USA Wrestling’s 7 Basic Skills Study Guide

Search YouTube for “USA Wrestling Seven Basic Skills” or click this link
https://youtu.be/WBx7rGnn8po
(Total video play time 59:14)

0:00-3:40 Highlight Clips

3:40-4:57 Make Your Own Luck Concepts for an Ever Evolving Sport

4:57-10:33 **Skill 1 of 7 Position:**
(5 Key Positions: Head Up, Back Straight, Hips In, Knees Off the Mat and Toe Pressure)

What are the 2 basic stances?

1. __ __ __ __ __ __ (staggered)
   Wide foot __ __ __ __ (spread)
   Legs are __ __ and coiled (bent)
   Hands are __ __ __ __ (forward) and elbows are __ (in)
   Chest is forward over the __ __ (knee)
   Head is __ (up)

2. __ __ __ __ (square)
   Wide __ __ __ (base)
   Legs are bent and hips are __ __ __ __ (dropped) creating a power angle
   Hands are __ __ __ __ (forward) and elbows are __ (in)
   Chest is not as forward over the knee as the __ __ __ __ __ (staggered) stance
   Head is __ (up)

A strong stance is the __ __ __ __ __ __ (foundation) for successful takedowns

10:33-12:36 Drills for Stance & Position

1. Scramble to a Stance Drill (10:39-11:18)
   a. Builds strength early in the season
   b. Start flat
   c. Fight top man’s pressure
   d. Return to a solid stance

2. Scramble to a Base Drill (11:18-11:36)
a. Wrestler A starts flat on his/her back
b. Opponent tries to hold him/her on their back
c. Wrestler A scrambles (with bridging) and returns to a strong base

   a. Used to teach fighting for hand control
   b. Bottom wrestler creates back pressure
   c. Bottom wrestler fights for inside hand control

4. Scramble to Control Drill (11:59-12:13)
   a. Starting position is one wrestler on his/her back and the other standing and applying pressure to the down wrestler’s back
   b. On the whistle, the top wrestler must quickly circle and move to top position

5. Get Set Drills – Arm Chop (12:14-12:36)
   a. Starting in referee’s position
   b. Use the whistle to practice reaction time
   c. Top man chops the near arm
   d. Top man uses the back knee to jam the opponent’s butt forward
   e. Repeat the drill – start from each side

12:42-15:52 **Skill 2 of 7 Motion:**

Power is the result of _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ (strength) and _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ (mobility)

To move effectively, athletes must be able to _ _ _ _ _ _ (circle) to both sides, adjust _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ (laterally) and move _ _ _ _ _ (into) and _ _ _ _ _ (away) from an opponent while holding strong position.

Two common methods of moving in a defensive posture are a _ _ _ _ _ (down) block and a _ _ _ _ _ _ (cross) block.

   a. Drop a hand to obstruct the opponent’s path to his/her leg
   b. Send our leg back and up to avoid the opponent’s attack
   c. Maintain balance on the opposite foot and look to circle

15:52-20:18 **Bottom Motion**

3 Key areas to move from:

1. Back to Belly
   a. Get to a bridge
   b. Work an arm to and through his chest
   c. Roll into or away from the opponent based on the arm you can push through

2. Belly to Base – Base Building Technique from World Champion Bill Zadick at this link - [http://www.teamusa.org/USA-Wrestling/Coaches-Core-Curriculum/2015/02/05/RefereesBottomBaseBuildingmp4?channel=VhbnE2czpY4l64YBRDvu6TB5Vqevfd5](http://www.teamusa.org/USA-Wrestling/Coaches-Core-Curriculum/2015/02/05/RefereesBottomBaseBuildingmp4?channel=VhbnE2czpY4l64YBRDvu6TB5Vqevfd5)
   a. Clear arms first
i. Windmill
ii. Walking hands out
iii. Pealing hands

b. Keep head up
c. Build base by bringing the outside knee up to our side
d. Knee slide to a solid base
e. Apply back pressure

3. Starting Position/Base to Feet (Referee’s Position)
   a. Most common bottom move is the _ _ _ _ - _ _ (stand-up)
   b. Drill hip heist drills (sit-out, switch, etc…)

20:18-21:14 Top Motion

Constant motion keeps the top man in better _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ (control)

Top motion (break downs) includes:

   a. Arm Chop
   b. Far Knee, Far Ankle
   c. Near Knee, Far Ankle
   d. Near Knee, Near Ankle
   e. Spiral Ride
   f. Leg Riding

Chest _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ (pressure) and leg drive are key components to successful top wrestling.

21:14-23:11 Drills for Motion (Click this link for more agility skill drills with 2X Olympian, Ahad Javanselehi - https://youtu.be/y364QNcy4Eo)

A great way to develop motion skills is to practice foot-work using _ _ _ _ _ _ (hopping) and _ _ _ _ _ _ (jumping) drills.

23:11-23:48 Stalking from a Square Stance

Wrestler A works from a square stance to close the gap with the opponent by placing his/her forehead to the opponent’s chest.

23:48-24:21 Hip-Heist Drill

   a. The bottom wrestler gains inside hand control as he/she comes up to standing
   b. Isolate one of the top man’s hands and lock it away from our hips
   c. Create distance between our hips and our opponent’s hips as we use back pressure from our head/shoulders to create space
   d. Explode away from your opponent in a hip heisting motion
   e. Circle back to your feet to look for offensive or counter offensive opportunities
Pressure Down Drill for Stand Ups

a. Standing wrestler applies pressure to the bottom wrestler who is laying flat on his/her stomach
b. Bottom wrestler builds from Belly to Base (as above in the Bottom Motion Drills - 15:52-20:18)

Neutral Defense – Performance Motions

Down block and cross block drills can be performed against an opponent who simulates an attack by reaching for singles or high crotches

Skill 3 of 7 Level Change:

A wrestler’s shot often fails because of an improperly executed _ _ _ _ _ (level) change.

A well executed level change includes:

a. Dropping hips
b. Bending Knees in a vertical plain
c. Penetration (next skill – 4 of 7)
d. Change level up and through the opponent at a 45 degree angle

Review 5 Key Positions: Head Up, Back Straight, Hips In, Knees Off the Mat, Toe Pressure

Level Change Drills

Up and Through – High Crotch, Double & Single

a. Wrestler A assumes a low level position
   a. Head Up
   b. Back Straight
   c. Trail Leg Up
b. Opponent shuffles into him/her in a square stance
c. Wrestler A drives up and through the opponent
   a. Used for High-Crotch (first clip 28:23-28:50)
   b. Double Leg (28:51-29:21)
   c. Single Leg (29:23-29:50)

Level Change – Push & Drop

Develops the wrestler’s ability to _ _ _ _ _ (lower) his/her level while being pressured by the opponent

a. The opponent aggressively tries to put his/her hands on Wrestler A’s shoulders
b. Wrestler A focuses on changing level past that pressure for a shot in good position
Skill 4 of 7 Penetration:

Top wrestlers don’t just penetrate to their opponent’s legs but penetrate _ _ _ _ _ _ (through) the opponent’s legs.

Penetrations occur in a variety of ways:

a. Inside Step – Technique video from World Champ, Bill Zadick at http://www.teamusa.org/USA-Wrestling/Coaches-Core-Curriculum/2015/02/06/InsideStepPenetrationflv?channel=E1Mjc3czo1OL5ulrrPfVLgy9VpuRmyaN
b. Outside Step – Technique video from Bill Zadick at http://www.teamusa.org/USA-Wrestling/Coaches-Core-Curriculum/2015/02/06/OutsideStepPenetrationflv?channel=E1Mjc3czo1OL5ulrrPfVLgy9VpuRmyaN

Penetration Drills

Jolt Drill – For Double and Single Legs (34:11-35:27)

a. Wrestler A pops the opponent’s elbows
b. Execute a step in penetration
c. Concentrate on making hard contact with the opponent’s upper body
d. Drill repeatedly to build muscle memory

Knee Pound (or Knee Slide) Drill for Singles, Doubles and High Crotches

Designed to properly re-attack an opponent and elevate him/her

Run Down Legs Drill

Designed to teach wrestlers to learn the skill of re-shooting after defending an opponent’s attack

a. Opponent starts in a Bear Crawl position
b. Wrestler A starts in a front head and arm (as if he/she stopped the opponent’s shot)
c. Wrestler A takes a lateral (outside) step to create an attack angle
d. Use proper penetration to complete a takedown on the opponent

Sprint-Out Drill

Same drill as Run Down Legs Drill but in the case the defensive wrestler tries to run away from the attacking opponent once Wrestler A takes the lateral (outside) step.

This drill teaches wrestlers to realize they will have to _ _ _ _ _ _ (adjust) to fast moving targets in order to gain some of the toughest takedowns.
38:27-39:23 High Level Re-Shots

a. Opponent reaches to simulate a shot  
b. Wrestler A down blocks or cross blocks the opponent’s reach  
c. Wrestler A immediately re-attacks the opponent after the block  
d. Note that Wrestler A’s defense coils his/her legs to prepare for an explosive shot

39:24-40:55 Sprawl to Shot Drill

Requires wrestlers to develop strong penetration steps after a sprawl on a stationary opponent.

Can be used to develop double legs, single legs and high crotches.

Ensure athletes use proper position before increasing speed and intensity.

40:59-45:03 Skill 5 of 7 Lifting:

The best wrestlers finish shots strong by coming up to their feet and power (through) their opponent.

43:34-45:03 Lifting Drills

Reverse Lift Drill (43:38-43:47)

a. Builds strength for lifting  
b. Partners take turns lifting each other from a reverse lift grip around the opponent’s waist  
c. Lift with the legs and hips – avoid bending over at the waist which can over-stress the back and hamstrings  
d. Rotate the opponent in the air and repeat  
e. Opponents can help the lifter by springing a bit with the feet and hands until he/she can perform the lift without help

Lunge Drill (43:48-44:07)

a. Wrestler A lifts his/her opponent in a Fireman’s Carry  
b. Alternate legs by stepping forward in a lunge step  
   a. Keep head up  
   b. Keep back straight  
   c. Step so that the knee stays above the foot and does not extend past the toes of the front foot

Stand Up Mat Return Drill (44:08-44:35)

a. Starting position is referee’s position  
b. Wrestler A is the top wrestler and will perform the lifts  
c. The bottom wrestler executes a solid stand up
d. Wrestler A steps slightly around to the side of his/her opponent  
e. Wrestler A lowers his/her level to “load” the coil power of his/her legs  
f. As Wrestler A lifts the opponent, he/she will slightly rotate the opponent in the air so that the bottom wrestler lands on his/her base or side  
g. Grips for Wrestler A can be a lock around the opponent’s waist or the back hand can reach through the high thigh from behind as the front hand stays tight to the opponent’s waist.  
h. The bottom wrestler continues to stay in a solid base (coil) throughout the move and immediately pops back up to standing to continue the drill  

Peek-Out Drill (44:36-45:03)  

a. Wrestler A starts bent over in either a front head lock or a front chest lock by his/her opponent  
b. Wrestler A bends his/her legs and “peeks” his/her head out from under the opponent and drives the hips forward to good position  

45:07-52:35 **Skill 6 of 7 Back Step:**  
Used to help take an opponent from his/her feet to their back from neutral or can be used to turn an opponent from par terre (typically in Freestyle or Greco-Roman)  

49:50-52:35 **Back Step Drills**  

Dive Roll Drill (49:56-50:35)  

a. Wrestler A (without a partner) practices the motions of a back step repeatedly  
   a. Wrestler A steps one foot forward  
   b. The trail leg steps behind the front foot and makes a “T”  
   c. Wrestler A bends the knees to coil the power in his/her legs  
   d. Wrestler A explodes the hips back (into the imaginary opponent) and leans his/her head and torso forward in a bending motion  
   e. Utilize momentum of the throwing motion to complete the drill with a front roll  

Drop and Turn Drill (50:36-51:31)  

a. Wrestler A starts in the standing position with his/her back facing the opponent  
   b. Wrestler A leans backward and arches into the opponent’s hands that are locked and ready to catch Wrestler A and his/her weight  
   c. The opponent will count out loud, “One – Two” and then releases Wrestler A’s weight  
   d. Wrestler A must execute a hip heist maneuver using the back step  

Spin and Shot Drill (51:32-52:03)
a. Wrestler A goes through the motion of an Arm Spin (Throw) – view Arm Spin Technique from Olympian, Ike Anderson, at [http://www.teamusa.org/USA-Wrestling/Coaches-Core-Curriculum/2015/02/06/OffenseArmThrowflv?channel=h3bDc3czqXjLUZjeSw-CpeQbtxOEizA](http://www.teamusa.org/USA-Wrestling/Coaches-Core-Curriculum/2015/02/06/OffenseArmThrowflv?channel=h3bDc3czqXjLUZjeSw-CpeQbtxOEizA)

b. Without completing the Arm Spin for points, Wrestler A immediately recognizes his/her position to execute a high single leg attack

**Spin and Go-Behind Drill (52:04-52:14)**

a. This drill is for both wrestlers
b. Wrestler A executes an Arm Spin but only to the mat
c. Wrestler B turns his/her arm downward (limp arm) during the Arm Spin to counter the move
d. Wrestler B then quickly moves to a Go-Behind

**Hip Toss Exchange Drill (52:15-52:35)**

a. This drill is for both wrestlers
b. Both wrestlers lock up an over hook and under hook position from neutral
c. Wrestler A executes a Hip Toss (without completing the throw)
d. Each wrestler supports the weight of his/her opponent so that they do not fall during the drill

52:36-57:06 **Skill 7 of 7 Arch and Turn (Back Arch):**

Back Arch and Turn is important in many different elements of wrestling including _ _ _ - _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ (hip-heisting) and _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ (bridging)

**Arch and Turn Drills**

**Wall Walk Drill (54:52-55:08)**

a. Wrestler A works without a partner (may use a partner for support until he/she can do this without help)

b. Wrestler A stands with his/her back facing a wall
c. Wrestler A simulates a throwing motion until his/her hands reach the wall
d. Continue walking the hands down the wall increasing the degree of arch until his/her head touches the mat


a. Wrestler A locks hands securely with his/her partner
b. Starting a short distance away from the partner, Wrestler A walks toward his/her partner and changes level to “coil” power into his/her legs
c. Wrestler A begins to back arch, as if throwing an opponent
d. The partner in this drill continues to support Wrestler A’s weight as needed to ensure Wrestler A’s safe arching toward the mat
Table Arch Drill (55:33-55:55)

a. Wrestler A’s partner starts in referee’s position – a solid base
b. Wrestler A simulates a back arching throw and uses his/her partner to support their weight (shoulders to back)

Seated Explosion Drill (55:56-18)

a. This move is for advanced wrestlers who are experienced with the back arch
   a. Begin in a seated position on the mat
   b. Start by driving the hips forward to “coil” power in the legs
   c. Once the legs have power, Wrestler A locks his/her hands as if throwing an opponent
   d. Complete the back arch until the head touches the mat

Dive Arch Drill (56:19-55:45)

a. This move is for advanced wrestlers who are experienced with the back arch
   a. Wrestler A executes a front roll
   b. Once Wrestler A “coils” power into his/her legs, he/she uses arm motion to begin executing a back arch (similar to a back flipping motion). It is encouraged to use the arms to support Wrestler A’s weight as he/she lands the back arch.

Arch Springs Drill (56:46-57:06)

a. This move is for advanced wrestlers who are experienced with the back arch
   a. Wrestler A locks his/her hands as if ready to throw an opponent
   b. Squat to load power into the legs
   c. Begin the back arching motion
   d. Explode with the legs and arch backward landing with hands/forearms on the mat (not the head)
   e. First attempts at this drill may show wrestler arching over a shoulder rather than going directly over the head

Summary and Highlights