

THROWING

- ✓ Accuracy is the most important part of throwing.
- ✓ Using good fundamentals in throwing practice will develop accuracy.
- ✓ Every time a ball is thrown between two people, a spot should be picked out and the player should throw to it.
- ✓ Don't just throw for the sake of warming up. Throw for improved accuracy.
- ✓ For accuracy and better carry, get in the habit of throwing from over the top.
- ✓ When possible, set fingers across the seams.
- ✓ Infielders, outfielders, and catchers should follow through with their throws just as pitchers. Bring your arm through.
- ✓ All plays in the infield cannot be made from coming over the top. At times the infielder as well as catcher may have to come from the side for execution. Be smart enough to know when this is necessary. Against a fast runner or when a play will be extremely close, the fielder must realize he does not have enough time to bring the arm up to the top throwing position.
- ✓ Throw extended distances to develop arm strength.
- ✓ Charging a ground ball will help get a better and harder throw off.
- ✓ Infielders, outfielders, and catchers: Forget warming up with knuckle and curve balls.

BASIC HITTING FUNDAMENTALS

Perhaps the most controversial of all baseball fundamentals-- as well as the most mysterious-- are the basics of good hitting.

As each player is physically and mentally different, it is extremely difficult to determine what procedure is best for the individual. Below, however, are several musts in becoming a better hitter.

- ✓ Select a bat you can handle.
- ✓ Keep your head still.

- ✓ Concentrate on contact.
- ✓ Hit strikes.
- ✓ Keep your hands back.
- ✓ Keep your front shoulder and chin tucked in.
- ✓ Don't commit yourself too soon.
- ✓ Forget about pulling the ball-- that will come.
- ✓ Turn head so that both eyes are on the pitcher.
- ✓ Lay the bat on the shoulder while waiting for pitcher to get ready.
- ✓ Don't hold bat in an erect position for any length of time. This takes strength out of your hands and arms and detracts from a free, fluid swing.
- ✓ Learn to hit your strength. Every hitter has a strength just as every hitter has a weakness. Learn to hit your pitch.
- ✓ Stay on the balls of your feet. Keep off the heels.
- ✓ Say to yourself, "Every pitch thrown is going to be a strike. I am going to hit every pitch." That way you will never be caught with the bat on your shoulder.
- ✓ When stepping in to hit, make sure you have good plate coverage.
- ✓ Don't stand in someone else's foot marks.
- ✓ Look down and check to see that the fat part of the bat is covering home plate. Don't have handle over home plate.
- ✓ Start the bat on every pitch to create some type of hand action and bat speed. If you like the pitch, go ahead and hit it. If you don't like the pitch, then hold up your swing.
- ✓ Swing down on high pitches.
- ✓ Step to hit the pitch.
- ✓ Take a short step and stride. A long stride will only throw you off balance.

- ✓ Don't over swing. Make contact and the ball will go.
- ✓ Don't be a guess hitter. Don't look for anything--hit what you see.
- ✓ Make the pitcher come to you. Don't be anxious and go after him.
- ✓ Keep your hands back. YOU HIT WITH YOUR HANDS AND YOUR HEAD!
- ✓ Keep your hands relaxed. As contact is made your hands will tighten.
- ✓ When hitting to the opposite field, hit the ball on the ground and hit down on the ball.
- ✓ Faster players should use heavier bats and should concentrate on hitting balls on the ground and making contact. Utilize speed.
- ✓ If you're having trouble controlling the bat, don't be afraid to choke up. Bat control is very important.
- ✓ Keep your tail up at home plate. Don't fall away.
- ✓ Be aggressive with the bat. Go to home plate to hit.
- ✓ After contact is made, follow through--don't quit on the swing.
- ✓ Hit with the top hand and roll the wrists.
- ✓ Hit with the hands in the strike zone if the swing is late.
- ✓ BE PATIENT! WAIT ON THE BALL!

SOME HITTING FAULTS **AND HOW TO CORRECT THEM**

OVERSTRIDING:

- ✓ Stride can be shortened by taking an extremely wide stance.
- ✓ Put the weight on the back leg (this causes the hitter to keep weight back).
- ✓ Bend knees and crouch. Shift weight to ball of back foot.

HAND HITCHES:

Getting the bat started should not be classified as a hand hitch. Most players have to start their bat in some way, and we are not concerned with this. However, if you are constantly getting

hit on first or cannot get the bat back up and through in time, you may be dropping the hands too much. If this is the case, you should then:

- ✓ Move hands back rather than dropping them down.
- ✓ Place bat on shoulder, bring up hands until they are parallel with shoulders and hit right from the shoulder. Do not pick the bat up--just hit off of the shoulder.

UPPERCUTTING:

- ✓ Instead of a vertical bat, carry a flat bat (almost parallel with the ground).
- ✓ Lay the bat on the shoulder. Then, as the pitcher gets ready to throw, pick up the bat. This will give you freedom with your hands, and the swing will have to be level as the hands are right opposite the shoulders.
- ✓ Concentrate on swinging down on the ball. Get the feeling of the ball coming down rather than up. Actually, what you will be doing is swinging level. The bat cannot go down, or you would hit yourself on top of the feet.
- ✓ Keep the shoulders and hips level. Do not drop back the shoulders to hit.
- ✓ Practice hitting the ball on the ground.

HEAD PULLING:

- ✓ Don't be concerned about looking to see where the ball will go.
- ✓ Watch the ball hit the bat.
- ✓ Swing down. Think about swinging down. In taking a longer look to swing down, your head will automatically have to look at the ball longer.
- ✓ Keep the chin and shoulders tucked in. Don't be in a hurry to pull one. Your hands will take you out. Keep the head steady.
- ✓ Forget about trying to hit the ball in the air.
- ✓ Cut down on your swing.
- ✓ Don't try to pull the ball.

SWEEPING THE BAT:

- ✓ Put the bat in the fingers instead of far back in the hand.
- ✓ Get the feeling you are hitting with your wrists only.

- ✓ Feel the bat in your hands.
- ✓ Relax your arms; don't try to hit with them. Roll the wrists.

BATTING DRILLS

- ✓ If you're having trouble hitting the curve ball, have a pitcher who is having trouble getting the curve over throw batting practice to you.
- ✓ Create bat speed by this drill: Have one player throw underhanded from a short distance, and have the second player hit up against a screen. Do this drill at a fast pace with players switching off. This drill can be done in a small area. Make sure the hitter follows through as he would any other time.
- ✓ Create bat speed by developing strength in hands. Squeeze a rubber ball or hand grips. Also do finger tip push-ups for strength.
- ✓ If you are not blessed with natural strength, you must develop it and maintain it. A light type of weight program is helpful.
- ✓ Hit off of a batting tee.
- ✓ Swing a weighted bat during winter months.
- ✓ Practice hitting the ball to the opposite field. Hit down on the ball when doing this.
- ✓ Take a short imaginary stride even though you may not have the bat in hand.
- ✓ To learn the strike zone, extend lines out in front of home plate with your bat so that in looking at home plate it actually will look like a longer plate. This will be easier to see when in the batter's box and will help you determine what pitch to hit.
- ✓ Bring your hands through. This will automatically bring your hips through.
- ✓ Watch the bat hit the ball in pepper games.
- ✓ Keep head still in the pepper games.
- ✓ In batting practice as in games, don't look to the pull side of the field. Look directly at the pitcher and center field. Hands will bring the ball around and you will pull automatically. Don't look to see where the ball will go--keep the head on target.

- ✓ If stepping in the bucket, draw a line behind you during batting practice. As you finish swing, look to see where your feet are. If they're on the other side of the line, then you have not corrected your falling away.
- ✓ Swing the bat as much as you can. Spend extra time in the batting cage. Switch off with a buddy, but hit, hit, hit.
- ✓ Form good habits in batting practice. Give batting practice a real purpose. Have an idea. Have a plan and follow it.
- ✓ Hit with the "wrist only" in a pepper game. Don't be concerned with stride. Get the feel of the bat being just in your hands.

OUTFIELD DRILLS

- ✓ Throw overhand and follow through as a pitcher would. Slap self in back with follow through hand.
- ✓ Get as many ground balls as possible. If possible, shag grounders in infield.
- ✓ Pepper games are good for agility when played properly.
- ✓ Practice the crossover even though you may not be shagging a ball.
- ✓ Line up with another outfielder about 30 feet away and toss the ball over each other's head. This will develop the proper way to go back on a ball.
- ✓ Practice gripping the ball across the seams. Get in the habit of feeling the ball correctly when making your throws.
- ✓ CHARGE GROUND BALLS!--CHARGE GROUND BALLS!!!!!!
- ✓ Run pitchers and all others out of your position during batting practice. The only way you will learn to play it is to PLAY IT ALONE.
- ✓ Practice catching the ball off throwing foot. This saves a step, and if the ball is high enough, it can be done.
- ✓ Practice one short step when catching both ground balls and fly balls. You can't throw anyone out if you run with the ball.
- ✓ Run, Run, and Run--an outfielder is only as good as his legs.

Fielding Skills-Infielders

- ✓ Get yourself in proper position to field the ball. Stay low with glove out and your back parallel to the ground. By doing this it protects the player and allows for quick body movement when pursuing grounders.
- ✓ When fielding the ball, go after the ball, stay in front of it, and use both hands. Don't wait for the ball come to you.
- ✓ Keep your eye on the ball. It is important to look the ball into the glove. There is more chance for injury if you turn your head. If you see a "hot" grounder that is not playable, knock it down to prevent any extra bases.
- ✓ Catch infield pop-ups over your head so you can keep your eye on it. Make sure to "call out" the pop-up to avoid collisions.
- ✓ When tagging the runner, keep both hands on the ball at all times.
- ✓ Minimize throws on a "run-down" play (maximum of two). Try to force the runner back to his original base.
- ✓ Remember.....an accurate throw is better than a strong one. Throw the ball to your fellow teammate's chest (letters on a jersey).
- ✓ Keep the throws low.
- ✓ Always talk to your teammates. It helps keep you alert and reinforces your pitcher's confidence.
- ✓ Always go for the sure out. The out is more important than the base runner.
- ✓ Back up other players when needed.



Fielding Skills-Outfielders

- ✓ Don't stand flat footed when the batter comes to the plate. Watch the ball closely and anticipate a hit to your field.
- ✓ When fielding the ball, always look to the cut-off man for instructions on where to throw the ball.
- ✓ Catch fly balls over your head so you can be in a good position to release a quick throw.
- ✓ When pursuing fly balls, keep your eye on the ball at all times.
- ✓ If a grounder is difficult to field, block it with your body to avoid extra bases.
- ✓ Keep throws low and bounce them to the infield if you can't reach it on the fly accurate.
- ✓ "Call out" all fly balls to avoid collisions.
- ✓ A glove with "an open web" is the preferred outfielders' glove because of maximum visibility.
- ✓ Back up your fellow outfielders in the even they miss the ball.



Fielding Skills-Catchers

- ✓ Always be aware of your position behind home-plate.
- ✓ When squatting, their feet should be shoulder-width or a little more apart. And their weight should be on the balls of their feet.
- ✓ To hide their signals from the opponent, catchers should give signs close to their body. Hanging their glove hands below their glove-side knee will also help hide the signals.
- ✓ Always give the pitcher a large stationary target with their mitts.
- ✓ When blocking balls, the catcher's first priority is to stop the ball. To do this, the catcher should drop to both knees, place their glove between their legs, and keep their head down, and body in front of the ball.
- ✓ On foul balls behind the plate, catchers should visually locate the ball first. Next they should take off their mask and hold it until they get under the ball. Once they get underneath the ball, toss the mask to the side to catch the ball with both hands.
- ✓ When there are no runners on base and the batter hits a grounder, the catch must run to 1st base on an angle and back up the 1st base man.

Dealing with Parents

Coaching a Youth League team is exciting and rewarding, but sometimes you may experience difficulty with parents. Some may want more playing for their child, while others may judge the coach's decisions. Here are a few thoughts to remember when dealing with parents:

- ✓ Always listen to their ideas and feelings. Remember they are interested and concerned because it is their children that are participating.
- ✓ Express appreciation for their interest and concern. This will make them more open and at ease with you.
- ✓ No coach can please everyone. Don't try.
- ✓ Know your objectives and do what is best for the team, not for the parents.
- ✓ Make certain all parents know **YOUR** ground rules. Set parent meetings before the start of the season.
- ✓ Resist unfair pressure. You are the coach and you make the final decisions.
- ✓ Most important be fair. If you treat all players equally you will gain respect.
- ✓ Be consistent!
- ✓ Handle any confrontation one on one. Don't be defensive. Don't argue with parents. Listen to their viewpoint and thank them.

Drills

Tee Drill

Purpose- learn how to drive through the ball, and consistently hit line drives

Equipment- bats, baseballs, hitting tee, backstop

Procedure

- ✓ Place a ball on a tee about 10-20 feet in front of the backstop
- ✓ Have players pair up; one feeds (sets the ball on the tee) and the other hits
- ✓ Have the hitter hit line drives into the backstop

Key Points-

- ✓ Adjusting the tee to different heights simulates hitting low and high pitches.
- ✓ If a player hits under the ball, he or she will hit the top of the backstop.
- ✓ If a player hits on top of the ball, he or she will hit a ground ball that rolls into or hits low on the backstop.



Top & Bottom Hand Isolation Drill

Purpose- by isolating each hand you are training the hands individually to work together.

Equipment- bat, baseballs, backstop

Procedure

- ✓ Have players pair up; one feeds (soft toss) and the other hits
- ✓ Player kneels opposite batter with a bucket of balls
- ✓ Player softly tosses balls into hitting zone of batter
- ✓ Batter is using a shorter bat or is choking up on his own bat
- ✓ Batter swing with only one hand, alternating hands

Key Points

- ✓ By isolating each hand you are training the hands individually to work together.
- ✓ The drill helps people that are described as being dominant with a particular hand.
- ✓ It also is a step in the process of achieving correct muscle memory.

Basketball Drill

Purpose- learns how to drive through the ball, and follow through with your swing.

Equipment- bat, basketball (deflated), hitting tee, backstop

Procedure-

- ✓ Place a deflated basketball on a tee about 10-20 feet in front of the backstop
- ✓ The batter takes a normal swing and follows-through right through the basketball

Key Points-

- ✓ Make sure the basketballs are deflated
- ✓ Unless the player makes a good strong follow through, the ball will not go far

Golf Whiffle Ball Drill

Purpose- works on eye hand coordination (see the ball)

Equipment- stickball bat or broom handle, golf whiffle balls

Procedure-

- ✓ Have players pair up; one feeds (soft or fast toss) and the other hits
- ✓ Players softly tosses balls into hitting zone of batter or fast toss
- ✓ Have the hitter hit line drives into the backstop

Key Points

- ✓ Smaller diameter ball and bat makes for great coordination drill
- ✓ If a player hits under the ball, he or she will hit the top of the backstop
- ✓ If a player hits on top of the ball, he or she will hit a ground ball that rolls into or hits low on the backstop

Pepper Drill

Purpose- to have hitters develop better bat control and a short, quick swing. Batters can also practice bunting in pepper to improve bunting skills. Fielders work on short toss and fielding ground balls.

Equipment- bats, baseballs

Procedure-

- ✓ Have the player hitting stand approximately 22 feet away from three fielders, who position themselves two feet apart.
- ✓ The player should hit the ball using a short, quick, downward stroke. And hit the ball sharply with one or two hops (ground balls) to the fielders
- ✓ A fielder fields the ball and quickly tosses a half to three-quarter speed pitch back to be hit.
- ✓ The hitter should hit the ball where it is pitched
- ✓ Preferably use four players in this drill and not more than five

Key points

- ✓ Emphasize hitting inside pitches
- ✓ Have batters hit the pitches in the middle to the fielder directly in front of them
- ✓ Outside pitches should go to the fielder to the right (for a right-handed batter)

Soft Toss Drill

Purpose- works on eye hand coordination, more batting reps

Equipment- bats, baseballs, backstop

Procedure-

- ✓ Have players pair up; one feeds (soft toss) and the other hits
- ✓ Player kneels opposite batter with a bucket of balls
- ✓ Player softly tosses balls into hitting zone of batter
- ✓ Have the hitter hit line drives into the backstop

Key Points

- ✓ Live hitting with out the need of a batting tunnel or field
- ✓ If a player hits under the ball, he or she will hit the top of the backstop
- ✓ If a player hits on top of the ball, he or she will hit a ground ball that rolls into or hits low on the backstop

2 Ball Soft Toss Drill

Purpose- works on eye hand coordination, more batting reps

Equipment- bats, baseballs, backstop

Procedure-

- ✓ Have players pair up; one feeds (soft toss) and the other hits
- ✓ Player kneels opposite batter with a bucket of balls
- ✓ Player softly tosses 2 balls into hitting zone of batter
- ✓ Player calls top or bottom ball as balls are released
- ✓ The hitter hits the called ball into the fence

Key Points

- ✓ The hitter learns to concentrate and keep the weight back
- ✓ Live hitting with out the need of a batting tunnel or field
- ✓ If a player hits under the ball, he or she will hit the top of the backstop
- ✓ If a player hits on top of the ball, he or she will hit a ground ball that rolls into or hits low on the backstop

Tennis Ball Drill

Purpose- eye hand coordination

Equipment- bat, tennis balls

Procedure-

- ✓ Have players pair up; one feeds (soft toss) and the other hits
- ✓ Player can feed tennis balls to batter soft toss style or bouncing
- ✓ The batter takes a normal swing and follows-through right
- ✓ Have the hitter hit line drives into the backstop

Key Points

- ✓ Bouncing balls are more challenging
- ✓ You can also do a walking toss where the player walks along the batter and bounce the balls to the hitter. Very challenging

First & Third Drill

Purpose- works first & third situation and both the offense and defense

Equipment- baseballs and field

Procedure-

- ✓ Split up your team into two teams with complete infield
- ✓ One of the teams will play defense in the field, while the other team runs the bases.
- ✓ The team running the bases will begin with a runner on both first and third, with the object being to score a run
- ✓ Defensively, the object is to stop the runner from scoring while also attempting not to give the runner second base on an easy steal

Key points

- ✓ The catcher calls the play before the pitcher pitches the ball
- ✓ The runner on first has only three pitches in which he must attempt to steal second base
- ✓ A successful steal of second base will be worth one point, and a run scored will be worth three points
- ✓ You need to work on defensive & offensive strategies before running this drill

Base Advance Drill

Purpose- runners to learn how to take the extra base. Fielders to challenge the runner

Equipment- baseball field, fungo, baseballs, helmets

Procedure-

- ✓ Players put on helmets and line up at home
- ✓ Nine players with warm, loose arms take the field. (you can also use just outfielders)
- ✓ A coach stands at home with a fungo bat and plenty of baseballs
- ✓ As the coach hits the ball into the outfield on the ground, a player runs to first rounds the bag, and reads the outfielder. The runners can stay at first or try to advance to second

Key Points-

- ✓ A coach in the outfield can make sure the outfielders don't break in too early
- ✓ Outfielders can also work on their defensive skills

- ✓ Runners should run hard between home and first, anticipating going to second base

Batting Practice Drill

Purpose- to practice defensive situations that may cause a fielder difficulty

Equipment- baseball field, bats, baseballs

Procedure-

- ✓ During batting practice, place your outfielders in exaggerated defensive positioning to create numerous specific defensive situations
- ✓ Work each hit ball as a live game situation
- ✓ Runners work on proper base advancing skills

Key Points

- ✓ Stress the importance of approaching the drill as if it were a game situation
- ✓ Be specific in where you play the outfielder in order to exaggerate a particular weakness.
- ✓ Take every opportunity to emphasize mental toughness and getting a good jump

Cutoff and Relay Drill

Purpose- to work on the mechanics of relay and cutoff skills and show players how they can contribute to a team defense

Equipment- baseball field, baseballs

Procedure-

- ✓ Place a team on the field
- ✓ Each infielder has a ball (except for the pitcher and catcher)
- ✓ Stand in shallow outfield and call out the number of runners on base
- ✓ Each infielder, one at a time, calls out the number of outs and throws a simulated hit to the outfield, anything from a single or double to a sure out.
- ✓ The drill starts with the third baseman, and the other infielders wait until the previous cutoff or relay play is complete before taking a turn.
- ✓ The catcher directs the cutoff players to their positions and calls the play

Key Points

- ✓ Use every base running situation possible to practice the spectrum of cutoff and relay plays.
- ✓ Watch each infielder's and outfielders throwing, catching and fielding mechanics, and check that each player makes the proper choice about where to throw the ball.

Relay Line Drill

Purpose- to improve relay technique

Equipment- baseball field, baseballs

Procedure-

- ✓ Using all your infielders, line them up in a straight line from home plate to a spot in the outfield near the fence, separating them by approximately 90 to 120 feet.
- ✓ An outfielder then will start the drill by picking up the ball near the fence and delivering the throw to the first infielder.
- ✓ Each infielder will then complete the relay technique to the next infielder until the ball reaches home plate

Key Points

- ✓ It is important that each infielder handles the ball and exhibits both visual and verbal communication, coupled with proper footwork.

Slow Roller Drill

Purpose- to work on the first basemen's and third basemen's abilities to field slow rollers and bunts

Equipment- baseball field, baseballs

Procedure-

- ✓ Place five to six baseballs in a straight line from home plate moving out toward third base, beginning about 20 feet from the home late area
- ✓ Balls are about three to four steps apart
- ✓ The third basemen reacts to each ball as if it is a bunted ball



- ✓ Drill the first basemen by placing balls up the first base line in a similar manner

Key Points

- ✓ Stress the importance of your third basemen catching the ball off his or her right foot and throwing in the same manner
- ✓ For drill purposes, have your players field the ball with both hands, although quite often when a ball is not moving, its acceptable to let them field bare-handed this could be a variation in this drill

Long Toss Drill

Purpose- to develop arm strength and incorporate the technique of running through a fly ball or ground ball to get maximum power into the throw

Equipment- baseball field, bats, balls

Procedure-

- ✓ Once the outfielders' arms are loose, ask them to play catch from approximately 200 to 300 feet, depending on the athletes.
- ✓ The coach should distinguish between long catch and rainbow catch
- ✓ For long catch, players are to throw a long distance, but also to keep the throw low to the ground as if a cutoff man might need to cut the throw off

Key points

- ✓ Check throwing form and accuracy
- ✓ If players are using poor mechanics and are wild in their throws, shorten the distance and correct the flaws before building up to longer throws.

Bucket Drill

Purpose- work on ground ball fielding

Equipment- bat, bucket of baseballs, and extra bucket

Procedure-

- ✓ Coach is at home with bucket of balls
- ✓ Players all line up at an infield position
- ✓ Place empty bucket at second base

- ✓ Coach hits ground balls to players, who field the ball cleanly
- ✓ Player runs ball to bucket and goes to the back of the line
- ✓ Repeat

Key Points

- ✓ Emphasize proper fielding techniques
- ✓ Does not overwork throwing arm while getting lots of fielding in

Accuracy Drill

Purpose- work on throwing accuracy

Equipment- baseballs

Procedure-

- ✓ Players pair off and line up 20-30 feet apart at first
- ✓ You can have 1 pair or as many as you like
- ✓ Record accuracy as a point system
- ✓ Use a simple three point system, but you set it up any way you like
- ✓ A throw from the head region around the side and down to the waist is worth the three point
- ✓ A throw that is easy to catch, but requires the player to fully extend his arms is worth two points
- ✓ A throw which requires the players to step to make the catch is worth one
- ✓ A uncatchable throw is worth zero
- ✓ Set a point total, say 10-20, and let them go for it

Key points

- ✓ Emphasize proper throwing techniques
- ✓ This helps the player who is throwing to focus on the chest area of the target

Around the bucket drill

Purpose- helps players learn to field through the ball and work on ground ball fielding

Equipment- bucket of baseballs and extra bucket

Procedure-

- ✓ Fielder lines up at shortstop
- ✓ Place empty bucket about 5 feet in front of the fielder
- ✓ Coach is near pitchers mound
- ✓ Coach rolls ground balls at the bucket
- ✓ Player will circle around the bucket (on the third base side) field the ball and keep his momentum moving to 1B
- ✓ As the fielder gets better at this, the coach should roll the ball harder at the bucket to force fielder to move his feet quicker to get into proper position

Key Points

- ✓ Player learns to field through the ball
- ✓ Emphasize proper fielding techniques

Base Advance Drill

Purpose- runners learn how to take the extra base. Fielders challenge the runners

Equipment- baseball field, fungo, baseballs, helmets

Procedure-

- ✓ Players put on helmets and line up at home
- ✓ Nine players with warm, loose arms take the field. (you can also use just outfielders)
- ✓ A coach stands at home with a fungo bat and plenty of baseballs

Key Points

- ✓ A coach in the outfield can make sure the outfielders don't break in too early
- ✓ Outfielders can also work on their defensive skills
- ✓ Runners should run hard between home and first, anticipating going to second base
- ✓ Runners should work on learning which hits they can take the extra base on

Hockey drill

Purpose- to practice fielding fundamentals and game reactions in situations where players can't predict the bounce of the ball.

Equipment- backstop, baseballs, fungo bat

Procedure-

- ✓ Separate players into two teams, and put one team on each side of the backstop, which serves as a goal
- ✓ Each team rotates a "goalie" to defend the goal (about 10 feet wide)
- ✓ The coaches hit ground balls in an attempt to score on the goalies

Key Points

- ✓ Start out slowly and increase the tempo as the game continues
- ✓ Make sure the players field the ball out in front of the body and that the head is down or the ball as it enters the mitt

Target Drill

Purpose- to help players learn the proper release point for throws of various distances and increase their throwing accuracy.

Equipment- baseballs, backstop

Procedure-

- ✓ Players stand about 10 feet from the backstop with a number of balls. Create a series of targets at different heights on the backstop (towels work well)
- ✓ Executing the proper fundamentals, the players practice their release point by trying to hit the targets
- ✓ Players retrieve their own balls
- ✓ Increase distance (15,20,25, feet) after successful throws

Key Points

- ✓ You can have four or five stations going at the same time, if you use both sides of the backstop
- ✓ Watch that your players throw the ball over the top rather than sidearm
- ✓ Players should stride toward the target
- ✓ This leads to proper follow-through and less strain on the arm

Circle drill

Purpose- to develop the ability to complete underhand and backhand feeds on double plays

Equipment- baseball field, baseballs

Procedure-

- ✓ Place four or more players in a circle approximately 15 feet apart, and have them toss the ball underhanded around the circle, beginning with the partner on the immediate left
- ✓ After one minute, have the players to reverse direction and perform the drill to the right

Key points

- ✓ Emphasize movement following the throw, as well as making good, chest high feeds

Short Toss Drill

Purpose- to provide numerous controlled repetitions in order to develop defensive techniques for outfielders

Equipment- baseball field, bats, balls

Procedure-

- ✓ From a short distance, the coach tosses the ball in a manner similar to desired defensive situations
- ✓ Having several baseballs enhances the repetitive aspect
- ✓ The numerous repetitions enhance footwork, movement toward the ball and the player's jump

Key Points-

- ✓ Make sure players are using the proper technique
- ✓ Be mindful to incorporate mental toughness

Bucket Drill 2

Purpose- work on ground ball fielding, throwing accuracy

Equipment- bat, bucket of baseballs, extra garbage can size bucket

Procedure-

- ✓ Coach is at 2nd base with bucket of balls
- ✓ Place a large garbage pail (33 gallons or larger size) on its side, atop home plate so that the opening is facing the diamond
- ✓ Players make 2 lines in right and left field
- ✓ Have the first two players in each line break away from their groups and assume a normal ready fielding position
- ✓ Throw a soft pop fly into the air for the fielders to catch
- ✓ After the catch, they crow hop and throw the ball at cutoff height to home plate
- ✓ Instruct them to throw the ball into the bucket with the ball bouncing once or twice prior hitting home plate
- ✓ Each throw the players rotate.

Key Points-

- ✓ Emphasize proper fielding techniques
- ✓ Set up beneath the ball with momentum going forward toward plate as the catch is made
- ✓ Catch the ball above the bill of the cap slightly off-center toward the throwing shoulder; glove fingers are pointed to the sky (not turned toward the horizon)

Cone Drill

Purpose- to develop mobility and coordination in fielding

Equipment- baseball, cones

Procedure-

- ✓ Place 4 or 5 cones in a straight line, 5 feet apart
- ✓ Coach or player kneels about 10 feet away from cones
- ✓ Players line up at one end of the line of cones
- ✓ One at a time the players step up to field balls that are thrown by the coach
- ✓ Coach throws balls into each “fielding area” created by the cones
- ✓ The players step up to field first ball, then step back, side step into next “fielding area” and step up to field next ball, and continue through all the cones

Key Points-

- ✓ Emphasize fluid movement in and out of the “fielding area”

- ✓ Perform proper fielding techniques
- ✓ Speed up the drill as players perform better

Exchange Drill

Purpose- to achieve numerous repetitions of a catcher's throwing position and release

Equipment- baseball, catcher's gear

Procedure-

- ✓ Each day, once your catcher's are loose, they should approach every ball as if it were a steal attempt
- ✓ Monitor your catcher's foot movement toward the ball and the exchange of the ball from glove to throwing hand

Key Points-

- ✓ The key in this drill is being sure the catcher's hands do not drop below the letters of the uniform as he or she takes the ball back to his or her release point
- ✓ As a variation, long catch can also be incorporated daily to develop arm strength, quick feet toward the ball, and the exchange of the ball from glove to throwing hand

One Knee Toss Drill

Purpose- to achieve numerous repetitions of a catcher's throwing position and release

Equipment- bucket of baseballs, catcher's gear, field

Procedure-

- ✓ Catcher at home plate
- ✓ Coach a few feet in front on one knee
- ✓ Coach will toss ball to catcher who is already in their stance
- ✓ The catcher will catch the ball and execute proper throwing footwork and throw to another player at 2nd or 3rd base

Key Points-

- ✓ Being on one knee and tossing the ball will allow the coach to put the ball exactly where they want to work.
- ✓ This will assist the catcher in working on both types of throwing footwork

Blocking Pitches Drill

Purpose- to work on pitched balls that are low in the dirt

Equipment- tennis ball (or another type of softer ball), catcher's gear

Procedure-

- ✓ using a tennis ball, the coach stands, 10 feet from the catcher and throws short hops in the dirt to simulate pitches

Key Points-

- ✓ have catchers catch the ball with their body instead of blocking it rigidly and having it bounce far out of reach

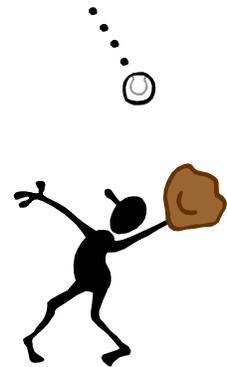
Foul Ball Drill

Purpose- to improve the ability of a catcher to react quickly to pop flies

Equipment- baseball

Procedure-

- ✓ The catcher assumes the crouched position while a partner, standing directly behind the catcher, throws the ball high into the air, imitation a pop fly
- ✓ The catcher turns his or her back to the field, locates the ball, discards the mask, and makes the catch with two hands



Key Points-

- ✓ The catcher should not take off the mask until he or she has located the foul ball and is in position to catch it
- ✓ A catcher who takes off the mask too early may trip over it

Reaction Drill

Purpose- to work on reaction time for pop ups and increase alertness

Equipment- bucket of baseballs, catcher's gear, field

Procedure-

- ✓ Catcher at home plate
- ✓ Coach is 5 feet in front of catcher with a ball in each hand
- ✓ With a flick of the wrist, one ball is thrown directly at the catcher's mask
- ✓ At the same time, coach throws the other ball into the air to catcher to make a play

Key Points-

- ✓ The catcher must learn to trust their equipment and not pull their heads back and leave their throats exposed
- ✓ They must also learn to keep their eyes on the ball when it comes off the bat or skips or the dirt

Shadow drill

Purpose- to work on catchers positioning and ball blocking

Equipment- catcher's gear

Procedure-

- ✓ Catcher at home plate
- ✓ Coach call location of pitch
- ✓ Catcher moves to position where ball was called

Key Points-

- ✓ The coach will check their form to make sure the catcher is in good position

Base circuit drill

Purpose- base running to all bases

Equipment- field, bases, helmets, 1 bat

Procedure-

- ✓ To begin, place one player in the coach's box at first base. Put the first runner in the batter's box at the plate with a bat
- ✓ All other players line up in the home plate vicinity

- ✓ Pitcher simulates throwing a pitch. Batter executes normal swing mechanics, breaks from batter's box and sprints to first base
- ✓ Batter runner to run full speed through the bag at first
- ✓ After the batter has sprinted to first, he becomes the first base coach
- ✓ The first base coach becomes the runner at first
- ✓ The next player in line steps to the plate with a bat
- ✓ The pitching coach simulates the next pitch. The batter swings and breaks toward first. The runner at first steals second with a slide into the base.
- ✓ The pitching coach simulates the next pitch. The batter swings and breaks toward first. Runner on first steals second with a slide into the base. Runner on second takes a proper turn around third and heads for home.

Key Points-

- ✓ Each runner runs the base circuit in three stages, and a full circuit includes three runners running separate stages
- ✓ It is a good conditioning drill, but mostly it prepares them to run the bases properly and with a mission.