

## Dealing with Missed Shots...

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When I thought of writing about this topic – I just couldn't wait to get stuck into it right away. You see – I have been a player and am now a coach – it is amazing how the different attitudes change and how the reaction of the coach can affect the players overall outcomes!

There are some very basic principals we need to get into the players heads.



Courtesy:  
Billy Bounce

**Rule number 1** – As long as the shot is straight – it is a good shot. The ball going through is actually not the mission – it needs to be straight first, before it can go in next time.

**Rule Number 2** – You will never, ever, ever, make every single shot you take. Have a look through the record books of all the great shooters – not even close to 100%.

**Rule Number 3** – All shots stem from the free throw line – (this is where you should expect to make every shot! But if you don't – “was it straight? If it was – then push it harder or softer – that's the only thing you need to think about!) I will come to free throws later.

**Rule Number 4** – Were you looking at a target on the FRONT of the ring? (I will deal with this later on as well!)

**Rule Number 5** – as long as the player has shot the ball with the intention of it going in (that IS why we shoot isn't it?) then that's OK – you'll get it the next time.

If a player has hit a shooting slump – then take them back to the free throw line and get them to rehearse their routine.

This must be done EXACTLY the same way every single time – no if's, no but's!

Here are the simple steps

Imagine getting the ball from the referee.

Step to the line – placing your feet in the same position every time

Focus on a target on the front of the rim

Bounce the ball or do whatever you need to do to get ready to shoot – but your eyes do NOT break contact with the rim

Remember “Reach” at the end of the shot (this is part of the 3 step shooting process called Step, T, Reach – more on this later.)

Get your player to complete this routine on the free throw line, then move them to the 45 and do the same – from the same distance, then go to 90 and do the same from the baseline, change sides – get them to think about the routine but more importantly this... By using this method – they will NEVER miss the same shot twice – because of this simple rule – as long as the ball is straight – if it does happen to miss – then all they need to do is either push it harder or softer and it will go in.

Now – I know what you are thinking – what if the ball isn't going straight – check their eyes – 90% of shooting problems all stem from the eyes. That brings me to the breakdown of the shot as I teach it and have had amazing success with kids everywhere – and adults for that matter!

## The Shot!

My guide to teaching it – understanding it and what I have found to be extremely successful in the way I teach thousands of kids every year to get this most technical but at the same time - basic facet of the game. (We all teach dribbling the same way - but when it comes to shooting - there are 5 million idea's to get the same result!)

Let me preface these writings by saying this – do I proclaim to be the best shot teacher around? Not even in the slightest sense of the word – there are many brilliant coaches out there who leave me in their dust – however, I can say this – my method has been tested on everyone from 4 year old children to professional players and not one of them has told me it doesn't work – and in most cases – it has improved their shot. So... hear me out and test it for yourself.

I ALWAYS start a shooting lesson with the players in front of a wall or something they can look at. And this is exactly what I tell them – word for word.

I want you to pick out a brick or a target on the wall and lets pretend that I have marked that brick with a piece of chalk. Now, I am going to give you a tennis ball – you are going to stand where you are and take aim at the target. If you hit it – I will give you \$100.00.

(There is no ball and no \$100 by the way – we are using imagination). My question to them – and to you is this.

It is multiple choice

In your opinion would the person taking aim

- a) ensure their feet are in the correct position, make sure their elbow is in, bend their knees and then throw the ball at the target – hoping to hit it? Or
- b) take aim at the target by focusing on it – and throw the ball at the target.

It is ALWAYS answer b – yet – we always teach answer a – why?

Do you remember the first thing you were taught to aim at when you were a child starting out to play? Wasn't it the corner of the square? Why was that? Because it gave you something to focus on and try to hit.

Why then – as soon as you step away from that short 45 degree angle – is there confusion about what to teach?

The golden point is this...

“The Eyes Tell Your Hands What To Do”

That's it – simple! The absolute number one rule is to focus on a target!

A simple test you can do while reading this. Here is another thing I get the player to do – adults have tried this as well and come up with the same answer.

You can do this while you are reading this – take a look around the room and pick out something that you can look at quickly but it must be something that has a back you can see as well as a front – for instance a chair or a table. Look at the legs.

Ok – now try this – put your head down – and raise your head up quickly – pick out a target on the chair or table – tell me – what do you see first – the front or the rear of the item?

The front – right?

Now think about a basketball rim – net all around, 9 other players and a split second to focus and shoot – the eyes automatically find the front.

Here is a cheat tip – look at a rim – see where the net joins? There are your targets!

Now – the most common feedback I get from experienced coaches is this statement...

“If they aim at the front – won’t they hit the front?”

My question is why?

If they aim at the back – won’t they hit the back? That is of course – if they can see the back of the rim in a game situation – most times they can’t!

(Some of the great shooters will tell you they aim at the back of the rim – that is completely ok – I am just trying to teach you the easy way!)

If they do hit the front of the rim – CONGRATULATE them! The shot was straight! Next time they push it harder and hey presto!

(Remember the 4 stages of learning!)

Now – here are the 3 simple words you need to teach at the same time.

Catch – the ball

“T” – form a T with the ball in their hands so they are ready to shoot

Reach – reach high and flick your wrist – every kid gets this – it is simple and straight forward.

Let’s go back to the free throw.

When you are teaching the player – stand under the rim and just watch their eyes – this will tell you if they are concentrating or not.

If the shot goes astray – ask them what they are thinking about – you will see, in a very short period of time – the concentration level go up because they are aware of the routine.

If the player ever breaks the eye contact with the rim during the free throw routine – tell them to stop and start again – it has broken their concentration.

In between every shot they must step back and start the process again.

Once they get a hang of this – talk to them and put them in game situations – they need to make this one because they are 1 point down and need to make both – or they are level and need to make the bonus shot – whatever – just put mental pressure on them – and when you can – make it FUN! Talk to them while they shoot – make a joke, do something silly – it really improves their concentration and makes the session more fun.

If you are coaching a player in a game situation and their shots are going astray – just get them to think about the 3 words and make sure the shot is straight – nothing else matters!

The next training step is to do normal shooting drills and just make sure they are focusing on the target, completing the 3 word – 3 step process and most importantly – watching the ball going straight towards the target.

In closing – remember some points you need to be aware of if teaching, coaching.

Don’t worry about the shot that missed, concentrate on the next one.

Don’t jump on a player for missing – did you ever see a player who wanted to miss? They didn’t want that outcome either – encourage – all the time!

**ENJOY – it is a GAME!!!!**

Just one thought in closing – a former coach of mine when I was younger said this to our team after we lost a 1 point game and we were all upset –

“Don’t worry about it boys – there are 1.2 billion Chinese who don’t even know you played today!”

That just about says it all – don’t you agree?

Feel free to distribute this article to wherever you please – all I ask is that you include all credits and information as it is stated here.

Bruce Hultgren is creator and author of the BillyBounce™ “Bounce ‘n’ Jam™” series of programs for children. Teaching them “ball skills to music”. Bruce has over 15 years development and research knowledge in the field of junior development and teaching. See [www.billybounce.com](http://www.billybounce.com) or visit the Hoopstore on [www.5starhoops.com](http://www.5starhoops.com).

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