



BASIC NETBALL SKILLS

The 'Change It' Approach

As a coach, it is important that you cater for individual skills and abilities - which in a team sport can be quite difficult. Every player in your team should have the opportunity to take part in every activity. One way to do this is to follow the major concept behind the "change it" approach. Each time you plan an activity or drill, keep in mind how you can make that drill a bit easier and how you can make it a bit harder. In that way the same drill can meet the needs of all players. Ways that you can change a drill to vary the difficulty include;

- make the playing area larger or smaller
- alter distances between players or targets
- vary the number of players involved in teams
- change the rules - make it easier or harder to score points
- use different equipment - softer balls, shorter goals, smaller balls
- introduce time limits

Shoulder Pass

A shoulder pass is a one handed pass used for speed and accuracy over longer distances. The pass should be aimed in front of the receiver to where they are running to. This is the pass that should be used by all players most of the time - thus is the focus when teaching passing to younger players.

Coaching Points:

- Opposite foot to throwing arm forward.
- Feet shoulder width apart. Weight should be on back foot when begin the pass.
- Hold ball with 2 hands initially, then bring back behind shoulder with one arm.
- Fingers should be spread wide behind the ball.
- Transfer weight forward as you bring the throwing arm through. This provides the power to the pass.
- Follow through until throwing arm is extended and wrist and fingers also follow the pass.
- Your hips and shoulders rotate in the direction of the pass.
- Direct the pass into the space ahead of the receiver.

Chest Pass

This pass is used for quick, short and accurate passes. It is not as important as a shoulder pass when developing skills in young players.

Coaching Points:

- Stand front-on with the ball in two hands at chest height, with elbows down (chicken wings in!)

- Spread fingers around the ball with thumbs behind.
- Step forward and transfer your weight to this foot as you release the ball.
- Flick the wrist and fingers as the ball comes out evenly from both hands.
- Always keep your head up and eyes looking forward.

Bounce Pass

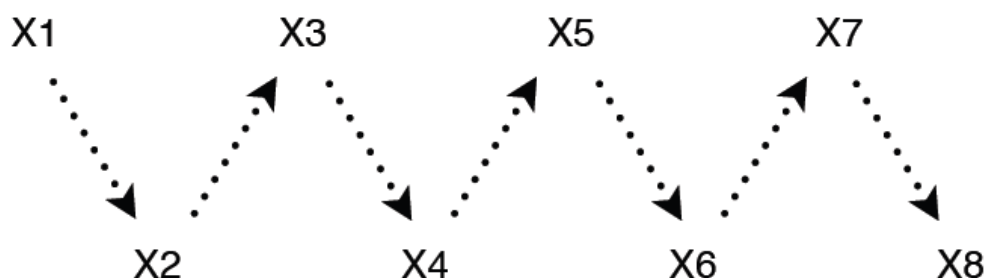
This pass is used when the area is crowded and should only be used over a short distance. It is a good pass to teach shorter players who have trouble passing around a defender's long arms.

Coaching Points:

- Step forward on opposite leg and lunge down.
- Push the ball forward and downwards, so it bounces 2/3 of the distance towards the receiver.
- The ball should be released by the thrower below hip height.
- The ball should be received by the catcher at knee height.
- The aim is for the pass to stay low at all times, they should bend to throw it and bend to receive it - otherwise it defeats the purpose of doing a bounce pass at all.

Passing & Catching Drills

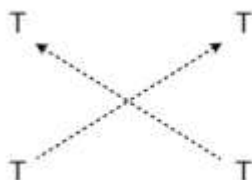
1. **Pairs Passing & Catching.** Have players stand in pairs approximately 3m apart. Have them throw up and down court, rather than across court. Partners shoulder pass/chest pass/ bounce pass to each other concentrating on technique and ball placement. Extend this drill by adding challenges, e.g. how many passes can you do in 30 seconds without dropping the ball? You can also add a distance challenge - every time a pair completes 10 passes without dropping the ball they take a step back. If they drop the ball, they take a step in. After a set amount of time, see which pair has been able to increase their distance the most.
2. **Long Throw.** Work in pairs, starting approximately 2 metres apart. A shoulder pass is thrown between the two players. If the ball is caught, they both step back. If the ball is dropped, they step forward. The winning pair is the one who has retreated the furthest. Work for a set amount of time or a set number of passes.
3. **Cross Ball.** Set up team in zig zag formation (you might like to use dots or cones to help with this). Players pass from one player to another up and back down the zig zag. To extend this drill, you can add a time challenge - see if they can beat their time to get up and back twice. You can also vary the pass used - shoulder, chest or bounce. Add difficulty to this drill by having players shoulder pass using their non-preferred hand.



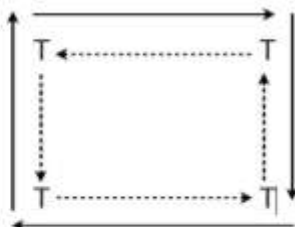
4. **Shuttle Ball.** Work in groups of 3 to 5 players. Set up markers approximately 3 metres apart. Player 1 throws the ball to player 2 and then runs to line B. Player 2 throws the ball to player 3 and then runs to join the group at line A. Continue repeating this pattern.



5. **Cross Square.** Work in groups of 4. Stand 2-3m apart in a square. One pair bounces the ball diagonally across the square and one pair chest passes. After 10 passes, pairs swap over their type of pass.



6. **Bounce Pass Throw and Run.** Bounce pass ball clockwise around square. After passing, run anti-clockwise around square and back to start to get next pass.



Safe Landings

A safe and effective landing technique will reduce the chance of ankle and knee injuries by reducing the forces experienced by the body.

Coaching Points:

- Knee and toe should be facing the same direction
- Knee and hip should be controlled - they should not swing inward or outward
- 'Soft' landing, with knees slightly bent.

Landing Drills:

1. **Cross Square.** Work in groups of 4. Stand 2-3m apart in a square. One pair bounces the ball diagonally across the square and one pair chest passes. After 10 passes, pairs swap over their type of pass.

2. **Bounce Pass.** Throw and Run. Bounce pass ball clockwise around square. After passing, run anti-clockwise around square and back to start to get next pass.

Two Foot Landing

Coaching Points:

- Land with feet shoulder width apart to give good base of support for better balance.
- Keep body upright. Bend at knees, hips and ankles to soften the impact. Shouldn't sound like elephants when they land.
- Keep body weight evenly placed above both feet.

Pivot

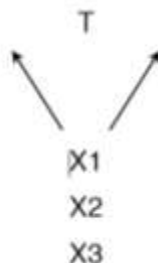
Players should be encouraged to pivot to the outside as that is the way their body is naturally heading. It also means that they will be turning away from their defender.

Coaching Points:

- Pivoting must always be done on the grounded foot.
- Bend knees slightly and put weight on grounded foot.
- Turn on the ball of the grounded foot while pushing off with the other foot. This other foot provides you with direction and balance.
- Turn your body to face down the court to your teams' goal post.
- While pivoting, keep the ball close to your body and get in a position ready to throw.
- Make sure you catch the ball cleanly before you begin pivoting.

Footwork/ Movement Drills

1. **Hoop Landings.** Line up players in groups of approximately 4. Place a hoop out in front of each line. One by one, players run up and do a 2 foot landing in the hoop. Extend the drill by players landing with a 2 foot stop in the hoop, then stepping out on their opposite foot pretending to make a shoulder pass. Extend again by adding a ball. Have a thrower out the front. Players run to the hoop, catch a pass and land in the hoop with a 2 foot stop. They then step out of the hoop on their opposite foot and throw a shoulder pass back. Swap throwers regularly.
2. **One Foot Landing.** Work in groups of approximately 4 players. One thrower out in front. X1 passes to T, then makes a straight lead to the right. They receive a shoulder pass from T, catch and land on the right foot. They pivot around to their right and pass to X2 who begins the drill again. Change over throwers regularly, and change angle of straight drive to left side.



One Foot Landing

Coaching Points:

- When you run to your right you should land on your right foot and pivot to your right.
- When you run to your left you should land on your left foot and pivot to your left.

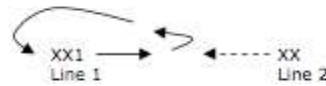
- Once landed, place the other foot on the ground quickly to help absorb impact and help with balance.
- Bend your knees, ankles and hips on impact to cushion your landing.

Drills:

1. **Continuous Captain Ball.** Work in groups of 4 or 5. Player 2 catches a pass from player 1, lands in two foot stop and then passes a shoulder pass back to player 1. They then run and stand behind player 1. Player 1 continues this routine through to the last player in line. When they catch the pass from player 1 they become the new leader and the game continues facing the other way. Continue until all players have had a turn at being thrower. You can race the two teams through to add variety if necessary.



2. **Shuttle Ball with Pivot.** Have two lines facing each other. The worker (X1) leads forward from the line and receives a pass from line 2. X1 lands on two feet, pivots and then passes back to their line and returns to end of their own line. The sequence continues with alternate leads from line 1 then line 2. Can change drill to do one foot stop and lead out on the diagonal.



3. **Statue of Liberty.** Work in pairs with one ball between two. One player stands like the statue of liberty with ball held high with one arm. Their partner runs, leaps and snatches the ball, landing with the correct footwork and balanced. They then pivot around and pass the ball back to the statue. Repeat 5 times before swapping roles.
4. **Court Pivots.** Players spread out over at least one third, in a space of their own. On 'Go' they jog around the space. The coach blows their whistle and on the whistle, the players must land their grounded foot, pivot around on the spot and then push off and run in a different direction. Work hard for 20-30 seconds, rest and repeat. Pivots and change of direction should be done as quickly as possible – head and eyes up all the time. Extend this drill by letting go a loose ball at any time. The nearest player must retrieve the ball and return it.

Straight Drive

This is the most important attacking move for players to develop.

Coaching Points:

- Sprint strongly out to the ball. Go directly forward, or at a 45 degree angle on either side. Players should never run sideways across the court for a pass.
- If you are leading to the right, you should take off on your right foot. If you are leading to your left, then take off on your left foot.
- The first 3 or 4 steps made are the ones that have to be strong.
- When leading to the right, encourage players to pivot on their right foot.
- When leading to the left, encourage players to pivot on their left foot.
- Pump your arms to go faster.
- Do not slow down until the ball is in your hands.
- Do not start your break until the person with the ball has got their balance and is ready to throw to you.

Change of Direction

This is essentially two straight leads joined together. The idea is you convince the defender you are making a break in one direction before you actually make your real move in another direction.

Coaching Points:

- Sprint strongly out to the ball, either directly forward or at a 45 degree angle on either side.
- The first 3 or 4 steps made are the ones that must be strong.
- Push off on your outside foot strongly and move in the direction you want to go.
- Again, put emphasis on the first 3 or 4 steps when moving in the new direction.

Dodge

All movement when dodging should be quick and definite.

Coaching Points:

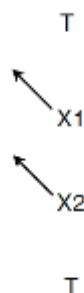
- Keep your eyes on the thrower at all times.
- Keep body upright, your feet shoulder-width apart and your knees and hips slightly bent.
- Move a few steps (2 or 3) away from your intended catching direction.
- Push off your outside foot strongly and move in the direction you want to go.
- Pump your arms to accelerate faster and extend your arms to catch the ball.
- Do not have your feet too far apart as it is harder for you to change direction quickly and strongly.
- Make sure movements are strong and definite and not just a bit of a lazy sway. You are supposed to be fooling your opposition about which way you are going to run.

Attacking Drills

1. **Drive and Catch.** Work in pairs, one ball between two, about 4m apart. Thrower stands with back to worker, tosses ball up about 1/2 a metre and catches it themselves. They pivot to face the attacker. The attacker then completes a straight drive to receive the ball, two foot land and return the ball using a shoulder pass. Repeat 10 times and then swap over roles.



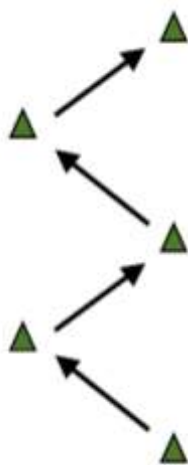
2. **Basic Straight Leads.** Work in groups of 4. Worker 1 makes a lead out at 45 degrees to receive a pass. Worker 2 then makes a straight lead to receive a pass from worker 1. They then pivot and pass the ball to the second thrower.



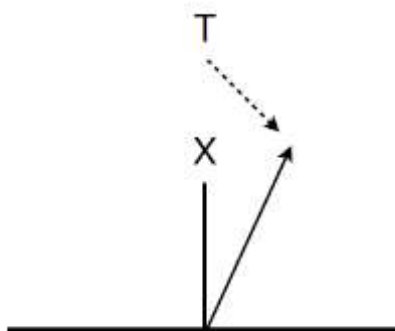
3. **Straight Lead Lines.** Work in groups of approximately 4 players. Players form a straight line down the court, about 3 or 4m apart. X1 starts with the ball and throws to self to establish timing. X2 makes a straight lead forward to receive a pass, pivots and passes to X3 on a lead. Continue down the court and back again. Change to use a straight lead to the left, then a straight lead to the right. Encourage players to pivot on the correct foot.



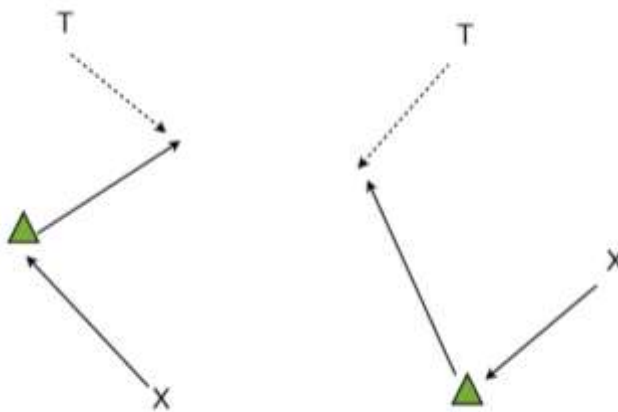
4. **Changing Drives.** Work in groups of 4. Players drive through the cones focusing on a strong change of direction. Push off on the outside foot at each cone to drive hard the other way. 5. Touch and Drive. Work in pairs. Worker runs away from the thrower to touch the line with their foot, they then turn quickly and drive hard to receive a straight pass. Complete 10 straight drives and then swap over. Ensure that players keep their eyes on the ball all the way to their hands. Do not slow down until the ball is in your hands.



5. Touch and Drive. Work in pairs. Worker runs away from the thrower to touch the line with their foot, they they turn quickly and drive hard to receive a straight pass. Complete 10 straight drives and then swap over. Ensure that players keep their eyes on the ball all the way to their hands. Do not slow down until the ball is in your hands.



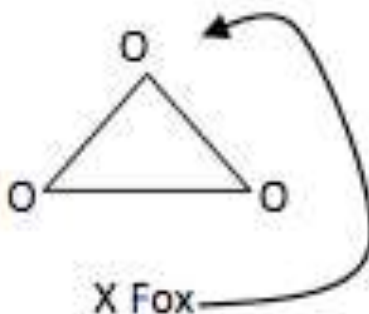
6. **Change of Direction.** Players complete a straight drive out to the cone, and then change direction and drive for a second time to receive a pass. Use two different variations for this drill;



7. **Train Tag.** Work in groups of 4. One person is 'it'. The others join a straight line, each holding the waist of the person in front of them. The person who is 'it' has to try to tag the person at the end of the line. The rest of the line has to try and move left and right to protect the back person.
8. **Cone Weave.** Work in groups of 4. Set up cones in zig zag pattern, just about 1 metre apart. Players dodge from one cone to the next to the end of the circuit. They then join the end of the line. You can extend the drill by having a player at the top of the cones, throwing in a ball at any time. This ensures that the player keeps their head and eyes up at all times.



9. **Fox and Geese.** Work in groups of 4. Three players join hands to form a circle. An extra player, nominated as a tagger or 'fox', stands outside the circle. The fox aims to tag the player in the circle designated as the 'goose'. Players keep the circle intact and aim to re-position to protect the goose from being caught. Fox makes quick changes of direction to move around the circle and try to catch the goose. The fox cannot push through nor go under arms of circle. After designated time frame (e.g. 30 seconds) or after the goose is tagged, players change roles.



Shadowing in Defence

Coaching Points:

- Stand in front of opponent with back to them, your body half way across their body.
- Keep arms close to your sides.
- Feet shoulder width apart, knees slightly bent, back upright.
- Keep good vision of both the ball in front and the player behind you.
- Shadow the player's moves using fast feet to keep up with them.
- Do not turn your head - move your feet faster instead.

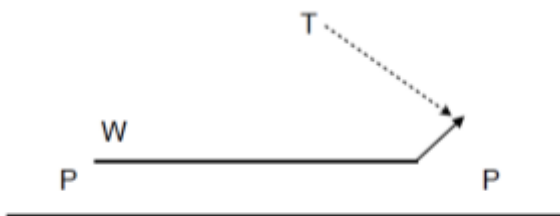
Recovery and Arms Over

Coaching Points:

- Push off strongly using long stride or a few steps to get back 3 feet.
- Use arms to help power you backwards.
- Feet shoulder width apart, knees slightly bent, weight forward on ball of foot but with whole foot on ground.
- Stretch arms upright. Arms follow the movement of the ball.

Defending Drills

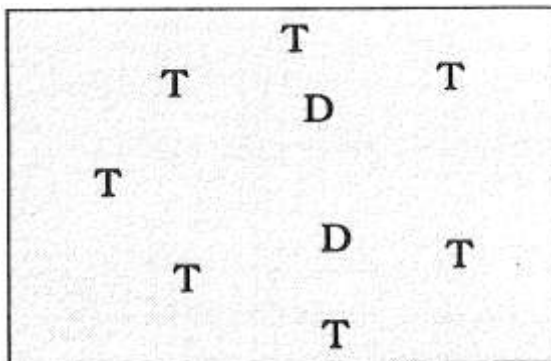
1. **Shadowing between two cones.** Place 2 cones about 3m apart. Defender starts in the shadowing position. They slide between the 2 cones, keeping in the defensive position with their heads still. Practise with head facing in both directions. Extend this drill by adding an attack player for the defence to shadow. The attack player should start by moving slowly, side to side between cones. As the defence gets better, they can increase their speed. Extend this drill again by holding up coloured cards in front of defence for them to call out. This tests whether they have good vision of both the ball out front and the attack they are shadowing. Extend again by having thrower out the front to pass ball at any time to attack. Defender must intercept the pass.
2. **Shadows and Intercepts.** Work in groups of 4 - 1 worker, 1 thrower and 2 stationary posts. The worker starts sliding along line in defensive position, imagining they are shadowing an attacking player. The thrower then passes the ball towards the post at one end. The worker runs forward to intercept the ball in front of the post with two hands preferable. Start back level with the line and move towards the other side.



3. **Recovery to 3 feet, arms over.** Have players all start up on the transverse line. On 'Go', they all step back 3 feet, get balance and put arms up. Check that their feet get back before they put their arms up. Extend the drill by adding arms over ball movement - coach stands out in front of line with ball and moves it slowly around. Players move their arms to mirror those movements.



4. **Defence Circle.** Have two defenders with at least 6 players (throwers) forming a circle around them. Throwers pass the ball to each other around the circle, but cannot throw to the person next to them. The defender closest to the thrower must move up to them 3 feet away and put arms over ball. The other defender sags back and tries to intercept the pass. Get 3 touches, then swap over defences in the middle.



Shooting

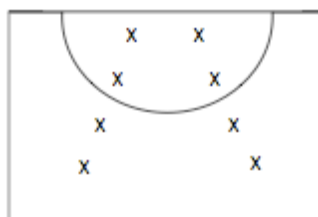
The Australian shooting technique is a one handed shot. The other hand is just a support hand and rests lightly on the side of the ball. Junior players will have trouble with strength using a high release with one hand, and so may lower the ball to get more power. As they get older and stronger, you can encourage them to again increase the height of the ball on release.

Coaching Points:

- Ball held above head.
- Arms extended with shooting arm pretty straight and close to the ear.
- Ball rests on base of fingers and thumb.
- Opposite hand is placed on side of ball to help steady it.
- Feet shoulder width apart with feet, hips and elbow pointing towards the goal post.
- Bend elbows and knees, then straighten them.
- Flick the ball with the wrist as you release. Follow through with arms and fingers pointing towards the post.
- The ball should travel in an arc towards the post.
- Follow in for rebounds.

Shooting Drills:

1. **Shuffle Shoot Relay.** Form two equal teams. Line up on a diagonal from the transverse line to the goal. Start ball at transverse. Pass down the line of players until it reaches the last person in the goal circle. They attempt a shot at goal and retrieve the rebound. They then run to the start of the line, everyone shuffles down one spot and you repeat the sequence again. Continue until players get back to their starting positions. Team scoring most goals wins.



2. **Pepperpot Pass and Shoot.** Split into 2 teams. Each team stands around the radius of one side of the goal circle, numbering off 1 to 4. Two balls are placed in the centre of the goal circle. The coach calls out a number. That number from each team runs in, picks up a ball, passes to each player from their team (as in corner spray). Once they catch the last pass, they attempt to shoot a goal. First team to score a goal gets a point. You can extend this game by calling 'fruit salad'. If that happens, player 1 first comes out and goes through the routine. Once they get the goal in, player 2 comes out

and completes the entire routine. Continue until the last player in the team completes the routine and sinks the goal.

3. **Twenty One.** Split into 2 teams. Each team forms their own line in front of the goal post. One at a time the front players attempt a goal. If they get the goal in they get 2 points for their team. If they miss, but get the rebound on the full, they can have another attempt at which point they score 1 point if they get it in. The other team's first player then has a turn. Continue with each team taking turns and adding up their scores until the first team reaches 21 points.
4. **Killer.** Have entire team start in one straight line in front of goal post, with the first two players having a ball. The first person shoots and continues to shoot until they get the goal in. You shoot from where you get the rebound each time. If you get the goal in, you pass the ball to the next person in line and join the end of the line again. The second person in line begins to shoot as soon as the first player has had their first shot. If the player behind sinks the goal before the player in front of them each time, then the front person is out. The winner is the last person 'alive'.

Defending a Shot at Goal

Coaching Points:

- Make sure you get 3 foot distance before putting arms up.
- Defend the ball, and immediately the goal shooter releases their shot, turn and block them so that you have front position for the rebound.
- The other defence should be alert for the pass off by the shooters, as well as get front position for the rebound also.