



INSTANT

SOFTBALL PRACTICE

OUTFIELD SKILLS AND DRILLS

5 Pre-Designed Softball Practice Plans

**Packed With 16
Skill-Building Drills for
All Ages**

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DISTANCE PR

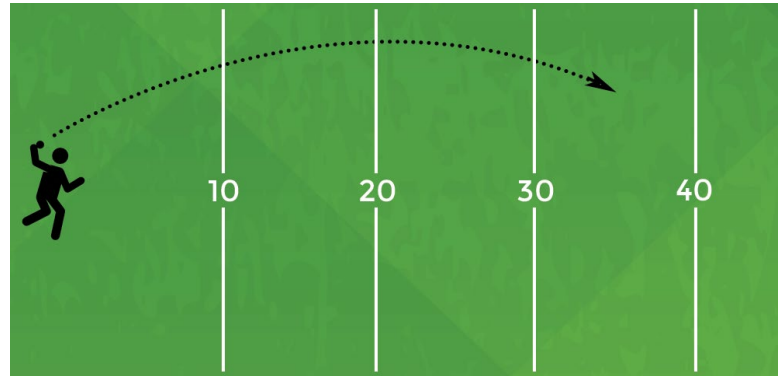


PURPOSE:

To help build arm strength and proper throwing mechanics. Players will learn to use their bodies to throw the ball farther.

SETUP:

This drill is best performed on a football field where there are line markers to help players SEE the distance their ball travels. Or, set up lines of cones 5 yards apart. Line players up on the goal line, each player should have a ball.



Players compete to see who can make the longest throw

INSTRUCTIONS:

- On the coaches whistle, all players throw their ball while standing on the goal line. Each player needs to determine the distance of their throw using the yard lines on the field. They should remember the distance when their ball landed for the first time, not where it rolled after landing.
- After all players have thrown, players RUN to their ball, pick it up, and return to the goal line. (This is part of their warm up, so they need to be sprinting).
- Have the players take 3-5 more throws from a standing position.
- The idea is for each player to set their own “PR” (personal record) for top distance thrown.
- Next, have the players take two shuffle steps into their throw so they can see how much momentum helps their distance.
- Players should realize that the more they use their body momentum, the farther their ball will travel.
- Coaching Tips:
 - The thrower’s shoulders should be level with the front shoulder pointing at the target
 - Use a four seam grip - place the index and middle fingers across the seams so the “horseshoe” portion is facing sideways, making a backwards “C”
 - Drive off the back foot and pull the glove hand in towards your body as you release the ball



FIRST TO FIFTEEN

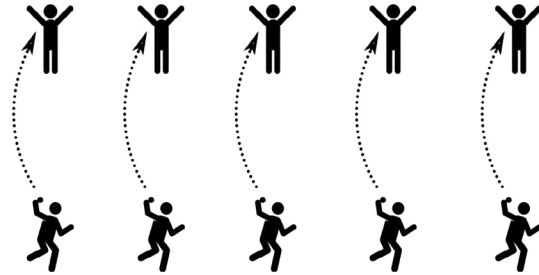


PURPOSE:

To help improve throwing accuracy

SETUP:

Group your players into pairs based on similar throwing/catching abilities. All players should have a glove, and one player in the pair should have a ball. Make two lines, with pairs facing each other about 50 feet apart (the distance can be adjusted based on age/ability of players).



Players compete to see who can make 15 consecutive throws with their partner.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. On the coaches whistle, players begin to play catch with their partners.
2. One point is awarded to the pair if a ball is thrown and caught at chest level.
3. One point is deducted for any uncatchable throws or missed catches.
4. The first pair to 15 wins.

MAKE IT HARDER

- Have players take 3 steps back each after they hit 15

MAKE IT EASIER

- Have players take three steps toward each other to reduce the distance between them.



SIT & THROW



PURPOSE:

To warm-up the wrists and arms and practice proper rotation on the ball.

SETUP:

Arrange players into pairs based on their abilities. Players should sit cross-legged about 8-10 feet from their partners. Both players should have a glove, one player should have a ball.



Players play catch from a seated position to work on upper body mechanics

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. This drill is essentially a game of catch, but from a seated position. This helps players isolate the wrist and arm movement.
2. Players should throw the ball back and forth about 25 times.

COACHING TIPS:

- Index and middle fingers should stay behind the ball through the release
- The throwing hand should be above the thrower's head, elbow should be at least shoulder high.
- Thrower should follow through, making a fishhook with the throwing wrist
- The rotation on the ball should be from the 6 o'clock position to the 12 o'clock position.



FOOTWORK TENNIS

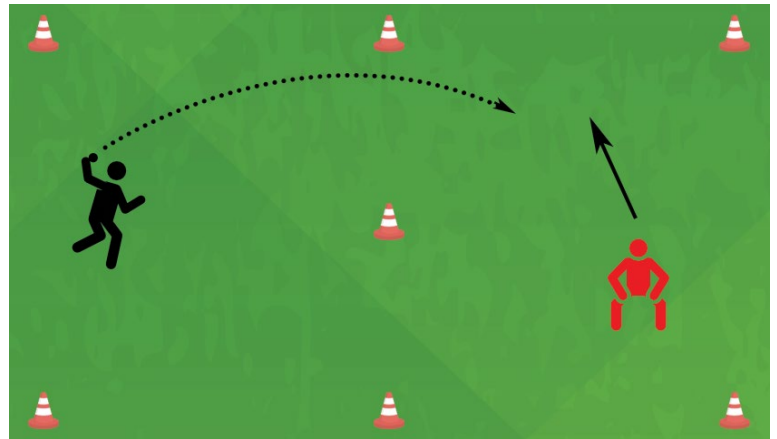


PURPOSE:

To practice & improve fielding footwork (crossover, drop step)

SETUP:

Set up a “tennis court” on the field using cones as markers. The “court” should be a rectangle 30 ft long by 20 ft wide, use dots or more cones to mark out a line down the middle as shown.



Players throw pop flies from one side of the “tennis court” to the other

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Two players stand on each side of the court, facing each other. One player begins with the ball (Player A).
2. Player A throws a pop fly or line drive into Player B’s zone. Player B has to catch the ball using a crossover or drop step to move toward the ball.
3. Player B then throws a pop fly or line drive into Player A’s zone. Player A must catch the ball using a crossover or drop step to move toward the ball.
4. Repeat until one player misses the ball. When a catch is missed it’s a point for the throwing player. First player to 5 points wins.

MAKE IT HARDER

- Add in a second ball so that there are two balls going at once.

MAKE IT EASIER

- For players still learning the fundamentals, perform this drill with a coach on one side of the “imaginary net”. This way the coach can customize the throws to ensure the player feels challenged, but not frustrated.



ON THE RUN

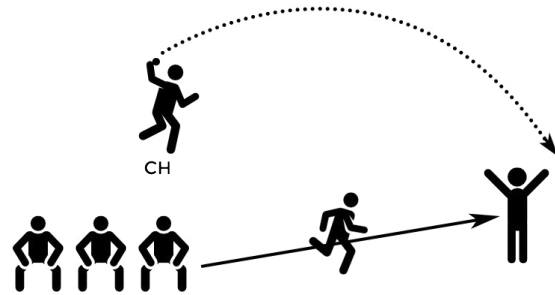


PURPOSE:

To practice catching balls while on the run

SETUP:

Players form a single file line with their gloves on as shown. Coach has a bucket of softballs and stands beside the first player in line.



Fielders sprint to catch fly balls on the move

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. On the coaches command, the first player in line runs away from the coach but keeps the coach in sight by looking over the shoulder.
2. After the player has begun running, coach throws the ball in the same way a quarterback would “lead” a receiver. The ball should be thrown fairly high so that players have time to judge it’s path.
3. Player is to track the trajectory of the ball and not break stride to catch it.
4. After catching the ball, player runs to return ball to coaches bucket, then takes place at end of the line.

COACHING TIPS:

- Keep this drill fast paced. As soon as one player catches the ball, the next player in line should begin to run.
- Watch that players use correct form when running sideways, they should point their lead shoulder where they think the ball will land.
- Players should never take their eyes off the ball.

MAKE IT HARDER

- Make some throw over the player’s head and to the far side, forcing her to turn and find the ball in the air

MAKE IT EASIER

- Keep the fly balls on the near side of the player, so she can track it out of the coach’s hand and into her glove



SHOUT IT OUT DRILL

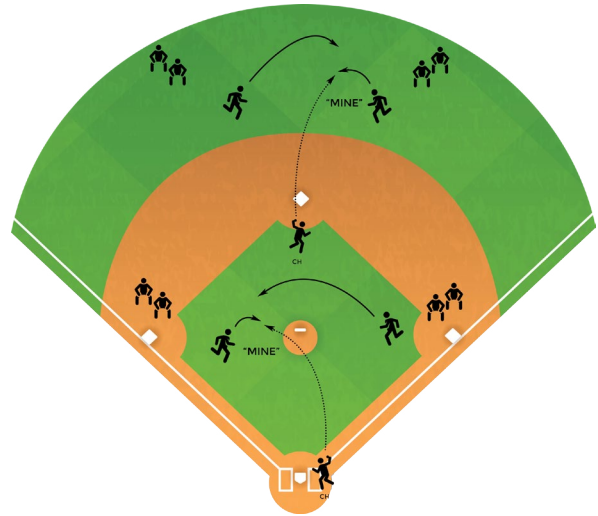


PURPOSE:

To practice outfield communication in fly ball situations.

SETUP:

Coach stands 5 feet behind second base with a bucket of balls. Place your outfielders in two lines, one line in right center and the other in left center. The lines should be about 25 feet from each other. All player should have a glove.



The closer fielder calls out "Mine" then catches the fly ball. The second fielder backs up the play.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Coach begins the drill by throwing a high arching "pop fly" designed to land between the two outfielders.
2. The player who is closest to the ball needs to loudly shout MINE three times so the other fielder is called off and acts as a backup.
3. After catching the ball, the player throws the ball back to the coach.
4. Both players go to the back of the line and drill begins again with new players at front of line.

MAKE IT HARDER

- If you have two coaches, you can perform the same exact drill using the infield area simultaneously. This will make the environment louder and more distracting as to simulate a real game environment where players have to focus on their teammates voices and not outside sounds.

MAKE IT EASIER

- If you have a player who is shy and doesn't like to speak up on the field, call out who should catch the ball as you throw it. For example, say "Taylor" as you throw the ball. Taylor should then say "Mine, Mine, Mine" and catch. This will sometimes give that shy player a nudge to use their voice because you first gave them "permission".



DROP STEP DRILL

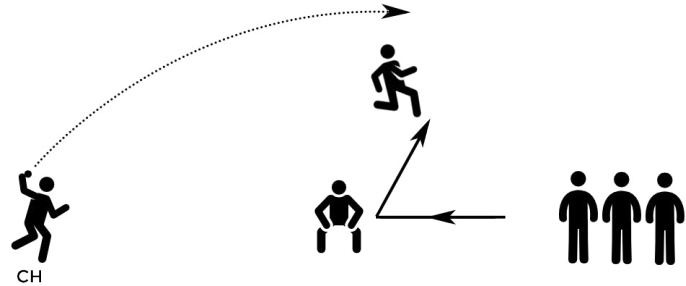


PURPOSE:

To practice using a drop step to field pop flies and line drives

SETUP:

Create a line of fielders (all with gloves) standing 20 feet away from the coach. Coach should have a bucket of balls.



The fielder makes a drop step, then runs to catch the fly ball.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The first fielder in line stands in a ready position facing the coach.
2. Coach throws a ball at an angle behind the fielder (to either side, mix it up).
3. The fielder uses a drop step to move to catch the ball.
4. Fielder should then make a smooth motion throw back to the coach and run to the end of the line.
5. Drill resumes with next player in line.

MAKE IT HARDER

- Instead of throwing balls to your fielders, hit them instead. This will make the drill more game-like.
- For players who have mastered the drop step and catch- encourage them to catch the ball with their non-dominant foot forward so they can immediately go into a crow-hop throw.

MAKE IT EASIER

- Walk through the footwork first, helping players understand how to make a drop step by pivoting on one foot and swinging the other foot out wide. Then introduce the ball with short pop-ups from 6-8 feet away.



CROW HOP CORNERS

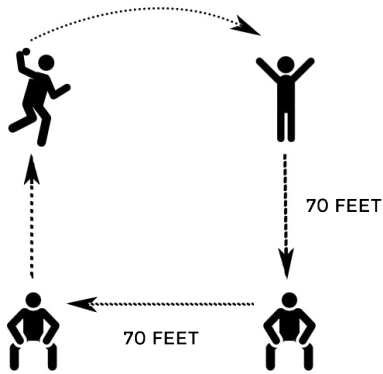


PURPOSE:

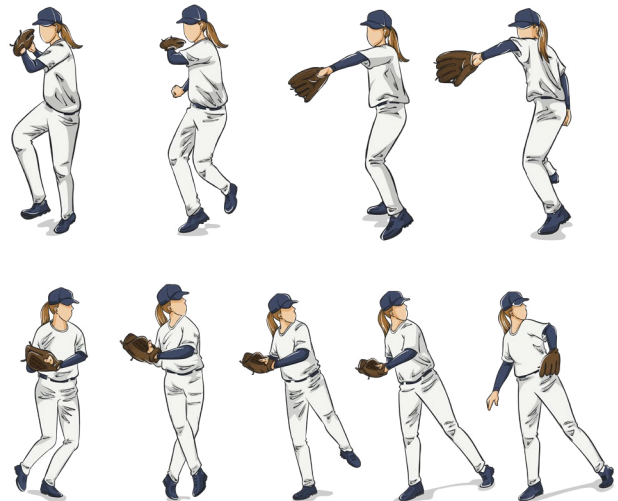
To practice using a crow hop to generate momentum for long distance throws.

SETUP:

Divide your players into groups of fours. Have each foursome make a square shape with about 75 feet between each player. All player should have gloves, one player should have a ball.



Players use a crow hop to make a long throw to each corner of the square



INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The player with the ball begins the drill by throwing the ball to the second player using a crow-hop.
2. The drill proceeds with each player throwing to the next with a crow-hop.
3. After the ball has made it around the square three times, reverse the direction of the throws.

MAKE IT HARDER

- Move the players farther apart from one another
- Allow players to throw to any partner across the square in any direction
- Players must pick the ball up off the ground first, then crow hop and throw

MAKE IT EASIER

- Teach the crow hop footwork first. The back foot should go up and over the front foot as the hips and shoulders turn to throw (i.e.. "Right foot - left foot - throw" for a right-handed player)



TAKE A KNEE DRILL

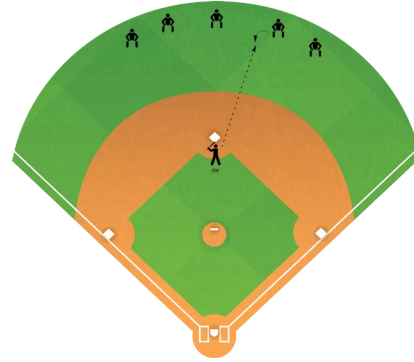


PURPOSE:

To practice proper fielding technique for medium-strength ground balls.

SETUP:

Fielder should stand in the grassy outfield facing a coach who is 40 feet away.



Fielders play an outfield grand ball using the one-knee method, then make an accurate throw back to the infield

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. To begin the drill, coach hits or throws a medium-strength ground ball towards the fielder. Ball should land to the left, right, or in front of the fielder.
2. The fielder should use correct footwork (cross over step, slide step) to move toward the ball.
3. Once at the ball, the fielder should drop to their throwing side knee and put glove between their legs and field the ball.
4. In one smooth motion the fielder should then rise up and make a crow hop throw back to the coach.

MAKE IT HARDER

- Occasionally yell out “Do or Die” and the player has to hustle to field the ball and throw it all the way to home.

MAKE IT EASIER

- Start by demonstrating the one knee position, focusing on the throwing side knee down, glove flat on the ground, and throwing hand in position to secure the ball. Then roll soft grounders from 6-8 feet away. Move back slowly as players master the skill.



INTERCEPTOR DRILL

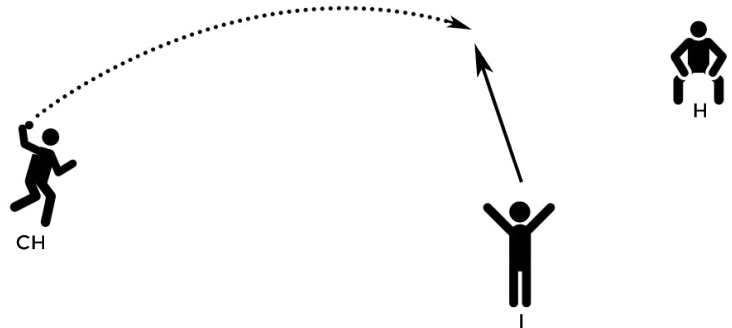


PURPOSE:

To practice fielding line-drive balls using the crossover step and drop step. Also develops outfield communication skills.

SETUP:

There are three people involved in this drill: The Coach (CH), the Helper (H), and the Interceptor (I). The coach and helper stand 50 ft apart, facing each other. The Interceptor stands 30 ft from the coach, facing the coach, 20 ft off the midline. (see diagram)



Fielders practice using proper footwork and communication to catch line drives or fly balls in the outfield

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Coach throws a line drive or low fly ball to the helper.
2. The Interceptor uses a loud, strong voice to call out for the ball and then uses a crossover step or drop step to move toward the ball.
3. The Interceptor catches the ball before it hits the ground, then crow hop throws the ball to the coach for the drill to restart.
4. Prior to the next coaches throw, the Helper should adjust their position left/right and/or front/back to change the direction of the throw each time.
5. If the Interceptor misses the ball, the Helper catches the ball and throws back to coach.

COACHING TIPS:

- To make this more challenging, add TWO Interceptors, place them each 20 feet on each side of the midline. The players will need to communicate to avoid collisions. The player who doesn't get the ball should position themselves to back-up.



DIVE DRILL

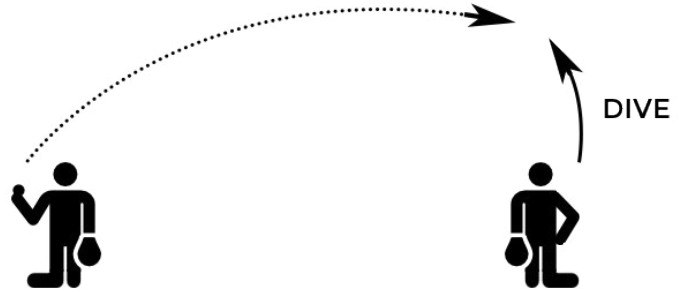


PURPOSE:

To practice using a dive to catch fly balls or field grounders.

SETUP:

In the outfield grass, have a fielder kneel about 15 feet away from the coach. Fielder has glove, coach has bucket of balls.



Fielders learn to make a diving catch from a kneeling position, then progress to more difficult dives

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Coach begins the drill by quick flipping a ball just outside the extended reach of the fielder.
2. The fielder must dive from a kneel to catch or field the ball.

MAKE IT HARDER

- Have players partner off and throw diving catches to each other
- Have players stand up and make the dive from an athletic upright position
- Throw pop-ups that require the player to run into the diving catch

MAKE IT EASIER

- Instead of flipping the ball to the fielder, stand directly above her and simply drop the ball straight down to one side or the other



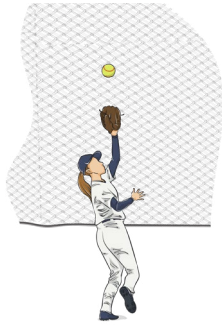
FENCE FLY



Advanced

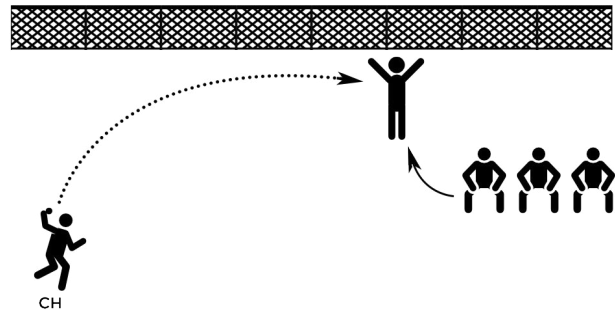
PURPOSE:

To practice catching balls near stationary objects such as fences or dugouts



SETUP:

Players form a single file line in foul territory 10 feet from a fence with their gloves on as shown. Coach has a bucket of balls and stands about 30 feet in front of line.



Fielders practice catching fly balls in close proximity to the fence

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Coach begins the drill by throwing a high arching ball designed to land between the fence and the player line.
2. The first player in line needs to catch the ball up against the fence, and then run the ball back to the coaches bucket before sprinting back to the end of the line.
3. As soon as the ball is returned to the coaches bucket, the coach begins the drill with the next player in line as to keep the drill running at a fast pace.

COACHING TIPS:

- Many players are afraid to catch pop flies near fences because they worry about running into the fence and getting hurt. Teach the kids to extend their arm toward the fence while they keep their eye on the ball. Their arm will alert them before they crash

MAKE IT HARDER

- Hit live batted balls instead of throwing fly balls

MAKE IT EASIER

- If you have a player who is very uncomfortable with this drill, have them begin touching the fence instead of moving toward it.



REACTION DRILL



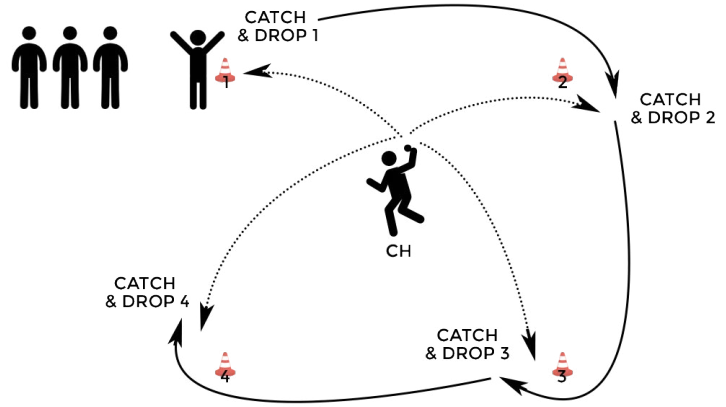
Advanced

PURPOSE:

To improve a player reaction time when fielding.

SETUP:

Make a square with 4 cones spread about 15 feet apart from each other. Coach stands in the middle with 4 tennis balls. Fielders line up to first cone with gloves on.



Players make four consecutive catches, running around a four cone square

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. First fielder in line takes their place at cone #1 facing AWAY from coach.
2. Coach throws the first tennis ball toward cone #1 and yells “GO” as soon as ball is released.
3. When fielder hears “GO” they turn around and catch ball.
4. After catching the first ball, player drops ball to the ground and runs to cone two.
5. Coach throws the ball to cone #2 as player is rounding the cone, so they have to catch it as their body is turning. If successful catch is made, player drops ball on ground.
6. Play continues until fielder has rounded all four cones and coach as thrown all four tennis balls.
7. At the end of the drill all four tennis balls are returned to coach and drill begins again with second player in line.

MAKE IT HARDER

- Players can start laying flat on their stomachs

MAKE IT EASIER

- Players face the coach on the first throw(remove the turn around)



EXTRA BASE HIT

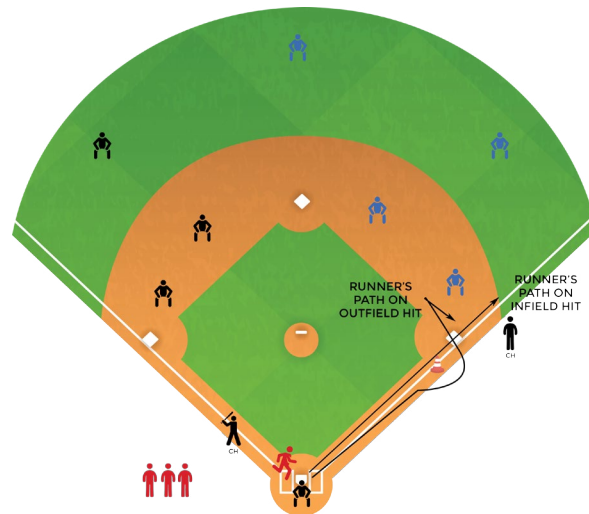


PURPOSE:

A game-like baserunning drill that helps runners learn when to round first and when to sprint straight through the bag.

SETUP:

Split your players into three teams. One team lines up at home plate, the other two fill the defensive positions. Place a coach at first base. And another coach hitting ground balls from the third base line.



Baserunners learn to make an aggressive turn at first

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The first player on the baserunning team steps up to the plate.
2. The coach will put the ball into play by hitting a ground ball to the infield or a line drive into the outfield.
3. The baserunner will sprint to first base, watching the first base coach for a signal.
 - If the ball is hit to an infielder the coach will tell the runner to sprint through the bag.
 - If the ball is hit to the outfield, the coach will tell the runner to sprint through first and round the base, scanning the outfield for the ball.
 - The runner will either return to first base or sprint to second depending on how the ball is being fielded by the outfielder.
4. Repeat with the next runner in line. After one team has gone, rotate the teams to different positions.

COACHING TIPS:

- To make the drill more game-like. Allow the runners to stay on base and continue around the bases until they score.

MAKE IT HARDER

- Instead of the coach hitting ground balls, have players bat against live pitching or a pitching machine.

MAKE IT EASIER

- Place a cone 5 feet past first base to indicate how far the baserunner should go after rounding.



3 BALL THROW

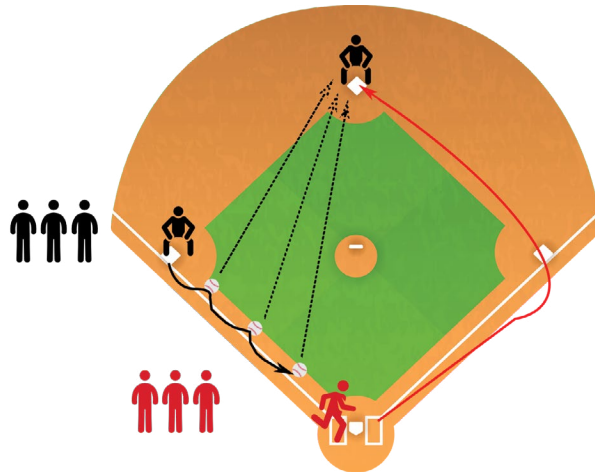


PURPOSE:

Practices throwing and baserunning in a fun, game-like situation

SETUP:

Split your players into two teams. The offensive team lines up behind home plate. The defensive team lines up behind third base with one player covering second base. Place three balls along the third base line, evenly spaced between third base and home.



Players compete to see who can make the longest throw

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The first player on the offensive team steps into the batters box with a helmet but no bat
2. On the coach's whistle, the offensive player sprints to first base and rounds to second
3. The first player in the third base line sprints to the first ball on the third baseline, picks it up barehand and makes an accurate throw to second. She then proceeds to the second ball and throws to second. Then finally the third ball and throws to second
4. The goal of the baserunner is to make it to second base before all three throws are completed.
5. If the baserunner beats the third throw, the offensive team gets a point. If the third throw beats the baserunner, the defensive team gets a point
6. After throwing, the fielder will rotate to play second base while the second baseman rotates to the back of the throwing line. After each fielder has played both positions, rotate the teams and repeat

MAKE IT HARDER

- Have the second baseman tag the sliding baserunner in order to make an out.

MAKE IT EASIER

- For younger players, you can move the three balls closer to second base for a shorter throw. Or use two balls instead of three.



FIRST AND THIRD

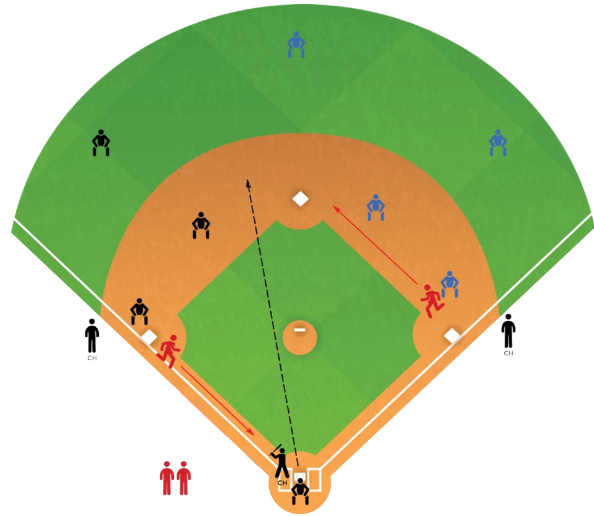


PURPOSE:

A live baserunning drill that will also work on situational defense

SETUP:

Split your players into three teams. One team lines up at home plate, the other two fill the defensive positions. Place base coaches at first and third base. And another coach hitting ground balls from the third base line.



Baserunners learn to react to the hit ball and advance

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The first player on the baserunning team begins at third base. The second player begins at first base.
2. Both baserunners take a short lead
3. The coach will put the ball into play by hitting a ball into the outfield
4. If the ball is hit on the ground, both baserunners try to advance
5. If it is hit in the air, the runner on third will try to tag up and score
6. The baserunners try to score runs while the fielders try to make outs
7. After all players on one team have rotated through first and third, switch the teams up
8. Keep track of runs scored and crown a winner at the end

COACHING TIPS:

- The third base coach will tell the baserunners whether to advance, go back or tag up
- Make sure your fielders are communicating about fielding balls in the outfield and throwing to the cutoff

MAKE IT HARDER

- Instead of the coach hitting balls, have players bat against live pitching or a pitching machine

MAKE IT EASIER

- Add a base coach at second to provide extra guidance



60 MINUTE SOFTBALL PRACTICE - OUTFIELD EMPHASIS

Required: 2 coaches, balls, bats, helmets, tees, bases, cones



Warmup: 10 Mins (Full Team)

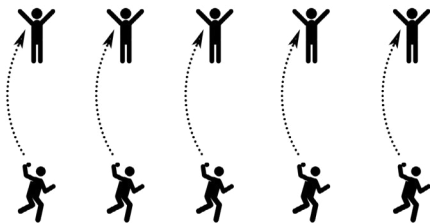
Dynamic Warmup: 10 mins

Skip Forward and Backward. High Knee Runs. Carioca. Butt-kickers. Walking Lunges.

Water Break: 3-5 Minutes (Coaches Set Up Stations)

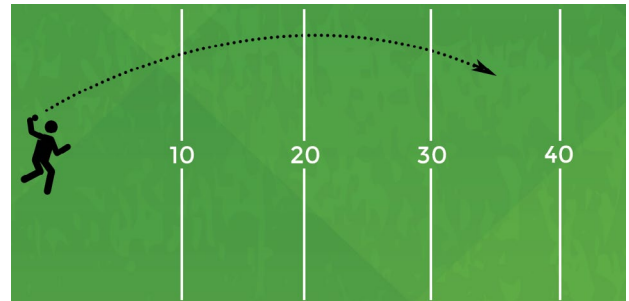
Stations: 20 Mins (Split Team Into Two Groups and Rotate Through Each Drill For 10 Mins)

First to Fifteen: 10 mins (Infield)



Players compete to see who can make 15 consecutive throws with their partner.

Distance PR: 10 mins (Outfield)



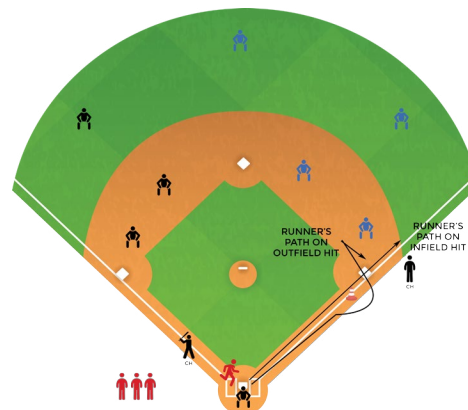
Players compete to see who can make the longest throw

Water Break: 3-5 Minutes (Coaches Set Up Stations)

Game Preparation: 20 Mins (Full Team)

Extra Base Hit: 20 mins

Baserunners learn to make an aggressive turn at first





60 MINUTE SOFTBALL PRACTICE - OUTFIELD EMPHASIS

Required: 2 coaches, balls, bats, helmets, tees, bases, cones



Warmup: 10 Mins (Full Team)

Dynamic Warmup: 10 mins

Skip Forward and Backward. High Knee Runs. Carioca. Butt-kickers. Walking Lunges.

Water Break: 3-5 Minutes (Coaches Set Up Stations)

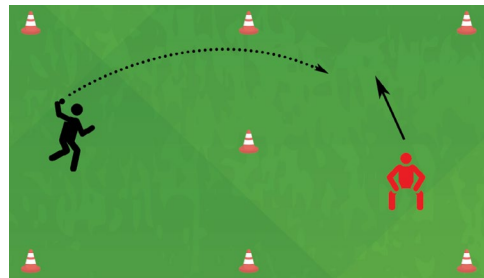
Stations: 20 Mins (Split Team Into Two Groups and Rotate Through Each Drill For 10 Mins)

Sit and Throw: 10 mins (Infield)



Players play catch from a seated position to work on upper body mechanics

Footwork Tennis: 10 mins (Outfield)



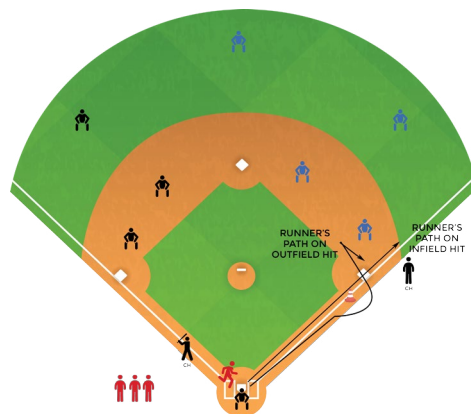
Players throw pop flies from one side of the "tennis court" to the other

Water Break: 3-5 Minutes (Coaches Set Up Stations)

Game Preparation: 20 Mins (Full Team)

Extra Base Hit: 20 mins

Baserunners learn to make an aggressive turn at first





90 MINUTE SOFTBALL PRACTICE - OUTFIELD EMPHASIS

Required: 3 coaches, balls, bats, helmets, tees, bases, cones

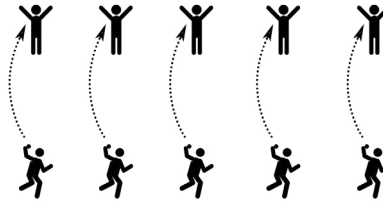


Warmup: 20 Mins (Full Team)

Dynamic Warmup: 10 mins

Skip Forward and Backward. High Knee Runs. Carioca. Butt-kickers. Walking Lunges.

First to Fifteen: 10 mins

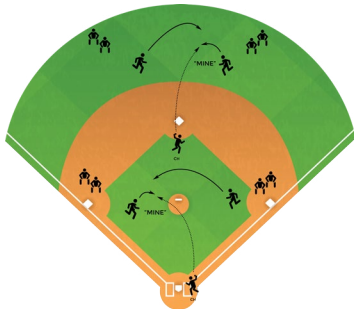


Players compete to see who can make 15 consecutive throws with their partner.

Water Break: 3-5 Minutes (Coaches Set Up Stations)

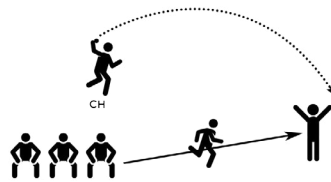
Stations: 30 Mins (Split Team Into Three Groups and Rotate Through Each Drill For 10 Mins)

Shout it Out Drill: 10 mins (Infield)



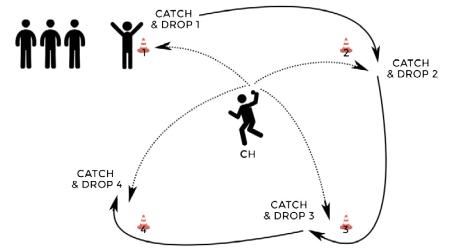
The closer fielder calls out "Mine" then catches the fly ball. The second fielder backs up the play.

On the Run: 10 mins (Outfield)



Fielders sprint to catch fly balls on the move

Reaction Drill: 10 mins (Outfield)



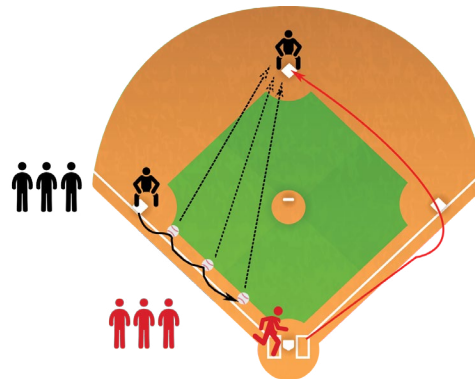
Players make four consecutive catches, running around a four cone square

Water Break: 3-5 Minutes (Coaches Set Up Stations)

Game Preparation: 30 Mins (Full Team)

3 Ball Throw: 30 Mins

Players compete to see who can make the longest throw





90 MINUTE SOFTBALL PRACTICE - OUTFIELD EMPHASIS

Required: 3 coaches, balls, bats, helmets, tees, bases, cones



Warmup: 20 Mins (Full Team)

Dynamic Warmup: 10 mins

Skip Forward and Backward. High Knee Runs. Carioca. Butt-kickers. Walking Lunges.

Sit & Throw: 10 mins



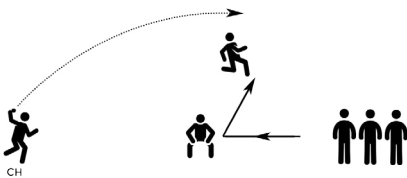
Players play catch from a seated position to work on upper body mechanics

Water Break: 3-5 Minutes (Coaches Set Up Stations)

Stations: 30 Mins (Split Team Into Three Groups and Rotate Through Each Drill For 10 Mins)

Drop Step Drill:

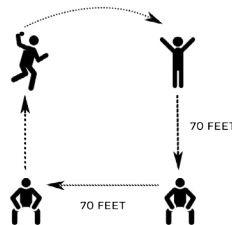
10 mins (Infield)



The fielder makes a drop step, then runs to catch the fly ball.

Crow Hop Corners:

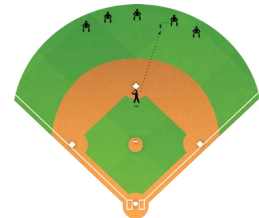
10 mins (Outfield)



Players use a crow hop to make a long throw to each corner of the square

Take a Knee Drill:

10 mins (Outfield)



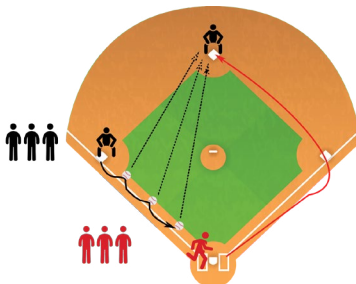
Fielders play an outfield grand ball using the one-knee method, then make an accurate throw back to the infield

Water Break: 3-5 Minutes (Coaches Set Up Stations)

Game Preparation: 40 Mins (Full Team)

3 Ball Throw:

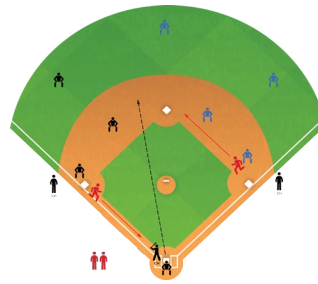
20 Mins



Players compete to see who can make the longest throw

First and Third:

20 Mins



Baserunners learn to react to the hit ball and advance



120 MINUTE SOFTBALL PRACTICE - OUTFIELD EMPHASIS

Required: 3 coaches, balls, bats, helmets, tees, bases, cones

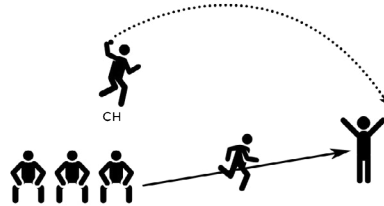


Warmup: 20 Mins (Full Team)

Dynamic Warmup: 10 mins

Skip Forward and Backward. High Knee Runs. Carioca. Butt-kickers. Walking Lunges.

On the Run: 10 mins



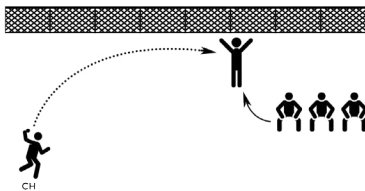
Fielders sprint to catch fly balls on the move

Water Break: 3-5 Minutes (Coaches Set Up Stations)

Stations: 45 Mins (Split Team Into Three Groups and Rotate Through Each Drill For 15 Mins)

Fancy Fly:

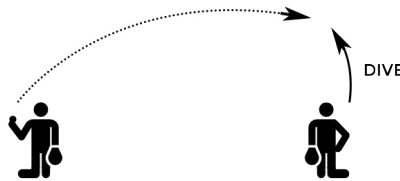
15 mins (Infield)



Fielders practice catching fly balls in close proximity to the fence

Dive Drill:

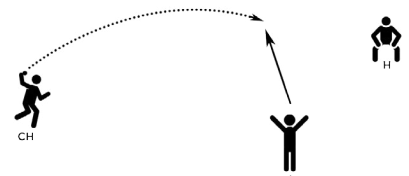
15 mins (Outfield)



Fielders learn to make a diving catch from a kneeling position, then progress to more difficult dives

Interceptor Drill:

15 mins (Outfield)



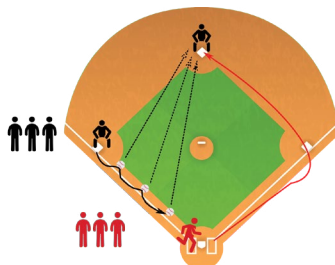
Fielders practice using proper footwork and communication to catch line drives or fly balls in the outfield

Water Break: 3-5 Minutes (Coaches Set Up Stations)

Game Preparation: 45 Mins (Full Team)

3 Ball Throw:

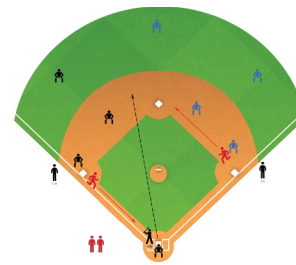
20 mins (Infield)



Players compete to see who can make the longest throw

First and Third:

20 mins (Infield)



Baserunners learn to react to the hit ball and advance