

VISUAL SKILLS REQUIRED FOR **BASKETBALL**

Concentration/Focus

Maintaining a high level of concentration and focus in a fast paced, action-filled game like basketball is essential in order to deliver a great performance. A slight lapse in concentration can lead to turnovers, missing easy lay-ups and free throws, or being beaten to the basket by another player. The team that can establish an intense level of concentration and maintain it for forty-eight minutes is the one that will go further than the rest.

Accommodation and Convergence

Accommodative skills allow an athlete to keep objects in focus as well as quickly change focus during the game. Basketball players must be able to change focus instantaneously as the ball comes toward them or is thrown away from them. Quick, accurate saccades (or eye movements) are needed to rapidly survey the locations and movements of the other nine players and the ball in relationship to the basket, boundary lines, etc.

Anticipation Timing

It is of crucial importance for a player to make the right move at the right time. Therefore, perfect timing is essential. A player must anticipate exactly when to catch a pass, when to go for a rebound, when to intercept a pass, etc.

Depth Perception

The ability to quickly and accurately judge the distance between yourself, the ball, your opponents, teammates, boundary lines and other objects is vital for:

- Shooting (*If you consistently over- or underestimate the distance to your target, poor depth perception may be the reason. Good depth perception can minimize shots that are too long, that fall short of the rim, or are not high enough*)
- Passing, specifically to players on the other side of the court on a breakaway; and
- Evaluating the defensive positions of opponents.

Because it's such a fast moving sport, with both the players and the ball in constant motion, knowing where you are, relative to the ball, other players, and the basket is very important.

Dynamic Visual Acuity

Sharp dynamic visual acuity is extremely important for a sport like basketball, since both the athletes and the ball are in constant motion. Players must be able to react quickly to visual stimuli that are constantly changing.

Eye Fatigue and Performance Levels

Since basketball is a very fatiguing sport that requires a lot of running and jumping, eye 'fitness' is very important. A player who has limited visual endurance may find that he or she performs better early on in the game but is unable to sustain the visual demands required for peak performance as the game goes on. Therefore, eye exercises which strengthen eye muscles, will allow you to perform for longer periods of time with reduced eye fatigue.

Fixation Ability

Fixation is critical for accurately shooting at the desired target. A basketball player must focus quickly on his/her target (e.g., The back of the rim or bank-point on the backboard) and then execute the shot and follow through by retaining fixation on the spot after the shot is released.

Peripheral Vision/Awareness

Utilizing the full extent of your visual field and being aware of your surroundings, movement of other players or objects around you, and changes on the court is an essential skill for a basketball player on both offense and defense.

- The offensive player has to look directly at his/her opponent's eyes while being peripherally aware of the basketball he/she's dribbling, an open man to pass to, other defensive players trying to steal the ball from him/her, etc.
- The defensive player must concentrate centrally on the offensive man he/she's guarding, while being peripherally aware of screens (picks), his/her position on the court in relationship to his man and the basket, how much time is on the shot clock, where the ball is on the court, etc.

Visual Reaction Speed

Since basketball is such a fast-moving sport, players have to be able to react to any situation that rises as quickly as possible. If your reactions are automatic, it will help in plays such as interceptions and rebounds.