



Basketball Movement Skills



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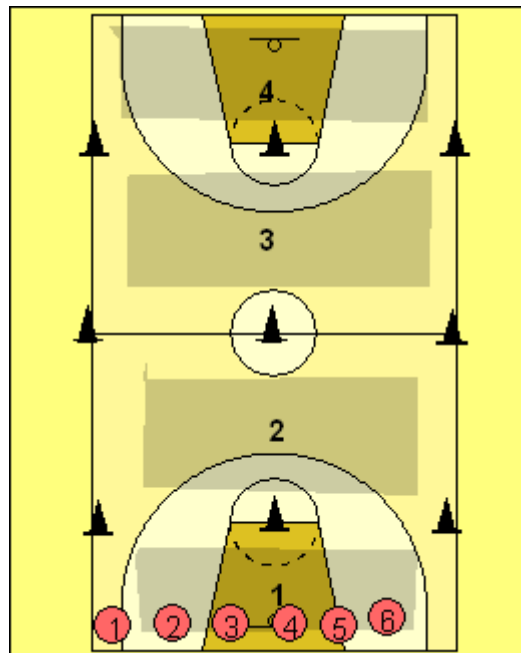
Movement Skills

Movement skills are the foundation of both offensive and defensive basketball. As coaches we must ensure that players move efficiently and safely on the court. Since there are other players on the court players must learn to move in space. Sports talk about open and closed space. Open space is clear of any defenders while closed space has other players in the space. Players need to develop many skills around the use of space:

- scanning for awareness - seeing and comprehending what is happening around them, find open space, recognizing closed or crowded space.
- moving in different planes – forward, backward, right, left
- moving at different levels - high, low
- avoidance actions – change of pace, change of direction and fakes

In all of the following drills it is crucial to debrief with the children to draw out the learning from the activity. This will not happen unless you bring it to their attention. Asking simple questions works better than telling the children.

This is also a great time to work on leadership skills by allowing the children to take turns being the leader. They have a chance to say "ready go" in a nice loud leadership voice.



Avoidance action

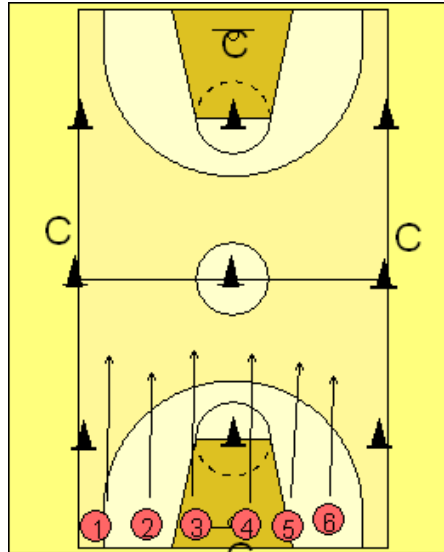
In order to play many team spots it is important that the players learn to avoid another player. We have developed this progression to help children learn the basic concepts of avoidance.

There are 4 concepts we want the players to learn:

1. Change of pace
2. Change of direction
3. Faking
4. Combinations

This is one basic warm up drill that can be used over an extended period of time to teach these concepts.

Divide the court into four zones:
baseline to foul line, foul line to centre, centre to foul line, foul line to baseline



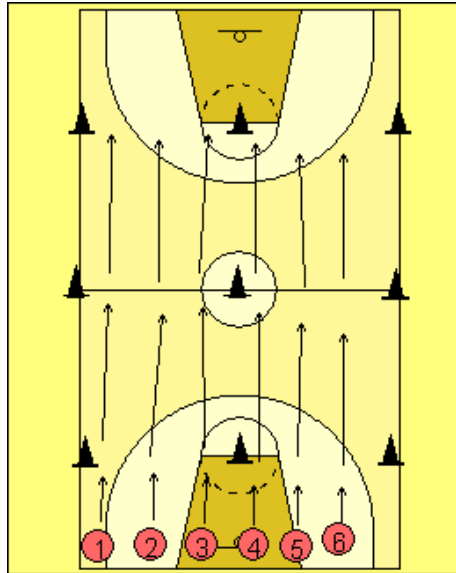
Scanning

An area of weakness for many players is the ability to scan the floor for meaningful information as they move. To often players "zone out" as they run from one end of the floor to the other. When they arrive they then try to analyze the situation.

Position four people around the court. They can have different color pinnies, use a number of fingers or touch a part of the body to give signals to the players. As the players run the floor they are constantly scanning. In fact with young children have them repeat the phrase **rim, right, and left**. As the children look at the rim they must call out the signal they see. They then look to their right and call out that signal and finally look to the left.

Please note: this can be added to any of the drills. You can also add a ball to the drill as a way of loading the drill. When the ball is added you can also add "10 fingers". Anytime one of the coaches shows "10 fingers" the player must pass the ball to the coach who immediately passes the ball back.

Questions: Why is it important to be able to scan when we move? What is important to remember to do when you scan?



Gaits (walk, jog, and sprint)

In the first activity we are teaching the children the 3 basic gaits for human locomotion. Have the children **walk** through zone 1. They should swing the arms and walk heel to toe with the head held high. **Stop** at the end of the zone.

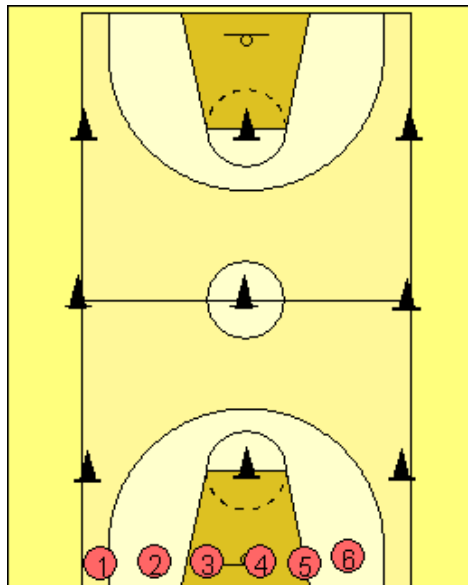
In zone 2 we want to **jog** in a heel toe manner. Have the players stop at the end of this zone.

In zone 3 we want to **sprint** getting up on the toes and pumping the arms. The players should fall into the sprint action. Allow them to use zone 4 to decelerate.

Note: you can add a ball after the players have learned these actions.

You can also do the drill where there is no stopping between the zones.

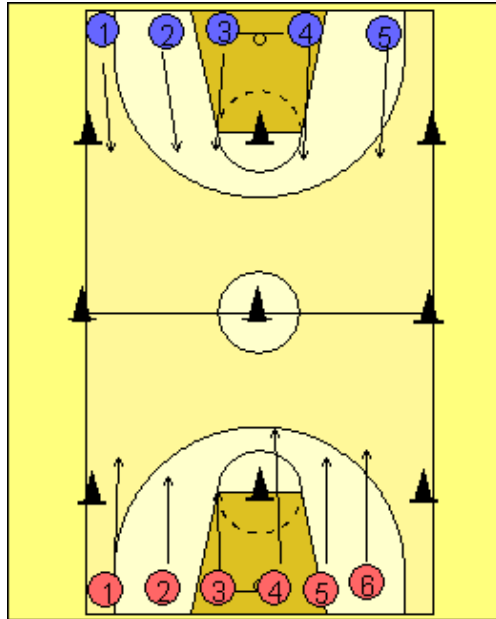
Questions: What do you do differently with your arms in each zone/
What do you do differently with your feet?



Change the zones

You can mix up the different zones to have the players be able to move at different speeds:

- sprint - walk - jog
- sprint - jog - walk
- jog - sprint - walk
- jog - walk- sprint
- walk - jog - sprint
- walk - sprint - jog
- Have the players create their own combination



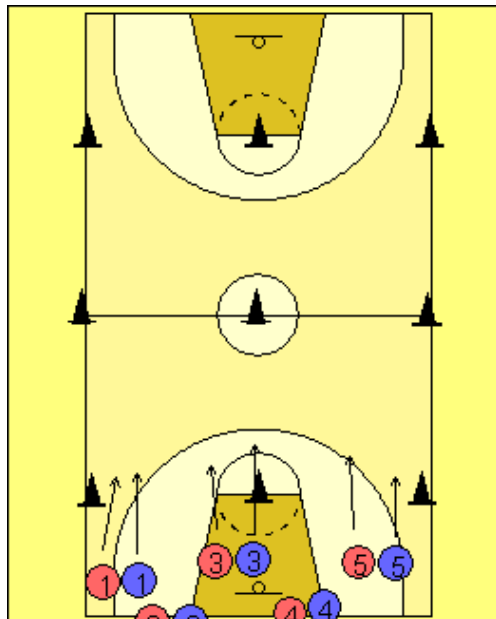
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Moving in congested space

Players also have to be able to move in space being aware of other people. The group is split up coming from each end. Players must keep their heads up.

Load the drill by adding the scans after the players have learned to move in space safely.

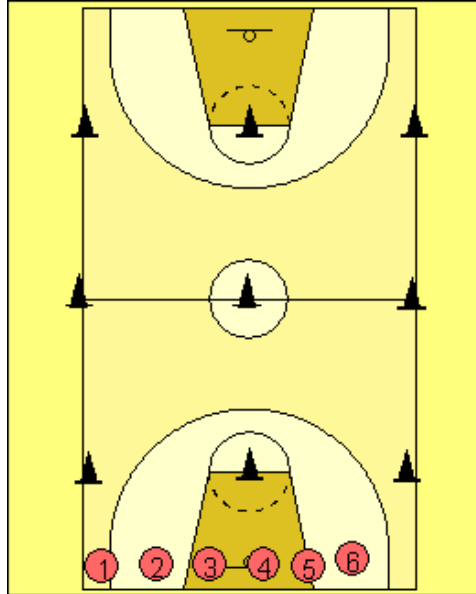
Questions: How do we move differently when the space is congested or crowded? What things are important when moving in crowded space?



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Using change of pace to avoid others

The players must now learn to use a change of pace to lose their defender. The players partner up one beside the other. You may have to send them in two groups to avoid congestion. One player is the leader who is using different paces of forward movement to lose their partner or shadow. The leader attempts to see how many times he/she can make the flower move in front. Keep score.



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Changing pace in different planes

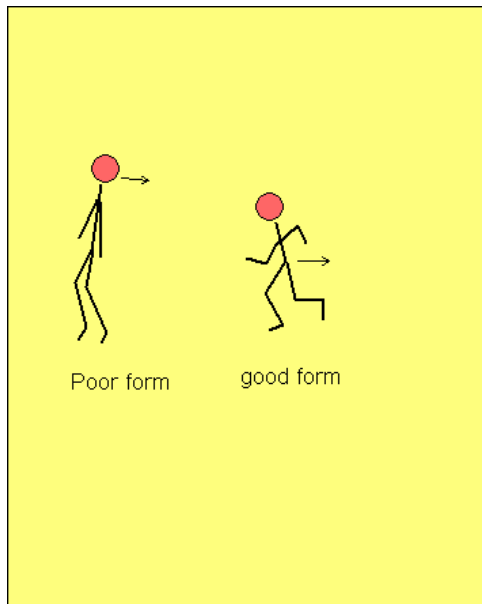
This drill is also excellent for teaching players how to move in different planes.

Walking, jogging, and sprinting backward

Very few players will know how to do this skill. Most will stand very erect with the head leading the body. Most will look over the shoulder not trusting where they are going.

Have the players walk, jog and then sprint backwards. Keep the nose over the toes. be in an athletic stance.

Now have the players change the type of running as well as the speed within the different zones.



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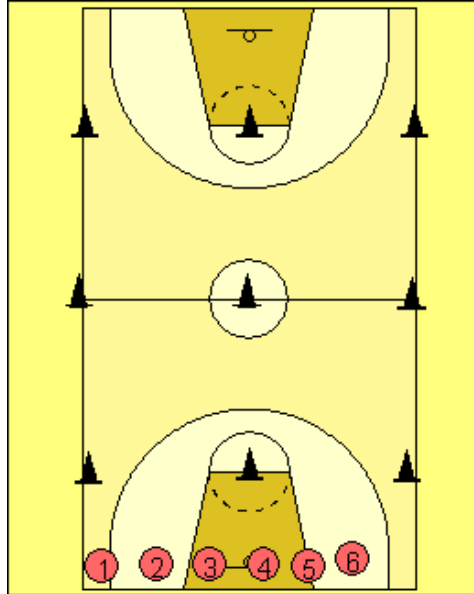
Backward running

Too many players will stand very erect and lean backward to run. They will end up taking very tiny steps.

The nose should be over the toe and the player should be in an athletic stance and reach backward with the leg and foot.

You do not have to take a lot of strides in this position, but you may need to take two or three before changing direction. Very often as you run backward you take two strides then open the hips in one direction and then in the other.

Question: Why do we want to stay low with our noses over our toes?



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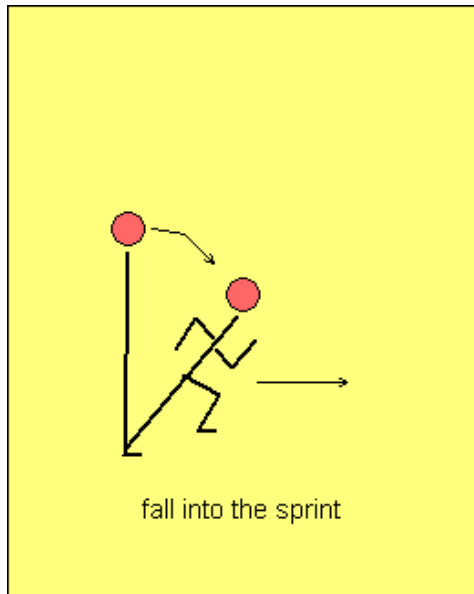
Running forward looking over the shoulder

Players need to be able to run the floor while looking backward over their shoulder for the ball. Most players will have to run looking at the end wall. If they turn their shoulder they have a tendency to drift to the middle as they run.

We do the same drill as before working on the different paces while looking over the shoulder.

Also practice:

- slides
- carioca
- side ways running

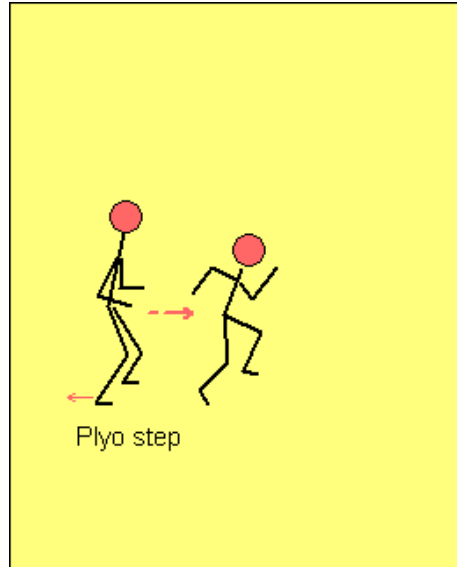


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Fall into the sprint

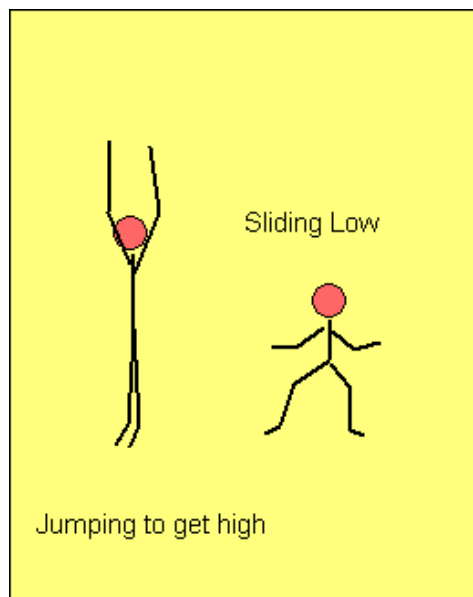
The players should learn to have an exaggerated forward lean when starting the sprint. The first three steps are key.

Plyo Step into sprint



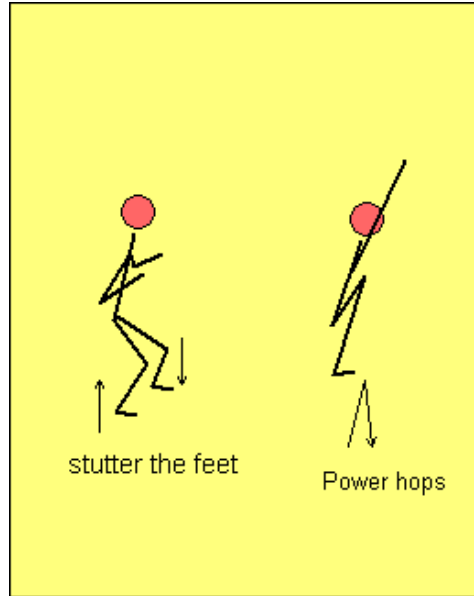
Lee Taft in his **Basketball Speed Video** advocates a slight backward step (Plyo Step) to load the back foot so that it can push off explosively in the opposite direction. He claims that without this push our first step is a pulling action that is very slow and not very powerful. The slight loss in time is made up by the distance that can be covered in the same amount of time. Players naturally make this step. You do have to be careful if it involves the pivot foot.

Changing levels of movement



We also can have the players move at different levels.

- Low - have the players slide getting very low
- Running low
- Skip getting their head very high
- Jump off two feet
- Jump off the right foot
- Jump off the left foot
- Dive on the floor to get low
- Take a charge top get low
- Be able to do these actions while moving in different directions i.e. moving sideways jump



Actions between the zones

It is important that the players learn to use the different gaits coming out of different action.

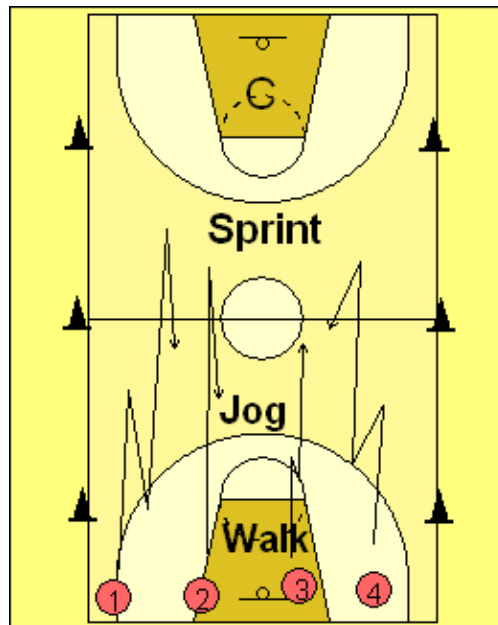
Deceleration is one of the most important skills players learn. They need to be able to stop with a 1-2 stop (right lead foot, left lead foot), 2 foot stop and stutters.

For example: the players can walk in zone one and stop. Stutter the feet until "go" is called, the jog to the next zone.

Stop and do power hops (bring the knees to chest). On go sprint.

Other actions

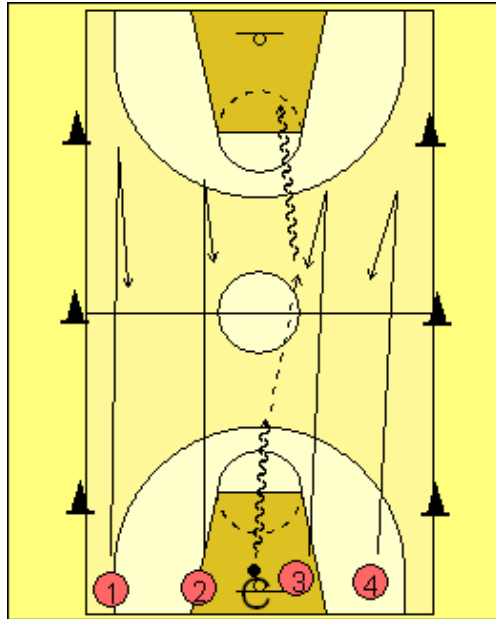
- burpee or push ups
- face back to the direction you came, start by turning
- do a 360 turn (turn both left and right)
- move laterally before moving forward
- Hip turns (this is a quick jumping of both feet together, sometimes called a jump switch)
- Do an action and go in another direction



Wave Running

The coach is at the far end of the floor. The coach points to have the players moving forward and backward. the player must remember what pace they are moving when in that zone.

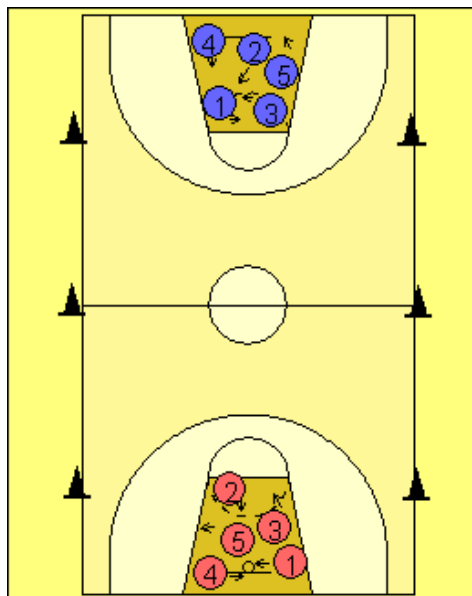
Add a ball
Remember to add the 10 fingers or scans to the right and left.



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Wave running with a ball

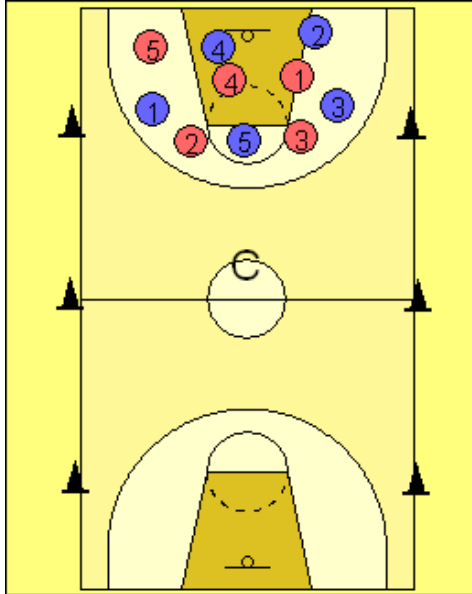
In this example the coach has a ball. He/she tosses it off the backboard and rebounds the ball. The players take off running down the court looking over their shoulder. If the coach pivots, like he/she is trouble the players come back to the ball. If the coach dribbles the players go long again looking for a pass. The coach can pass to one player who scores or have the group execute an offensive play.



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Changing direction

These first drills are to help players move in space by changing direction. The emphasis is on awareness of space and using scanning to help them in this task. Divide the players up and use the basketball key. The players move randomly about the key avoiding the other players. If they touch they are frozen. Do this first by walking, then jogging. You only need to go for about 20 seconds. Ask the players how this relates to the real game? Why don't we want all players in the key?



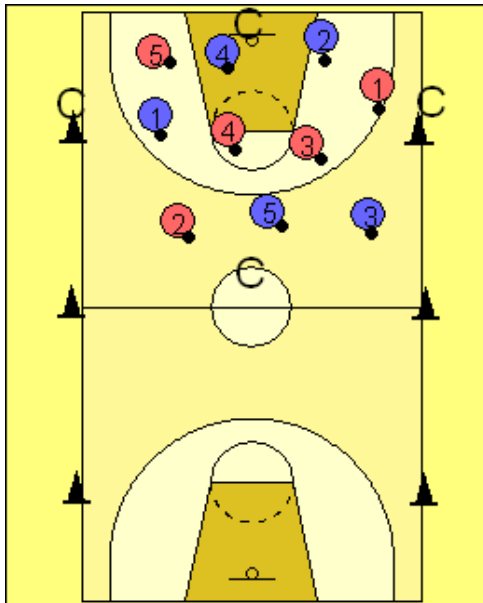
2nd progression

Now combine the two groups and put them inside the 3 point line. Do the same drill.

The next progression is to use the 1/2 court.

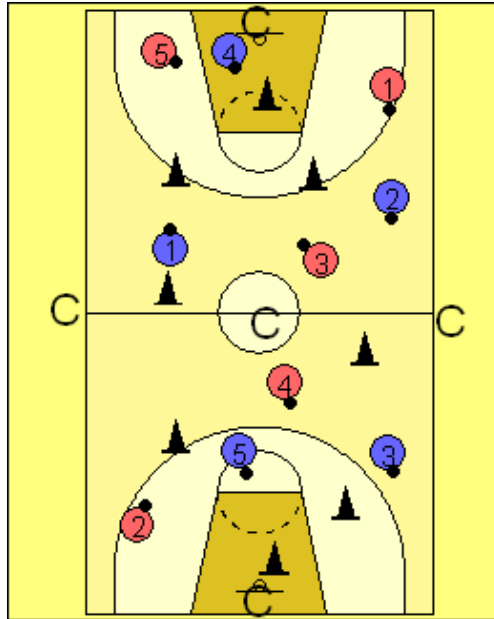
The final progression is to use the entire court.

You want the players to learn that the more open the space the faster they can move. When it is congested they need to be going at a speed where they are able to quickly change direction. You also want them to learn to use the entire space available. When they bunch up they will find it more difficult to move. Constantly challenge them to use the open space. Debrief them with questions to draw these concepts out of the children.



Scanning

These drills should be done at first without a ball. Then add the basketball. You can also add the scan aspect to the drill. As the players move they can chant "rim, left, right. Again people can be positioned to give signals. If the ball is used add the 10 fingers. In the example given the players are using the entire half court while dribbling with a ball. The coach can also have the players use change of pace by calling out the speed, walk, jog or run. Make sure the players use both hands.

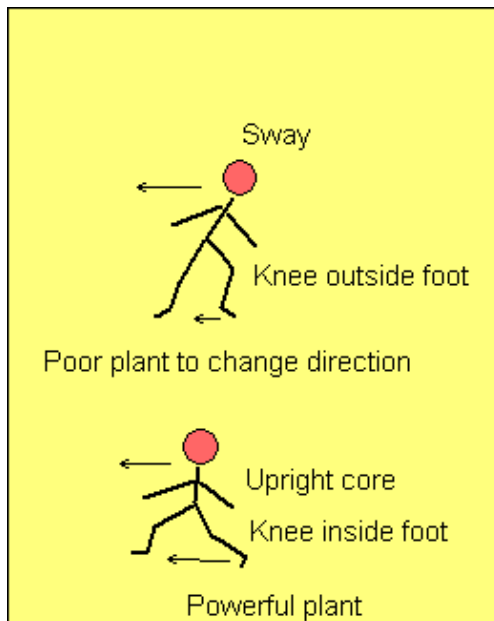


Add pylons

The players pretend the pylons are volcanoes. They must make a change of direction when they arrive at a pylon. Start the drill with out a ball. The players are challenged to see how many different pylons they can travel too in 30 seconds.

Loading

- add the scanning
- add the ball
- add a fake before changing direction
- have different color pylons (place a pinnie of some) to indicate different changes of directions. Orange mean fake right go left, green means fake left go right.

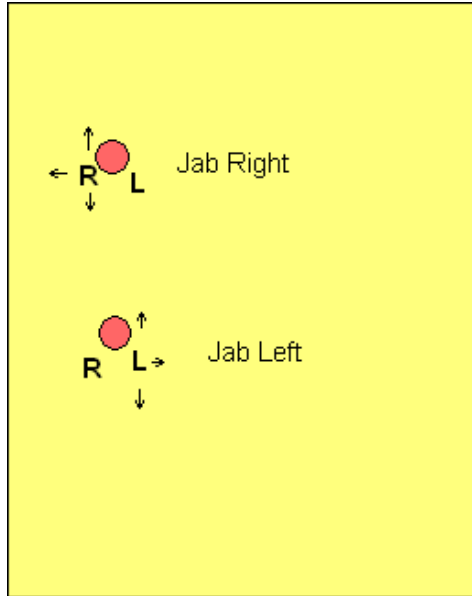


Proper form

You will have to spend time with the players on the proper footwork for changing direction. It is important that the push foot gets outside the line of the knee. Also the trunk should not sway.

I like to use the "clock drills" or "dancing" (push right go left, push left go right, jabs, step drop and pop) to teach these to the players

Jabs

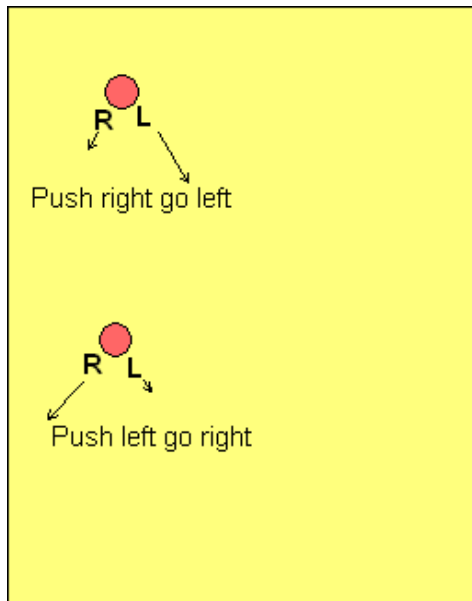


Players need to be able to take quick short steps with each foot. This jab step is called a plyo step by Lee Taft in his **Basketball Speed** video. Have the players practice this near a line on the floor. The jab should not be a big step but a quick plant to enable the player to push in the opposite direction of the desired movement. The players need to be able to maintain a good athletic stance throughout the entire drill.

The coach calls out direction of the foot.

- front
- side
- back

Push and go

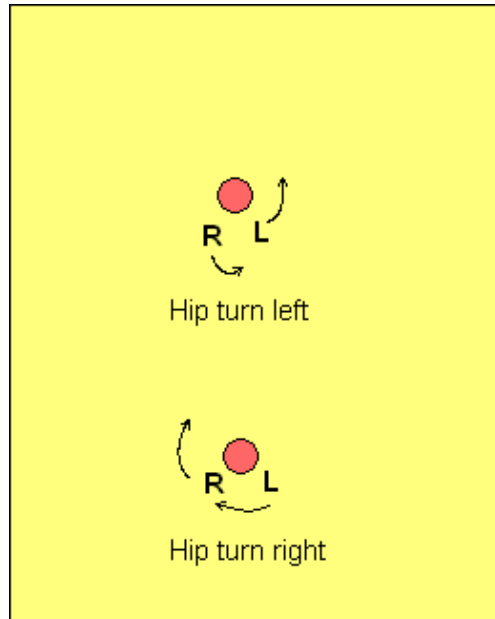


In push and go's the player takes a short jab and then an explosive step with the other foot.

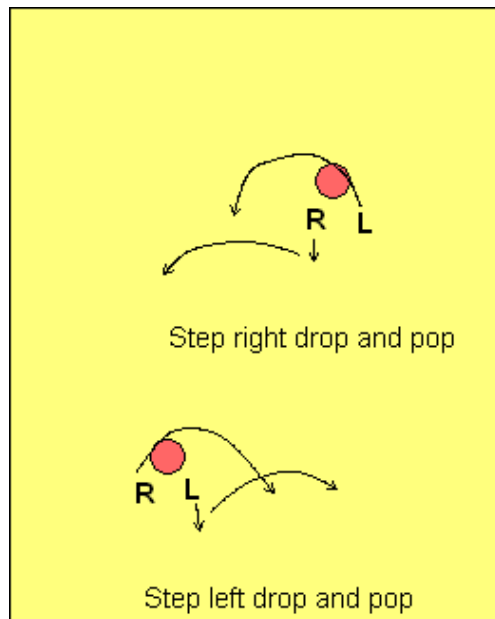
Hip turn (jump switch)

Both feet twist to a new position at the same time so the athlete can push and go backwards. The trunk is always facing forward. This is much quicker and powerful than a drop pivot.

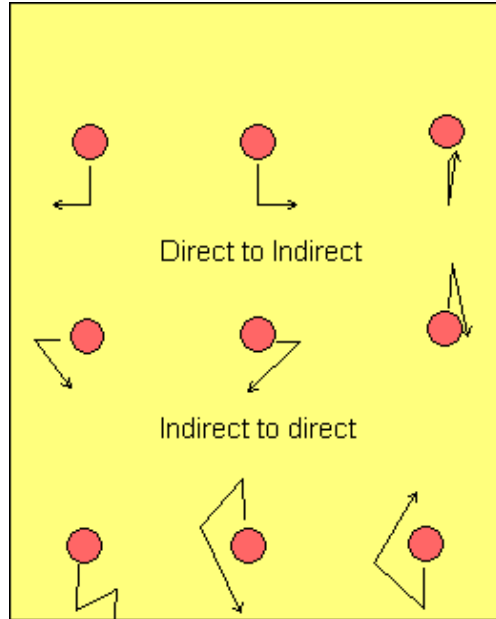
Do this at first with a just the turns. Then add the turn and go (where the turn and run)

**Step drop and pop**

The player takes a step with the right foot and then does a back pivot. (I find that if the player learns to sit and spin on the heel it is quicker and safer). This is immediately followed by a front pivot on the left foot. The player can then do a two foot hop to a jump stop. This is used in spin dribbles and moves to get open.



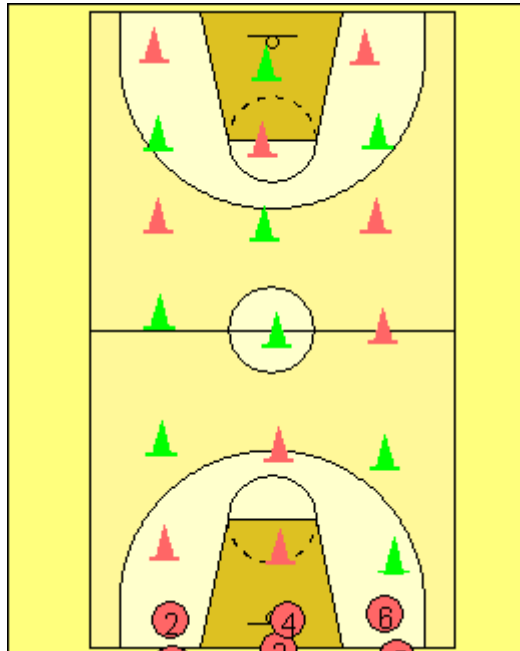
Indirect and direct



Players now need to learn the idea of direct and indirect cuts. A direct cut starts by going straight at the ball. The indirect action is when the player moves at an angle away from the ball. These are used as fakes and ways to create space for the player.

Practice these on air and then add a guided defender. As you go by the defender you should have your shoulder to the hip of the defender.

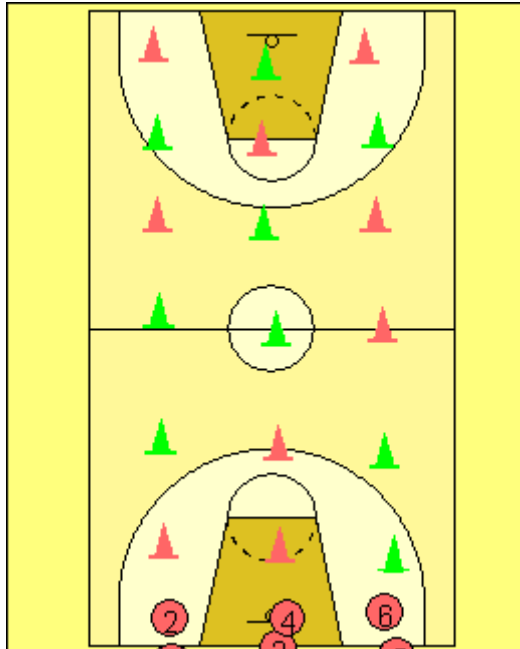
Change of direction



The players line up in three lines. They move through the pylons and change direction using good form at each pylon. The different colors signify a different type of change.

Loading

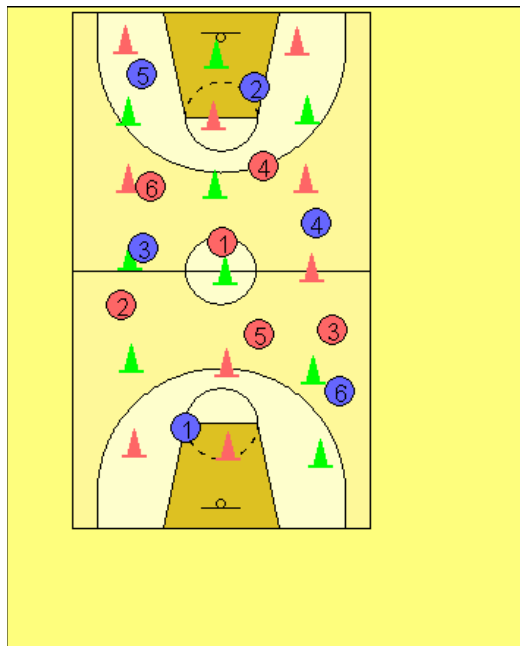
- use different changes of pace
- add the scans
- add the ball
- move in different planes- front to back , back to front, front to side, spins, slides



Fakes

Here the players can add fakes before the change of direct

- foot fakes
- head and shoulder fakes
- eye fakes
- catch fakes
- ball fakes (if dribbling)



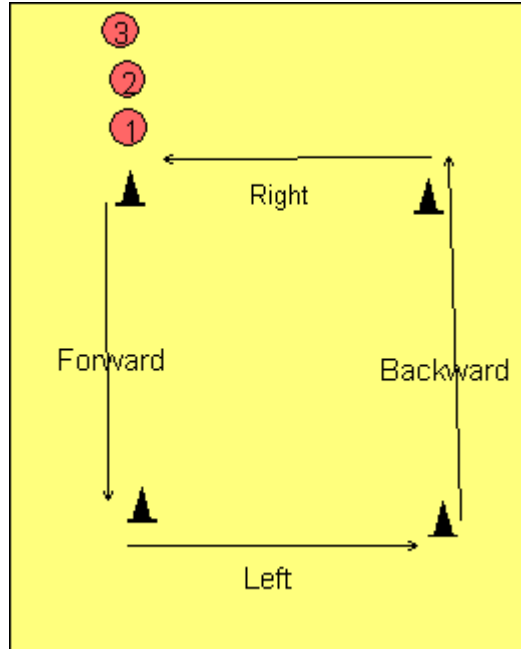
Bulldozers and builders

There are two teams with equal number of players. There is an equal number of pylons spread out around the gym. Half of the pylons are standing up the other half are tipped on their side. The bulldozers are attempting to tip the pylons over the builders are setting them up right. You can only use your hands. Go for a designated length of time and the team that has the most pylons in their position wins.

This is a great conditioner!

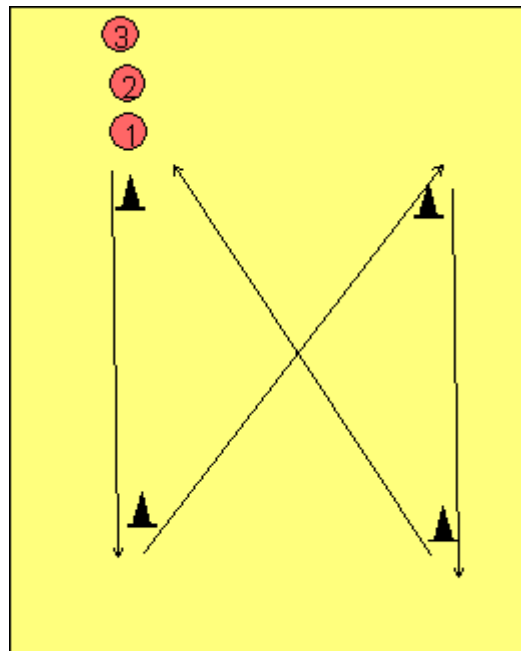
Load
Add a ball

Four Corners drill

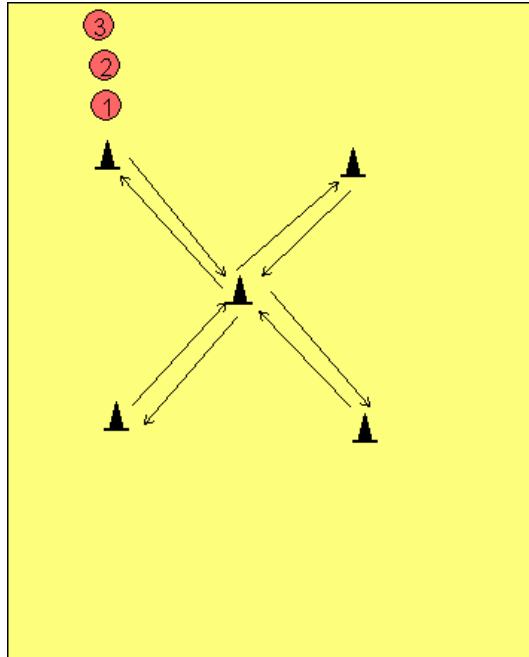


Step up little grids for the players with four pylons. You can also use the key or badminton courts. The players run forward, left, back then right. You can tell them the pace you want. In this example the players are working on always facing forward. You can also do the drill where they are working on different kinds of cuts.

Diagonal movement



Here the players move and make diagonal cuts. Again you as the coach decide if you want them sliding, running or lateral running always facing forward. Remember you can always add the ball.

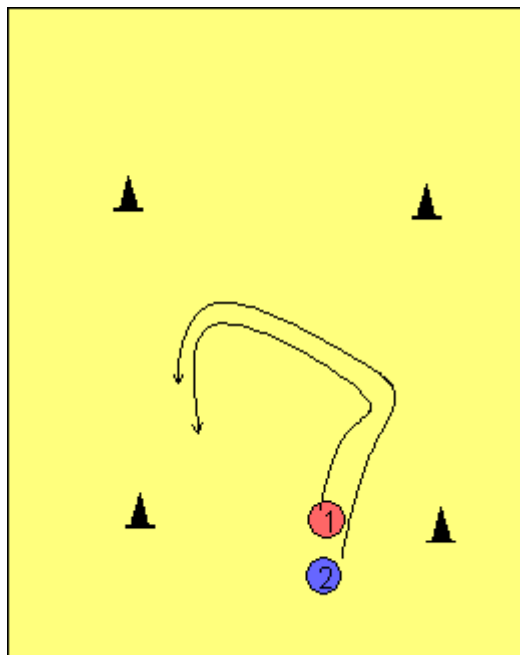


Star

In this example the players move forward and backward. The chest is always facing out.

Load

- add a pass
- add a ball



Random movement

Two players partner up. The lead player uses change of direction to try and lose the player behind. You can call the pace that the players move. With little kids you can call it cops and robbers. The lead person is trying to avoid the cop car following.

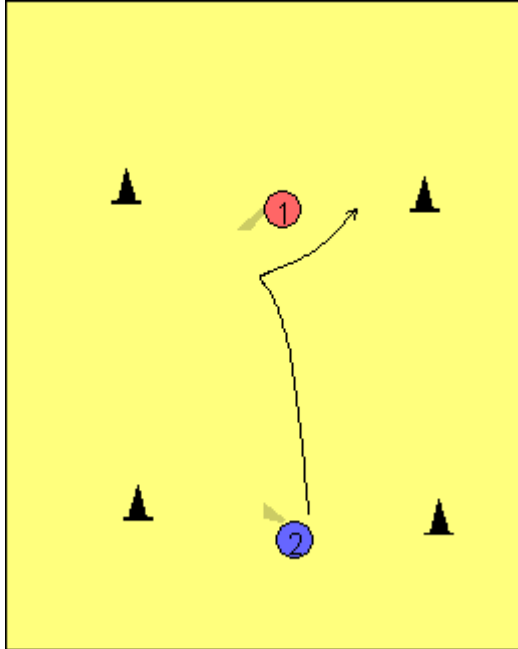
You can always add the ball. At first just have the back person with a ball following the front person. Then both players. Both players could have two balls. Load the drill by having a number of pairs perform the drill in a bigger space.

Steal the flag

Player #2 tries to run between the two pylons at the far end without #1 stealing his/her flag. (Use a pinnie tucked in the shorts that hang down to the knee).

This is a great lead up to teaching defensive position.

At first the defensive player will stay and wait at the line. Ask them if it would be easier if they started closer to the offensive player. Let them try different starting points.

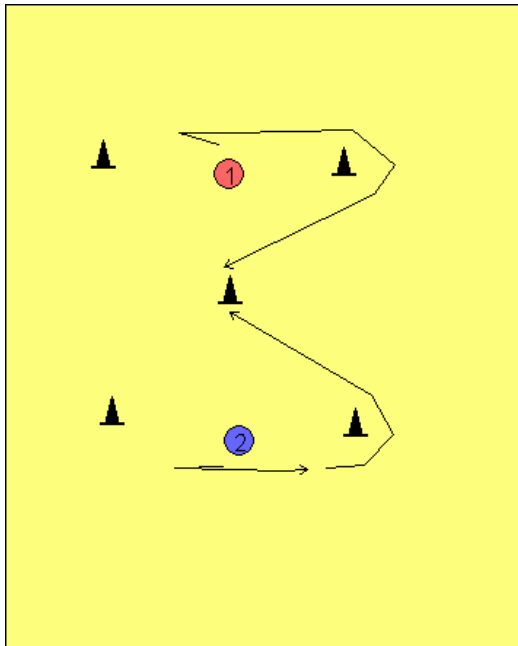


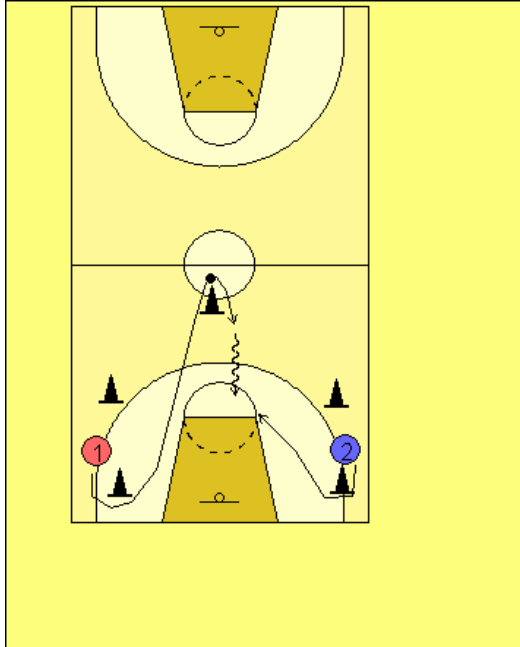
Mirror shuffle

One player is the leader. This player uses movement skills to try and shake the other player. The second player must mirror the first. When the first feels the time is right he/she sprints around a cone and tries to touch the middle pylon before the mirror player can tag him / her. Put a time limit on the amount of time faking.

load

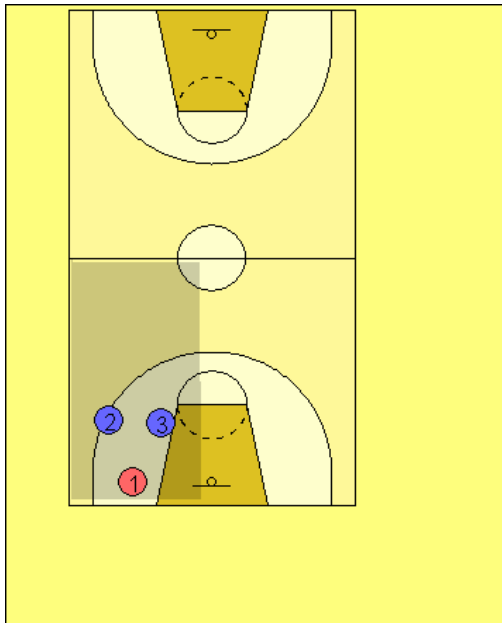
- Put a ball in the middle. The player goes and scores a lay up the second must play defense.
- Both players start with basketballs.





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In this example the players sprint around the pylons after faking and grab the ball from the pylon. They then play one on one.



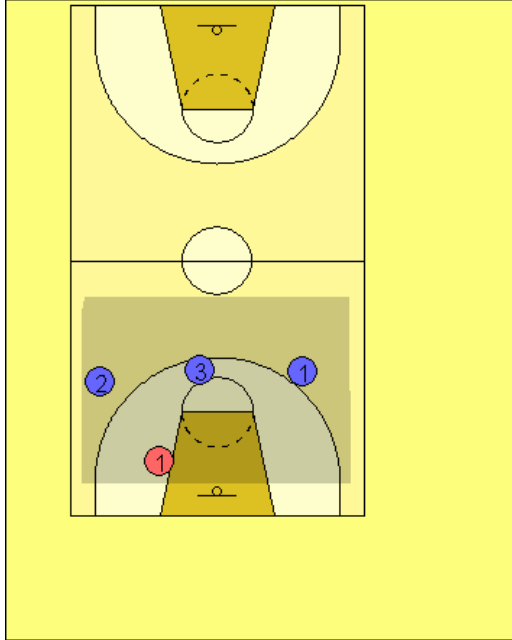
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2 on 1 capture the flag

Divide the court into four areas. With little kids you may need to put up cones. Allow a safety buffer zone.

The one player is trying to get to half court with out the flag being stolen. The defenders are working on corralling the offensive player and not allowing creases.

Add a ball to the offensive player
Make everyone use a ball



1 on 3 capture the flag

This is a great lead into pressure defense. The defense needs to work on not getting bunched. The offensive player's works on avoidance actions. The defenders work on back pedaling and lateral movement.

Another way to play it is to remove the flag. The offensive player scores a point if he/she can split two defenders. You may need to have four players on defense.

Add the ball.