

BONUS! HOW TO MAKE A SHOOTING CHECKLIST



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Bonus - How to Make a Shooting Checklist

I think making a shooting checklist is one of most useful exercises you can do as a basketball player. In truth, it wasn't until recently when I read Kyle Korver's shooting checklist that I decided to sit down and make one for myself.

Just to be clear, your shooting checklist is going to be different than mine and Kyle Korver's.

We all have different habits, body types, training experiences, and mechanics. So the point is not to copy what I've done but to search for the things that help you get into your shooting sweet spot.

I've always had a mental list in my head about the various elements of my shot that I need replicate to achieve a consistent shot, but I've never written them down on paper until now.

I'm going to walk you through the same questions that I've asked myself when I created my list, and I'll also provide the answers to the questions.

Practically speaking this has been a great exercise for me for several reasons.

1. Objective Self-Analysis is the Key to Growth

- I recently read a book called the [*Inner Game of Tennis*](#) which argues that a big key to the natural learning process is the ability to objectively self-evaluate without assigning a value on the action. For example, when a lot of shooters miss a shot they often get frustrated and angry; and when they make a shot they will give themselves praise. In both situations the person tries to consciously change (during a miss) or repeat (during a make) the action to achieve a desired outcome. This "trying" often does not allow a shooter to achieve the fluidity and smoothness that is required for shooting a jumper.
- The key is to observe the mechanics of your shot and allow yourself those changes to be absorbed into your shooting motion as you feel the ball release from your hands. What the checklist does is allow you to observe the tendencies you want to be repeatable in your shot so that you can feel them during practice. If you're not aware of these things then you won't be able to feel them.

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2. Focus on the Process

- A checklist puts into very real terms the specifics of what your process as a shooter looks like. If you can train yourself to repeat this process every single time you shoot the ball, you will have a great chance of making shots. One of the greatest traps a shooter can fall into is allowing their emotions to rise and fall depending on whether the ball goes through the hoop. This is a difficult habit to break! But it is one of the great keys to becoming a consistent and confident shooter.

3. Your Feelings will be Tied to Mechanics

- Every shooter knows the great feeling of getting in that shooting zone, where it feels like your in an alternate universe. You get into a flow that is hard to describe. One of the benefits of creating a list like this is to write down the mechanics that are associated with these feelings. One example could be, when I'm in the zone I can always feel the power of my shot coming from my legs. Repeating these movements in practice will help us build habits that allow our natural shooting movements to take over and the forced, tense, habits of "trying to shoot well" to be left behind.

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Step 1: Create an Opposites List

This first exercise will give us a list of things that we feel whenever we start shooting poorly. If we can figure out what not to do in our shooting, all we need is to take the inverse of that and we'll have a positive point of reference. Remember your bad habits will probably be different than mine.

Question: **When I start missing badly what do I notice about my shooting motion?**

● **Observation:** I start dipping the ball behind my head.

● **Positive Principle:** Release the ball in front of your face

● **Observation:** I usually miss short, which means I'm not loading my legs.

● **Positive Principle:** Feet down quick, explode up.

● **Observation:** I raise my head in the same motion as my shot.

● **Positive Principle:** Eyes up early.

● **Observation:** I'm off balance.

● **Positive Principle:** Find your feet early and get pointed towards the rim.

Write down your observations and then turn them into a positive principles like I have in the chart below.

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Question - 1

When I start missing shots
◀ what do I notice about my ▶
shooting motion?



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Step 2: Create an 'In the Zone' List

This second exercise will give us a list of things that we feel whenever get into that illusive shooting zone - what a great feeling!

The Key is to increase your awareness of how your body feels when you get into the zone. This can be difficult because your focus often blocks your conscious mind out of the process, but start to feel how your feet, body, torso, hands, wrist, eyes, head, legs, and back work in unison when your shot feels smooth and effortless.

Question: When I get into the zone what do I observe about my body, feelings, and posture?

● **Observation:** My release becomes short, explosive, and effortless.

● **Positive Principle:** No wasted movement. Shooting pocket and up.

● **Observation:** My shot feels effortless and smooth.

● **Positive Principle:** Relax your muscles and allow your natural shooting motion to takeover.

● **Observation:** My body feels strong from start to finish on release.

● **Positive Principle:** Strong legs, strong core, strong finish.

● **Observation:** My follow through feels quick and powerful.

● **Positive Principle:** Powerful wrist flick.

Write down your observations and then turn them into a positive principles like I have in the chart below.

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Question - 2

When I'm "In the Zone"

◀ what do I observe about ▶
my body and shot?

◀ **Observe** ▶

- ◀ Easy Release ▶
- ◀ Smooth Shot ▶
- ◀ Strong Body ▶
- ◀ Strong Release ▶

◀ **Principle** ▶

- ◀ Efficient Movement ▶
- ◀ Relax and Up ▶
- ◀ Strong + Up ▶
- ◀ Powerful Wrist ▶

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Step 2: Create a 'Focus' List

This third exercise will give us a list of things that we know help us get into a zone of concentration and focus when we start shooting the ball.

I've found that when you can focus on smaller things in and around your shot (i.e. your release point, the rim, the seams of the ball, etc) that making shots tends to take care itself. If you just focus on whether you "make or miss" the shot then you become engrossed in the results and stop focusing on the process.

Question: What parts of my shot can I use to help me focus on the process and avoid thinking about results?

● **Observation:** When I release from my shooting pocket I find good rhythm and consistency.

● **Positive Principle:** Focus on finding the sweet spot in shooting pocket.

● **Observation:** Before games when I focus on encouraging my teammates I stop focusing on how my shot feels.

● **Positive Principle:** Encourage others and avoid worry.

● **Observation:** Feel the ball coming off middle and pointer finger.

● **Positive Principle:** Feel the ball leave your through those those fingers.

● **Observation:** See the front part of the rim before you shoot.

● **Positive Principle:** Sight before shot.

Write down your observations and then turn them into a positive principles like I have in the chart below.

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Question - 3

What helps me focus on
 ◀ the process and not the ▶
 results of my shot?



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Here's an idea of what a shooting checklist could look like. Everyones list will look a little bit different. Yours could be longer or shorter depending on how many answers you have to the questions we asked previously, but the important thing is to have a list that you can reference. Happy Listing!

Shooting Checklist

- ◀ High release point ▶
- ◀ Explosive Feet ▶
- ◀ Body towards Target ▶
- ◀ Eyes on rim early ▶
- ◀ Relax + Shoot Smooth ▶
- ◀ Powerful wrist flick ▶
- ◀ Find your sweet spot ▶
- ◀ Feet towards the rim ▶
- ◀ Encourage Others! ▶
- ◀ Ball off two fingers ▶
- ◀ Strong core, legs, + finish ▶
- ◀ See Rim then Shoot ▶

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