

## SHOOTING FREE THROWS (FOUL SHOOTING)

A foul shot will occur if the referee calls a foul. That is why it is called a foul shot. This is one of the easiest shot to make in basketball because you are not guarded by anyone. It can also be very hard to make because you need lots of focus. Foul shooting continues to determine many basketball games, yet teaching how to shoot foul shots has remained virtually the same for decades.



**Perfect Practice Makes Perfect** - Great free-throw shooters usually have perfect form and have developed excellent releases. They got this way by practicing over and over. It isn't enough to be strong, have talent or about looking good in a uniform. It's all about technique, form and consistency. Focus on shooting correctly and repeat that over and over

**Develop a Routine** - My routine is simple. I position myself, get the ball, dribble three times, place the ball in palm of shooting hand, roll wrist to shooting position and immediately go into my shot. I don't stand there very long and think about what is taking place. I get the ball and shoot it. That is my routine and I like it, it works for me. Develop your own routine and repeat it over and over. Don't focus so much on the routine that you don't shoot the ball well but do make sure you consistently perform your routine.

**Repetition** - It is important to repeat the same thing over and over again. You want everything to become second nature for you. For me it is such a habit that it is just natural. The people who won the foul shooting challenge all shared this in common.

**Remember the Mechanics of Shooting** - Make sure that your elbow is in. If I'm lined up center to the basket and my elbow is straight when I release the ball then the ball will travel in a straight line. Second, make sure that your lead foot is properly pointed at the basket. By lining up your front foot with your elbow you've all but guaranteed a straight shot. And last is follow through, point the ball with pointing finger through to the basket and hold.

**Focus** - Find a spot on the basket and focus on it. I use the front of the rim as my guide and I keep my eye on it. Concentrate and don't watch the ball as you release it. Average foul shooters watch the ball in flight and it causes their head to move prematurely. Just focus on where the shot is supposed to go and maintain focus. Keep your body still and let the repetition and muscle memory take over. When I do my shooting drills I will not settle for anything less than 80% from the foul line.

### COACHING TIPS FOR FOUL SHOOTING:

- Players should get comfortable before they begin their shooting motion.
- Players should develop a foul shooting routine. They should keep it simple and repeat it every time they shoot foul shots.
- Players should begin low with the knees bent.
- Players should point their shooting-side foot at the basket. This helps them align with the basket.
- Players should have their head and shoulders square to the basket.
- Players should extend their body up as they shoot.
- Players should rise up on their toes.
- Players should extend their elbow and snap their wrist forward. This will give them proper shooting form follow through.
- Players should practice foul shots on a regular basis, especially when they are tired.

*The great players develop and then practice a sound basketball free throw method and stick with it through thick and thin. Since they develop sound technique, though, there are not many thin spots as they make a very high percentage of their free throws.*

*Practice under pressure. Use imagination, and compete against yourself. For example, imagine that time is out and that making the free throw will win the game. Record the number of free throws made out of every 100 attempts. Constantly challenge your own record. Do the same with consecutive free throws.*



*Be confident. Use positive affirmation statements before you go to the line, and visualize a successful shot just before shooting. Having a routine helps build confidence for free throws. Use deep breathing and muscle relaxation techniques.*

***Foul shots are FREE, so make them!***