

## YMCA Basketball Games and Skill Drills for 6-7-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 dribble and drive during a 1 v 1 game, keeping possession of the ball, focusing on increasing the proficiency of ball handling and dribbling. The objective is for players to be able to handle the ball and dribble under control.	1 v 1, modified half-court game—Explain how to start and restart the game. Each player takes a turn driving to the basket. His or her opponent plays cooperative defense. Players earn a point for keeping possession and attempting a shot.	<p>Coach: What is the goal of the game?                      Players: To put the ball in the basket, to score a basket.</p> <p>Coach: What are different ways that you can move toward the basket (target) while dribbling?                      Players: You can dribble fast or slow, change direction, or stop and start.</p> <p>Coach: How do you do that? (This question is to see what players know about dribbling.)                      Players: You keep the ball low, change hands, keep the ball at your side, use the finger pads, and keep your eyes over the ball.</p>		81

<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 6- to 7-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	Skill Drill	10	1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to handle the ball and dribble. 2. Have players practice ball handling and dribbling.	Individual—Each player practices dribbling. Players can choose the size and weight of the ball they use. At this point, you should 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: <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 in a series of curved pathways. If the player curves to the left, he or she must dribble with the right hand; if the player curves to the right, he or she must dribble with the left hand. The player must always keep the ball on the outside of the curve.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Move throughout general space, quickly moving from side to side in a zigzag.</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>	When working with the players on dribbling, you can vary the activity depending on the developmental needs of the player.	82

Topic	Type	Min.	Activity <sup>1</sup>	Activity Description	Questions (Games) or Tips (Skill Drills)	Variations	Page <sup>2</sup>
Passing	Game	10	Pairs of players will play as a team keeping possession of the ball and focusing on passing and dribbling with a partner. The objective is for players to be able to pass and receive the basketball.	<p>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.</p> <p>A team earns a point when they have one completed pass before the shot. Limit them to dribbling three times or less before passing. Call modified traveling violations. For example, a player can take three steps without dribbling the ball before you call a traveling violation.</p>	<p>Coach: What is the goal of the game?                      Players: To keep the ball to score; to dribble and pass to score.</p> <p>Coach: What do you have to do to be successful at passing?                      Players: You have to catch the ball and pass it right to your teammate.</p> <p>Coach: What types of passes are there? (This question is to see how much players know about passing.)                      Players: The bounce pass and chest pass.</p> <p>Coach: How do you play as a team?                      Players: You work together and talk to each other.</p>		85

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 dribble and pass to a partner. 2. Have your players practice dribbling and passing to a partner.	Pairs—Partner 1 dribbles 8 to 10 times and then passes 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. They should try bounce and chest passes. The object is to make four successful passes in a row.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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> For receiving <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Target the hands.”</li> <li>• “Keep your eyes on the ball.”</li> <li>• “Reach for the ball.”</li> <li>• “Pull the ball in.”</li> </ul> For passing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Put your hands on the sides of the ball, thumbs pointing to each other.”</li> <li>• “Step forward with your preferred foot.” “Push the ball forward at chest level, elbows out, and snap it.”</li> <li>• (After the pass) “Move thumbs down, backs of your hands facing each other, and move your weight forward.”</li> </ul>	To use as a Game 2: Same as Game 1, except that if a team makes a basket, they get the ball again (two turns only).	86

Topic	Type	Min.	Activity <sup>1</sup>	Activity Description	Questions (Games) or Tips (Skill Drills)	Variations	Page <sup>2</sup>
Shooting	Game	10	Players attack the basket, focusing on shooting close to the basket. The objective is for players to be able to shoot using basic technique.	<p>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.</p> <p>Teams earn one point if the ball touches the backboard or rim on the shot and two points if the ball goes into the basket. Call modified double dribble and traveling violations. For example, a player can stop and start toward the basket twice before you call a double dribble violation, and a player can take three steps without dribbling the ball before you call a traveling violation.</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>	<p>To simplify: Have players shoot close to the basket.</p> <p>To challenge: Increase the distance from the basket.</p>	88
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>Individual or pairs—Players practice shooting either 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 from each spot.</p> <p>If pairs are playing, player 2 gets the rebound and passes the ball back to player 1. The key 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 count the number of baskets made or “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 your wrist and wave good-bye.” (The hand follows through after the shot.)</li> </ul>		89

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	Players will use the dribble to drive and score, keeping possession of the ball and attacking the basket. They focus 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.	<p>2 v 2, modified half-court game—Players earn a point if they use five dribbles or less before shooting. Remind players that even though they are playing as a team, they should also attempt to dribble and drive to the basket.</p> <p>Call modified double dribble and traveling violations. For example, a player can stop and start toward the basket twice before you call a double dribble violation, and a player can take three steps without dribbling the ball before you call a traveling violation.</p>	<p>Coach: How do you use the dribble in basketball?</p> <p>Players: To get close to the basket to shoot, to beat your opponent.</p> <p>Coach: How do you do that?</p> <p>Players: You change direction, speed, or pathways.</p>	To use as a Game 2: Same as Game 1, except 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. Also, if a team makes a basket, it gets the ball again (second turn only).	91
Position and Movement	Skill Drill	20	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to start and stop and change direction quickly while dribbling.</li> <li>2. Have players practice starting and stopping and changing direction quickly while dribbling.</li> </ol>	<p>Individual—Players practice starting and stopping and changing directions quickly while dribbling, using the following activities:</p> <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 a 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. Jump shots should be taken within two feet of the basket.</li> </ul>	<p>For dribbling</p> <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> <p>For a jump stop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Stay in a balanced position.”</li> <li>• “Keep a front-back stance.”</li> <li>• “Bend your knees.”</li> <li>• “Lower your body.”</li> </ul>		92

Topic	Type	Min.	Activity <sup>1</sup>	Activity Description	Questions (Games) or Tips (Skill Drills)	Variations	Page <sup>2</sup>
Dribbling	Game	10	Players keep possession in order to score, focusing on dribbling and protecting the ball. The objective is for players to be able to dribble under pressure.	<p>2 v 2, modified half-court game—A player scores a point for keeping possession and attempting a shot. Opponents play cooperative defense. If a team makes a basket, it gets the ball again (two turns only).</p> <p>Call modified double dribble and traveling violations. For example, a player can stop and start toward the basket twice before you call a double dribble violation, and a player can take three steps without dribbling the ball before you call a traveling violation.</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; change directions.</p>	<p>To use as a Game 2:                      Same as Game 1, except 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.</p>	94

Topic	Type	Min.	Activity <sup>1</sup>	Activity Description	Questions (Games) or Tips (Skill Drills)	Variations	Page <sup>2</sup>
Dribbling	Skill Drill	20	<p>Individuals or pairs—Each player practices dribbling. Players can choose the size and weight of the ball they use.</p> <p>At this point, you should 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.</p>	<p>Dribble in different pathways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play follow-the-leader with a partner (followers are three feet behind), changing to different pathways.</li> <li>• Design strategies to outwit an imaginary opponent from baseline to baseline.</li> </ul> <p>Dribble around stationary obstacles. Set up cone markers three feet apart. Players try to dribble for 60 seconds without bumping into the cones.</p> <p>Dribble around stationary players. Divide players into groups of 3 or 4. One player is the dribbler. The other players in the group become obstacles and arrange themselves in a zigzag obstacle pattern down the floor. The players try to cause the dribbler to lose control of the ball. They can stretch and pivot, but cannot move from their space; the defensive players cannot touch the ball or the dribbler. (You can make this activity more challenging by allowing the defensive players to touch the ball but not the dribbler, when the player is ready.)</p> <p>Dribble against an opponent. Match partners with similar skill levels. Partner 1 dribbles 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; after 30 seconds, 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>	<p>Remember you can either ask players if they want to change the parameters of the game (such as the size of the ball or the court) or change them yourself in order to accommodate their abilities.</p>	95



Topic	Type	Min.	Activity <sup>1</sup>	Activity Description	Questions (Games) or Tips (Skill Drills)	Variations	Page <sup>2</sup>
Offensive Teamwork	Game	10	Players play a 3 v 2 game, focusing on keeping possession of the ball. The objective is for players to be able to pass and receive with a partner in order to score and to support teammates with the ball.	<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. The team must pass three times before shooting. Limit them to dribbling three times or less before passing.</p> <p>Call modified double dribble and traveling violations. For example, a player can stop and start toward the basket twice before you call a double dribble violation, and a player can take three steps without dribbling the ball before you call a traveling violation. Do not have jump balls, but alternate awarding possession from one team to the other.</p>	<p>Coach: What is the goal of the game? Players: The goal is to play as a team, passing and scoring.</p> <p>Coach: How do you help each other out? Players: We help by getting ready to receive a pass and moving around.</p>	Players can begin playing active defense.	97
Offensive Teamwork	Skill Drill	20	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to keep possession of the ball while moving it.</li> <li>2. Have your players practice keeping possession of the ball while moving it.</li> </ol>	<p>2 v 2—Two players dribble and pass while the other two players try to gain possession of the ball, either by intercepting a pass or stealing the ball on the dribble.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Keep your body between the ball and your opponent when dribbling.”</li> <li>• “Change directions, speed, and pathways.”</li> </ul>			98

Topic	Type	Min.	Activity <sup>1</sup>	Activity Description	Questions (Games) or Tips (Skill Drills)	Variations	Page <sup>2</sup>
Defense	Game	10	Players learn to use the basic defensive techniques to defend their own space, focusing on basic defensive technique. The objective is for players to be able to defend an opponent.	<p>3 v 3, short-court game using modified half-court rules—The offensive team must pass three times before shooting. Limit them to dribbling three times or less before passing. Defensive players earn a point when they take the ball away without committing a foul.</p> <p>Call modified traveling violations. For example, a player can take three steps without dribbling the ball before you call a traveling violation. Do not have jump balls, but alternate awarding possession from one team to the other. Treat fouls like violations. Players should raise their hands when they foul.</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>	To use as a Game 2: Same as Game 1, except choose either 1 v 3, 2 v 3, or 3 v 3, depending on the skill proficiency of your players. Rotate players accordingly so they all have a chance to play offense and defense.	100
Defense	Skill Drill	20	<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>All players—Divide players into two groups. The groups stand on opposite sidelines of the gym and face each other. Each member of group A has a ball to dribble.</p> <p>On a signal, group A begins dribbling toward the opposite sideline. Group B, without balls, begins moving forward, trying to take away the balls. If a group B player gains possession of a ball, that player dribbles toward the opposite sideline.</p> <p>When players from group A or group B make it over the opposing team’s sideline, they stay there until all balls are behind the sidelines. Group B now gets the balls, and the game begins again.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Keep your knees bent.”</li> <li>• “Keep your body low.”</li> <li>• “Put one hand up, one hand down.”</li> <li>• “Keep a wide stance.”</li> </ul>		101

Topic	Type	Min.	Activity <sup>1</sup>	Activity Description	Questions (Games) or Tips (Skill Drills)	Variations	Page <sup>2</sup>
Defense	Game	10	Players their own space while focusing on pressuring the ball handler. The objective is for players to be able to successfully steal the ball from an opponent.	<p>3 v 3, regular half-court game—Defensive players earn a point when they take the ball away without committing a foul. The offensive team must pass three times before shooting. Limit them to dribbling three times or less before passing.</p> <p>Call modified traveling violations. For example, a player can take three steps without dribbling the ball before you call a traveling violation. Do not have jump balls, but alternate awarding possession from one team to the other. Treat fouls like violations (players should raise their hands when they foul).</p> <p>Follow regular half-court rules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If a team scores, the other team gets the ball at the top of the key (restart area).</li> <li>• If a team gets an offensive rebound, that team can shoot again.</li> <li>• If a team gets a defensive rebound, that team gets the ball at the top of the key (restart area).</li> </ul>	<p>Coach: What do you do when you try to steal the ball from an opponent?</p> <p>Players: You watch the player, watch the ball, and try to figure out what the player will do.</p> <p>Coach: How do you do that?</p> <p>Players: You get low and keep your hands and feet active.</p>	To use as a Game 2: Same as Game 1, except choose either 1 v 3, 2 v 3, or 3 v 3, depending on the skill proficiency of your players. Rotate players accordingly so they all have a chance to play offense and defense.	104
Defense	Skill Drill	20	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to pressure the ball handler.</li> <li>2. Have your players practice pressuring the ball handler.</li> </ol>	<p>All players—Divide players into two groups: a dribblers group, in which each player has a ball; and a defenders group, which does not have balls. The dribblers group should have more players. Keep the practice within a confined space.</p> <p>On a signal, the dribblers begin dribbling while the defenders attempt to steal the ball. If a defender steals a ball, he or she begins dribbling. Go for about 45 seconds, and then regroup and switch roles as needed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Get into the ready position” (bend your knees; lower your body).</li> <li>• “Keep your hands and feet active.”</li> <li>• “Watch the player; watch the ball.”</li> <li>• “Anticipate.”</li> </ul>		105

Topic	Type	Min.	Activity <sup>1</sup>	Activity Description	Questions (Games) or Tips (Skill Drills)	Variations	Page <sup>2</sup>
Shooting	Game	10	<p>Players attack the basket, focusing on shooting within five to eight feet of the basket, and score as often as possible. The objective is for players to be able to receive a pass, square to the basket, and shoot accurately.</p>	<p>3 v 3, short-court game (use regular half-court rules)—Encourage players to score as much as possible. No dribbling is allowed in this game. Defensive players earn a point when they take the ball away without committing a foul.</p> <p>The offensive team must pass twice or more before shooting. Do not have jump balls, but alternate awarding possession from one team to the other. Treat fouls like violations.</p>	<p>Coach: What is the goal of the game?                      Players: The goal is to score following two consecutive passes.</p> <p>Coach: From where on the court do you score most of your points?                      Players: Most of the points are scored close to the basket.</p> <p>Coach: Why is it better to shoot from a position close to the basket rather than far from the basket?                      Players: You're more likely to score when you're closer (it's a high-percentage shot).</p> <p>Coach: Besides shooting from close range, what else do you do to shoot successfully?                      Players: We square our shoulders to the basket, keep our elbows under the ball and close to the body, keep one hand behind the ball and the other at the side of the ball, use a staggered stance with knees slightly bent, aim, and follow through.</p>	<p>To use as a Game 2: Same as Game 1 except choose either 3 v 1, 3 v 2, or 3 v 3, depending on the skill proficiency of your players. Rotate players accordingly so they all have a chance to play offense and defense.</p>	107

Topic	Type	Min.	Activity <sup>1</sup>	Activity Description	Questions (Games) or Tips (Skill Drills)	Variations	Page <sup>2</sup>
Shooting	Skill Drill	15	<p>1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to receive a pass and shoot.</p> <p>2. Have your players practice receiving a pass and shooting.</p>	<p>Pairs—Partners take turns shooting three shots from each of five spots approximately five to eight feet away from the basket. The partner not shooting rebounds the ball and passes it accurately to the shooting partner.</p> <p>The shooting partner gets in target position, receives the ball in triple threat position and squares up and shoots. Have players either count the number of baskets made or “high five” partners when they score a basket.</p>	<p>For shooting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Keep your hands apart on the ball.”</li> <li>• “Only fingers touch the ball.”</li> <li>• “Keep palms up.”</li> <li>• “Point your elbows toward the basket.”</li> <li>• “Flip your wrist and wave good-bye.”</li> </ul> <p>For triple threat</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Keep the ball on your hip.”</li> <li>• “Keep your elbows out.”</li> <li>• “Hold the ball to the side on your hip.”</li> </ul>		108
Passing	Game	10	<p>To play a 3 v 3 game, focusing on maintaining possession of the ball and supporting the ball handler. The objective is for players to be able to pass quickly and accurately and to support the ball handler.</p>	<p>3 v 3, short-court game using regular half-court rules—The team must pass three times before shooting. Limit them to dribbling three times or less before passing.</p> <p>Call modified traveling violations. For example, a player can take three steps without dribbling the ball before you call a traveling violation. Do not have jump balls, but alternate awarding possession from one team to the other. Treat fouls like violations. A field goal is worth two points.</p>	<p>Coach: What is the goal of the game?</p> <p>Players: The goal is to shoot as often as possible, to pass and shoot.</p> <p>Coach: What do you do to help your teammate with the ball?</p> <p>Players: We move to get open.</p>	<p>If needed, return to a 2 v 2 or 3 v 2 game.</p> <p>To use as a Game 2: Same as Game 1, except choose either 3 v 1, 3 v 2, or 3 v 3, depending on the skill proficiency of your players. Rotate players accordingly so they all have a chance to play offense and defense.</p>	110

Topic	Type	Min.	Activity <sup>1</sup>	Activity Description	Questions (Games) or Tips (Skill Drills)	Variations	Page <sup>2</sup>
Passing	Skill Drill	15		<p>2 v 1, in an area the size of the basketball lane—Two offensive players, an attacker (O) and a supporter (S), play against one defensive player (X).</p> <p>On the whistle, the defender attacks the ball (cooperative to active defense), the supporter moves to either side, and the attacker draws the defender and then passes.</p> <p>The practice continues until either the offensive players have made three passes or the defender has possession of the ball.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Move quickly to the side.” (Cue for the supporter)</li> <li>• “Attack the ball.” (Cue for the defender)</li> <li>• “Pass as the defender advances.” (Cue for the attacker)</li> </ul>		111