

## YMCA Basketball Games and Skill Drills for 3-5-Year-Olds

Topic	Type	Min.	Activity <sup>1</sup>	Activity Description	Questions (Games) or Tips (Skill Drills)	Variations	Page <sup>2</sup>
Dribbling	Game	10	Players will learn that they must be able to dribble to attack the basket (target) to score in basketball. The objective is for players to be able to play a 1 v 1 game of basketball in a predetermined area while following simple start and restart rules.	1 v 1, modified half-court—Explain how to start and restart the game. Each player attempts to dribble and shoot at a target. His or her opponent plays cooperative defense. No traveling or double dribble violations are called.	Coach: What are you trying to do? Players: Score a basket (or put the ball into the target).  Coach: What do you have to do to get the ball close to the basket (target)? Players: Dribble and run.	To simplify: Use a large-size basket or target and/or place the basket or target low.  To challenge: Increase the height of the basket or target.	40
Dribbling	Skill Drill	10	1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to dribble without losing control. 2. Have your players practice dribbling without losing control.	Individual—Players should stand apart from each other (allow 15 seconds for them to move to their own space); on a signal, they begin dribbling around the court without losing control. Players stop and catch the ball quickly on a signal. Repeat three times using short intervals (20, 30, and 45 seconds).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Use your finger pads.”</li> <li>• “Keep your eyes over the ball.”</li> <li>• “Keep the ball low.”</li> <li>• “Keep the ball at your side.”</li> </ul>	To simplify: Keep the interval short (10, 12, or 15 seconds).  To challenge: Lengthen the interval.	40
Dribbling	Skill Drill	10	Individual—Each player practices dribbling. Players can choose the size and weight of the ball they use.	<p>Easier Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dribbling with one hand.</li> <li>• Dribbling continuously with left and right hands.</li> <li>• Striking a ball down and catching it.</li> </ul> <p>More Difficult Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dribbling and moving with the ball.</li> <li>• Dribbling in different places around the body while stationary.</li> <li>• Dribbling continuously while switching hands.</li> <li>• Dribbling at different heights.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Use your finger pads.”</li> <li>• “Keep your eyes over the ball.”</li> <li>• “Keep the ball low.”</li> <li>• “Keep the ball at your side.”</li> </ul>	To simplify: Let players use a ball of a size and weight that allows them to succeed.  To challenge: Let players use a ball of a size and weight that will challenge them.	41

<sup>1</sup> This document offers activities, telling you what to teach. For guidance on how to teach fundamentals, see the Teaching Skills and Tactics Topics in the in the YMCA’s *Coaching Basketball* online course.

<sup>2</sup> This page number refers to pages in the “Plans for 3- to 5-Year-Olds” document found on the “Season and Practice Plans” page in the YMCA’s *Coaching Basketball* online course.

Topic	Type	Min.	Activity <sup>1</sup>	Activity Description	Questions (Games) or Tips (Skill Drills)	Variations	Page <sup>2</sup>
Dribbling	Game	10	The objective is for players to be able to handle the ball and dribble under control. Players will attack the basket (target) to score in basketball.	1 v 1, modified half-court game—Each player attempts to dribble and shoot at a basket (or target). His or her opponent plays cooperative defense. Players earn a point if they attempt a shot close to the basket (or target). Designate the area (such as the lane) from which players must shoot to earn a point. Do not call any traveling or double dribble violations.	Coach: What is the goal of the game? Players: The goal is to score a basket (put the ball into the target).  Coach: How do you move toward the basket (or target) with the ball? Players: We move by dribbling and running, by dribbling under control.	To use as a Game 2: Players earn one point for a shot attempt and one point for dribbling under control. Players determine whether they achieved one or two points; if the ball did not slip out of their hands as they played, it was dribbled under control.	43
Dribbling	Skill Drill	20	Individual—Each player practices dribbling. Players can choose the size and weight of the ball they use.	Have them try the following activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dribbling and moving with the ball.</li> <li>• Dribbling in different places around the body while stationary.</li> <li>• Dribbling continuously while switching hands.</li> <li>• Dribbling at different heights.</li> </ul>			44
Passing	Game	10	To keep possession of the ball, focusing on passing and receiving. The objective is for players to be able to pass and receive the basketball. Pairs of players will play as a team.	2 v 1, modified half-court game—Two players become partners and play against one defensive player, then one partner must switch roles with the defensive player. Switch at least twice so all players get to play defense. Limit them to dribbling three times before passing. Do not call any traveling or double dribble violations.	Coach: What would you do with the ball if you had a teammate? Players: Pass to him or her.  Coach: What do you have to do to be successful at passing? Players: Catch the ball and pass the ball right to my partner or teammate.	To simplify or to increase the challenge, modify the ball (size and weight) and basket (height and size) to meet players' needs.	47

Topic	Type	Min.	Activity <sup>1</sup>	Activity Description	Questions (Games) or Tips (Skill Drills)	Variations	Page <sup>2</sup>
Passing	Skill Drill	20	1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to pass and receive. 2. Have your players practice passing and receiving.	Individual or pairs—Demonstrate throwing and catching, and then have players practice some of the following throwing and catching activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tossing to self and catching.</li> <li>• Catching from a skilled thrower.</li> <li>• Bouncing a ball to self and catching it.</li> <li>• Passing or throwing to a target.</li> <li>• Catching the ball in different places around the body.</li> <li>• Passing the ball against the wall and catching it.</li> </ul>	For receiving: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Target the hands.”</li> <li>• “Keep your eyes on the ball.”</li> <li>• “Reach for it.”</li> <li>• “Pull it in.”</li> </ul> For passing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Put your hands on the sides of the ball, with your thumbs pointing to each other.”</li> <li>• “Step forward with your preferred foot.”</li> <li>• “Push the ball forward at chest level, elbows out, and snap it.”</li> </ul> After the pass: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Move your thumbs down, backs of your hands facing each other, and move your weight forward.”</li> </ul>	To simplify or to increase the challenge, modify the ball (size and weight) and basket (height and size) to meet players’ needs.	47
Passing	Game	10	To keep possession of the ball, focusing on dribbling and passing the ball to a partner. The objective is for the players to be able to execute both the chest and bounce pass. Pairs of players will play as a team.	2 v 1, modified half-court game—Two players become partners and play against one defensive player, then one player must switch roles with the defensive player. Switch at least twice so all players get to play defense. Limit players to dribbling three times before passing. Do not call any traveling or double dribble violations.	Coach: What is the goal of the game? Players: The goal is to keep the ball to score or to dribble and pass to score.  Coach: What types of passes are there? (This question is to see how much players know about passing.) Players: Two types of passes are the bounce pass and the chest pass.	To challenge: Have players pass only and not dribble.  To use as a Game 2: Choose either 2 v 1 or 2 v 2. Rotate players accordingly so they all have a chance to play offense and defense.	51

Topic	Type	Min.	Activity <sup>1</sup>	Activity Description	Questions (Games) or Tips (Skill Drills)	Variations	Page <sup>2</sup>
Passing	Skill Drill	10	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to chest pass and bounce pass.</li> <li>2. Have your players practice chest passes and bounce passes.</li> </ol>	<p>Pairs—Players practice passing to each other. After they have passed the ball four times, they change partners.</p>	<p>For chest pass</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Keep your chest high.”</li> <li>• “Keep your thumbs down and together.”</li> <li>• “Step forward.”</li> </ul> <p>For bounce pass</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Snap your thumbs down and together.”</li> <li>• “Bounce the ball so your partner catches it waist high.”</li> <li>• “Step forward.”</li> <li>• “If you have the ball, you must dribble to move.”</li> <li>• “Pass on the move.”</li> <li>• “Control the ball.”</li> <li>• “Lead your partner.”</li> </ul>	To simplify skill practice, limit the number of practice activities or limit the practice to the chest pass only.	51
Passing	Skill Drill	10	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to dribble and pass to a partner.</li> <li>2. Have your players practice dribbling and passing to a partner.</li> </ol>	<p>Pairs—Partner 1 dribbles the ball 8 to 10 times and then passes it to partner 2. Partner 2 starts dribbling forward and then passes back to partner 1. The partners continue to dribble and pass to each other from one end of the gym to the other. The goal is to make four successful passes in a row (adjust number as necessary).</p>	<p>For chest pass</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Keep your chest high.”</li> <li>• “Keep your thumbs down and together.”</li> <li>• “Step forward.”</li> </ul> <p>For bounce pass</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Snap your thumbs down and together.”</li> <li>• “Bounce the ball so your partner catches it waist high.”</li> <li>• “Step forward.”</li> <li>• “If you have the ball, you must dribble to move.”</li> <li>• “Pass on the move.”</li> <li>• “Control the ball.”</li> <li>• “Lead your partner.”</li> </ul>	To simplify: Limit the number of practice activities or limit the practice to the chest pass only.	52

Topic	Type	Min.	Activity <sup>1</sup>	Activity Description	Questions (Games) or Tips (Skill Drills)	Variations	Page <sup>2</sup>
Shooting	Game	10	To attack the basket, focusing on shooting close to the basket. The objective is for players to shoot using basic technique. Players score by shooting in a 2 v 2 game.	<p>2 v 2, modified half-court game—Players earn one point if they hit the backboard or the rim of a modified basket and two points if it goes into the basket. Designate the area (such as the lane) from which players must shoot to earn points.</p> <p>Call modified double dribble violations. For example, a player can stop and start toward the basket three times before it is a violation. If a violation occurs, the player’s opponent takes a turn.</p>	<p>Coach: What is the goal of this game?                      Players: The goal is to shoot at the basket and score points.</p> <p>Coach: How do you do that?                      Players: You shoot close to the basket.</p>	To use as a Game 2: Choose either 2 v 1 or 2 v 2, depending on the skill proficiency of your players. Rotate players accordingly so they all have a chance to play offense and defense.	55
Shooting	Skill Drill	20	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to shoot baskets with a set shot.</li> <li>2. Have your players practice shooting baskets with a set shot.</li> </ol>	<p>Individuals or pairs—Players can practice shooting individually or in pairs in a game of Around the Key. For this game, mark shooting spots with tape in an arc around the basket (inside the key). All shots should be close to the basket. Each player moves from spot to spot in order, shooting at each spot. If pairs are playing, player 2 gets the rebound and passes the ball back to player 1.</p> <p>The keys to success will be the size and weight of the ball the player uses as well as the height and size of the basket or target. Players should “high five” their partners when those partners score a basket.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Keep hands apart on the ball.”</li> <li>• “Only fingers touch the ball.”</li> <li>• “Keep palms up.”</li> <li>• “Point elbows toward the basket.”</li> <li>• “Flip the wrist and wave good-bye.” (The hand follows through after the shot.)</li> </ul>		55

Topic	Type	Min.	Activity <sup>1</sup>	Activity Description	Questions (Games) or Tips (Skill Drills)	Variations	Page <sup>2</sup>
Position and Movement	Game	10	To keep possession of the ball and attack the basket, focusing on driving and dribbling to shoot. The objective is for players to be able to start and stop, change directions quickly while dribbling, and jump stop. Players dribble and drive to shoot.	2 v 2, modified half-court game—If a team makes a basket, that team gets the ball again (gets a second turn). Designate the area (such as the lane) from which players must shoot to earn a point. Call modified double dribble and traveling violations. For example, a player can stop and start toward the basket three times before you call a double dribble violation, and a player can take four steps while not dribbling before you call a traveling violation. If a violation occurs, the team’s opponent takes a turn.	Coach: How do you use the dribble in basketball? Players: To get close to the basket to shoot, to beat your opponent.  Coach: How do you do that? Players: You change direction.	To simplify or to increase the challenge, modify the ball (size and weight) and basket (height and size) to meet players’ needs.  To use as a Game 2: Choose either 2 v 1 or 2 v 2. Rotate players accordingly so they all have a chance to play offense and defense.	59
Position and Movement	Skill Drill	20	1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to start, stop, and change direction quickly while dribbling. 2. Have your players practice starting and stopping and changing direction quickly while dribbling.	Individual—Players practice starting and stopping and changing directions quickly while dribbling, using the following activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dribble moving slowly at first, and then gradually increase speed.</li> <li>• On a signal, quickly stop both moving and dribbling—jump stop.</li> <li>• Dribble in general space. On the signal, stop quickly in a front-back stance, maintain the dribble, and then continue moving forward on the signal. To increase the challenge, pivot in another direction, and then continue moving.</li> <li>• Move from one basket to the next by dribbling, and then jump stop and shoot. All shooting should be close to the basket (within two feet).</li> </ul>	For jump stops <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Stay in a balanced position.”</li> <li>• “Keep a front-back stance.”</li> <li>• “Bend the knees.”</li> <li>• “Lower the body.”</li> </ul>	To simplify or to increase the challenge, modify the ball (size and weight) and basket (height and size) to meet players’ needs. To simplify: Limit the number of skill practice activities.	59

Topic	Type	Min.	Activity <sup>1</sup>	Activity Description	Questions (Games) or Tips (Skill Drills)	Variations	Page <sup>2</sup>
Dribbling	Game	10	To keep possession of the ball, focusing on increasing the proficiency of ballhandling and dribbling. The objective is for players to be able to handle a ball and dribble under control. Players keep possession of the ball using a dribble.	<p>2 v 2, modified half-court game—Each player attempts to dribble and shoot at a basket (or target) while being guarded by an opponent. The offensive team must pass twice or more before shooting. Teams earn a point if they dribble and attempt a shot close to the basket (for example, in the lane). Designate the area (such as the lane) from which players must shoot to earn a point.</p> <p>Call modified double dribble and traveling violations. For example, a player can stop and start toward the basket three times before you call a double dribble violation, and a player can take four steps while not dribbling before you call a traveling violation. If a violation occurs, the team’s opponent takes a turn.</p>	<p>Coach: What are the different ways that you have moved toward the basket (target) while dribbling?                      Players: Dribbling fast or slow, changing direction, and stopping and starting.                      Coach: How do you do that?                      Players: Keep the ball low; change hands; keep the ball at my side; use my finger pads; keep my eyes over the ball.</p>	To use as a Game 2: Choose either 2 v 1 or 2 v 2. Rotate players accordingly so they all have a chance to play offense and defense. Also, players earn one point for a shot attempt and one point for dribbling under control.	62
Dribbling	Skill Drill	20	Individual—Each player practices dribbling. Players can choose the size and weight of the ball they use.	<p>Have them try the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dribbling and changing the speed of movement (moving both fast and slow in general space).</li> <li>• Dribbling while changing directions forward and back or right to left.</li> <li>• Dribbling in different pathways:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Move in straight, curved, and zigzag pathways in general space.</li> <li>• Follow the straight lines on the gym floor.</li> <li>• Move in a straight pathway. Each time a player meets another person or hears your signal, he or she turns quickly to the right or left and continues dribbling.</li> <li>• Move throughout general space, quickly moving from side to side in a zigzag.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Use your finger pads.”</li> <li>• “Keep your eyes over the ball.”</li> <li>• “Keep the ball low.”</li> <li>• “Keep the ball at your side.”</li> </ul>		63

Topic	Type	Min.	Activity <sup>1</sup>	Activity Description	Questions (Games) or Tips (Skill Drills)	Variations	Page <sup>2</sup>
Dribbling	Game	10	To keep possession of the ball, focusing on dribbling and protecting the ball. The objective is for players to be able to dribble under pressure. Players keep possession of the ball until they shoot.	<p>3 v 2, modified half-court game—Three players play offense and two players defend, then two offensive players must switch roles with the defensive players. Switch at least twice so all players get to play defense. Players earn a point if they keep possession of the ball (dribble with control) until they shoot or they attempt a shot close to the basket.</p> <p>Designate the area (such as the lane) from which players must shoot to earn a point. Call modified double dribble and traveling violations. For example, a player can stop and start toward the basket three times before you call a double dribble violation, and a player can take four steps while not dribbling before you call a traveling violation. If a violation occurs, the team’s opponent takes a turn.</p>	<p>Coach: What ways can you move to protect the basketball from your opponent when dribbling?                      Players: Keep the ball on my side; keep the ball low; and change directions.</p>		65



Topic	Type	Min.	Activity <sup>1</sup>	Activity Description	Questions (Games) or Tips (Skill Drills)	Variations	Page <sup>2</sup>
Dribbling	Skill Drill	20	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to keep possession of the ball while dribbling.</li> <li>2. Have players practice keeping possession of the ball while dribbling.</li> </ol>	<p>Individual—Each player practices dribbling. Players choose the size and weight of the ball they use. Provide players with situations in which they must dribble with either hand without looking at the ball. Set up obstacles so players can learn to vary the force of the bounce. Here are some examples:</p> <p><b>Dribble in different pathways:</b> Play follow-the-leader with a partner (followers are three feet behind) OR Design strategies to outwit an imaginary opponent from baseline to baseline.</p> <p><b>Dribble around stationary obstacles.</b> Set up cone markers three feet apart. Players try to dribble 60 seconds without bumping into the cones.</p> <p><b>Dribble around stationary players.</b> Divide players into groups of five to six players. One player is the dribbler. The other players in the group become the obstacles and arrange themselves in a zigzag obstacle pattern down the floor. The players try to make the dribbler lose control of the ball. They can stretch and pivot, but cannot move from their spots; the defensive players cannot touch the ball or the dribbler.</p> <p><b>Dribbling against an opponent.</b> Match partners with similar skill levels. Partner 1 begins dribbling and moving toward the baseline while partner 2 plays cooperative defense. Increase the difficulty by moving to active defense. If partner 2 takes the ball away before 30 seconds are up, he or she gives it back; when 30 seconds are up, partners switch roles.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Keep your body between the obstacle and the ball.”</li> <li>• “Keep the ball at your side.”</li> </ul>		66

Topic	Type	Min.	Activity <sup>1</sup>	Activity Description	Questions (Games) or Tips (Skill Drills)	Variations	Page <sup>2</sup>
Defense	Game	10	To defend your own space, focusing on basic defensive technique. The objective is for players to be able to defend an opponent. Players learn basic defensive technique.	<p>3 v 3, short-court game—Defensive players earn a point when they take the ball away. Limit offensive players to dribbling three times or less before passing. Call modified double dribble and traveling violations.</p> <p>For example, a player can stop and start toward the basket three times before you call a double dribble violation, and a player can take four steps without dribbling before you call a traveling violation. If a violation occurs, the player’s opponent takes a turn. Starting with this game, call fouls as violations.</p> <p>The defender can touch the ball, but he or she cannot touch the opponent. If a violation occurs, the opponent gets the ball.</p>	<p>Coach: What do you do when you are playing defense? Players: Try to get the ball and protect the basket.</p> <p>Coach: How do you defend your basket? Players: Play the person with the ball and try to get the ball.</p>	<p>To Simplify: Modify the size and height of the basket or target.</p> <p>To Challenge: Modify the size and height of the basket or target and limit rule modifications.</p> <p>To Use as a Game 2: Choose either 1 v 3, 2 v 3, or 3 v 3. Rotate players accordingly so they all have a chance to play offense and defense.</p>	69
Defense	Skill Drill	15	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to defend against an opponent.</li> <li>2. Have your players practice defending against an opponent.</li> </ol>	<p>Pairs—Match players of similar skill. The defensive player moves in a defensive position in front of the offensive player, who dribbles slowly, then gradually faster in a zigzag pathway. Then have players perform the same exercise and switch roles. Have players change partners every three to five minutes.</p>	<p>For basic defensive position “Keep the knees bent.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Keep your body low.”</li> <li>• “Put one hand up, one hand down.”</li> <li>• “Keep a wide stance.”</li> </ul> <p>For playing defense</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “See the ball, not the opponent.”</li> <li>• “Play the ball.” Players should focus on the ball, not the person dribbling it.</li> </ul>	<p>To simplify: Modify the ball to meet players’ needs.</p> <p>To Challenge: Use a larger ball.</p>	70

Topic	Type	Min.	Activity <sup>1</sup>	Activity Description	Questions (Games) or Tips (Skill Drills)	Variations	Page <sup>2</sup>
Offensive Teamwork	Game	10	To play a 3 v 3 game, focusing on keeping possession of the ball. The objective is for players to be able to pass and receive and to support teammates with the ball. Groups of three players will play as opposing teams.	<p>3 v 3, short-court game. Limit players to dribbling three times or less before passing (you can modify the number of dribbles as necessary). Call modified double dribble and traveling violations.</p> <p>For example, a player can stop and start toward the basket three times before you call a double dribble violation, and a player can take four steps without dribbling the ball before you call a traveling violation. If a violation occurs, the team's opponent takes a turn. Also call modified foul violations. This allows the defender to touch the ball, but not the opponent. If a violation occurs, the opponent gets the ball.</p>	<p>Coach: What do you have to do to work as a team?                      Players: You have to help each other out and support your teammate.</p> <p>Coach: How do you help each other out?                      Players: You get ready to receive a pass and move around.</p>	<p>To challenge: Limit the rules modifications.</p> <p>To use as a Game 2: Choose either 2 v 3 or 3 v 3. Rotate players accordingly so they all have a chance to play offense and defense.</p>	72
Offensive Teamwork	Skill Drill	15	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to dribble and pass in a game situation.</li> <li>2. Have your students practice dribbling and passing in a game situation.</li> </ol>	Groups of four—Three players dribble and pass while the fourth player tries to steal the ball. Rotate the player trying to steal the ball every two minutes. This is a no-contact game. Limit the space used for the game to half of a short court.	"Change directions, speed, and pathways."	To challenge: Have players play 2 v 1.	73