

# The Focus Shooting Method

Focus On Critical Unique Spots. F.O.C.U.S.



Bruce Hultgren

**Dedicated to those who have spent a part of their lives  
teaching, coaching, guiding and mentoring me.  
And to those developing shooters and coaches  
who are ready to “break the cycle” on 1950’s lessons.**

**Author’s Note:**

**Please note that I have developed, tested and coached this for  
thousands of hours in many different countries.**

**I’ve written this Shooting System manual for the betterment  
and improvement of the game.**

**In my words, as I would be teaching it to you.**

**Enjoy...**

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***"A Basketball Shot Is Like Your Fingerprint - No Two Are The Same"*** Bruce Hultgren

## **WHY WHY WHY Are We Here?**

Have you ever seen or read something that someone was trying to teach you, then, when you watched them complete the task - it was completely different to what they're teaching you?

There are examples of it everywhere in Basketball shooting.

Throughout this book I'm going to show you example after example of what we are told and taught versus what actually happens - and when you see it - you'll be amazed.

Square Up - Think Again.

Finger Tips - Think Again.

No Dipping on the shot - Think Again.

You'll see HEAPS of supporting images in this book.

Let's Begin...

***“Sport evolves when sacred cows are killed.***

***This is where change happens.”***

(Think About The Fosbury Flop in the world of High Jump)

Tim Ferriss - The Four Hour Work Week

# Introduction

## The Breakdown Of “The Focus Shooting Method” For Coaches & Players

The FOCUS Shooting Method is broken down into very specific and easy to understand points throughout this document. (and if you're a new coach or teaching youngsters – let's get them into the correct habit FIRST – shall we?)

Which, at the end – creates a perfect sequence to enable the athlete to complete the shot and achieve the necessary outcomes.

You'll find these quotes positioned through the course – and they make perfect sense. Please remember them!

**“If you can't explain it to a 6 year old, then you don't understand it yourself.”**  
Einstein

(this is exactly how I started to develop this method, by teaching young kids.)

**“INSANITY – doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.”**  
Einstein

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What about if I said this statement to you....

**"We're only going to teach the players something they will do 15% of the time and ignore the other 85%".....** what would you think about that?

THIS is exactly what happens in basketball shooting – the straight up, picture perfect jump shot is just 15% of the shots we take – but this is all we seem to focus on!!!

How does that make any sense to ANYONE?

Let's Get Started....

A Note From Coach Bruce.

Hi Coach/Athlete,  
(If you're a player, learn this method so you can coach it, then you'll "get it".)  
Thanks for being here and I look forward to hearing about the improved shooting successes you and your athletes are achieving.

The most important thing I can share with you at this point in time is to embrace this method, give it time, watch the magic happen and take as much credit as you like – without you – there is no teaching, no learning and no improvement!

I've written this book in the exact sequence as I would cover it in a shooting session, typically it takes about 18 – 20 minutes to get the first 5 steps across, but I'm OK if you take a bit longer!!!!

This course is also written as I would be speaking to you, exactly as I would present this method to groups or single athletes. Wherever I have written the word athlete – this represents the language each athlete is hearing while I present the lessons – they're processing all this information in their own head, like I'm speaking directly to them. Even in a group setting.

**Before we begin**, let's put some things to REMEMBER in place.

1. We are creating a new habit for the athlete – this typically takes **20 HOURS** of practice to make it a habit and to be a master of that habit. (You'll see immediate improvement, the key is to keep them going through the performance “down phase” that will inevitably happen.)
2. Athletes typically want the ball to go in every single time they shoot it – this is natural. You need to remember 2 things about this while you're coaching/ learning and encouraging this new method.
  - a). If it's straight it's a good shot – it doesn't have to go in to be a good shot and
  - b). The typical response after something doesn't always “click” is to give up too soon – MEASURE the 20 hours.

There will be 3 phases that every athlete will experience in time. (and any other new skill)

2.1 Success and immediate improvement

2.2 A slight dip in the results and therefore the desire to keep making adjustments to their shot

2.3 If they literally time themselves and give themselves 20 hours to master this, they will come out the other side as an amazing shooter. (which they will visibly improve on from day 1)

As a coach I want you to be able to teach this method **and make it your own.**

You know what's it's like when you teach your favourite dribbling drill or skill?

The words just come out, you know how to time everything and you know what to look for.

This method is absolutely no different. Learn it, present it, make it your own, and always remember WHY we're teaching this way.

I developed this method to originally teach young kids how to shoot – then I read this quote – I guess I was on the right track!

\*\*\*\*\*

**“If you can't explain it to a 6 year old, then you don't understand it yourself.”**

**Einstein**

\*\*\*\*\*

Here is your instruction to the athlete(s)...

## **PART 1 – THE ABSOLUTE BEGINNING.**

### **“The Agreeable Target!”**

(Instruction – say or do this) I want you to stand on a slight angle, about 45 degrees, to the backboard and ring, just a couple of steps away from the basket and I want you to look at the corner of the square of the backboard on the same side that you're standing.

Now I want you to really focus on the corner of the square and I want you to shoot the ball at that spot.

This painted square is a target area, it is only there to help you focus on different spots to make shooting a basket much easier for you.

That little square is just the right size to shoot the ball off.

With a little bit of practice, while standing on that short 45 degree angle – if you hit that corner of the square 100 times, it will go in 100 times. (agreed?)

Now ask this question of the athletes and let them think and reply with their guesses.

**"WHY does that work?"** (shooting and hitting the corner of the square)

Here are some typical answers you will hear – have a think to see if you thought of one of these.

- \* Hitting the corner of the square works because....
- \* Because of the angle
- \* It makes you throw the ball higher
- \* It gives you something to look at
- \* Because.... it just works!

BUT... here's the REAL answer..... Ready?

### **"Because Your Eyes Tell Your Hands What To Do"**

Simple – right? Makes sense!

It doesn't matter if it's a lay up, a set shot in close, a hook shot, a fade-away, or any other shot you can practice.

In EVERY single instance, your eyes can lock onto that target and if you hit it, the ball will go in. (with some practice!)

Can I assume that you're nodding in agreement with me right now?

If I run a session for coaches and athletes anywhere in the world, we will all agree on this single point. And that point again is this... If you hit the corner of the square 100 times while standing on a 45 degree angle, the ball will more than likely go in 100 times (REGARDLESS of the shooting action).

Sadly – that's where the agreement of focus points usually stops and someone has “THEIR WAY”, or “This is What I teach” blah blah blah.

And that's awesome – but it probably hasn't worked – true?

NOTE: I've even had the example where a friend of mine who is a very high level coach, high performance coach and very experienced, sheepishly told me that in his semi professional team, **HE** was the best free throw shooter!!!! Please tell me that you agree with my thinking that there's something wrong with that!



We all agree if we hit these targets in close from 45 degrees, the ball will go in!

## PART 2

### “Another Example Target”

Let's look at another example.

As the coach I want you to instruct your athlete(s) to complete the following.

I want you to pretend that you're standing about 15 big steps away from a wall.

I'm the coach and I point out a target for you on that wall – it could be a brick, a dot, just pick something so they're all looking at the same thing.

Let's pretend that I've just given you a tennis ball and I say to you – "if you can throw the ball from where you're standing and hit this target – I'll give you \$100." (we're just pretending remember!)

So right now you now have 2 options to hit your target and win the \$100

**Option 1:** Throw your tennis ball like you would throw a stone or small ball, cocked back and released towards target (go ahead and pretend you're doing that now)

or

**Option 2:** Make sure your feet are set, your hips are aligned, your shoulders are square – etc etc.

Now tell me – which option would you choose?

About 99.9% of people always pick option 1

When they're asked why – (apart from the fact that it just makes sense) they usually say that it feels natural to them. (and you know the throw styles vary!)

When I ask them why? They have no idea.

When I ask them why this method works over and over – they have no idea.

Then I remind them that it's as simple as....

**"Because Your Eyes Tell Your Hands What To Do!"**

Are you getting the message?



## **PART 3**

### **“Making Sense”**

I've just given you 2 examples of the simple way that we can focus on a target and how your eyes will tell your hands what to do.

This is where it gets really fun.

I want you to stand on the side of the key so you are “side on” to the rim.

Now all you can see is the rim.

Do you remember in part 1 that we could get 100 people on a court and they would all agree that if you hit the corner of the square, that the ball would go in?

**Because everyone agreed on the target?**

Now... if I placed 100 people in the same spot that you're standing right now, side on to the basket and asked them....

"There's 2 seconds left in the game, you're 1 point down and the ball has just landed in your hands – what do you look at?"

I'd probably get 20 different answers from across the group of 100.

And typically I get responses like....

- \* a blank stare
- \* a look of horror
- \* back of the rim
- \* the rim (anywhere!)
- \* the hole in the middle
- \* shrugged shoulders
- \* I just throw it up there (that response was from a professional!!!!)

Remember, you've typically only got .5 of a second (that's half a second) to be able to lock in, get your eyes to tell your hands what to do and release the ball.

But here's the scary part.....

I'd get all these different answers from coaches as well – different messages, different targets – AARRGGGHHH!!!!

Let's look at 2 different options (scarily there are coaches who teach MANY other things to look at as well – but let's stick to the 2 very basic concepts.)

### **Option 1: The Back Of The Rim**

Please do this exercise for me.

Stand where you are on the court about 15 feet away from the basket and look down at the floor.

When you're ready, count seconds 1, 2, 3 and when you reach 3 look up at the rim and in half a second – try to find the target you want to aim at and then look back at the floor again. (by the time you get to 4!) (now do it from the 3pt line!)

Let's think about what I just asked you to do.

I want you to try and find a target that isn't easy to see!

In a game there are defenders, fatigue, mayhem, the rim and the net to get through – in .5 of a second.

(now imagine that you've jumped to shoot, there's a hand in your face, etc etc!)



\* You think he's got time to find the back of the rim in this situation????

## Option 2: The Front Of The Rim – A Specific Target

Now, I want you to look AT the rim itself – see where the little loops are on the front of the rim where the net joins the rim? You'll find that no matter where you stand on the court, whatever angle, there will be a loop right there in front of you. (on the pro rims in the NBA they don't have these showing because of potential injuries through fingers getting caught etc – BUT – the net does go to a specific point on the rim – if you're an NBA coach or player reading this – this is your target! See below)

Now, let's repeat the "what can you see in .5 of a second" exercise again. Eyes down, count to 3 and find the target right there on the front of the rim.

The target was right there in front of your eyes – correct? (you can't actually argue this point – it literally IS the first thing you see)



Ask yourself this question now....

*"If every player agrees that the easiest target to see on the backboard is the corner of the square, wouldn't everyone agree that the front of the rim and a specific target would be the easiest thing to learn to look at and for coaches to teach?"*

(Do you know what the typical answer or response that I get to this theory?)

**A: But if I aim at the front, won't it hit the front? Ummmm..... maybe! But if you do – next time shoot it a little harder – you'll never miss the same shot twice!**

Also – couldn't we say the same thing about the back of the rim? Yes – this drives me crazy! More of this in detail soon.

**SHOOTING TIP:** If you find yourself with a choice of 2 targets (loops or net connection points – see previous image) on the front of the rim, for example, there isn't a loop right in front of your eyes and you have to make a choice – here's the secret – if you're a right handed shooter, choose the left loop and if you're a left handed shooter, choose the right hand loop.

Remember – you have to make a decision in a heartbeat, set this rule in place in your head while you **practice (20 hours remember!)** – be aware of the decision being made and understand why you're making it.

The reason for the choice is this – if you're a right hand shooter, and you choose the left hand target, your shot adjustment will be minimal and as a result of this change, the ball will still head to the middle of the rim. If you choose the right hand target, you're tempting the ball to be closer to the right hand side of the rim and possibly hit that side of the rim.

I'm sure there's a super technical explanation, but I'm all about keeping it simple, I've tested it for thousands of hours, it works.

## PART 4

### “Baby Steps”

(At this stage, I'm not going to talk about any of the typical hoops coach techie stuff, just shoot the ball however you like. Quite often I'll have a group of 10 players, all shooting a little differently, but getting the same “straight” result.)

It's time to shoot!

1. Please complete the following shots so you can be aware of what you're looking at.

Shoot 20 from each side of the backboard, being really aware of your target. You should only be about a step away from the rim and backboard.

If you want to make it 20 makes each side, then go for it. There are just TWO things I want you to do at this point.

1.1 Shoot the ball high and try to bounce the ball on top of your target. (\*\*Remember this phrase... “11 o'clock is MONEY TIME.” Try to release the ball and your shooting arm would be at 11 o'clock if we put you in front of a clock face.)



1.2 If you want to watch the ball after you've shot it – go for it – this makes no difference to the shot at all – it's already left your hands! Watch it and see if it's straight and hitting the target. (you'll see pics in this book of NBA players ball watching, it's completely OK – go for it!)

2. Let's put the theory to the test – please stand on the bottom "peg" or lowest line sticking out from the side of the key.

If there are no markings where you are, just stand side on to the rim, so the only target you can see are those on the front edge of the rim that is closest to you.

Find your target – is there one right in front of you or do you have to make a decision about left or right target?

Here's the drill.

I want you to shoot the ball with the aim of trying to "bounce" the ball on top of your target. (or tell athletes to try and "swish it")

For example, shoot the ball high enough in the air so that if you are indeed successful in your task, the ball will actually bounce on the target.

There are going to be 2 things that automatically happen here.

1. Your eyes will tell your hands what to do and if you're focussed, the ball will go straight.
2. The ball will probably go through the rim more often than not!

### NOTES FOR COACH:

\* Watch the athletes shoot from both right in front of them and right behind them.

\* Watch the flight of the ball – "Is it straight?"

**\* If it's flat, ask them to "bounce" the ball on the rim – on the top of the target (11 o'clock "Money Time" release point – think of where 11 o'clock is!)**

You'll see an IMMEDIATE improvement in their accuracy – just by locking their eyes into a target.

**NOTE: Notice I haven't said ANYTHING about technical stuff yet?**

Until you're focussed on the same target, the technical stuff is pointless. You'll also find that your shots will now be going straight, that's the very first thing we HAVE to get right.

Remember: **"Your Eyes Tell Your Hands What To Do."**

A COMMON ARGUMENT: You know what I hear ALL the time?

"But if I hit the front of the rim the ball will miss. I need to aim at the back – so if I hit the back of the rim, it will drop in". You know my observation and answer on that?

Without this FOCUS method – the key word in this whole sentence is.... **“IF”!!!!!!**  
People have been trying to teach the back of the rim for 70 years, if that DID in fact work, wouldn't there be many more great shooters in the world?????????

**TASK:**

Shoot 20 shots from the 5 different spots shown. From each side of the key, from 45 degrees and directly in front of the rim. No more than 2 big steps away from the basket. (see pic)



This is where the acronym of **FOCUS** really starts to take shape and you should be experiencing immediate success already.

**Focus On Critical Unique Spots. F.O.C.U.S.**

**What does SUCCESS mean for you when shooting?**

If I ask 100 players this question, 100 of them tell me that it's only a good or successful shot if the ball goes through the rim or net.

Fact: A Successful shot is a **STRAIGHT** shot! Doesn't even matter if it's an airball.

WHY? Because if it isn't straight, it has no chance of going in!

If you can shoot straight, (focus on a target) then the only adjustments you need to make really are "do I shoot harder or softer next time?"

Let's put you mentally into a game situation.

You've just caught the ball about 4 big steps away from the basket on a 45 degree angle.

Here are 3 typical shot outcomes you may experience.

1. You catch the ball, find your target, release the ball... and it hits the front of the rim and comes back to you.

(Your self assessment is simply this. 1. Was it straight? 2. What was I looking at?

3. What was I thinking about? 4. Do I need to push it higher, harder or softer next time?)

2. You catch the ball, find your target, release the ball, it's all net. (oh yeah!)  
(Your self assessment is simply this. 1. Was it straight? 2. What was I looking at?  
3. What was I thinking about? 4. Do I need to push it higher, harder or softer  
next time?)

3. You catch the ball, find your target, release the ball and it hits the left or  
right of the rim and misses.  
(Your self assessment is simply this. 1. Was it straight? 2. What was I looking at?  
3. What was I thinking about? 4. Do I need to push it higher, harder or softer  
next time?)

If you simply practice this in your head each time you shoot, with practice, you  
will NEVER miss the same shot twice.

Let me justify that statement.

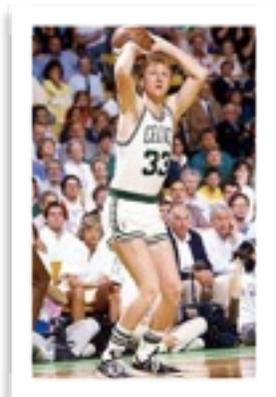
1. If you know what you're looking at and you aim for it and you hit the target,  
that is a success – correct? (straight = success)
2. If it's too flat, shoot it higher
3. If it's too short, shoot it longer
4. If it's too long, shoot it softer.

Makes sense.... right?

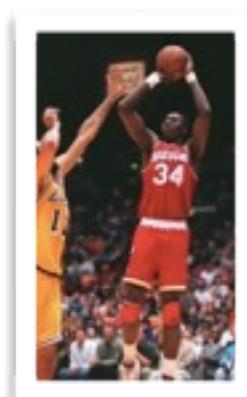
### **Get the athletes to "Celebrate Straight".**

There have been lots of questions in this phase of the program – let me ask you  
one more simple question.

"Does anything I've written so far not make sense or sound too complicated?"



**F.O.C.U.S!**



## PART 5 – YOUR BODY!!!!

Have you ever purchased a new car and after you bought it, all of a sudden you saw them everywhere on the road? This happened because of a sudden you became "aware" of the make and colour.

What I am about to show you is going to have the same effect about shooting and once you are shown it, it will drive you crazy and you'll probably ask yourself **"Why hasn't this been shown to everyone? It just makes sense!"**

(remember that reference to **"Common Sense"** earlier? We insert it again here.)

NOTE: Just for the record – I've had many "interesting discussions" (arguments) with so called shooting coaches about how wrong this theory is and I shouldn't be teaching it – but, like the "old school – point your toes to the target and look at the back of the rim teachings" – this doesn't make sense!

This is a really fun part of the "realization process" about YOUR athlete(s) shooting action.

Let's do this simple drill and I want you to see what happens.

Ready?

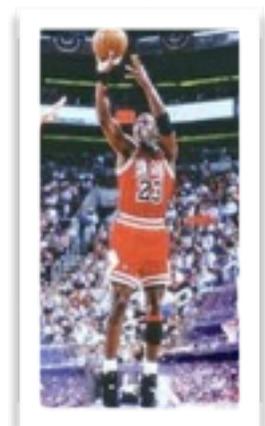
I want you to get your athlete(s) to go back to the baseline spot and shoot 5 shots from each side, jump a little bit on your shot.

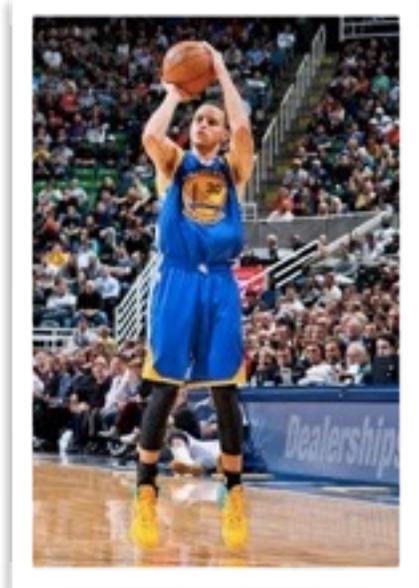
CHECK THIS....

When they land, I want you to check the position of their feet, hips and shoulders.

If they're like **"EVERY HUMAN BEING ON THE PLANET"** – their feet, hips and shoulders are NATURALLY on an angle – about 30 – 45 degrees away from the target. (see images as a reference point & watch a darts player! Go back one page and look at the picture of Larry Bird – can you see his body angle now? Now look at Michael Jordan's body position!)

If this is the case (they've landed on an angle) – FANTASTIC!!!! This is absolutely biomechanically CORRECT.





(I've included pics of some of the best shooters on the planet and you'll see how their body is on this exact angle.)

## WHY DOES THIS HAPPEN AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Let's talk about the first part of the question.

Why does this happen?

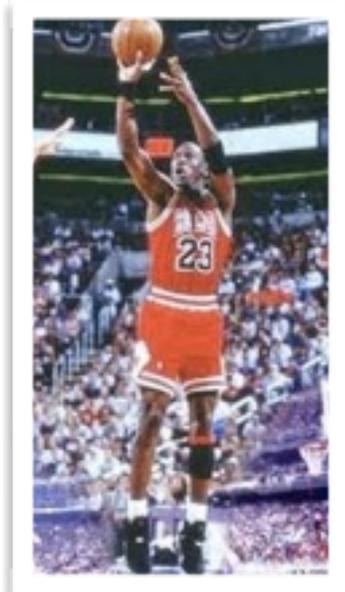
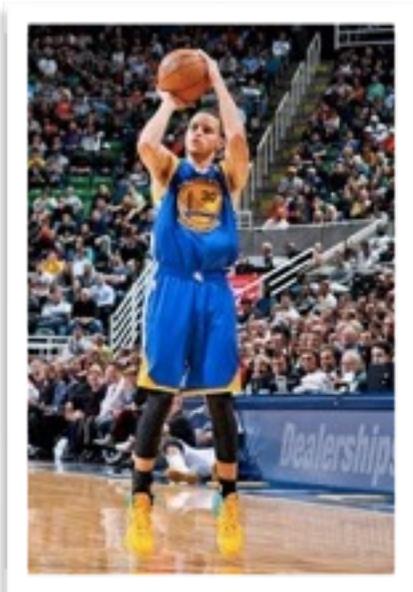
Your body naturally forms a "straight line" so it doesn't have to twist while you shoot the ball.

This is a natural bio-mechanical position for your body and we need to encourage this angle.

If you want to break it down into it's simplest form – you want to create the following.

1. A Lead foot **“on an angle”**
2. A Lead hip **“on an angle”**
3. A Lead shoulder **“on an angle”**

**BE AWARE:** There are shooting coaches, commentators, NBA players and others who still claim that you should "square up" before you shoot the ball – BUT THEY DON'T!!!! Let's talk about 2 players in particular – Steph Curry and Michael Jordan – both unbelievable shooters. Both PREACH squaring up – BUT... both of them DON'T!!!! And here's the best part, take a look at the photo's of them, their feet, hips and shoulders are on the same angle that you are now naturally creating with your body. Keep up the great work!



## Part 2 of this question – WHY IS BODY POSITION IMPORTANT?

What we want to do is create a "straight line" so we're not twisting our body and torso in the air while we shoot.

The natural angle alignment of the feet, hips and shoulders will ensure that the ball goes straight. **\*And the shot becomes effortless!!!!**

Combine this with the focus of the eyes and you're well on the way to becoming a deadly accurate shooter.

\*\*\*Special note on this point – watch as many shooters as you can both live and on TV. It will become VERY clear to you which players have been taught the "point ten toes to the rim when you shoot" technique. They immediately twist their body and land on an angle – **EVERY.... SINGLE.... ONE OF THEM!!!!**

Here's a collection of **OVERWHELMING EVIDENCE** of feet, hips and shoulder positioning on an **ANGLE!**

(remember earlier on when I mentioned that I'd show you something and now it was so obvious, that you'd kick yourself for not noticing it sooner?

Yep – this is it!)







ARE YOU WITH ME YET? Did you notice different release points but **EVERY... SINGLE... SHOOTER is on an angle!!!** From their feet, hips and shoulders. It's time we started to preach **"ANGLE UP"** instead of square up. Don't you agree?

## THE FREE THROW

After 40+ years in the game – I think this has to be the single greatest teaching mistake that's ever been manufactured over time.

THIS is the exact place where you here those DUMB phrases of square your feet and square your shoulders.

Yep – DUMB.

Doesn't make sense. Never has.

Let me explain...

Up to this point you've probably played along at home and nodded your head in agreement with everything I've said. I've based all my writing to date on common sense, experience and stuff that just works, PROOF.

So, having said that... if our body naturally turns to form a straight line to shoot and I've shown you evidence of the great shooters actually doing this....

Then WHY OH WHY would we change this whole bio-mechanical process to shoot a completely uncontested shot?

I know this may be coming off as aggressive, it's not meant to be, it just doesn't make sense and I get really frustrated every time I hear an "expert" on TV talk about the wrong thing!!!!

\*\* NOTE: Squaring Up was first taught when players in the 50's would shoot the ball with 2 hands and also complete free throws by doing a 2 handed bucket shot – I think we've progressed from that – don't you?

Moving on...

NOTE: Let's get something right out in the open, right here, right now. I'm not going to stand in front of you, EVER, and shoot 100, 200, 500, 1000 free throws in a row to prove that I am the guru of all guru's. Some people think you need to be able to achieve this in order to give advice on shooting.

Again – tell me where the common sense is on that thinking? I can shoot at a good clip AND teach you the secret on how to do it. (I WILL guarantee that every single one of my shots will be straight though!)

Have you noticed something about this document so far? I am continually trying to justify why this works and how it works. (It takes a lot to change years of incorrect teaching!) I'll repeat this again for you.... if it (the current teaching methods of shooting) were in fact successful, the long time things that coaches preach, WHY can't more people shoot? (I rest my case!)

(To those College and NBA players who can't make a free throw – give me 45 minutes with them with this method and they would be fixed – this method has NEVER failed!)

Back to the lesson.

This is a Free Throw routine that I've taught over the past 10 years, and yes – it has NEVER failed. (you just need to practice it!)

Let me PROMISE you this. You WILL get immediate results from doing just this routine.

Let's take a quick refresher course up to this point.

1. You need to focus on your target
2. Your body is naturally on an angle when you shoot
3. With points 1 and 2 taken care of – the shot will go straight 99 times out of 100.

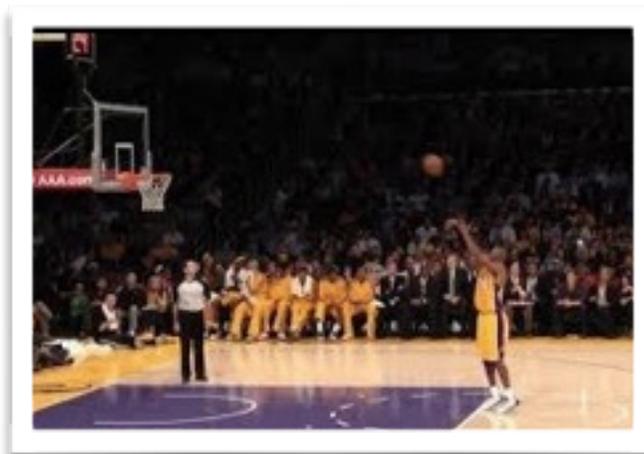
So with these points in mind – we need to "re-create" the natural shot – at the free throw line.

After years and years of testing, teaching and delivering – here are the very simple guidelines – "GUIDELINES!" for the FOCUS Method free throw.



## 9 EASY STEPS TO THE PERFECT FREE THROW

1. Pretend the referee has passed you the ball and you hold onto it.
2. Look at the rim – point your lead foot (if you're right handed – this will be your right foot) directly to your target, then pivot your heel so your toe is pointing to a spot just to the outside left side edge of the key (as you face the basket) meets the baseline. This will also turn your hips and shoulders onto a more natural shooting angle. (see pic below – if it's good enough for Kobe!)



3. At this point in time, put your back foot wherever you like, as long as it's comfortable and you're balanced.
4. Turn your hips slightly away from the rim so they're pointing towards the spot near where the 3point line meets the baseline. Your hips will typically be on about a 30–45 degree angle to the rim. (look at pic)
5. Your shoulders will be naturally on an angle at this point in time as well.
6. Now that you've "locked in" your feet – FORGET ABOUT THEM! It's time to take care of the free throw.

7. Next – **lock your eyes in on your target**, pick the "loop" you're going to aim at and **DO NOT BREAK EYE CONTACT** with this target. (If we're in agreement that "your eyes tell your hands what to do", then give your eyes every opportunity to achieve this!)

8. Now dribble the ball, 1,2 or 3 times in front of your lead foot (preferably just once) while **maintaining focus on the target**. In one motion, complete the last dribble and shoot the free throw. Bringing the ball up in a straight line from the dribble to the shot. Again, **11 o'clock release point**, trying to gently "bounce" the ball on the top of the target (high arc). The next sound you will typically hear is that of the ball going through the net. It's a beautiful thing!

9. On completion of each shot, step away and reset for the next shot.



Some quick notes.

I've seen shooters move their feet while dribbling before they shoot a free throw – **keep the feet still!** What we are trying to do is eliminate every single sub-conscious thought process out of your head EXCEPT shooting. Moving your feet only distracts the mind.

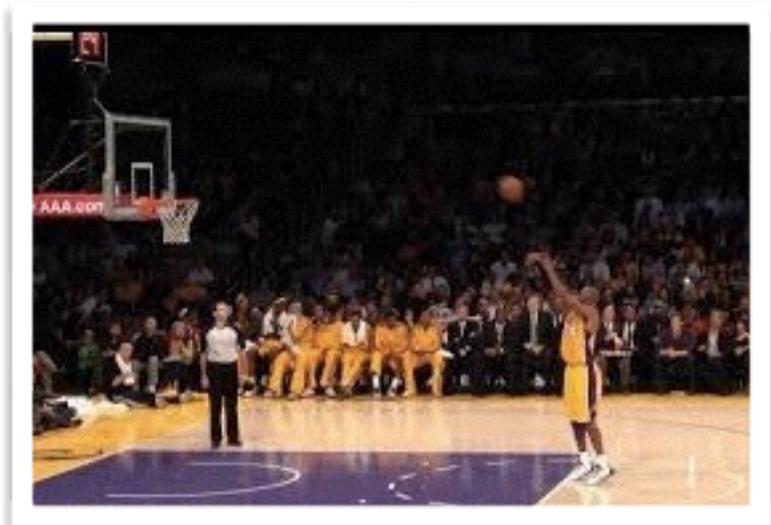
Pausing at the end of the dribble on the free throw – this again allows the brain to start sub-consciously thinking about things like, am I ready? Ball doesn't feel right? What if? etc etc etc. Once you've practiced this routine, the coach will want YOU on the line when the game is in the balance.

Self teaching points.

1. What was I looking at?
2. What was I thinking about?
3. 11 o'clock release?
4. Was it straight, soft, flat, hard, left, right.

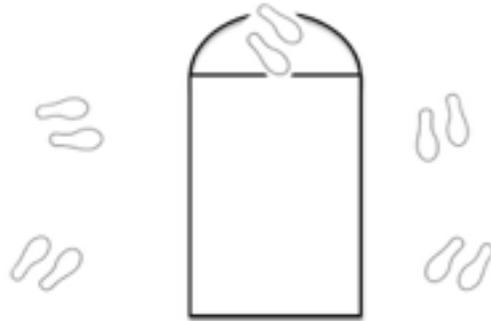
Let's Look At Some Images Of Great Free Throw Body Positioning (**ANGLES!**)



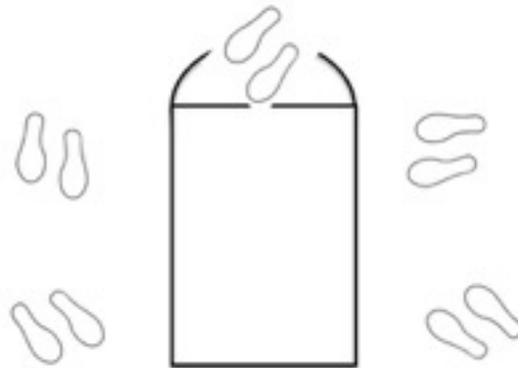


## Your Feet Positioning Guides

(Use these as a "guide" to reference your feet and body positioning.)



### Right Handed Shooter – Foot Positioning Guide



### Left Handed Shooter – Foot Positioning Guide

## THE SHOOTING FINGER(S)

This is a really interesting topic that I'm very flexible with in my teaching. I've seen amazing shooters that point a single finger at their target – Kobe Bryant, Michael Jordan. And this obviously works, but there are many other great shooters who don't do this!

Some use the index (pointer) and middle fingers as a reference point and those of you with smaller hands – maybe use the thumb as well as a guide.

This can be a personal preference, again – this is getting into the very technical part of shooting that will take care of itself if you're looking at the right target! (see section on "crazy shots" and why FOCUS is critical)

Lets look at some different releases to show you this point. (these are all great shooters remember!)



## HOW TO CONCENTRATE?

If you're like me – there was more than one occasion in school when the teacher asked me to concentrate harder and I had absolutely no clue on how to do that!

So let's give you a quick lesson on that exact subject so you can help develop the skill.

There are 2 simple ways I teach this to basketball players of all ages.

### **1. The look ahead drill.**

Let's do this together and you'll see what I mean.

Please put your ball down between your knees or feet.

Now put your hands out in front of you like you're about to type on a keyboard – look straight ahead and wiggle your fingers like you're typing.

Can you see your fingers out of the bottom of your eyes while looking straight ahead?

Fantastic – now – let's walk along dribbling the ball, looking straight ahead and use the same method, see the ball out of the bottom of your eyes. Bingo!

You've just concentrated on a task!

Here's one for shooting.

2. Each time you shoot a free throw or shot, ask yourself the normal questions.

Self teaching points.

1. What was I looking at?
2. What was I thinking about?
3. 11 o'clock release?
4. Was it straight, soft, flat, hard, left, right.

Once you're aware of these questions and you're aware of what is going on in between your ears – you're in the world of concentration!

Another fun one to add in is to have someone talk to you and try to "put you off" while you're shooting a free throw – this will force you to focus on the system that is the shot. So when the pressure is on – you rely on the system you've practiced over and over.

## THE BALL POSITION IN THE HAND

I've found this one always interesting because it didn't make sense from day 1 when I heard it as an 8 year old.

*"Hold the ball with your fingertips so you have better control of the ball when you shoot."*

HUH?

Why can't I balance the ball in my palm?

Why do I need to have it rest in my fingertips?

I like to think of my hands like the wheels on my car – they're the things that give me traction, the more rubber on the road, the better.

If I can grab the ball and have more coverage under the ball when I'm about to shoot – then, bring it on!

This isn't going to be a long module.

It's NOT IMPORTANT whether it's fingertips or not and here's why.

EVERYTHING comes back to the eyes and the target.

You can shoot the ball from your waist, left hand, right hand, backwards, fading away etc etc.

If you're NOT LOOKING at the target – how the heck do you expect the ball to go where you want it to go?

This is where the coaching fraternity, in my humble opinion, has spent way too much time thinking about the mechanics and have missed out on the single most important lesson.

**The EYES!!!!!!**



Let's face it – there are Hundred's of Thousands of basketball players around the world who have picture perfect shots... **but they can't shoot!**  
(or shoot free throws!)

GO FIGURE!!!!

What does that tell you about what they're looking at or NOT looking at?

If some of the poorest free throw shooters of our time simply took this lesson and applied it, their issues would be over. I've PROVEN IT over and over and over again!

NOTE: I've researched many great shooters and I want you to take a look at these images – every one of them is "**palming**" the ball when they shoot it – but if you listen them to teach – it would be fingertips only!

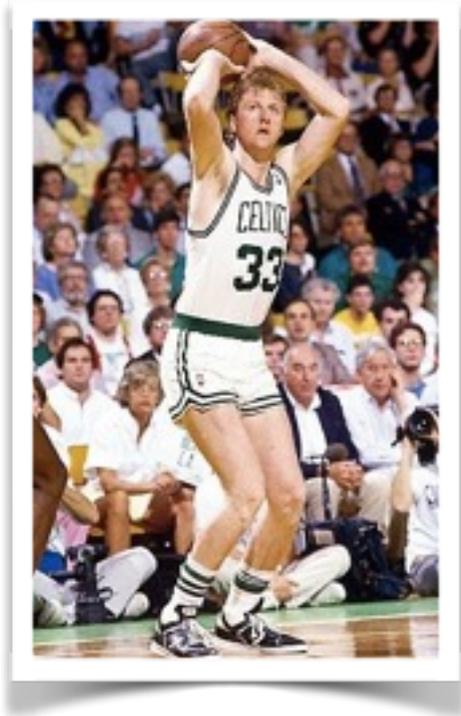
We've all heard this stuff way too many times and now it's a part of the vocabulary – it's just plain WRONG!

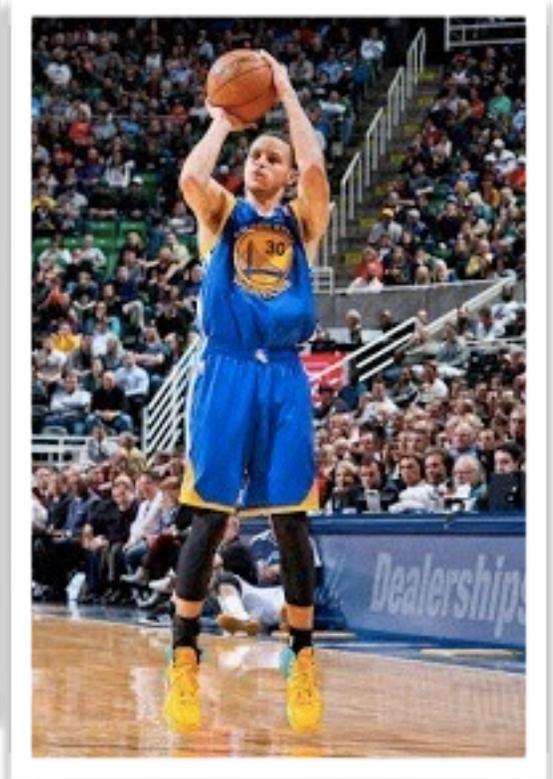
For more re hand position, see section on Crazy Shots!

Here are some images to show you PROOF that fingertips are not important at the beginning of the shot.









## THE POSITION OF THE ELBOW

This is another part of the shot that was drummed into me for years as a player, but it's just not that important.

Sorry coaches, it isn't.

Everyone talks about having the elbow under the ball – tell that to Ray Allen – the NBA's leading 3 point scorer in history (see all the pics in the last pages!!!!) Reggie Miller, Larry Bird, Kobe Bryant, Michael Jordan, and the list goes on.

Sure, there are players who always put their elbow under the ball in a straight up and down line, but it just isn't that important.  
GO BACK and look at the collection of pictures to prove my point.

Another piece of information that I hear about way too often that is another waste of breath is this...

**"the elbow should be level with your eyes before you release the ball."**

Really?

So tell me again how the players pictured throughout this course could possibly put the ball in the basket if their elbow isn't in the right position?

**"Your EYES Tell Your Hands What To Do!"**

Practice this FOCUS method over and over and over and watch the magic happen.

## THE FOLLOW THROUGH

**This is a definite must** when shooting a regulation jump shot or set shot – it puts spin on the ball, helps it glide through the air and hopefully helps put some arc on the shot so it gently drops into the basket.

The high release (11 o'clock) and extension will also help you shoot over defenders.

This is a very important part of the shot.

## TO DIP OR NOT TO DIP?

Meaning: When you catch the ball in your set position – do you "dip" the ball before you shoot or go straight up into the shot?

This is a really interesting "argument" that's arisen over the past few years.

I was brought up with the "don't dip the ball" or No dip rule – however, we all know that the dip happens and in a lot of cases actually helps momentum of the shot.

Watch a lot of the great shooters and they'll actually shoot a combination of both of these shots.

If it has to be released super quick, they won't dip.

Research and others are promoting the dip and I say you should practice both releases.

Let's face it, I could show you 100 different clips right now with arguments for both sides.

There's no right or wrong in this one – practice both, FOCUS on the correct target, everything else will take care of itself.

NOTE: One of the most interesting things I have had discussions with other coaches about around the world in the past 10 years has always, always, always, revolved around the mechanics of the shot.

**NEVER** about the target.

And when I bring this up – I am totally dismissed and the conversation ends.

This is one of the main reasons I'm releasing these teachings to the world.

It's time to break the cycle of creating bad shooters because someone too many years ago muttered the words....

**"square up to the basket, keep the elbow up, blah blah blah."**

(The hardest part for me when explaining this and for others to understand the concept is simply this – if I said to you right off the bat – "my secret is looking at a target on the front of the rim" then all the mechanics teachers dismiss it in a heartbeat – I get it – but I've written all these words now in order to tell the story and justify the teachings. It's all common sense – right? You're now reading a long way into the course – it takes time to show and present arguments/reasoning behind the teaching – agreed?)



## THE CRAZY SHOTS!

This is the section where the **F.O.C.U.S** method begins to totally outshine every other teaching method that we've been brainwashed with.

Let me explain...

DID YOU KNOW.... I recently read that only 15% of shots in a basketball game were jump shots or set shots. **ONLY 15%**

That means 85% are either free throws or "crazy shots".

I have no reason specifically to call them "crazy shots" but it defines all the shots that aren't your standard set shot or jump shot.

Here's the list that I can think of right away...

Lay Ups in all forms

Hook shots

Fade-aways

Fall aways

Step Backs

Double pump

Floater

Tear Drops

And the list goes on...

**Now THIS is where the FOCUS method comes into it's own and all the "mechanics" are thrown out the window.**

There is simply no need for elbow placement, elbow height, hand position, balance etc etc etc

When you practice these shots, and I STRONGLY encourage you to practice ALL of these shots, the MOST IMPORTANT thing to concentrate on is

**"what are you looking at?"**

Remember the Acronym for this method?

**FOCUS  
ON  
CRITICAL  
UNIQUE  
SPOTS**

Find the spots, practice hitting the targets, then when the game throws the opportunity at you or you need to create the opportunity, you can take it, knowing that this is something you've practiced over and over and over.

Crazy shots are CRITICAL to have in your arsenal as a shooter.

In the game it's called "the ability to finish the shot" – to get the "and 1".

How do you expect to make these crazy shots unless you train your eyes to tell your hands what to do?

Take a look at the photo's I've provided again throughout this course. From the foot positioning, the hips and shoulders and also the different release methods in the "crazy shots" section.

Think... find target fast, tell hands what to do, release quickly!

**(this is the part where I ask other shooting coaches... “What do you teach your players when it comes to shooting one of the 85% of shots that aren’t standard shots?” AND THIS IS THE LOOK (below!) I usually get!!!)**

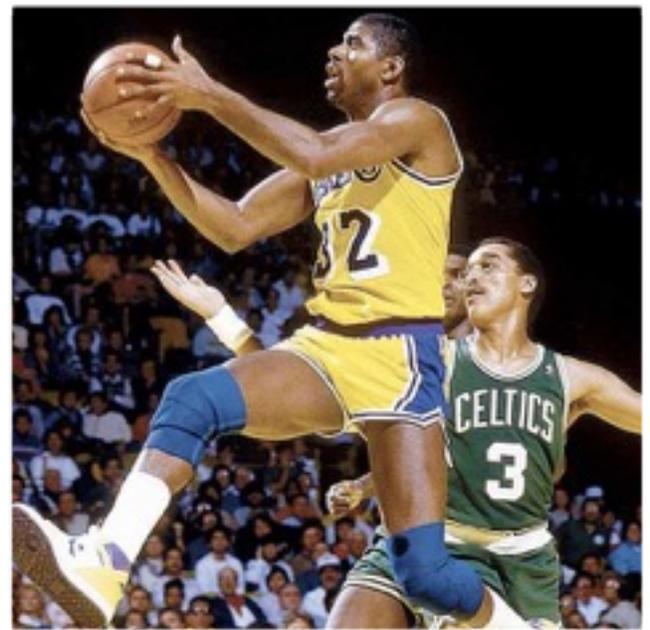
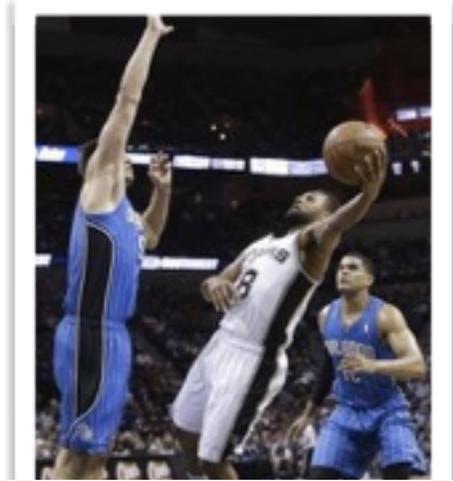
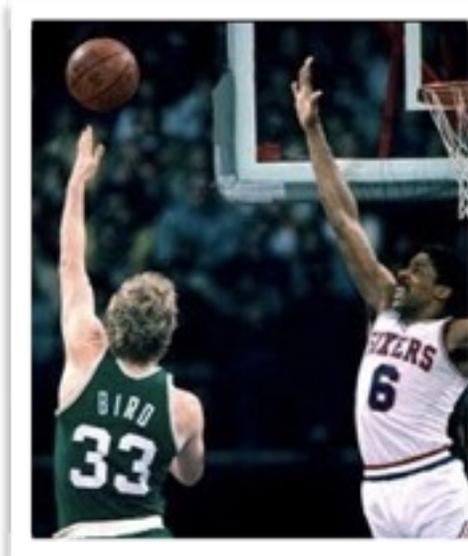


**A jump shot represents only 15% of shots taken in a game.**

**If you don't teach your players to FOCUS – how do you expect them to finish these shots and how do you expect to be able to help them improve if you don't have an agreed target (outcome) to aim for?**







Note: I tried to find more images of females shooting the basketball to show examples – it's easy to find images of them dribbling, but not shooting!

## WRAPPING UP

Everything I've written about so far is simply a gift from me to you.

You don't have to spend years developing the method, over 10 years improving and refining it (what were you doing in 2004? Yep – that's when I really started to work on it), learning as you go and getting many, many doors slammed in your face because your ideas are deemed to be "different" to traditional methods.

Your job now is to take this information and make it your own.

Go through this method step by step.

My wish for you as a coach and player is that you become the shooting coach or shooter you want to be, the players develop into what you want them to be and to be recognized as the coach of the team where all players hear this all the time....

**"They can all shoot!"**

The guidance and advice in this course has been provided to you absolutely free of charge, with no strings attached and in the complete good faith that you'll at least try it.

It will take 20 hours for you and your players to master this skill – but you WILL see immediate improvement in your shots.

Remember....

**"The only time success comes before work... is in the dictionary."**

I wish you every success in the world and I hope your basketball dreams come true.

If you'd like to provide any feedback, ask questions, book me to run a session for you or let me know how you're going – feel free to email me

*Bruce*

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## About The Author

Bruce Hultgren is now based in Geelong, Victoria, Australia. A former professional player in Australia's National Basketball League (NBL), Bruce started his coaching career while still playing, back in 1991.

He started to coach young children and realized very quickly that everything to do with the game had to be broken down so a 6 year old could not only understand it, but achieve success in all the drills they were attempting.

This is where the FOCUS shooting method began to take shape.

In 2004, Bruce began to concentrate on the method while he continued to work in his basketball coaching business.

2006 saw Bruce move his family to Sacramento, California where he started to really develop and refine the method in many different coaching situations.

During this next 5 year period while based in the USA, Bruce was lucky enough to be asked to present at many events and forums around the world. Countries included different parts of the USA, UK, Germany, New Zealand, Australia, and Dubai (United Arab Emirates).

\* He knew the FOCUS method could be taught in any situation when he had to teach the method to children in Dubai through an interpreter. Every child succeeded in learning and becoming better shooters immediately!

From 2011 until 2014 Bruce "sat" on this teaching method, teaching it only to his local basketball club where he was the director of coaching and now has 240 children exhibiting improved shooting success.

It's been "in the pipeline" to write this course manual – the moment has finally arrived to share this with the world.

\* Rent Bruce – if you'd like to experience these teachings face to face, send Bruce an email to [bruce@brucehultgren.com](mailto:bruce@brucehultgren.com) to start the conversation.