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## Basketball player

Knowing the basics of basketball helps you better appreciate the skill and fineness that college and professional players show every time they take the court. Ad ad Basketball players are a variable set. Every player must be not only a talented and fit athlete, but also a good team player. ROBYN BECK/AFP/Getty Images NBA balls are made of leather outer rubber bladder with a butyl rubber bladder that holds air and creates enough pressure to bounce the basketball correctly, as well as a carcass made of nylon and polyester. There are no official specifications of which basketballs should be made. While there are no specific regulations, the NBA decides the ball should be between 29.5 and 29.875 inches in circumference. In 2006, Spalding, which makes basketballs for official use, introduced a new ball made of microfiber composite, which was discontinued due to complaints from players. Learn to love basketball – and strengthen your game – with advice from top WNBA players and coaches Credit: MSG Photos Our heart warms to see women represented in the gym. And for the most part, they are everywhere – cardio marches, a weight room, a swimming pool, studios – in a number equal to, if not larger, than men. But there is one exception: the basketball court. It's a problem because basketball offers incredible full-body training. Plus, it's fun – it's fast enough to entertain you, and you can play it alone or with your friends depending on your mood. So in honor of March Madness, we asked professional basketball players and coaches what makes the game so incredible - and what they want to be the ball players they need to know before they tie their high tops. (P.S. Try march madness-inspired total body workout.) Ad ad ad: MSG Photos Basketball is a full body workout: You have a cardio piece of running up and down the court throughout the game. You've got plyo stuff about jumping and changing directions quickly. And you have a strength component, from leaning on someone, setting up picking and arresting people. —Katie Smith, a retired WNBA player who is currently an assistant coach at the New York Liberty People don't want to get on the treadmill and run. But the action of basketball uses the whole body. You run, you squat, you use your hand-eye coordination. Inside the game there are elements of so many other sports. And it is constant - you move at both ends of the floor. Swin Cash, the New York Liberty player who will start his 15th season in 2014, will be the first player to do so. Basketball is pretty good at all levels of fitness. It tests aerobic and anaerobic capacity due to cardio and anaerobic capacity. You play for a long time, but you have quick sprint bursts to follow Especially in my position, my strength is put to the test - I have to keep my position and box people out and rebound and deal with strong defensive walls. So it requires basic fitness and back and shoulder strength. Then everything that's also caused by exploding - getting to the rim quickly and taking a quick first step. — Carolyn Swords, a New York Liberty player who is entering her sixth season at WNBA Credit: MSG Photos I love basketball because it has so many parts. It's physical, but then there's a mental piece. You have to think about running plays. There are so many things coming at a very fast pace against you, and you have to react and figure it all out. I love it - it challenges you in so many ways. That's why it's so rewarding. —Smith(Find out how meditation can make you a better athlete.) The ad What works for me is usually low-carb, but it depends on the game schedule. I have to fill up properly for competitions, then eat lots of greens, lots of fruits and vegetables. I'm trying to make sure I get enough protein to build power. And I eat the highest quality foods I can find. –Swords I have a very high metabolism. Others may not be able to eat like me. You need to know your body. I eat three good meals a day. I love seafood, but I'm not a big carnivore, so I make sure to replenish with protein shakes or almonds or other things I can carry with me. But I also love sweets, so I also match them to my diet. It's a balancing thing. – Cash credit: MSG Photos All you need is a ball and sneakers. Maybe the court, maybe the rim, but even without it, you can do ball-handling exercises. — Smith Some other sports, you need a lot of money to get started. As a young kid, that's one of the reasons I was drawn to basketball. —Cash(See: 20 iconic sporting moments featuring female athletes.) Credit: MSG Photos Everyone has a different philosophy about what style they want to use. Some people prefer low tops... I go with higher top shoes because I play closer to the edge with more legs that I can trip over, so I like the extra ankle brat. —Swords Ad ad credit: MSG Images It is possible to do individual workouts – ball handling and shooting – but even if you only have one other person working out with you, the types of exercises you can do will multiply greatly. And it's helpful to have a teammate there to cheer you through it. They may see something you can do better and offer advice. It's also a fun way to push yourself and test yourself. Team dynamics are valuable in basketball. You have another set of eyes, and you can use their to improve your workout. —Swords(Ballers knows fitness guy is the best thing ever.) Credit: MSG Photos You hone your skills individually. Players spent a lot of time in the gym, working on Handle, get shots up, chase their own rebounds. That's what I like, there's an individual skill in the game. —Smith Credit: MSG Photos Some of it is only genetics, but plyo stuff can help, like a jumper. So can strength training, like squatting. It's a combination of power and explosiveness that will help you get the earth faster. So rope ladders can help, box jumps, jump ropes... —Smith I've always heard, practice doesn't make perfect, but practice makes habits. When you do lunges or squats, you get used to your muscles so they remember the next time you do it. When I was jumping, I went to some stadium running up the stairs. With repetition and because you use your ATVs, it gives you a solid foundation for jumping ability. –Cash ad

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