

## Sample Youth Practice Schedule (Ages 7 to 10)

Here is a sample structure of a practice schedule for a youth team. It may not be exactly what you would do every practice. For example, some days you may spend more work on athletic skill work and spend 15 minutes at the beginning of practice to do so. Some days, you may play games to teach skills half of the practice.

**Here is a template of the basic structure of every practice:**

- 1. Dynamic Warm Up & Athletic Development Work - 10 to 15 minutes** This is probably the #1 thing missing from most youth practices. It helps prevent injury, improves performance, and improves athletic ability. What good is a basketball player who is injured or is not athletic enough to utilize the basketball skills developed? The better the player moves, the better the player performs. Why not spend time on it? There are a lot of players who have tremendous SKILLS, but lacked the ATHLETIC ability to make it to the next level. However, with this age group, they are NOT mentally capable to take much technical instruction, so it is great to incorporate games to get the players warmed up.
- 2. Teaching Skills and Using Fun Drills to Improve Skills - 20 minutes** The #1 reason kids quit sports is because it's not fun anymore. Youth coaches' primary focus should be to teach skills and make it an enjoyable experience! This isn't high school, college, or even PRO basketball, so don't treat your practices like it. Try the skill-fun drill technique. This means that you teach a skill, then follow up that skill with a fun game or drill to work on the skill. It helps break up the monotony of practice.
- 3. Games to Practice Offense and Defense (Plenty of 2 on 2 & 3 on 3 work to teach skills)- 20 minutes** If you are in a 5 on 5 league, you can incorporate some 5 on 5 time. Although, I would not recommend to do it every practice. Skill work is much more important at this age level.
- 4. Cool Down - 5 minutes** AVOID STATIC (held) stretching & YOGA with kids under the age of 10. At this age, the child's nervous system has not developed to the extent that they can properly use static stretching. As a result, this will decrease safety and effectiveness of the stretch. Yoga can also negatively affect a child's movement patterns and coordination. Yoga is not bad for everybody. It's just bad for this AGE GROUP. Instead, use dynamic flexibility and full range of motion exercises.