

How to Draw a Basketball

12 easy steps for beginners



What you'll need

- A pencil
- An eraser
- A ruler
- A black pen
- Colored pencils

How to use this guide

New lines for each step are shown in **blue**; lines you already drew are gray. Draw lightly first, then ink and erase near the end.

[Read the full tutorial online →](#)

STEP 1 Draw a big circle for the ball

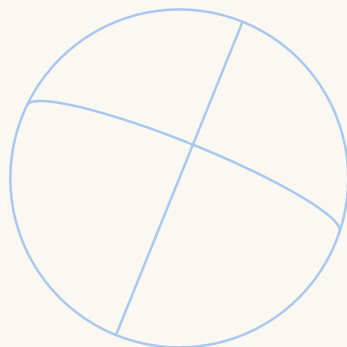
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On the left half of the page, draw a large circle that takes up a bit more than half the paper's height. Keep a hand's width of space to its left for the motion lines. I trace a lid when I want a clean ball, but a light freehand circle works just as well.

 **Tip:** Draw from your elbow, not your wrist, and the curve comes out rounder.

STEP 2 Add two wrap lines that cross

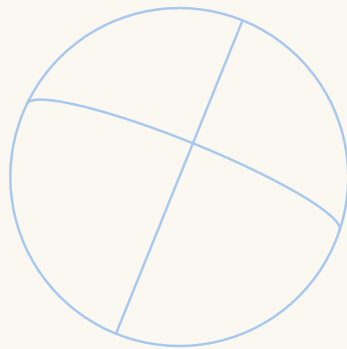
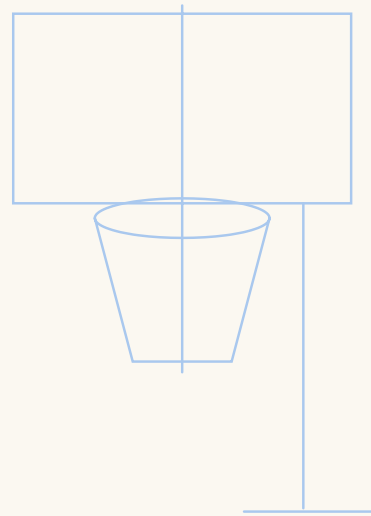
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These two lines are the secret to a round ball. Draw one line from near the top of the circle down to near the bottom, leaning a little to the right. Then draw a second line across it from the left edge to the right edge, sloping gently downward and curving slightly. They should cross just above the middle. Their bend makes the ball look like it's turning.

 **Tip:** If your cross is perfectly straight and level, tilt it; a leaning cross looks like a spinning ball.

STEP 3 Block in the hoop and pole

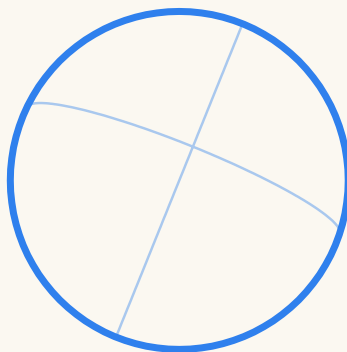
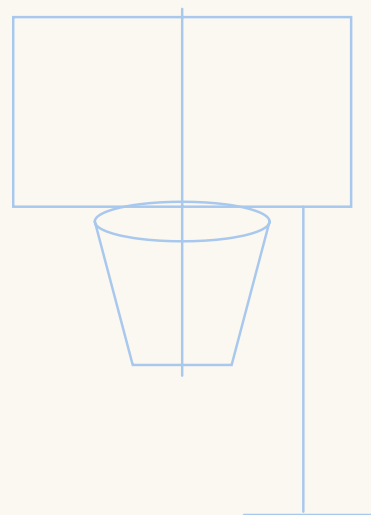
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On the right side, rule a wide rectangle for the backboard, its top roughly level with the top of the ball. Draw a light vertical line through its middle. Where that line meets the bottom edge, sketch a flat oval for the rim, then a bucket shape under it that narrows toward the bottom. Add a vertical line under the right end of the board for the pole and a short ground line.

 **Tip:** Make the rim oval about half the backboard's width; a smaller rim looks like a teacup.

STEP 4 Go over the ball outline

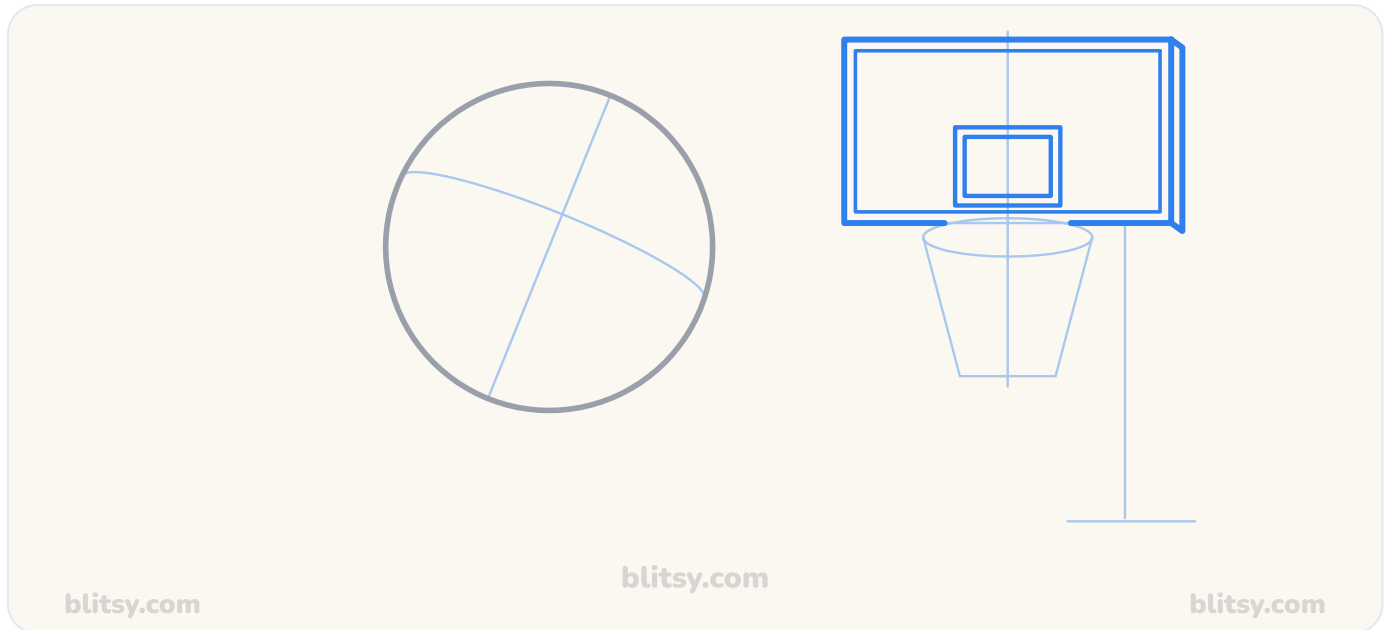
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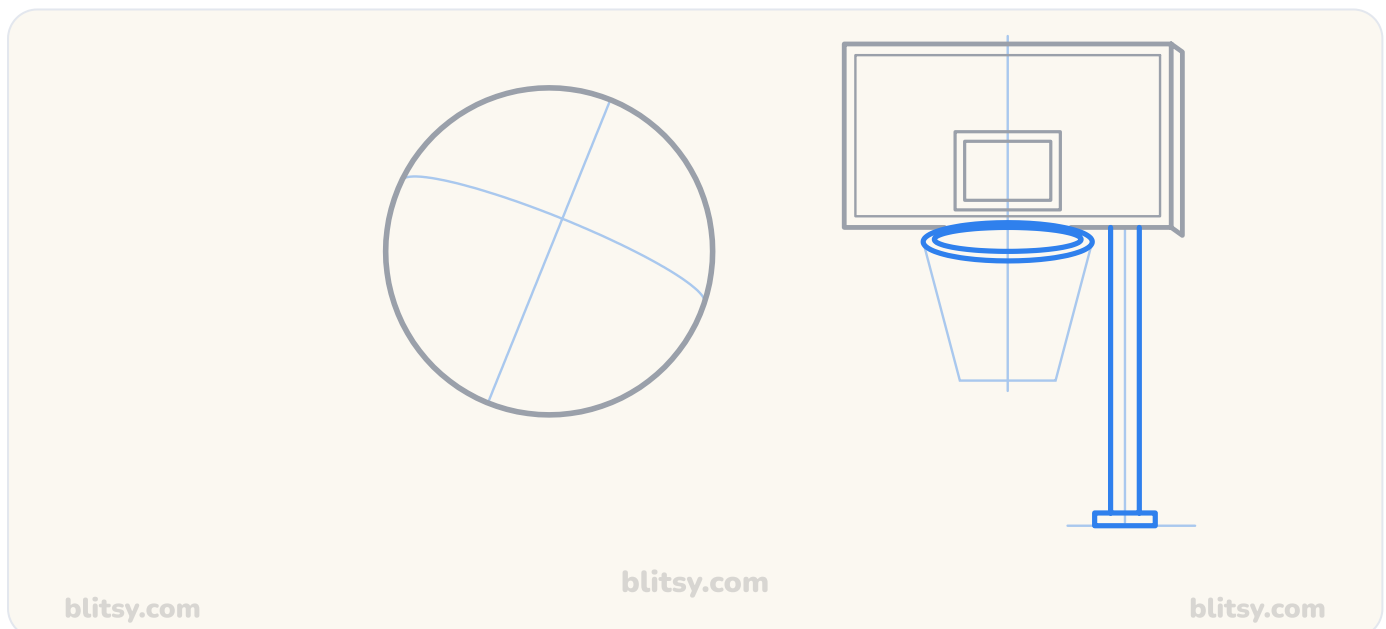
Now press a bit harder and trace the circle with one smooth line. Most beginners scratch around it in tiny strokes, and the edge ends up hairy. Turn the paper as you go so your hand can sweep along the curve comfortably.

 **Tip:** Stop and turn the paper whenever your hand feels cramped.

STEP 5 Outline the backboard and the red square

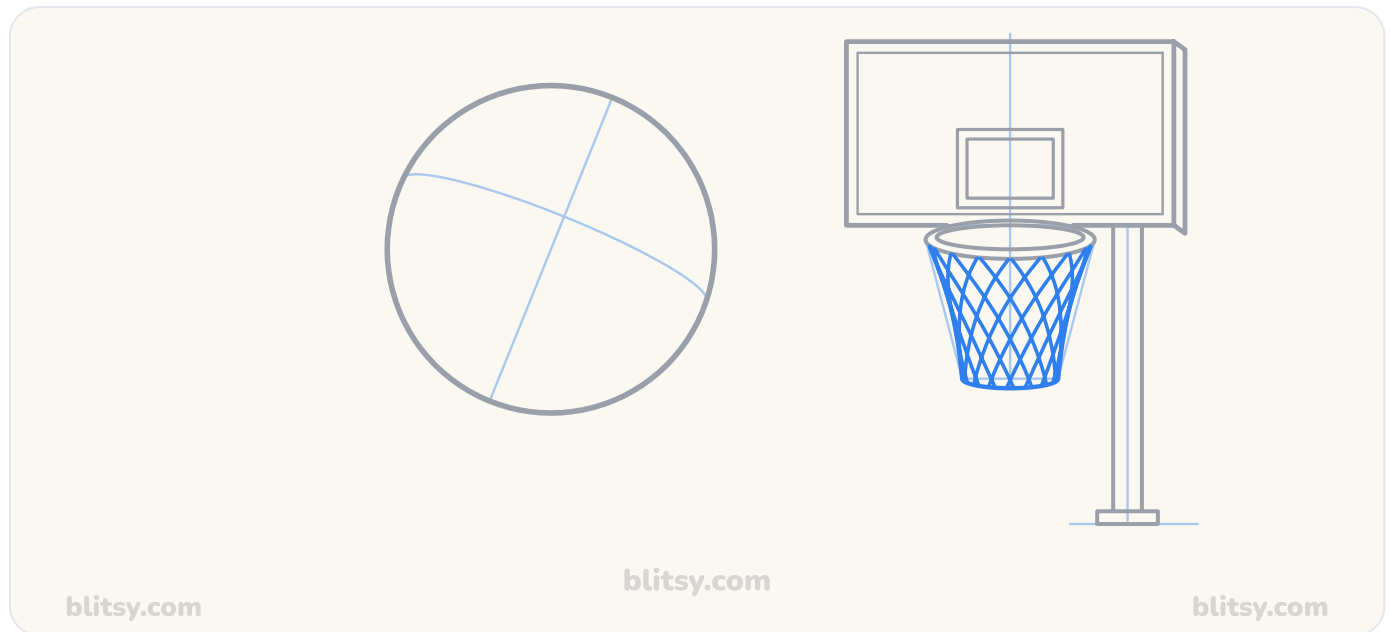
Trace the rectangle, then draw a second one just inside it to make a thin frame. Add a narrow side strip on the right edge so the board has some thickness. In the lower middle, draw a small rectangle with another one inside it; the gap between them becomes the red square. Leave the board's bottom edge open where the rim sits in front.

 **Tip:** Use the ruler for every board line; wobbly edges make the board look like paper.

STEP 6 Draw the rim and the pole

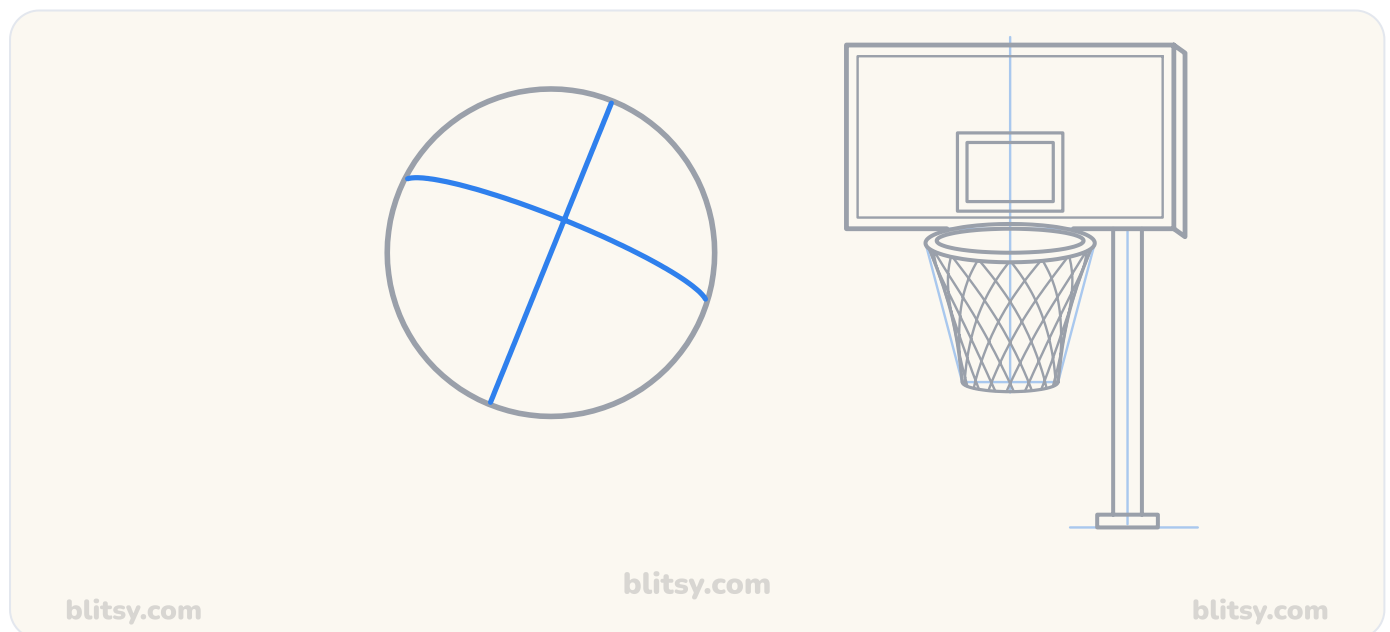
Go over the rim oval, then draw a slightly smaller oval inside it, a touch higher, so the rim looks like a metal ring with thickness. The pole is two straight lines from the bottom of the board down to the ground, with a small flat block at the foot. I keep the pole to the right of the net so the two never tangle.

 **Tip:** Leave the ring a little thicker at the front than at the back, since the front is closer to you.

STEP 7 Weave a net that narrows down

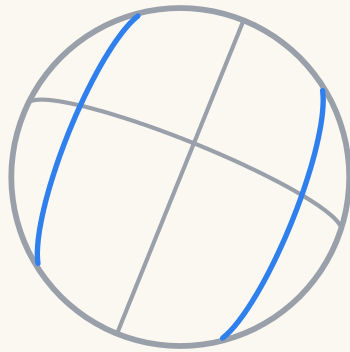
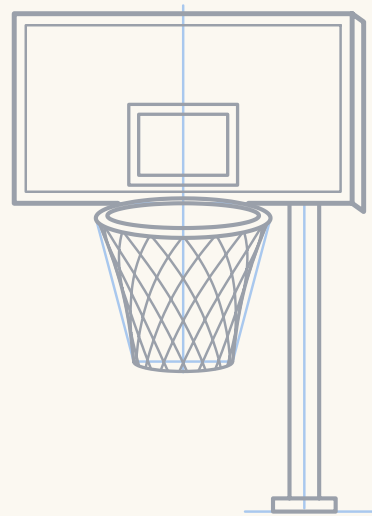
Draw the two sides of the net from the ends of the rim down to a small oval at the bottom. Then fill the middle with slanted lines: one set leaning left, one set leaning right, so they cross and form diamonds. The diamonds get smaller toward the bottom because the net narrows. Ten or so lines each way is enough.

 **Tip:** Draw all the left-leaning lines first, then all the right-leaning ones, so the pattern stays even.

STEP 8 Ink the two main seams

Trace both wrap lines from step 2 with a firm pencil line. Make sure each one runs all the way to the outline at both ends, because a seam that stops short in the middle of the ball looks like a crack. These two seams cut the ball into four parts.

 **Tip:** Let each seam touch the outline exactly; small gaps there show up a lot.

STEP 9 Add the curved side seams

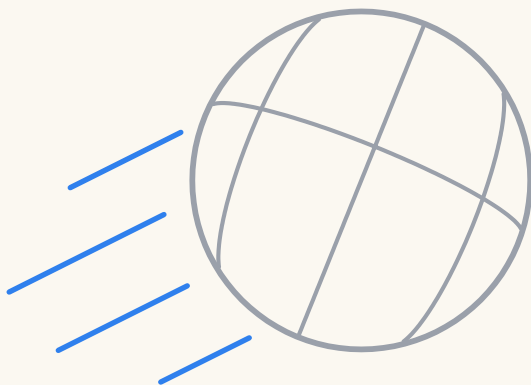
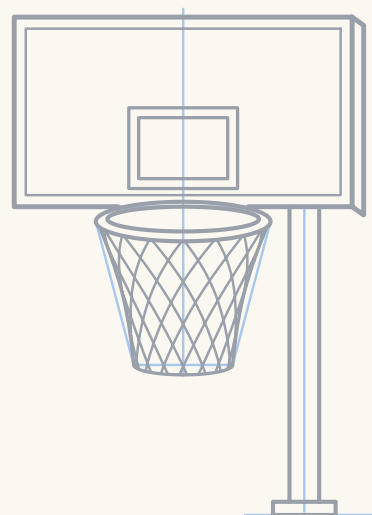
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A real basketball has two more seams, one on each side. Draw a curved line on the left part of the ball, running from the top edge to the lower edge and bowing out toward the outline. Mirror it on the right. Both cross the horizontal seam but never touch the vertical one. That outward bend keeps the ball round instead of striped.

 **Tip:** Keep both side seams the same distance from the middle seam.

STEP 10 Sketch the motion lines

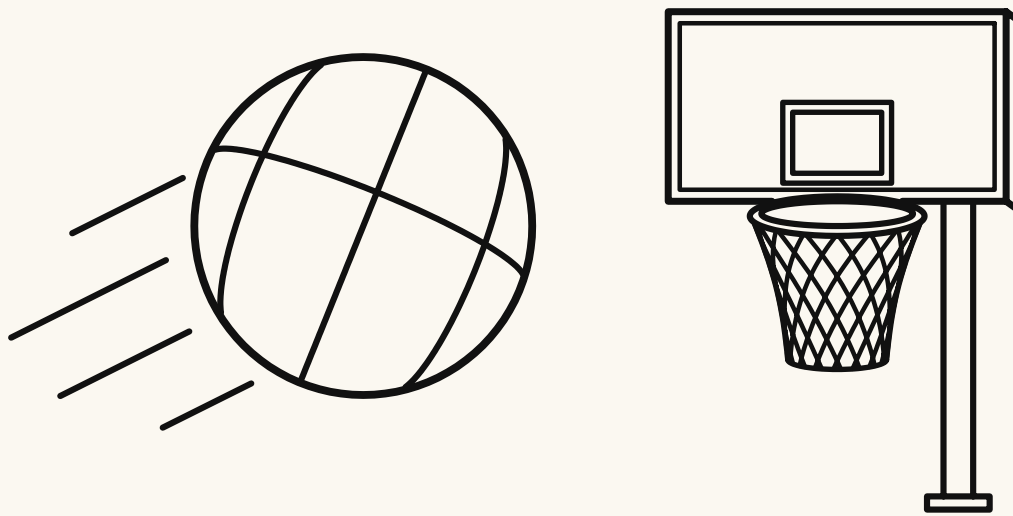
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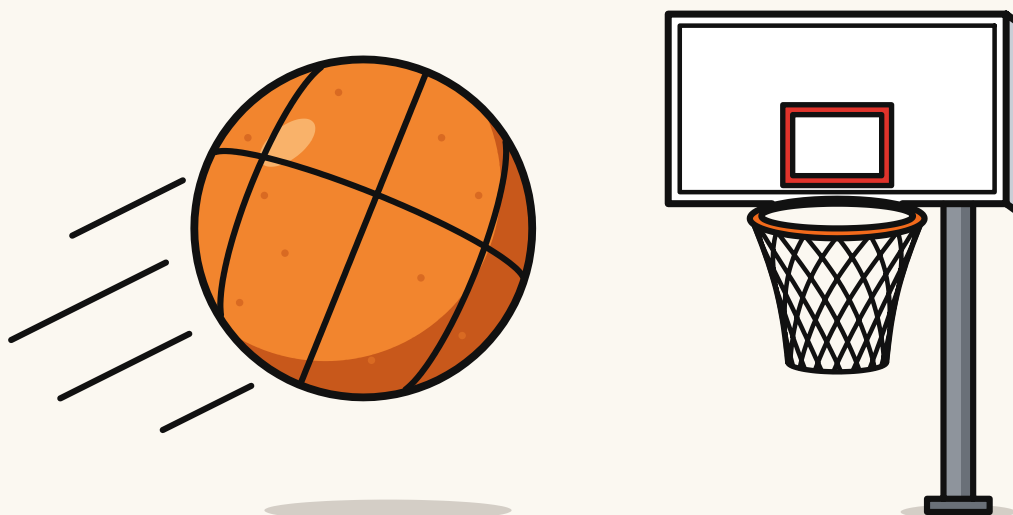
Behind the ball, on its lower left, draw four short straight lines that all point the same way the ball is flying, up toward the hoop. Start each one a little away from the ball and vary their lengths. That small gap matters, since lines that touch the ball look glued on.

 **Tip:** Make the middle motion lines longest and the outer ones shorter.

STEP 11 Ink everything and erase the guides

Trace every keeper line with the black pen: the ball, the seams, the board, the square, the rim, the net, the pole and the motion lines. Slow down on the net. Once the ink is dry, erase the guide circle, the cross and the hoop guides.

 **Tip:** Ink the net last, when your hand is warmed up and steady.

STEP 12 Color the ball and the hoop

Fill the ball with orange and leave a small light patch near the top left for shine. Add dark orange along the lower right edge to make it round. Color the square red and the rim a bright orange, then the pole gray with a darker stripe on one side. I leave the backboard and the net white, plus a soft shadow on the ground under the ball.

 **Tip:** Color the ball in curved strokes that follow its outline, and it looks rounder.