

NBA Moves That'll Get You Room to Shoot the Jump Shot

by: Patrick Chylinski

The Fall Away

Shooting a fall away, especially down low (or when you have a defender on your back) can be a good way to get your shot off. Now, the fall away is a tough shot because you have to adjust your shooting motion to account for the fact that you're moving away from the basket during the shot. But with enough practice, you'll get the hang of it. Basically, the fall away shot allows you to shoot the ball over a defender that is guarding you closely, or over a taller defender, because you create enough space to shoot by drifting away from the basket.

The best way to learn the fall away? Watch a few NBA or college games and see how the really good players make the move. Then go out and practice the shot on your own over and over again until you can knock down a fall away with consistency (and don't forget to practice the shot from both sides: turning both to your right and to your left on the shot). Practice the shot from down low in the post (roughly 6 or 8 feet out), and even practice going out further from the basket (roughly 10 to 12 feet out). Shooting a fall away from much further than that is tough and not a shot you'll probably take in a game.

And finally, after you've practiced the shot a lot on your own, use the fall away in pick-up games and practices. No matter how much you practice shooting the shot on your own, there's no substitute to using the shot in actual competition. To really perfect the shot, you need to practice and use the shot in game situations.

The Lean In

The lean in move is another way to create space to shoot the ball. It's a great move on its own, but even more effective when paired with the fall away.

The lean in move simply means that you lean your body into the defender slightly, forcing them to back away, and/or get off balance. Once you've gotten the defender to back up a few inches (or a foot or two), you've created enough space to shoot the ball. This is the lean in move on its own.

But the lean in move is even better when you combine it with the fall away. The combination move is this: you lean in to the defender to get them off balance, or backed up a bit, then you fall away slightly to create even more separation, then you knock down the jumper. Once you've made the lean in and go up for the fall away shot, your only job then is to focus and hit the shot, since the defender shouldn't be an issue anymore. Even if your opponent recovers and tries to get a hand up on the shot, you've already created enough distance between you so it won't be a problem.

If the defender is really guarding you closely, leaning in slightly will work great (your body contact will force them to back up slightly, and get them off balance). If the defense is a step or two away from you, the lean in move can still work. But if the defender is a few feet away from you, the move isn't so much a lean in as it is a jab step or lean forward move to get your opponent to think you're planning to drive by them. If your opponent thinks you're about

to make a drive to the basket, they have to react. This usually takes the form of them moving back a step or two, or putting their weight back on their heels. Either way, you've got them at a disadvantage, and given yourself plenty of space and time to go up for the shot.

The key to the lean in move is to make it subtle and quick. You want to lean your body into the defender ever so slightly, and as if you're about to drive by them. If the move is too aggressive or the lean in motion is too severe, the ref will call you for an offensive foul. But if you lean in slightly as if you're going to make a drive to the basket, the ref usually gives you the benefit of the doubt. If you make a little contact with the defender, they usually won't make a call against you.

Combine the lean in (to back the defender away), and the fall away (to create even more space), and you should be able to get your shot off against tough defenders, even ones that have a height or jumping advantage over you. Watch Kobe, Allen Iverson, or Ray Allen. These guys really know how to create space to shoot the ball. And all three of them use the lean in, the fall away, and the two moves combined.

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