



CHEAT WITH SCIENCE: BANK ON THE BANK SHOT

If you're playing basketball, forget the swish and go for the bank. Science has proven it's a better shot, at least from close range. That's because the backboard substantially increases your odds of hitting the target. "When the ball hits the backboard, it loses a lot of energy, which means you don't have to be as accurate," says Larry Silverberg, a mechanical engineer at North Carolina State University. Silverberg ran simulations of 1 million shots and found that, when shooting from many angles within 12 feet of the basket, the bank can be 20 percent more effective than the swish. Here's how to beat your brother at one-on-one—or sink that crumpled memo in the office recycling bin. —KATHARINE GAMMON

1 READY From many angles—even straight on—the bank shot is the best approach. (Although baseline jumpers and straight-on shots from more than 12 feet fare worse with the banking method.) To help find the best spot to aim for, imagine a V with its point in the top-center area of the backboard square.

2 AIM Imagine a vertical line floating 3.3 inches behind the center of the backboard. Where it crosses the V is the optimal spot to bank. Near the baseline, the aim point is higher on the backboard and thus farther from the rim. Near the free-throw lane, the targets are lower and closer to the rim.

3 FIRE The optimal amount of backspin for your bank is three revolutions per second—practice by putting a dot on the ball or watching the logo as you shoot the ball. Too much spin and the resulting increase in downward speed will keep the ball too close to the glass.