



The Fundamentals

There is no perfect way to shoot and I think anyone can be a good shooter with any form as long as they practice. In order to be a great shooter, however, I think you need the following core fundamentals. Most players will do some of these naturally while they may need to focus more intently on others.

Feet - Your feet must be balanced with your weight evenly distributed between both feet. I personally prefer (and teach) a slight angle with the feet. Instead of the toes pointing directly at the rim, they should be angled slightly so that your shooting shoulder is aligned towards the rim. For righties, your feet should be slightly angled left and for lefties, the opposite. The shoulder actually creates about a 30-35 degree angle with the chest so the body should reflect that in its alignment with the hoop, starting with your feet.

Shoulders - Your chest and shoulders must always be aligned properly to give yourself the best chance of making the shot. High level players can and frequently will shoot shots on the move where they may be slightly off balance or their feet aren't square, but no matter their balance or their feet, their shoulders are always aligned to the hoop. For those who are in the process of becoming great shooters you must start with proper alignment of the feet and shoulders in the pre-shot routine before moving to any shooting off-balance.

Hand Placement - Here I think it's personal preference. Some elite shooters center their middle finger of their shooting hand on the ball while some center their pointer finger. I don't think it matters much. What does matter is the off hand. If you freeze frame just about any elite shooter to ever live before they begin to release the ball, the ball is comfortable sitting in their shooting hand. Don't believe me? Check it out. The ball sits in their shooting hand while their off-hand hovers nearby. The ball then releases with a downward flick of the wrist creating the essential backspin of the shot. Any off-hand activity in the release can create a lack of spin and control in the shot and elite shooters can not afford these potential errors.

The Ball Path - This is one I don't hear talked about nearly enough. In order to create the most efficient shot in terms of repeatability, control, and power the ball should travel from the shooter's pocket directly upwards in a straight line towards the rim. The more variance or circularity to this path, the more power, balance, and control is lost throughout the shot. As you move further away from the hoop, this hurdle becomes much more difficult to overcome.



The Window - This is the area through which you maintain vision of the hoop. For younger players who may struggle to shoot from above their head this will be more difficult, but it can promote a good ball position on the shooting side of the body instead of in the middle. **The Window** allows players to keep their eyes on the target and also allows for last minute reads such as an open cutter or a long-armed defender who may be in range to get a fingertip on the shot. A blocked shooter will rely only on muscle memory to make shots whereas a shooter who maintains their **Window** will make use of both muscle memory and visual input making them more consistent.

The Release - This is what creates rotation and arc in the shot. Rotation and Ark are the two elements that create what most people call the “Shooter's Bounce”. These two aspects of the shot allow the ball to land softly on the rim and also promote the downward trajectory that ultimately sends the ball through the net. A release with high arc and optimal rotation will include a wrist snap on the shooting, promoting the backspin on the ball, as well as a high-hand finish to create the optimal arc. If your hand is finishing at eye level or below after you release the ball your shot is likely coming off too flat which will create a harder bounce off the rim and lessen the surface area through which the ball can enter the net. If your guide hand has any activity in pushing the ball towards the rim this will also impact your rotation.

The Rotation - Rotation leads to control. Rotation also softens the ball as it hits the rim allowing for the “Shooter's Bounce”. Rotation should be perfect backspin. Spin in any other direction will create a reaction with the rim that sends the ball AWAY from the net, something we (obviously) never want to do in the shot.

The Arc - The proper arc should optimize the surface area through which the ball can enter the net. From a scientific perspective, the optimal arc creates an angle of descent of approximately 50 degrees as the ball reaches the basket.

Check these aspects of your jump shot and see what feels right for you. The most important thing is engraining the habits in close and only AFTER they feel second nature moving back. Once we move back we focus on the fundamentals. Then, once we nail them we go full speed and shoot without thinking.

Remember, at this final stage the proper mechanics should already be second nature from all of our shots in close. Then we trust our shot and focus on the proper training.

Happy shooting!!