

HOW TO HOLD THE SHOT

Balance the shot in his hand so it is resting at the point where the fingers are connected to the palm of the hand.

Keep their fingers together and allow their thumb to gently rest against the side of the shot that opposes the other four fingers.

The shot should be placed underneath the jaw, roughly one inch in front of the ear. The hand should be pressing the shot against the neck to support it in this position. It is very important that the throwing hand is **behind** the shot and not underneath it.

Once the above is mastered the athlete is ready to proceed to the 5 step approach to the full throw

STEP ONE

In the first step, the thrower stands in the shot ring with his whole body facing the throwing sector and his toes touching the inside of the toe board. The shot is positioned under the jaw, as described earlier, with the intent to throw straight away from the chest. From this position, the thrower will push the shot away from the chest using only the throwing arm. This first step will isolate the **throwing action of the arm** so that the proper mechanics of this motion can be emphasized. The coach should be careful to note that the thrower is keeping the upper arm behind the forearm as he pushes on the shot and that the arm is at roughly a 90-degree angle upon release. The thrower should also be releasing the shot off the end of the middle three fingers so the shot will snap off the throwing hand. A proper release will cause the shot to spin very little and it is not desirable to have a lot of rotation on the shot upon release. Once these steps have been mastered, the thrower is ready to advance to the second step of the progression.

STEP TWO

In the second step, the thrower starts from the same position as in Step One, but with one modification: to rotate the trunk 90 degrees so that his chest is facing the side of the shot ring. From this position, the thrower rotates his trunk back to the original starting position to give a little momentum to the shot before beginning the throw with his arm. This step isolates the **trunk rotation** and the **throwing action of the arm** so that the proper mechanics of these two actions can be emphasized. The proper execution of this drill will result in the thrower coordinating the movements of the trunk and arm to realize at least a five-foot gain in distance from the first step in this teaching progression.

STEP THREE

In the third step of this progression, the thrower starts from the same position as in Step Two, but with one modification: to bend his legs into a quarter squat position while putting all his weight on the balls of both feet. From this position, the thrower initiates the throw in the same manner as in Step Two, while extending his legs up out of the quarter squat position. This step introduces the **action of the legs** into the throw, while coordinating the extension of the legs with the trunk rotation and throwing action of the arm. Proper coordination of the legs, trunk and arm should result in another five-foot increase in distance from the technique used in Step Two

STEP FOUR

In the fourth step, the thrower performs exactly the same movements as in Step Three, except that this step is performed at near **maximal effort**. The coach may allow the athlete to explode out of the starting position to such an extent that they "blow out" of the shot ring. This may be allowed to teach the athlete to be aggressive in throwing the implement. Step four is the first time that the beginning thrower focuses more on the **quickness of execution** and the **explosive elements** of shot putting. The first three steps focused on the **coordination of body segments** and **proper throwing positions**. It is crucial for the coach to make sure that the thrower is executing all elements of the throwing technique correctly, because each step of this progression builds on the previous step.

STEP FIVE

The final step of this five-step progression leads the thrower into the **stand throw**. The athlete begins in the same position as in Step One. From this position the thrower steps back in toward the center of the ring with his right foot to make a "base" that is a little wider than shoulder width. The width of this base may vary depending on the dimensions of the thrower and what feels comfortable to him. There is no steadfast rule as to exactly how far apart the feet should be. The thrower's feet should also exhibit **heel-toe alignment**, meaning that the right heel should be lined up with the left toe along the line that extends down the center of the ring from front to back. This alignment is critical, because it allows the hips to "square up" when the shot is thrown, and allows full trunk rotation for maximal involvement of the back and leg muscles.

After the thrower has established a base with his feet, he should bend his right knee and allow almost all of his weight to be balanced over the ball of the right foot. One way to check if the weight is over the right foot is to have the thrower lift his leg completely off the ground and balance himself on the ball of the right foot. The thrower should then turn his trunk so that his shoulders are squared up to the back of the shot ring. At this point, the thrower is in the basic position to perform a stand throw.

Other technical details the coach should look for in the stand throw position is:

- The head is looking out the back of the ring with the eyes focused on a spot that is roughly 15 feet behind the back of the ring.
- The left arm is relaxed and gently reaching downward toward the back of the ring.
- The right foot is facing out the side of the shot ring with the weight balanced on the ball of the foot. The heel should not be touching the ground.
- The back of the thrower should be facing the throwing sector.
- The left leg is relaxed and slightly flexed in anticipation of bracing for a shift of weight from the right leg to the left leg. The heel should not be touching the ground.

PERFORMING THE STANDTHROW

The legs, followed by the trunk and then the throwing shoulder, should initiate the stand throw. The first movement will cause an upward extension of the right leg (also known as the drive leg), while the right leg and right hip rotate around to square up the right hip. This will result in a **corkscrew** movement of the right leg and hip. Once the legs and hips are in motion, the upper body will start to rotate around to square up the chest toward the throwing sector. As this is happening, the left arm will gradually extend out from the body and reach out down the right sector line of the throwing sector. At this point, the final rotation of the hips and shoulders, along with the complete extension of the legs will result in the release of the shot (just as in Step Three). As the shot is being put with the right hand, the left elbow will be pulled back toward the left hip to further help with the squaring up of the shoulders to the throwing sector.

As the right leg is finishing its extension and the hips are squaring up to the throwing sector, the left leg (also known as the block leg, or post leg) will lock out and "post up." By firming up the left side of the body in this way, the right side can be accelerated even further as the shot is released. This action is known as "blocking" and is critical to realize the best possible throw. Other technical details the coach should look for during the execution of the stand throw are:

- The thrower's head should always face straight out from the chest. It should not be thrown to the side. Upon release, the head may be thrown straight back to allow the chest to rise up so the shot may be lifted.
- The thrower should start off throwing from a "non-reverse" position, i.e., his feet, hips, chest, and head face the throw after releasing the shot. This is to insure that the thrower is fully extending his arms and legs completely before release so he can "push" on the shot as long as possible. The longer the push on the shot, the more the shot will be accelerated.
- At the completion of the throw, both toes should be facing the throwing sector.

TEACHING THE REVERSE

Once the stand throw with a non-reverse finish has been mastered, the thrower can advance to the reverse technique. The reverse allows the thrower to follow through and "chase after" the shot a little more than the non-reverse. The reverse will see the thrower turn his body 180 degrees as the follow through on his throw so he is facing out the left side of the ring after his throw. The reverse is performed by kicking the block leg out the left side of the ring while replacing it with the right leg. This simultaneous action will cause the thrower to rotate 180 degrees as he follows through on his release of the shot into the reverse position. It is important that the thrower does not watch the shot as it is released, since it will cause his center of mass to move forward out the front of the ring. This will result in the thrower fouling by falling out the front of the ring. Many long throws have been lost because of this technical error.

Many beginning throwers tend to reverse too soon when they attempt to reverse for the first time. Therefore, it is recommended that beginning throwers start by non-reversing and only graduate to the reverse when they show that they can consistently reach full extension of the arms, hips and legs on their non-reverse throws. For throwers who are not able to reverse all the way, the simple drill of having them jump (with their hands on their hips) and turn 180 degrees at a time may give them the feel for the reverse.

Once the beginning thrower is able to complete a full stand throw under control, he is ready to begin drills to learn the glide and/or rotational techniques. Many throwers throw much farther in warm-ups with their stand throw than their full technique and then go on to use their full technique in the meet! It is okay for throwers to stand throw in meets and it doesn't make sense to have a thrower rush to the glide or rotational technique before he is ready.