



# GAA HANDBALL



## Perfect Your Technique

A step-by-step guide to developing your shot  
technique in Handball

## Get the Basics Right...



### Hand Positioning

When striking the ball, the hand should be:

- 1) Held in a **relaxed cup**, with fingers closed
- 2) The wrist should be loose and flexible
- 3) Contact should be made in the cupped hand, near the base of the first two fingers

### Ball Contact

When making contact with the ball, contact should always be made **in line with the vertical midline of the body**. If you strike the ball before the midline, then the ball will likely go lower than you want. If you strike the ball after the midline, then the ball will likely go higher than you want.



### Body Positioning & Footwork...

*Footwork is the most important fundamental to hitting the ball properly.*

The ball will rarely come to a player in a perfect position to be hit. Thus it is essential that the player moves into a position in order to have the best opportunity to use the proper stroke. Whenever the ball is in play, the player should quickly move into a position about six feet deeper in the court than where the ball will be contacted. This is called the **'pre-shot'** position.





## Underarm Stroke

The underarm stroke is one of the most basic strokes in the game. It is used to hit the ball, when the ball is below waist level, with the fingers pointing towards the floor at point of contact.

Sometimes it will be necessary to use this stroke on retrieving low hit shots directly in front of the player, and on back wall shots that are very close to the side wall. It is also the stroke used in the underhand fist ceiling shot, or whenever the ball is too close to the body to use the sidearm or low sidearm stroke. The underarm is an essential stroke when playing 60x30.

### Key Points:

- 1) Body positioned facing the side wall, with knees slightly bent
- 2) Ball should be contacted below the waist
- 3) Fingers should be pointing to the floor at point of contact
- 4) Step into the ball, and transfer your weight from the back foot to the front foot, when making contact with the ball



## Coaches Corner

### Coaches tip to help you execute this skill...

The movement of the arm striking the ball should move through a 180-degree rotation. Imagine the starting position of the arm to be at 9 O'Clock, with the finishing position at 3 O'Clock.



## Overarm Stroke

The overarm stroke is generally the most natural stroke for a beginner to execute. This stroke is used to return high bounding balls from a shoulder height or higher position.

The most regular instance in which the overarm stroke is used, would be when executing an overhand ceiling shot in the 40x20 court. It is an important defensive shot for a young player to develop and be able to execute of both hands.

It is also regularly used as an attacking serve in the One-Wall code, to serve the ball deep with power.

### Key Points:

- 1) Body positioned facing the side wall, with knees slightly bent
- 2) Transfer the weight from the back foot to the front foot as the player strides towards the front wall
- 3) Fingers pointing towards the ceiling, and elbow bent at the point of contact (at eye level)
- 4) The body position rotates from facing sideways to forwards on the follow through of the stroke



## Coaches Corner

**Coaches tip to help you execute this skill...**

If you are finding the skill difficult to execute, try throwing the ball using the overhand stroke. Start the swing with your throwing/striking arm bent at shoulder height, at 90-degrees.



## Sidearm Stroke

The sidearm stroke is becoming more and more prominent in the modern game. It is used to hit returns from between the waist and shoulders, and execute the pass shot. It is a very complex skill for a beginner to learn, and thus throwing the ball is a useful exercise to help the player develop the correct body movement without the added pressure of striking the ball.

The sidearm stroke is more prominently used in the 40x20 and One-Wall codes of Handball.

### Key Points:

- 1) Body position facing side wall, with knees slightly bent
- 2) The elbow is bent, with the wrist curled, on the back swing
- 3) Transfer weight from the back foot to the front foot as the body moves through the skill
- 4) The elbow is fully extended, with fingers pointing towards the side wall at point of contact



## Coaches Corner

### Coaches tip to help you execute this skill...

If you are having difficulty performing the sidearm, visualize 'skimming a stone' whilst executing the sidearm via a throwing motion.

The sidearm technique is very similar to the overarm technique, with the key difference being further flexion of the back in particular, and the knees.



## Low Sidearm Stroke

The low sidearm stroke is identical to the sidearm stroke previously shown. The only difference is that the contact with the ball is made lower – usually between the waist and the knees. To get into the crouched position to execute this stroke, the knees must be bent further than for the standard sidearm stroke.

The low sidearm is the primary offensive stroke in the 40x20 code, and is used to execute the low kill shot.

### Key Points:

- 1) Body position facing sidewall, with knees and back bent closer to the ground than for the standard sidearm
- 2) Transfer weight from the back foot to the front foot as the body moves through the skill
- 3) The elbow is bent during backswing, but almost fully extended, with fingers pointing towards the side wall at point of contact
- 4) Ball is generally contacted between the waist and the knees



## Coaches Corner

### Coaches tip to help you execute this skill...

When executing the low sidearm, try to strike the ball as low to the ground as you can. Try to strike the ball so it travels low and parallel to the floor. The lower a ball can be struck parallel to the floor, the flatter it will rebound of the front wall, and thus be more difficult for your opponent to retrieve.