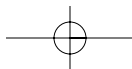
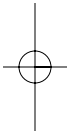
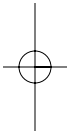
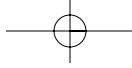
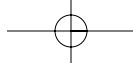




# **Teresa Weatherspoon's Basketball for Girls**





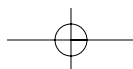


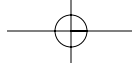
# **Teresa Weatherspoon's Basketball for Girls**

**Teresa Weatherspoon**  
with **Tara Sullivan**  
and **Kelly Whiteside**

**John Wiley & Sons, Inc.**

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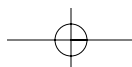
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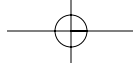
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Charles Weatherspoon Jr. and Bernadette  
Diana Weatherspoon  
Carolyn Weatherspoon  
Michael Weatherspoon  
Denise Weatherspoon  
Anthony Weatherspoon  
Dominique Weatherspoon  
Tanaya Weatherspoon  
Brandon Weatherspoon  
Jalen Weatherspoon

You are all the reason for *many things* that happen in my life. I love you all soooo much. Hugs and kisses 4-ever.

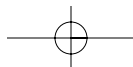
Many thanks also to:

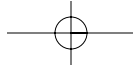
Paris—you are very dear to me—thanks for your advice, *your help*, and for just being the unique person that you are—you're always in my heart.

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All my friends, you know who you are. I love you.  
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Big shout-outs to the Liberty Sistas:

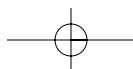
Vickie Johnson ("VJ")  
Sophia Witherspoon ("So So")  
Kym Hampton ("Big Hamp")  
Rebecca Lobo ("B")  
Kisha Ford ("Kee")  
Coquese Washington ("Little One")  
Trena Trice ("T<sup>2</sup>")  
Elisabeth Cebrian ("Bettie")  
Alicia Thompson ("Chelle")  
Sue Wicks ("Warrior")  
The Liberty coaching staff

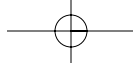
You are all *simply amazing!* Much love!

Last but not least, thank you to the fans of New York. *You are the best*—continue to support us, because we're coming *BACK!*

Please, please forgive me if I left anyone out, anybody. Trust me, you are *appreciated. MUCH LOVE!!*

**Spoon**





# Contents

**Introduction..... 1**

**1 Before You Start**

Warming Up .....	4
Stretching .....	4
Warm-up Drills .....	9

**2 Dribbling**

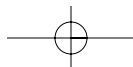
The Control Dribble.....	14
The Speed Dribble.....	17
Advanced Dribbling.....	17
Use Both Hands .....	21
Driving to the Basket.....	22
Dribbling Drills .....	23

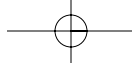
**3 Passing**

Passing Fundamentals.....	29
Types of Passes .....	31
Passing Drills .....	34

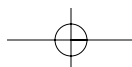
**4 Shooting and Individual Offense**

Shooting the Rock.....	39
Three Basic Shots .....	43
Three-Point Shot .....	48
Shot Selection .....	48
Free Throws .....	49
Triple Threat .....	50
Drill That Shot.....	51





<b>5</b>	<b>Rebounding</b>	
	The Rules of Rebounding	57
	Offensive Rebounding	60
	Rebounding Drills	60
<b>6</b>	<b>Individual Defense</b>	
	Positioning and Footwork	65
	“D” It Up	67
	Defense Drills	73
<b>7</b>	<b>What Makes a Team Player</b>	
	There’s No I in Team	76
<b>8</b>	<b>Team Offense</b>	
	The Team Concept	83
	Set Plays with Two Girls	86
	Using Picks and Screens	87
	Set Up the Offense	88
	Fast Break	89
	Offense Drills	91
<b>9</b>	<b>Team Defense</b>	
	Man-to-Man	95
	Zone	97
	The Press	99
	Communicate	100
	Team Defense Drills	100
<b>10</b>	<b>Conditioning</b>	
	The Off-Season	104
	During the Season	105
	My Routine	106
	<b>Appendix</b>	<b>109</b>
	<b>Glossary</b>	<b>111</b>
	<b>Credits</b>	<b>115</b>
	<b>Index</b>	<b>117</b>



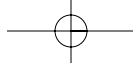
# Introduction

This book is for girls all over the world who love to play basketball. When I was young, I didn't have professional women athletes to look up to or to pattern myself after. I had to watch the men play. But now there are so many more opportunities for women in sports, and I want to let girls know that they can make their dreams come true, just like I did. I want girls to be able to look up to me, and I want to share what I know about this game of basketball that I love so much.

I hope that you will learn a lot from this book, mostly about skills and ways to make yourself a better player. I give you ideas on every facet of the game, and in many chapters there are drills to help you improve. But more than anything, I hope you will learn about my passion for the game. Even though I play professional basketball for the New York Liberty of the WNBA, basketball is more than a job for me, it is my love. Like anybody who wants to be the best at what they do, I want to be the best basketball player on any court. I hope that through reading about my career, my family, my youth, my high school and college days, and, of course, my pro career in the WNBA, you will see for yourself how you can achieve your dreams.

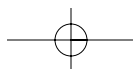
Keep this book nearby and check back with it often. If you have a tough practice or a tough shooting night in a game, come back and read about when that happened to me. Remember that I had tough times, too, and they made me stronger. And when you find a certain aspect of your game lagging, check back with the ideas here. Make sure you are preparing yourself the right way for a game.

To parents and coaches, I hope that you, too, will find this book useful. You are such important individuals in the lives of young people. I was lucky that I had wonderful role models in my mom, Rowena, and my college coach at Louisiana Tech, Leon Barmore. You also can become important shapers of young lives if you approach



the game the right way. Don't pressure the kids to do too much; let them enjoy the game, see its beauty, and most of all, let them have fun playing it. Clearly the odds are against most kids becoming professional athletes. But the benefits of playing basketball—learning to work with teammates, to deal with satisfaction and disappointment—will be important in every girl's life.

The first step in any new venture is just that: taking a step. If you have never played basketball before or if you have just decided to start playing more seriously, congratulations. I hope reading what I have done to become a good player will help you reach your goal. Don't be afraid to start. A journey of a thousand miles begins with one step. That's all it takes. Join in.





## Warming Up

When I get to the gym, I can't wait to start playing, but I resist the temptation and always warm up first. Why is it important? Because warming up and stretching help keep your body injury-free. Always warm up your body for about five minutes before beginning any stretches to avoid injury. To begin your warm-up, jog around the court three times. Then stand with your arms out by your sides and make small circles, five to the front and five to the back. Increase the size of the circles and do five more in one direction and five more in the other. Now your muscles are warm before you stretch.

## Stretching

Remember to stretch before every practice and game. Actually, I stretch after each game and practice, too. It's a good habit to get into. The following routine stretches the major parts of your body that you use the most when playing basketball. The best way to stretch is *sloooooowly*. Bouncing while stretching can cause injury because your muscles will tighten, not relax. Your body needs time to loosen up each of the muscle groups before you can perform at your

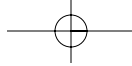
best. A few guidelines: Go lightly, holding your stretch for about ten to twenty seconds. Relax after each stretch for about twenty seconds. Do each stretch two or three times. Each time try to extend the stretch a bit farther. There never should be pain. If there is, you're forcing the stretch too much.

Here are some simple stretches to help you get loose before a game or practice.

### **Lower Leg Stretch**

Sit on the floor with one leg straight and the other positioned so the heel of your sneaker touches the inside of your opposite thigh. Bend forward at the waist and grab the ankle or foot of your straight leg. Hold for twenty seconds. Repeat on opposite leg.

The lower leg stretch works your calf muscles and hamstring tendon.



## ***Hurdler Stretch***

Still seated, spread your legs to form a V. With your left hand, reach out and touch your right ankle or toe. Hold that position for twenty seconds. Then repeat the process with the right hand touching your left ankle or toe.

## ***Butterflies***

Still seated, put your heels together in front of you and pull your feet close to your body. (Your legs will look like the wings of a butterfly.) Grab your right ankle with your right hand and your left ankle with your left hand. Put light pressure on your knees with your elbows and push forward slowly. Hold for twenty seconds.

## ***Standing Groin Stretch***

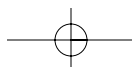
Stand and spread your feet a little more than shoulder width apart so you feel a slight pull in your groin and hamstring muscles. Bend over and try to put both hands on the floor. Hold for twenty seconds.

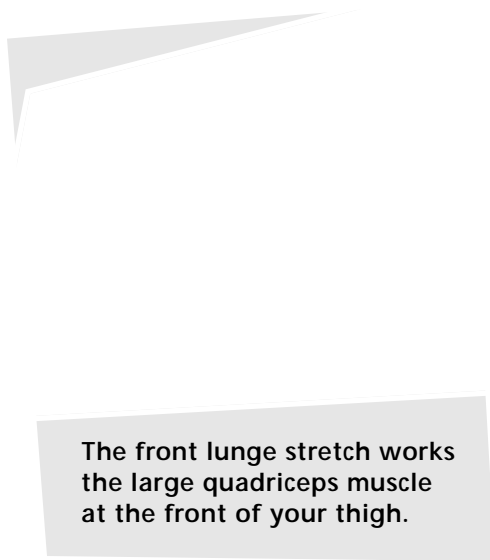
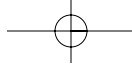
**The butterfly stretch works your groin area and the large muscles in your thigh.**

## ***Side Lunge Stretch***

Take the same position but this time lean to the left, bending your left leg and keeping your right leg straight. Hold for twenty seconds, then repeat on the other side.

**The side lunge stretch works the hamstring tendon in the hollow of your knee.**





**The front lunge stretch works the large quadriceps muscle at the front of your thigh.**

### ***Front Lunge Stretch***

Facing forward, bend your left leg and keep your right leg extended behind you. Put both your forearms on top of your left thigh. Keep your chest upright. Hold for twenty seconds, then repeat on the other side.

### ***Calf Stretch***

Stand a few feet from a wall and put one foot in front of the other. Keep your heels flat on the floor and lean forward against the wall. Hold for twenty seconds, then repeat with the other foot forward.

### ***Trunk Twists***

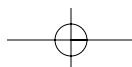
Standing with your feet spread apart, twist your upper body left and right, holding your arms at chest level.

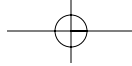
### ***Flamingo Stretch***

Standing, grab your right foot with your right hand and pull it behind your right leg to your buttocks. (Sometimes it's hard to balance while standing on one leg, so grab a wall or a teammate's shoulder until you get the hang of it.) Hold for twenty seconds. Repeat with the left foot.



**The flamingo stretch works the large quadriceps muscle at the front of your thigh.**



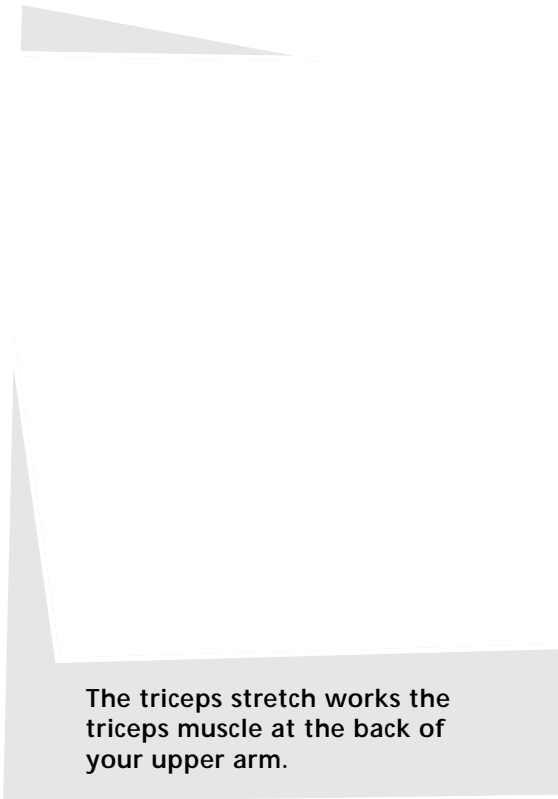


## ***Triceps Stretch***


Standing, hold your left elbow over your head with your right hand. (Your left elbow should be above your left ear.) Pull your elbow behind your head. Hold for about twenty seconds. Repeat with your right elbow.

## ***Biceps-Shoulder Stretch***

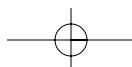
Standing, pull your right arm across your chest and hook it with your left elbow until you feel a stretch. Hold for about twenty seconds. Repeat with your left arm.

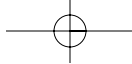


**The triceps stretch works the triceps muscle at the back of your upper arm.**



**The biceps-shoulder stretch works the muscles in your shoulder and the large biceps muscle in the front of your upper arm.**





## Spoon Servings

Full name: Teresa Gaye Weatherspoon

Nickname: Spoon

Height/Weight: 5'8", 161 lbs.

Birthdate: December 8, 1965

Birthplace: Jasper, Texas

Home: New York City and Pineland, Texas

High school: West Sabine High School (Pineland, Texas)

College: Louisiana Tech, '88

Years of pro basketball: 10

Sports I like to play (other than basketball): Softball

Athlete I most admired as a kid: Muhammad Ali because he was an honest man, whether you liked what he had to say or not

Favorite food: Pasta, any kind of way

Favorite color: Dark blue

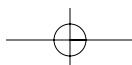
Biggest sports thrill: Winning the 1988 NCAA Championship

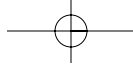
Runner-up: Hitting a shot as a freshman at LA Tech to send the game into overtime against USC and Hall-of-Famer-to-be Cheryl Miller

Proudest moment: Receiving the Wade Trophy in 1988 after Coach Leon Barmore pushed me to be the best I could be

Place I like to be when not playing: Pineland. I love to be at home. I like being around my nephews and nieces, watching them grow.

Number: I wear No. 11 in memory of a favorite uncle who passed away on my eleventh birthday. I also wear eleven braids in my hair at all times.





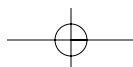
- Music: R&B, soft soothing music. Nothing that would tear my ears off.
- Favorite subjects in school: Math and English
- Pet: A cocker spaniel named Magic
- Hidden talent: No one knows that I can do karate. My dad put me in classes as a kid.
- Game day routine: I eat a banana about an hour before the game. It gives me an energy spurt.
- Favorite quote: "Your life is successful when you have an impact on another life." —Jackie Robinson
- Best advice ever received: My mother always said, "Believe. Times are hard, but believe." If my team is down by twenty, I still believe. You will never see me giving up.

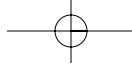
## Warm-up Drills

Now that your muscles are warm, you can do a few drills to further get your body ready. These drills will not only get you loose, they'll help improve your speed and endurance, making you a better player.

### ***Suicide Drill***

As you can guess from the name, this drill is never fun, but it is always useful. Because a basketball game is a series of quick bursts, it's good to do some sprints that focus on changing directions. Line up at the baseline and sprint to the nearest free-throw line; then run back to the baseline. Then sprint to half-court and back. Next, sprint to the far free-throw line and back. Finally, sprint to the far baseline and back. Three sets of these are a good start.



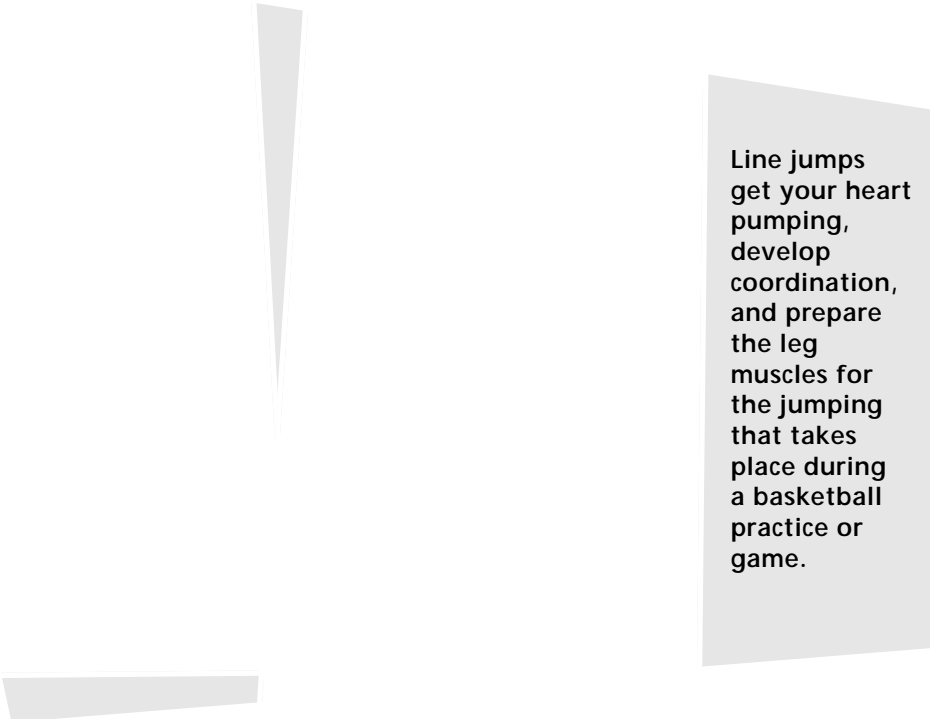


## ***Jumping Drill***

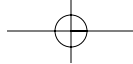
Jumping is crucial in basketball, so it's important to practice. This drill will help you jump higher. Stand next to a wall with a piece of chalk in your hand (be sure it's a wall where a chalk mark won't matter). Hold the chalk high and jump into the air, making a mark as high as you can. Then do ten more jumps, and make sure that each one is at least as high as your first chalk mark.

## ***Line Jumps***

This drill will help you develop coordination as well as get your legs ready to take all the jumping you'll have to do in a game. Stand with both feet together on one side of a straight line (the baseline, sideline, or whatever) and jump into the air across the line while keeping both feet together. Do this for thirty seconds, back and forth.



**Line jumps get your heart pumping, develop coordination, and prepare the leg muscles for the jumping that takes place during a basketball practice or game.**



## The Olympics

In 1988 we won the gold medal. My teammates were crying, but I didn't know how to react. I don't think that what winning the gold really meant hit me until 1992. When we won the bronze that year, I dropped my head and walked away. I didn't even want to touch that bronze medal. I saw the bronze as a prize for being a failure. But then I realized that when I walked away with my head down, I embarrassed myself. I understood that the Olympics are about more than winning it all. They're about competing, playing for your country. I fought for my country, played as hard as I could for my country. That means a lot to me. Now I cherish the bronze medal as much as the gold medal.

