

+

GAA  
HANDBALL



+

# ‘Every Shot has a Purpose’

A step-by-step guide to the various  
shot types in Handball

[development.handball@gaa.ie](mailto:development.handball@gaa.ie)

[www.gaahandball.ie](http://www.gaahandball.ie)

shots and their purposes. Any shot in the game can be taken by using the three basic strokes outlined earlier i.e. overhand can be used for a ball arriving above shoulder height, side arm can be used for a ball arriving at waist level and low side-arm or underhand can be used for a ball below knee height. The other main point to remember is that any shot in Handball can be classed as either an offensive (attacking) or defensive shot.

## Defensive Shots:

### 1) The Ceiling Shot:

***Aim:***

*A defensive shot that forces an opponent into a deep court position.*

The ceiling shot is an excellent option to change the pace of the rally; no matter what position you are on the court. A well-executed ceiling shot can force your opponent into the back corner of the court, and allowing you to take control of the center court. This 'centre court position' is generally considered where the game is won and lost, or at least controlled, as it is the position where you have most dominance within the court.

Both the overhand and underhand strokes can/should be used for this shot. Players should aim to strike the ball to the ceiling, close to front wall, and hard enough to enable the ball to reach deep court, but not hard enough to come off the back wall.

#### **Overhand Execution:**

- Contact is usually made when ball is above shoulder height
- Ball is hit with an open hand using the overhand stroke
- With knees bent and facing upwards the ball should be contacted close to eye level.
- Knees then straightened to lift the whole body upwards and hit the ball towards the ceiling.
- The power comes from the bent knees and this takes the pressure off the arms.

#### **Underarm Execution (Fist):**

- Contact is usually made when ball drops below the waist
- Ball is hit with a closed fist instead of the cupped hand.
- The ball is hit using the under arm stroke with a straight arm and a tight wrist instead of the usual loose arm throwing motion
- Ball makes contact with the cuticles (butt of the nail) as player strokes the ball in an upward motion.

- With knees bent and one leg in front of other, the ball is sent up towards the ceiling
- The power comes from the bent knees and this takes the pressure off the arms.
- Ideally the ball should be close to the sidewalls when dropping from the ceiling, this makes it harder to retrieve.

### **When to play the Ceiling Shot:**

The ceiling shot can be played from anywhere on the court, but there are certain instances in particular that the shot is recommended to be used.

- 1) When returning serves, especially low power drives serves.
- 2) During a rally to take your opponent out of the centre court position.
- 3) When you are constantly setting up your opponent and you need to play defensive handball.
- 4) If you discover your opponent is weak on the ceiling this is an ideal shot to use.
- 5) The fist shot helps you to hold centre court position and control the game.
- 6) Taking the ball on the 'fly' and fisting to the ceiling forces your opponent on to the back foot and put them under pressure.

### **Using the Fist:**

Although using the fist is recommended for the underarm ceiling shot, it is not always the best option to use the fist as opposed to the cupped hand.

Using the fist to strike the ball can enable the player to hit the ball harder. This is particularly common among the younger players who have yet to develop physically, and see the fist as a useful option to generate power. This can often generate poor practice with the young developing players, as they tend to use the fist in a range of other shot types during play.

Using the fist can have a negative impact on the player's control of the ball, in comparison to using the cupped hand. Therefore it is essential that the coach encourages the full development and correct technique of using the cupped hand at a young age, reinforcing that the power will develop as the child grows, and as technique is enhanced.

There is no doubt however that the fist can prove to be very effective during a game. One other instance where this may be a good stroke to use, is when a player is not in a good enough position to use his / her usual throwing motion strokes.

## 2) The 3 Wall Shot

### Aim

*To hit the ball from deep court onto either side wall in order for the ball to hit three walls before returning to deep court*

The three wall shot is a defensive shot that makes contact with three walls before bouncing to the floor and landing deep in the back corner. The three wall shot can be played both high and low. When executed well, the angles on the shot will give the returning player less time to get into the pre-shot position. It can be executed using the underarm, sidearm or low sidearm stroke.

#### **'High' 3 Wall Execution:**

- Ball should be hit high to the sidewall > front wall gently, so when it rebounds from the second sidewall it does not give your opponent a chance to hit it on the fly.
- Ball to be hit upwards onto either side wall with force
- Either stroke can be used and this shot can also be executed from a back wall shot.

#### **'Low' 3 Wall Execution:**

- This shot makes contact with the first side wall very close to the front wall and rebounds off the front wall, contacting the opposite side wall (similar to the two wall pass)
- More accuracy is needed for this shot and would be more effective against an opponent that executes good fly shots.
- Either stroke can be used and this shot can also be executed from a back wall shot.

#### **Experts Tip:**

The three wall shot that hits the right side wall first should have a clockwise spin after leaving the hand. This type of shot may also be struck using the left hand fist. The three wall shot that hits the left side wall only should have a counter clock wise spin and may be hit with a left hand stroke or the right hand fist stroke. If the ball has not got the proper spin, the shot will cause the ball to slow down after hitting the first sidewall and will end up in deep court.

#### **When to play the 3 Wall Shot:**

- When returning some 'two' wall serves that do not reach the back wall
- When returning some low power drives that rebound off the sidewall and then comes off the back wall to your good hand.
- When you find yourself running back to retrieve a ball in deep court making sure you are behind the ball and striking the ball with upward strokes resulting in a three-wall wraparound.

## Offensive Shots:

### 1) The Kill Shot:

#### Aim

*To hit the ball so low onto the front wall as to make it irretrievable.*

The kill shot is the most attacking shot in Handball. It can be attempted using the underarm, sidearm or low sidearm. There are two variations of the kill shot; the straight kill (straight onto the front wall), and the corner kill (sidewall to front wall, or front wall to sidewall).

#### Kill Shot Execution:

- Ball to be struck downwards using a downward body momentum, with bent knees and a crouched position.
- The flatter the ball trajectory the more effective the shot
- The lower the point of contact that the ball can be struck the better

### 2) The Fly Shot:

#### Aim

*To cut the ball off before it bounces.*

To 'fly' the ball, simply means to strike it before it bounces, or to volley it. Flying the ball is an aggressive play that reduces the time your opponent has in between shots, thus affecting his pre-shoot positioning. However, it can also be used defensively to the ceiling or around the walls, to change the pace and momentum of the rally. It can be attempted using the underarm, sidearm or low sidearm.

#### Fly Shot Execution:

- Body moving forward to meet the ball before it hops.
- Emphasis on good anticipation.
- If attempting a fly-kill or fly pass as an offensive shot, the point of contact with the ball should be below the waist, and in the midline of the body, thus cutting off opponents time and maintain centre court position

### 3) The Pass Shot:

#### **Aim**

*To force an opponent from a centre court position into rear court, and if possible to make it an irretrievable shot.*

Like the fly shot, the pass shot can be an offensive or defensive shot, and can be attempted using the underarm or sidearm. There are variations on the type of pass shot; the straight pass or the two-wall pass.

#### **Straight Pass Execution:**

- Ball to be hit at waist height onto the front wall, and bounce to either the right or left side of the opponent and head towards deep court

#### **Two Wall Pass Execution:**

- Ball to be hit at shoulder height onto the front wall, rebounding off either side wall, and clipping inside the back corner

### 4) The Back Wall Shot:

#### **Aim**

*To return the ball from the back wall before bouncing and onto the front wall.*

The back wall shot can be an offensive or defensive shot, and can be attempted using the underarm, sidearm or low sidearm. There are variations on the type of back wall shot, which depends on the height and trajectory of the ball, the players positioning on the court, and your opponents position on the court.

#### **Offensive Back Wall Execution:**

To attempt an offensive back wall kill or pass shot, the player should be in a good pre-shoot position. It is not recommended to attempt a back wall kill if you are on the back foot and rushed into execution.

- Move the body in line with the flight of the ball as it both travels to the back wall, and also as it rebounds off the back wall
- Aim to strike the ball low to the ground, as to produce a low trajectory, parallel to the floor

### **Defensive Back Wall Execution:**

A defensive back wall shot is recommended when the player is on the back foot, and hasn't adequate time to get into the desired pre-shot position. A defensive back wall shot might be a wrap around the walls, or a simple lofted lob to ensure the ball hits the front wall, and reaches deep court.

- Move the body in line with the flight of the ball as it both travels to the back wall, and also as it rebounds off the back wall
- Aim to strike the ball high on the wall, as to allow adequate time for you to compose yourself, and get back into the rally