

SPORTS SHORTS

Tips For Improving Your Basketball Skills

(NAPSA)—The key to success in any sport is practicing the fundamentals. Star athletes like Tiger Woods, Barry Bonds and Jason Kidd may make it look easy, but their success comes from hours of practice, dedication and hard work.

When it comes to basketball, there are no exceptions. If you're looking to take your game to the next level, six-time NBA All-Star and Huffy Sports spokesman, Jason Kidd, offers some valuable tips for improving your game:

- **Ball Handling**—Getting a feel for the ball is extremely important. Start with a drill called "Around the World," where you move the ball around your body in a circular motion. Start with the ball in front of you, then slowly transfer the ball from your right hand to left with the ball making a complete revolution around your waist. Next, do the same drill, but instead of moving the ball around your waist, move the ball around each leg. Make sure to reverse directions.

Once you're warmed up, start dribbling the ball with your right hand then switch over to your left. Bounce the ball 20 times using each hand. Once completed, repeat the drill. This time, dribble the ball in front of your body then back behind while standing in place; change the pace of your dribble often.

- **Passing**—Players love teammates who pass the ball, so be sure to practice these two basic passes. For the chest pass, hold the ball with both hands, thumbs down, at chest height. Step forward with your lead foot and throw the ball toward your teammate's chest. For the bounce pass, hold the ball with both hands at chest level, step forward, then bounce the ball two-thirds of the way to your teammate with the ball landing into his/her hands. Practice both of these passes 20 times each.

- **Shooting**—It's important to learn the basics of a jump shot. Grab a ball with both hands. Bend slightly at the knees with your legs



NBA All-Star, Jason Kidd, offers advice for improving your game.

shoulder width apart. If you're right handed, bring your right foot slightly forward and bend your right elbow at a 90-degree angle so it looks like an "L." Do the reverse if you're left handed. When ready to shoot, focus on the back of the rim or target area, bring your arm back, then shoot the ball making sure you follow through toward the target. Shoot a minimum of 10 shots in a row from various points on the court.

- **Rebounding**—It doesn't matter if you're big or small, everybody on the team needs to rebound. To do it right, follow these steps. First, turn your back toward your opponent and position your body between him and the basket. Second, jump toward the ball and reach for the rebound. Third, pivot away from the hoop and pass the ball to a teammate.

Now you're ready to hit the court to practice the fundamentals. But before you do, don't forget Jason's most important rule when it comes to practice, "Be sure to have fun and play with high-performance equipment that is safe and dependable."

For more information about where to find quality basketball equipment endorsed by Jason Kidd, call Huffy Sports at 1-800-558-5234 or visit huffysports.com.