Activity

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to execute a give-and-go.
2. Practice the give-and-go.

Activity Description

Play 3 v 1, 2 v 1, 3 v 2, or 3 v 3 half-court games, depending on the skill proficiency of your players. Rotate players accordingly so that all players have a chance to play offense and defense. Defenders should play cooperative to active defense.

Another player serves as coach. The offense practices the give-and-go three times, using L-cuts or V-cuts toward the basket.

Tips

- “Pass and cut.”
- “Target hand.”
- “Keep the defender behind you.”



Passing Give-and-Go



Time: 10 minutes



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Ages: 8 to 9

Type

Skill Drill

Activity

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to execute a give-and-go.
2. Practice the give-and-go.

Activity Description

Play 2 v 2 games with active to competitive defenders. Two other players serve as coaches. The offense practices the give-and-go three times; then players rotate. The offense becomes the defense; the defense becomes the coaches; the coaches become the offense.



Shooting Passing Lanes



Time: 10 minutes



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Ages: 8 to 9

Type

Game

Activity

Players will shoot as often as possible and focus on creating passing lanes. They maintain possession of the ball and use space in the attack.

Activity Description

Play 3 v 3 half-court, five-minute scoring games. One team plays offense for five minutes, then teams switch roles.

Questions

Coach: What was the goal of the game?

Players: To support the player with the ball.

Coach: What do you do to provide support?

Players: Move to get open; get away from your defender.

Coach: How do you get open?

Players: Use cuts and fakes.



Shooting Passing Lanes



Time: 15 minutes



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Ages: 8 to 9

Type

Skill Drill

Activity

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain creating passing lanes.
2. Practice creating passing lanes.

Activity Description

Players play 3 v 2 games; the defense is active to competitive. Offensive players focus on moving to open space. Players pass, then move to an offensive position (point, wing, baseline, or high or low post) adjacent to the ball.

Players should provide a target for receiving the ball, receive the ball in triple threat position, and use a ball fake before passing. To create passing lanes, they should use quick jab steps and fake-and-replace movements.

Tips

- “Quick cuts.”
- “Fake a pass, make a pass.”

Variations

To Use as a Game 2: Play 3 v 1, 3 v 2, or 3 v 3 short-court games, depending on the skill proficiency of your players.

The offensive team must make at least two passes before taking a shot. All shots must be within five feet of the basket.



Defense



Time: 10 minutes



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Ages: 8 to 9

Type

Game

Activity

Defenders try to win the ball by preventing the offense from scoring.

Activity Description

Play 3 v 3 half-court, five-minute scoring games. One team plays offense for five minutes, then teams switch roles.

Questions

Coach: What was the goal of the game?

Players: To keep the offensive team from scoring.

Coach: How did you do that?

Players: Closely guarded opponent, rebounded so they wouldn't get a second shot.

Variations

To use as a Game 2: Play 2 v 3 short-court games. Offensive players must make at least three passes before taking a shot. The defensive team earns a point if the offensive team does not complete three passes. Switch teams halfway through the game, with the two offensive players joining one defender on defense, and two defenders switching to offense.



Defense



Time: 15 minutes



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Ages: 8 to 9

Type

Skill Drill

Activity

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain stealing the ball.
2. Practice stealing the ball.

Activity Description

Divide players into a dribblers group and a defenders group. The dribblers group has more players. Confine space; 9 players would need about one-quarter of the court.

On signal, the dribblers begin dribbling; the defenders try to steal the ball. Defenders who steal the ball begin dribbling. Go for about 45 seconds, then regroup and switch roles as needed.

Tips

- “Ready position. Bend your knees, keep your body low.”
- “Active hands and feet.”
- “Watch your player.”
- “Anticipate.”



Passing Give-and-Go



Time: 10 minutes



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Ages: 8 to 9

Type

Game

Activity

Players attack the basket through the give-and-go; passing and cutting to the basket, looking for return passes and good shots.

Activity Description

Play 3 v 3 short-court games. Offensive players must make at least three passes before taking a shot. All shots must be within five feet of the basket.

Questions

Coach: What was the goal of the game?

Players: To pass and cut; to present a target.

Coach: How did you get open?

Players: Used a fake, a razor-sharp cut; ran ahead of defender; kept body between defender and ball.

Coach: What did you do to complete the give-and-go when there was competitive defense?

Players: Used more fakes. Dribbled to create passing lanes. Got open to support player with the ball.

Variations

To use as a Game 2: Play 3 v 1, 3 v 2, or 3 v 3 short-court games, depending on the skill proficiency of your players.



Passing Give-and-Go



Time: 15 minutes



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Ages: 8 to 9

Type

Skill Drill

Activity

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain the give-and-go.
2. Practice the give-and-go.

Activity Description

Play 2 v 2 games with active to competitive defenders. Two other players serve as coaches. Each offensive player practices the give-and-go three times, then rotates. Players move to the other side of the basket and repeat. Then practice the give-and-go three times with a competitive defense (use either side of basket).

Tips

- “Pass and cut.”
- “Target hand.”
- “Get and stay between defender and ball.”



Team Circle Activities



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Ages: 8 to 9

Key Idea

Four Core Values

Description

Gather players into a circle. “Everyone stand side by side in a circle. We’re going to keep standing side by side as a group while we try to pass the ball to those across the circle from us. We’ll pass slowly, and remember to stay side by side at all times.” Repeat for 10 passes. “If you were just catching a pass by yourself and could move to get the ball, it would have been much easier. But when we think of working together as a team, it takes more effort. We need to put just as much effort into being good teammates, with everyone doing their part. We’ll talk about four qualities or values that help us be better players—*caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility*. These qualities are just as important as shooting, dribbling, and passing. Give me an example of each of the four values.” Listen to their responses and discuss.

Key Idea

Honesty

Description

Gather players into a group. “Think about the rules in basketball. I am going to tell you a rule. Raise your hand if you think it’s something you should let the official know happened.” Examples: traveling, tripping another player, dribbling the ball out of bounds. “You should let the official know about all of those rules being broken, even if the official does not see it. Raising a hand or telling officials is an honest thing to do when you break a rule, even if it is an accident. It’s important to be honest when you break a rule in practice and in games. It is a quality that makes you a better player.”



Team Circle Activities



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Ages: 8 to 9

Key Idea

Responsibility

Description

Gather players into groups of two partners. “Everyone stand and balance on one foot.” Wait while everyone gets his or her balance. “Now one of you offer your shoulder for your teammate to lean on. If you’re leaning on your partner’s shoulder, now try to balance on one foot again. Change places. If you were leaning before, now let your partner lean on your shoulder and stand on one foot.” Wait until everyone has balanced with the help of a partner. “Now come back here. Wasn’t it easier to balance when you were leaning on your partner? It works that way in basketball, too. When you help each other during practices and games, we work better as a team. Each of you can contribute. Your teammates count on you to contribute to the team. That is being responsible to your team.”

Key Idea

Respect

Description

Gather players into two lines standing opposite each other about five feet apart. “I want each line to walk toward the other and give each person in the other line a high-five. Imagine that the other line is your opponent for a game. Show me how you would act toward an opponent and what you would say if it was the end of the game and we lost the game. Start.” Assist kids if necessary. Listen to responses some players provide to each other. “At the end of each game it is important to show respect for your opponent. We do this by slapping hands and saying something like ‘good game,’ even if we lose the game.”



Team Circle Activities



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Ages: 8 to 9

Key Idea

Responsibility

Description

Gather players into two groups; one group will spread out and pass to each other. The other group will be to one side, as if on the bench during a game; they should be silent for the first 30 seconds of the activity. Then have them cheer and encourage on-court players; continue this activity for 30 more seconds. “When players are on the bench during a game, they should be encouraging their teammates, no matter what’s happening in the game. This is being responsible to your team. It helps players to keep trying hard even if they are losing or have made some mistakes. How did it feel when you were playing and the bench players didn’t encourage you? How about when they did encourage you?” Listen to both responses and have players compare feelings.

Key Idea

Caring

Description

Gather players into groups of two and give each group one ball. Players should dribble and pass the ball to each other, making sure to distribute the ball to their partners. “Each of you should say two good things about your partner’s skills. Then come back to me in a group. Begin.” Wait for them to regroup. “What were some of the comments your teammates told you?” Listen to their responses. “What kind of value or quality is it when you go out of your way to say something good about a teammate’s playing?” Listen to responses and encourage discussion as needed. “Caring is one of our core values. You show you care about your teammates when you encourage them. It’s also appropriate to compliment your opponents on their good plays.”



Team Circle Activities



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Ages: 8 to 9

Key Idea

Caring

Description

Gather players into a group and choose two to demonstrate with you. You will dribble the ball and have the two players work to get in position to receive a pass. Keep dribbling, and do not pass to them. “Were the other players in good position to get a pass? Why didn’t they get the ball? I didn’t pass the ball. Sharing the ball so all players get a chance shows you care about your teammates.” Have players get into groups of three and dribble and pass the “caring” way. Bring players back together. “Raise your hand if you think that caring is an important quality or value on this team. It is important!”

Key Idea

Respect

Description

Gather players in a group near two cones 10 feet apart. Act out two examples of celebrating for good play or a win. One should be exaggerated and obviously inappropriate, the other modeling the kind of celebrating you’d like to see from your team. “If you think the first example I showed you is the way to celebrate a good play, stand by this cone. If you think the second is the best way to celebrate, stand by this one.” All players should vote. After all players have voted, ask why they voted the way they did. “The second example is the kind of celebrating that shows respect for your opponents.”



Team Circle Activities



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Ages: 8 to 9

Key Idea

Respect

Description

Gather children together in a group and choose one child to help demonstrate. The child will pretend to be an official; you will be a player. Dribble the ball and pass out of bounds. Direct the child to blow a whistle or make a sound to stop play when this occurs. Stop and bring the ball back to the child. “What did I do when the whistle sounded?” Listen to responses—discuss stopping on hearing the whistle, bringing the ball over, and not arguing about the call. “You need to respect the official and their decisions at all times. It also shows respect to the official when you thank them at the end of the game.”

Key Idea

Responsibility

Description

Gather players between two cones about 10 feet apart. “What are some different ways you can move the ball and score?” Listen to their responses. Provide the example of players working together to move the ball and score as one choice. Give the example of one player working without any other teammates as the other choice. “Which of the two is the best example of teamwork? If you vote for the first example, stand at this cone; if you vote for the second example, stand at this cone. If everyone makes good teamwork their responsibility, we can all work together to be successful. When you’re responsible to your team, you become a better player.”



Team Circle Activities



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Ages: 8 to 9

Key Idea

Caring

Description

Gather players into a group and choose three players to demonstrate. These three will dribble and pass down the court about 20 feet and then back to the group. Set up another group to do the same activity. Rotate players into the two groups until they all get a turn. Bring the team back together to discuss. "What was happening every time a new person came into the passing group?" Listen to their responses. Discuss many players getting playing time. "When we share playing time, it shows that you care about your teammates. Players who care about each other want the whole team to get a chance to play. That way everyone can contribute to the team."

Key Idea

Caring

Description

Gather players into a group. "Let's imagine we're playing in a game and one of your teammates passes to you. The pass is thrown too far away from you, and you can't get to the ball. Pretend you say, 'What a terrible pass! Get out of here until you learn how to play basketball!' How would you change your comment to sound more positive and make the person feel better?" Listen to their responses. "It is important to make positive comments and not get upset when your teammates make mistakes. This shows you care about your teammates."



Team Circle Activities



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Ages: 8 to 9

Key Idea

Responsibility

Description

Gather players into a group. Choose one player to demonstrate with you. Let the player know you'll be passing the ball and that he or she should pretend to be in position to make a basket. Make a bad pass to the player. Identify that the bad pass was your mistake. "Raise your hand if you think it's a part of learning when you make a bad pass." Give them time to raise their hands. "Now raise your hand if you think a bad pass means you are not a good player." Give them time to raise their hands. "Everyone makes mistakes, and when you make one it does not mean you're not a good player. Taking responsibility for your play, even when you can improve, is an important quality for good players."

Key Idea

Respect

Description

Gather players into groups of two. "Each of you tell your partner two or three ways you saw other players show respect this season. I'll give you two minutes." After two minutes, group all players together again. "Tell us what some of the examples were." Listen to examples and discuss. "It's important to notice respect being practiced and to talk about what we saw. All season we have been working on both basketball skills and being good teammates. Improving both of those areas tells me you have respect for yourselves and your teammates."



Warm-Up Activities



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Ages: 8 to 9

Description

Players travel from one basket to the next dribbling, jump stopping, and shooting short shots (two to three feet).

On your signal, players begin dribbling without losing control. Players stop and hold the ball quickly on your signal. Dribble three times: 20, 30, 45 seconds.

Players in pairs play Around the Key—one player shoots; the partner rebounds and returns the ball. The shooter tries to make five different shots around the free-throw lane in 30 seconds. Players receive one point for each shot made.

Players in pairs play Around the World. Spots are marked in an arc about five feet from the basket. Shooters follow a set pattern. The first player shoots from spot #1; if the shot is good, the player moves to spot #2. The player continues until he or she misses a shot. On a missed shot, the shooter may elect to stay there until his or her next turn, or “chance it.” This gives the player another shot immediately, but if the shooter misses, he or she goes back to the beginning. A made chance allows the shooter to skip the next spot.

Play 1 v 1 games, starting at foul line. Defense checks the ball and offense begins in a triple threat position.

Players play “Now you have it, now you don’t.” Divide players into two teams. Each team stands on opposite sidelines of the gym facing each other. Each member of team A has a ball; team B doesn’t. On signal, team A players begin dribbling toward the opposite sideline. Team B approaches, trying to take away the balls. If a team B player gains possession of a ball, that player dribbles toward the opposite sideline. When players from team A or team B make it over their “goal” line (the opposing sideline), they stay there until all balls are behind the sidelines. Team B is now given the balls and the game begins again.

Players take and follow their shots. Players with the ball shoot for 20, 30, or 45 seconds. They shoot, rebound, and shoot again. Players are limited to three dribbles before their next shot. They keep track of how many shots they make during the timed interval.

Players play 1 v 1, starting at the foul line. Defense checks the ball and offense begins in a triple threat position. The offensive player’s first movement should be either a ball fake or a jab step.