



Special Olympics Basketball Coaching Guide Teaching Basketball Skills

Dribbling

Dribbling is one of the most fundamental skills that must be learned. Not only is it important to learn how to dribble well, but it is also important to know when, and when not, to dribble. To become a good dribbler and ball handler, you must practice dribbling as often as you can, using both hands.

Skill Progression – Dribbling

Your Athlete Can	Never	Sometimes	Often
Attempt to dribble a basketball in any manner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dribble the ball in any manner at least three bounces in a row	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dribble a ball with one hand more than three bounces in a row while standing in place	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dribble the ball with the opposite hand more than three bounces in a row while standing in place	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dribble the ball with one hand, then the other hand, three bounces in a row each, without stopping, while standing still	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dribble the ball with one hand while walking forward ten steps	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dribble the ball with one hand while running forward 20 steps	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dribble the ball with either hand while moving in any direction (forward, backward or sideways)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dribble the ball with either hand while moving in any direction while protecting the ball from a defender	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Totals			

Teaching the Dribble

Key Words

- Feel for the Ball
- Head Up
- Protect



Faults & Fixes Chart – Dribbling

Error	Correction	Drill/Test Reference
Athlete pushes the ball too far out to make contact on the bounce to continue the dribble.	Start with dribbling in place, controlling the bounce and meeting it with your hand.	Stationary Dribbling
Athlete slaps at the ball at the top of the dribble.	Remember to have your hand low and feel for the ball as it comes back up off the floor.	Stationary Dribbling with partial coach assist. Coach can simulate the ball bounce to help the athlete feel meeting the ball and then pushing rather than slapping it back down.
Athlete watches the ball when dribbling.	Keep your head up and look occasionally for the rim.	Give the athletes a spot on the wall in front of them to focus on.
Athlete doesn't "protect" the ball.	Practice keeping your body between the ball and the defender.	Protect the Ball While Dribbling
Athlete takes too many dribbles.	Push the ball out from the waist more and run after it.	Dribble While Moving or Dribble and Slide
Athlete loses balance on the forward foot, causing the pivot foot to drag (travel).	Hop before you stop and land with feet shoulder width apart, with your head up.	Practice the Bunny Hop!
Athlete dribbles too high or wide to control the ball when changing direction.	Practice dribbling at knee height: stationary and then moving and changing direction.	Dribble and Slide



Coaches' Tips for Basketball – At-A-Glance

Tips for Practice

1. Assist the athletes by letting them put their hands on top of yours to feel the rhythm of dribbling. Start by using guided discovery. Allow the athlete to feel the roundness of the ball, the dimples and the weight. Ask the athletes what the ball feels like.
2. Ask them to drop the ball and catch it. Direct them to place the ball on the floor, the dribbling hand on top, and the other hand to the side and almost under the ball. In this way, when the ball is picked up, it is in proper position for them to begin and continue dribbling.
3. When dribbling the ball, the lower the bounce, the easier the control. Dribble the ball three times and pick it up.
4. Reinforce proper position of hands, head and body.
5. Practice each hand separately. Conduct a mini competition to see if the athletes can keep the ball dribbling for 15, 30, 45 and 60 seconds.



Dribbling Drills

For athletes with lower ability who have little experience dribbling, who dribble a ball with a flat hand or in the palm, or who dribble with two hands on the ball, use the following drills:

Key Words

- Feel for the Ball
- Head Up
- Protect

Stationary Dribbling

Perform while standing in place or simply moving with the ball.

Reps: Three sets of ten dribbles with each hand

Purpose of the Drill

- Develop ability and confidence in dribbling
- Teach athletes that once they catch a ball they have been dribbling, they must pass it

Steps

1. Start dribbling with one hand only and count out loud to ten with the right hand and then to ten with the left hand.
2. If the athlete has to catch the ball with both hands to control it, he or she must then pass it to the coach or another player (this prevents a “double dribble” call)
3. The coach or other player then passes the ball back to the athlete to begin again.
4. This may also be done in a circle with several athletes. Each time an athlete either completes 10 dribbles with each hand OR has to catch the ball with two hands, that athlete passes to another player in the circle.

Stationary Dribbling in Multiple Positions

Perform while standing, then kneeling, and finally sitting.

Reps: Three sets of ten dribbles in each position with each hand

Purpose of the Drill

- Develop ability and confidence in dribbling
- Develop ability to switch hands while dribbling

Steps

1. Start dribbling and count out loud to ten with the right hand and then to ten with the left hand.
2. Then keep dribbling as you kneel on the floor (ten with the right and ten with the left hand).
3. Then move from kneeling to sitting on the floor and count to ten again with each hand.



Dribbling while Moving Forward

Reps: Two round trips; each round trip is from baseline to the far baseline and back

Purpose of the Drill

- Develop skill of controlling and protecting the ball while moving
- As confidence grows, the athlete can add speed to the dribble as well as the skill of stopping

Steps

1. Stand in place and dribble the ball three times.
2. Push the ball slightly forward and walk forward.
3. Keep head and eyes looking forward, not down.
4. Gradually add speed and more forward push to the ball.

Alternate Hands 5-4-3-2-1-Dribble

Reps: Three sets of 5-4-3-2-1 as described below.

Purpose of the Drill

- Practice switching dribbling hands
- Developing body and ball awareness as the ball shifts from side to side

Steps

1. Stand in place and dribble the ball five times.
2. Bounce the ball in front of the body and over to the other hand.
3. Dribble the ball five times with the other hand.
4. Bounce the ball back over to the first hand and perform four dribbles with each hand, without stopping.
5. Repeat the pattern, each time doing one fewer dribble on each side.
6. Once this is mastered, you can have athletes reverse the process and increase the number of dribbles on each side back up to five.

Dribble and Slide

Reps: Two to three rounds of 30-60 seconds per practice

Purpose of the Drill

- Practice dribbling and moving the ball intentionally
- Practice keeping focus on other players instead of the ball while dribbling

Steps

1. Each player has a basketball and lines up with space between players, but so all can see the coach.
2. Players start dribbling in place.
3. The coach now uses arm movements (think airline stewards showing where the exits are on a plane) to direct the group to move left, right, to the back and to the front.
4. For fun, try a diagonal or a snaking pattern back – have fun with the hand signals!
5. Make sure athletes are using correct footwork and are keeping knees bent and heads up.

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Mini-Basketball: Dribbling Tag

Reps: Two to three rounds per practice

Purpose of the Drill

- Practice dribbling and protecting the ball
- Practice trying to legally steal the ball from an opponent

Steps

1. The group is divided into no fewer than two teams of two athletes each.
2. Each player has a ball and wears a scrimmage vest for team identification.
3. The area of the court depends upon the size and ability level of the group. The lower the ability level, the fewer the athletes. If there are two athletes, a jump ball circle can be used. If there are four to six athletes, the area inside the three-point arc and baseline can be used.
4. The coach signals the athletes to begin dribbling. Each athlete must keep the ball bouncing and protected while trying to tip an opponent's basketball away or outside the arc and the baseline.
5. If anyone stops his/her dribble, or the basketball goes outside the boundaries, those athletes are out of the game.
6. If a foul occurs, the ball handler stays and continues playing while the opponent is out of the game.
7. Play Dribble Tag for 1-2 minutes.
8. The team with the most athletes left dribbling inside the arc at the end of the time period wins.
9. A best-of-three game series can be played to heighten competition.





Hot Griddle Dribble

Reps: Two trips up and down the length of the court, stopping at the free-throw lines (extended), half court line and base lines.

Purpose of the Drill

- Practice changing from speed dribble to stationary dribble
- Practice keeping balance and setting up fake move or pass from a dribble

Steps

1. Start at the base line and fast-dribble up to the first free-throw line.
2. At that line, stop running and keep the dribble alive.
3. While stationary at the stopping point, start moving your feet quickly up and down, in place (as if on a hot griddle).
4. Hold that movement for 10 seconds and move on to the mid court line and repeat.
5. Repeat again at the other free-throw line and then again at the far baseline.
6. Turn around and repeat on the way back.

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Protect the Ball While Dribbling

Reps: Two to three rounds with a coach

Purpose

- Practice dribbling and protecting the ball
- Practice moving while keeping the ball from an opponent

Steps

1. Have athletes work one-on-one with a coach or assistant.
2. Athlete starts dribbling in place.
3. Coach takes the unprotected ball to show what we do NOT want to happen.
4. Coach instructs athlete to keep his/her body between the ball and the defender, with an arm bent to further shield the ball.
5. Now the coach moves around while the athlete continues to dribble, making sure the athlete moves the body to keep it between the ball and the coach.
6. Finally, the athlete is instructed to move forward and back or side to side while keeping the ball protected.

