CHAPTER 14
UPPER BODY FUNDAMENTALS
Part 2
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14. UPPER BODY FUNDAMENTALS

LAST FIVE OF TEN UPPER BODY RULES

6. Cradle Grip and Pinch Grip
7. 2-Finger and 3-Finger Releases
8. Release Point
9. The Release
10. Follow-Through, Slap the Water
14. UPPER BODY FUNDAMENTALS

6. CRADLE GRIP AND PINCH GRIP
14. UPPER BODY FUNDAMENTALS

6. CRADLE GRIP

Hand is horizontal, ball rests in the hand.

The universal grip.
14. UPPER BODY FUNDAMENTALS

6. PINCH GRIP

Shooter pinches the ball lightly with the 5 fingers.
6. PINCH GRIP

Pinch grip prevents the ball from dropping out of hand.
14. UPPER BODY FUNDAMENTALS

6. PINCH GRIP

Pinch grip used for hesitation fakes and large faking motions.

Don’t use with pump fake.
14. UPPER BODY FUNDAMENTALS

6. PINCH GRIP

Pinch grip creates:
1. 2-finger Release
2. Index Release
3. Middle Finger Release
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6. PINCH GRIP

And the pinch grip creates:

4. Topspin Release
5. 2 Finger Skip Shot
6. 1 and 2 Finger Lobs
7. 3-FINGER AND 2-FINGER RELEASES
14. UPPER BODY FUNDAMENTALS

7. 3-FINGER AND 2-FINGER RELEASES
Shooter uses a 3-finger release or a 2-finger release to shoot the ball.
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7. 3-FINGER AND 2-FINGER RELEASES

3-finger release: the universal release.

2-finger release is the advanced release.
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7. 3-FINGER RELEASE

Middle 3-fingers make final contact and place spin on the ball.
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7. 2-FINGER RELEASE

Index & middle fingers:
1. Snap down on the ball
2. Make final contact
3. Spin the ball.
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7. 2-FINGER RELEASE

Ball is caught with index & middle finger together.
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7. 2-FINGER RELEASE

Ball caught with index and middle fingers together.

Impossible to move fingers with ball in the hand.
8. RELEASE POINT

Release point is the height of hand and ball. 30” is best.
Low release point of 15” aims the ball at middle of goal. Goalie’s arms are usually positioned at 15-inches.
8. RELEASE POINT

Release point is spot in air where the ball is let go by the hand.
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8. RELEASE POINT

Higher the release point the better the shot. Release points of 30-inches or higher are best.

Low release point = low corner shot
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8. RELEASE POINT

Shooter has a 30-inch high or higher release point.
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8. RELEASE POINT

High release point scores on low-in-the-water goalie.
8. RELEASE POINT

High release point forces goalie to leap.
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8. RELEASE POINT

Shooter chooses a high or low shot by reading the goalie’s high or low position.
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8. RELEASE POINT CONTINUED

High release point has shooter kick high and hard with the legs with a high elbow.

Belly button (boys) or the hips (girls) is visible.

Weak shooter’s has chin in the water.
14. UPPER BODY FUNDAMENTALS

9. THE RELEASE

Final contact of the ball is with shooter’s fingertips.

BALL SPINS OFF FINGERTIPS
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9. THE RELEASE

Fingertips place equal pressure on the ball.

Creates level ball flight.
9. THE RELEASE

If index or ring finger dominates the ball veers right or left.

Veer right = index finger
Veer left = ring finger
9. THE RELEASE

Dropped Elbow:

Hand turns inward to left, ring finger pushes ball left.
9. THE RELEASE

**Weak Biceps:**

Hand turns right as index finger pushes the ball to **right**.

Biceps failed to stabilize hand.
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9. THE RELEASE CONTINUED

Ball veers to right or left: hand turned slightly.

Unequal finger pressure is an effect.
Not the cause of the release problem.
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9. THE RELEASE CONTINUED

Incorrect left foot positioning is the cause of the turned hand (dropped elbow).

Square body position = feet are together.
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9. THE RELEASE CONTINUED

**Cause:** Left foot does not point at corner.

**Situation:** Shooter’s body is square, turns the hand, putting side spin and a curve on the ball.
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9. THE RELEASE CONTINUED

Cure: Point left leg and the angle body.

Left foot controls angle of right hand and the body.
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9. THE RELEASE: BAR-IN DRILL

Shooter needs sensitive fingers to own the ball.

Bar-in shooting drill teaches finger control.
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9. THE RELEASE: BAR-IN DRILL

Shooter: 4-meter line, on L. post, shoots at the edge of right post. Ball deflects into goal

Ball deflects into goal: Ring Finger pushes ball.

Ball bounced out: Index Finger pushes ball out.
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9. THE RELEASE: BAR-IN DRILL

Five Things Happen to the Ball

1. Ball deflects into goal. Hand perfect.
2. Ball deflects out: Index finger pushed ball.
3. Ball bounced right back: Hand flat-ok.
4. Ball bounces up: Lying on back.
5. Ball bounces down: Release point above bar.
   (Good sign, indicates high elevation).
14. UPPER BODY FUNDAMENTALS

9. RELEASE: GIRL LOBS THE POWER SHOT

**Cause:** girl (or boy) shooter square to the goal.

**Effect:** Elbow drops, right hand under ball.

**Fix:** Angle body, Left foot drills, Poolside, Spin and Serbian drills.
14. UPPER BODY FUNDAMENTALS

9. THE RELEASE: GIRL LOBS POWER SHOT

Cure: Angled body use **L.R.R. rules**
Left foot point
Right leg back
**Rotate** the hips, elbow close to ear

Elevate, Rotate (hips) and Crunch (abs)
14. UPPER BODY

10. FOLLOW-THROUGH
SLAP THE WATER

Shooter completes shot by turning the body to left as hand slaps the water.

Follow-through stops the body motion.
10. FOLLOW-THROUGH ENDS THE SHOT

Shooter’s body decelerates (stops) by the body turning to left.
14. UPPER BODY

10. FOLLOW-THROUGH

There are 3 stages of throwing:

- Cocking
- Shooting
- Follow-thorough

Follow-through stops body and prevents injury.

It takes 2½ times more strength to stop the body than to throw the ball.
14. UPPER BODY

10. FOLLOW-THROUGH

Shooters are injured during the follow-through and not during the shot.

Body turns to the left and slows the body speed down to a safe speed and then the body stops.

Hand stops over the left foot in angled shooter.
14. UPPER BODY

10. FOLLOW-THROUGH

A square bodied shooter cannot turn and uses the shoulder to stop the throwing motion.

CORRECTED MYTHS:

The water does not stop the shooter’s right arm.
The water does not stop the diver’s dive.
The air does not stop the pitcher’s arm.
14. UPPER BODY

10. WOMEN AND THE HAND SLAP

Coaches of women water polo players believe in an incorrect follow-through theory: To speed up the right hand, slap it hard on the water. Use hand slap drill.

The follow-through is not the shot; it happens after the ball is gone! Follow-through slows the arm.

REALLY WRONG THEORY!
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10. WOMEN AND THE HAND SLAP

Speed of hand slap is the speed of the hips.

Shooter’s hand speed is her hip speed.

Practicing slapping the hand on water is wrong!
Hand slap drill does not speed up the hips.
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10. WOMEN AND THE HAND SLAP

Fast hip rotation: Hard slap, high speed shot.

Slow hip rotation: Weak slap, slow speed shot.

Fast Hand Slap = Fast Hip Speed.
14. UPPER BODY FUNDAMENTALS

10. WOMEN AND THE HAND SLAP

Speed of the hand is an **effect** and not **cause**.

Shooter’s hip speed **causes** ball speed.

Right hand speed, is an **effect**.
10. FOLLOW-THROUGH: HAND SLAP DRILL

Women with a weak release practice slapping their hands on the water.

OUCH! A Useless Drill.

Hand Speed is Hip Speed.
14. UPPER BODY FUNDAMENTALS

10. FOLLOW-THROUGH SPIN DRILL

**Hand Speed is Hip Speed.**

**DRILL:** Player has body angled, ball behind back with hand on top, rotates the hips quickly, arm next to ear. Slams the ball into water hard.

Faster hips rotate = Faster right arm moves.
14. UPPER BODY FUNDAMENTALS

Spin Drill

Girls with a slow arm motion and weak hand slap have slow hip rotation.

Have the girl increase her hip rotation and the right arm speed increases dramatically.
14. UPPER BODY DRILLS
13 Drills, 22 Slides

1. Ballerina
2. Spin
3. Ball pick up
4. Slam-Dunk Swims
5. Slam-Dunk Cage Slams
6. Serbian Straight Arm
7. Bar-in
14. UPPER BODY DRILLS
13 Drills, 22 Slides

DRILLS CONTINUED

8. High Corner Shooting
9. Across the Face Catch
10. Across the Body Pass
11. 2-on-1 Counterattack Cross Pass
12. Right to Left Hesie
13. Pump Fake Laps
14. UPPER BODY DRILLS

1. BALLERINA DRILL

Player rotates right arm and hips back with or without the ball. Step-back and rotate is command. Then pull down left arm, rotate the hips and move right arm forward. Move to shallow end. Finish in the deep end.
14. UPPER BODY DRILLS

1. BALLERINA DRILL

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14. UPPER BODY DRILLS

1. BALLERINA DRILL

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14. UPPER BODY DRILLS

3. SPIN DRILL

Player must understand body rotation.

**Hips rotate the body.**

Spin drill teaches body rotation.

Player points left foot and shoulder at goal, right arm straight back, hand on top of ball.
14. UPPER BODY DRILLS

4. SLAM-DUNK SWIM DRILL

Driver knows the legs are the shot.

Lunge drills force driver to use the legs.

Low-in-the-water driver, without momentum from the leg kick, cannot slam ball.
14. UPPER BODY DRILLS

5. SLAM-DUNK CAGE SLAM DRILL

Driver repeats the slam-dunk drill 1-meter the cage.

Driver is horizontal, right leg straight back, left foot forward. Lunge forward by pushing down on the ball, pull with left hand and kick the legs.

Driver lunges forward, touches the underside of crossbar and slams the ball down.
14. UPPER BODY DRILLS

5. SLAM-DUNK CAGE SLAM DRILL CONT.

The butt should appear after the slam-dunk. Russians believe that a visible butt indicates proper body motion.

Good lunge has shooter’s butt high out of the water after the slam. Dolphin kick after shot.
14. UPPER BODY FUNDAMENTALS

6. SERBIAN HIGH ELBOW DRILL

Player has ball over the head with locked elbow next to ear. Do not move the arm. Crunch abs and snap torso forward and the ball leaves the hand.

Elbow stays high. Do not move arm. Teaches high elbow positioning.

Prevents the elbow drop in women.
14. UPPER BODY DRILLS

7. BAR-IN DRILL

The shooter moves to 4-meter line, right post, and deflects the ball off edge of left goal post.

**Index finger** slightly pushes the ball inward to deflect ball into goal for score.

**Ring finger** pushes the ball to outside of goal.
14. UPPER BODY DRILLS

7. BAR-IN DRILL

Bar-in drill teaches accuracy and smart hands.

Shooter learns slight angling of hand causes ball to deflect into the goal, bar-in or to deflect out or to bar-out.
14. UPPER BODY DRILLS

8. HIGH CORNER SHOOTING

The shooter must shoot at the high corner.
It is easy to shoot at the low corners.

A high corner shot requires strong legs and a strong core (abs, low back).

Difficult for a weak shooter player to shoot high.
14. UPPER BODY DRILLS

9. ACROSS-THE-FACE CATCH DRILL

Two players, passer on left post and catcher on right post. Catcher faces goal, moves right leg toward towards the passer, pushes water to right with the left hand.

Swing the right leg 270-degrees and pull the water to the left to catch the ball.
14. UPPER BODY DRILLS

10. ACROSS-THE-BODY PASS

Player learns the across-the-body pass. Half of water polo is played on the left side of pool.

The across-the-body pass requires the use of the right foot point. The passer swings the right foot forward to point at the target and sweeps the left hand horizontally to the left.
14. UPPER BODY DRILLS

10. ACROSS-THE-BODY PASS

Player’s left foot points at right corner of goal when passing left. With a left foot point, the player’s right arm \textit{cannot} physically cross the left foot.

\textbf{Bad passer} lowers the arm, bends elbow, twists wrist and places sidespin on the ball for a bad pass left. \textbf{Cure}: Move the left foot point to left and pass left.
14. UPPER BODY DRILLS

11. 2-on-1 COUNTERATTACK CROSS PASS

Passer on right post throws ball to the shooter driving towards left post. Driver dribbles ball, stops by snapping right leg forward, pushes ball down in the water to stop, swings the right leg to left, is square to the shooter and passes.
14. UPPER BODY DRILLS

12. R.B. DRILL

Women have a more difficult time shooting a R.B. (rear back shot). A woman’s longer legs are harder to move forward through the water.

R.B. driver drives, drops the legs, moves to the vertical, & catches a dry pass for a quick shot.
14. UPPER BODY DRILLS

12. R.B. DRILL CONTINUED

The movement of the driver’s left leg forward from a horizontal flutter kicking position to a left leg forward position is called hip flexion.

A stationary hip flexion drill: horizontal, hold onto ball and snap the left leg forward.
14. UPPER BODY DRILLS

12. R.B. DRILL SWIMS

Driver flutter kicks laps with/without the ball. Snap left foot forward after 6 kicks in front of driver’s body.

The movement of left foot forward moves the body to the vertical. It is a trained response. Track hurdlers and high jumpers learn hip flexion, or, crunch the bar.
14. UPPER BODY DRILLS

13. RIGHT-TO-LEFT HESIE SHOOTING

Drill teaches moving the left foot from right to the left. Shooter sets up to shoot at the right corner, left foot points at right corner, goalie moves to right corner.

Then the shooter moves left foot to point at left corner and shoots. A difficult drill for women.
14. UPPER BODY DRILLS

14. PUMP FAKE ADVANCING THE BALL

Pump fake the ball by advancing forward for two laps. Player angles the body by pointing the left foot and having the right leg back.

Pump fake can only be done if the player’s body is angled, left hand pulling and right arm swinging. Poor technique rapidly tires player.
14. UPPER BODY DRILLS

PUMP FAKE ADVANCING THE BALL

A square player without a left foot/shoulder point or left hand sweep cannot swing the arm back and forth to pump fake the ball.

The square pump faker tires immediately.
14. UPPER BODY DRILLS

PUMP FAKE ADVANCING THE BALL

Next set up the frontcourt offense with a slougher on the 2-meter player. The outside player advances the ball by faking.

- No commitment—shoot the ball.
- Attacked—pass the ball into 2-meters.
14. UPPER BODY DRILLS

LEARNING THEORY FOR SHOOTING

Only bad shooters like to do tomorrow what they did yesterday.

Change and creativity score goals.

Practice, Experiment, Fail, Create.

Learn from mistakes, grow and create new shots.
14. UPPER BODY DRILLS

“Practice is failure time for the great shooter. “

Experiment with new shots.

Grow by creating, failing, learning from failure and continue trying to create new shots.

Tony Azevedo 4-US Olympian
14. UPPER BODY FUNDAMENTALS

**SUMMARY**

1. The torso, shoulders, arms are the upper body.

2. The upper body releases the ball, places spin on the ball, aims high or low and controls ball speed.

3. The upper body controls and modulates the power coming from the legs, hips and torso.

4. Wild shot: loss of leg stability in the lower body; loss of arm control in the upper body.
14. UPPER BODY Q & A

1. Upper body is the arms, shoulders and chest.
   True
   False

2. Only the right arm throws the ball.
   True
   False

3. The whole body throws the ball.
   True
   False
14. UPPER BODY Q & A

4. The lower body controls the upper body.
   True
   False

5. The fingertips place spin on the ball.
   True
   False
14. UPPER BODY Q & A

6. The left shoulder point is more important than the left foot point.
   True
   False

7. The right hand aims the ball.
   True
   False
6. The left shoulder point is more important than the left foot point.
   True
   False
   (Left foot point makes the left shoulder point.)

7. The right hand aims the ball.
   True
   False
   (Left foot aims the ball; right hand releases ball.)
14. UPPER BODY Q & A

8. The left hand is very important for shooting.
   True
   False

9. A high release point (hand height) makes a high corner shot.
   True
   False
14. UPPER BODY Q & A

10. An elbow dragging in the water throws the ball accurately at the high corner.
   True
   False

11. Lying-on-side is used for a cross-cage shot.
   True
   False
14. UPPER BODY Q & A

10. An elbow dragging in the water throws the ball accurately at the high corner.
   True
   False
   *(Ball travels in a straight line. Needs high hand.)*

11. Lying-on-side is used for a cross-cage shot.
   True
   False
   *(Move left foot to point at cross-cage corner.)*
14. UPPER BODY Q & A

12. The elbow drags in the water and shoots a:
   High Corner Shot
   Low Corner Shot

13. Skip shot is thrown accurately from lying on back.
   True
   False
14. UPPER BODY Q & A

12. The elbow drags in the water and shoots a:
   A. High Corner Shot
   B. Low Corner Shot
   (10” high hand throws low. A 30” hand throws high.)

13. Skip shot is thrown accurately from lying on back.
   True
   False
14. A wild shot is the result of an unstable:
   A. Right arm and hand
   B. Weak legs and square body

15. A slow hand slap by a girl is caused by:
   A. High-speed hip motion
   B. Slow hand snap
   C. Slow-speed hip motion
14. UPPER BODY Q & A

16. The head can point away from the goal.
   True
   False

17. Length of the arm cock is created by:
   A. Right Arm
   B. Rotation of Hip to Right
   C. Left Foot
14. UPPER BODY ANSWERS

1. T 9. T
2. F 10. F
3. T 11. T
4. T 12. B Low corner shot
5. T 13. F
6. F 14. B Weak legs
7. F 15. C Slow hip speed
8. T 16. F
17. C Rotation of the hip to right
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