

Basketball Lay-ups

The lay-up is the easiest shot and the first shot you should learn. It's not as easy as it looks at first, as a lot of kids have difficulty getting the correct footwork, and shooting off the correct foot. Then you must also learn to use either hand, and eventually do the reverse lay-up.

Footwork

When dribbling toward the basket, move slightly to one side of the hoop to create the proper angle. If you're on the right side, dribble right-handed, and plant your left (inside) foot and jump off that foot, and finally shoot with your right hand. As you raise your right hand, your right knee should also elevate. Pretend there is a string attached to your right hand and your right knee. Reverse this form if shooting from the left side.

As you approach the hoop, take a half step with your outside foot, then take a full stride with your inside foot pushing off the court. When jumping your outside knee should be bent. Go directly toward the basket, with your head up and eyes focused on the backboard. Go up strong and straight to the hoop. Don't shy away if there is a defender, just go strong to the hoop. You may get fouled and get a three point chance.

Aim

Always use the backboard ("use the glass") when shooting lay-ups from either side. Aim for the top corner of the box on the backboard. Focus in on this area; don't watch the ball. Keep your head up.

The Push Release

Younger players who are not yet strong enough for the underhand release should use the push release. Release the ball with the back of your hands facing you. Extend your shooting arm, as you push the ball to the hoop off your fingertips. You should go up with two hands, then release the ball with your outside hand. A very young player may need to shoot the ball with two hands.

Underhand Release

As you get stronger, you should develop the underhand shot. This release results in a softer shot, and more control when you are moving at high speed. Release the ball with your palm up and arm extended. Let the ball roll off your palm and then your fingertips, and lay the ball softly off the backboard. Use two hands going up, but then release the ball with your outside hand at the top of your jump. Be strong and concentrate... "finish"!

Simple drill for teaching the footwork

Have the players get into a line near the right side of the basket (to shoot the right-handed lay-up). Each player takes a turn. You can use more than one basket if you have enough assistants to watch each player's technique. This drill works on correct footwork. Have the player (with a ball) face the right side of the backboard with both feet together. Then have her take one step forward with the inside (left) foot, plant that foot and jump off of it and shoot the right-handed lay-up. When jumping, the right thigh comes up with the knee bent. Have each player work on this technique. Then try it on the run (without dribbling), and then with dribbling. Do the left side also... on this side you step forward and plant the right (inside) foot, and raise the left thigh and leg.