

Session #1

Equipment: Med balls, Agility Ladder, Surgical Tubing, 1 batting cage (utilize more if you have them), 4 hitting stations w/tees, L-screen, 3 buckets of baseballs, orange cones, stop watch

Minutes after start of practice	LESSON PLAN FOCUS - Individual Defensive Fundamentals, Cutoffs and Relays, Hitting Position		
	Name of Activity	Description	Key Teaching Points
0:00	Warm - Up	Cornerstone Dynamic Warm-Up*	1.) Movement Prep 2.) Improve Agility 3.) Rotational Explosive Movement
0:15	Baserunning	Group 1 - Home to first Group 2 - Leads off first, secondary lead, straight steal (throw down base to 2nd base side of 1st) Switch groups after 5 minutes	Home to First- Run 100%, hit front of bag, lean, snap head to right Leads off first - Step left, turn shuffle-shuffle, no crossover. Secondary lead - 2 to 3 shuffles in balance, stay low, read the ball
0:25	Throwing Program	Cornerstone Throwing Program* Pitcher's Daily Dozen*	Coaches stay with each group, ensure technique and focus
0:35	Pitchers/1B/2B/SS Everyone Else	Fast Paced PFP Core Stabilization Series Water Break when finished	Footwork, keeping body under control, firm accurate throws Developing a strong base for athletic movement
0:45	Infielder individual session Outfielders/ Catchers Individual Hitting	Cornerstone Lead-up Infield Drills (10 minutes) Infielders vs. Clock (Have an extra 1st basemen run the clock and rotate in) Stations Rotate in Pairs about every 5 minutes 1.) "Win This Pitch" Tactical Game (Cage) 2.) Hit/Take Drill 3.) Babe Ruth Drill 4.) Stride/Load	Proper footwork, hands in front of body, quick transfers Get to ball quickly, under control, accurate throws Competitive at bats Hitting position Weight transfer & hitting position Hitting position
1:05	Outfielder Individual Session	Get behind it Throw to cut man Turn and burn drill Flyball Groundball Communication	Catching coming through the ball Low strong throw, miss low, not high Sprint to the spot Communication priority

1:05 Continued	Catcher Individual Session Infielder Individual Hitting Water Break	Catchers Drill Menu (catcher's drills will be run near outfield or hitting coach so they can monitor) Stations Rotate in Pairs about every 5 minutes 1.) "Win This Pitch" Tactical Game (Cage) 2.) Hit/Take Drill 3.) Babe Ruth Drill 4.) Stride/Load	Receiving and Blocking Drills Competitive at bats Hitting position Weight transfer & hitting position Hitting position
1:30	Team Time Cutoffs and Relays	Single Cutoffs, Imaginary Runner, Players given starting place of runners Cutoff verbal communication system	Throw stays low, through outmans head, keep trail runner from advancing, back up appropriate bases (pitcher and other infielders)
1:45	Team Competition	21 outs	Make routine plays

END OF PRACTICE ANNOUNCEMENTS:

PRACTICE NOTES:

Practice Resources:

Home to 1st

Players swing a bat, sprint as fast as they can through first base. Have them focus on the front of the bag as they are running to avoid choppy or lunging steps at the end. After they hit the bag, they should break down quickly by chop stepping and look to their right see if the ball has gotten by. To enhance this drill, you can sometimes toss a ball past 1st base and have them break toward second if they see it.

Click [HERE](#) for Lead off and Stealing Techniques

Set up one, two, or three throw downs to the 2nd base side of 1st base (so they are out of the way of the group running to first). Set up a pitcher or a coach as a pitcher on the mound to simulate throwing home, or picking to first base. For secondary leads, have players take 2-3 shuffles as the pitch is being delivered home.

Fast Paced PFP

Caution: This drill needs to be done slowly at first with the utmost caution to ensure every player understands what is going on and knows where to stand to be safe during the drill. If at any point the coach sees an unsafe situation, he should yell "STOP!" and the all players stop immediately and do not throw the ball any more.

Set up: You will need an entire infield at their positions, and several pitchers in two lines, one in foul territory on the first base side, and one in foul territory on the first base side. Each line will supply one pitcher who will set up slightly on their side of the mound. Each pitcher will need one coach working with them and someone catching for them to keep things moving quickly.

If the coach on the first base side:

- 1.) Hits a ground ball to the first baseman (who is playing deep), the player's execute a 3-1 putout.
- 2.) Hits a ground ball right back at the pitcher, he initiates a 1-6-3 double play.
- 3.) Rolls a ball right down the first base line, he fields it like a bunt, clears the line to the inside and throws to first base.
- 4.) Hits a ball between the first baseman and pitcher, they try to get an out at first base (using the method in the "PFP" blog post)
- 5.) Hits a ground ball to the second baseman (perhaps this draws the first baseman away from the bag) they turn a 4-6-3 or 4-6-1 double play if the first baseman leaves the bag.

If the coach on the third base side:

- 1.) Hits a ground ball right back at the pitcher, they initiate a 1-2-3 double play (no throw from the catcher).
- 2.) Rolls a ball down the third base line, the pitcher fields a bunt and throws to the third baseman covering the bag.
- 3.) Rolls a bunt right back at the pitcher, and yells "SQUEEZE!" the pitcher will field the ball and shovel it to home plate.

4.) Rolls a bunt hard down the third base line past the pitcher, the third baseman will charge, field the bunt, and perform their footwork to first base (no throw).

Again, make sure each player knows their responsibility on each play. Once they understand what they are doing, have pitchers sprint from foul territory to their side of the mound and begin the next rep as soon as the ball and other pitcher is off the field.

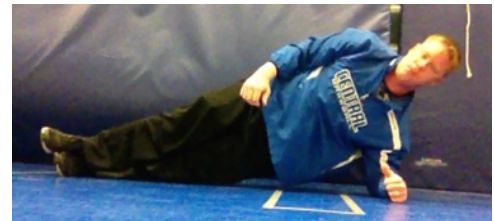
Core Stabilization Series

The Exercises

Front Plank - Try to keep a straight line from feet to shoulders. Don't let the midsection drop or be too high. EXTENSION - Raise the right leg, then left leg and hold, or raise the opposite arm and leg straight out.



Side Plank - Keep the body in line from feet to head, and don't let the body sag in the midsection. EXTENSION - Raise the free arm straight up in the air, or raise the top leg on the stacked feet into the air.



Side Arm Balance - Keep the body in a straight line from feet to head, do not let the midsection sag. Stack the feet. EXTENSION- Raise the top leg on the stacked feet in the air.



Plank Leg/Arm Extension - Start in plank position, extend the opposite arm and leg off the ground. Try to keep the body in as straight a line as possible. Hold for three to six seconds. EXTENSION- Add a pushup between each rep.

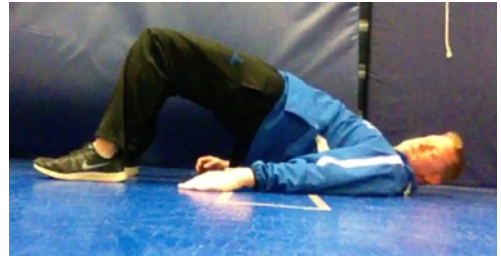


Starfish Pushups - This is a three part exercise. Begin in a plank position, then do a push-up. After the pushup is done, turn to a side-arm balance, then raise the top arm in the air. Hold the starfish position for two to three seconds.





Glute Bridge - Maintain a straight line between the shoulders and knees with the pressure in the feet on the heels. EXTENSION- Raise each leg off the ground and hold for three to six seconds.



Standing Medball Resistance Holds - The athlete stands in an athletic stance with their feet slightly farther than shoulder width. They hold a medball in front of their chest and their partner pushes it in various directions. The athlete resists trying to keep the medball in the middle of their body without moving their feet.

Click [HERE](#) for Infield Lead Up Drills

Infielders vs. Clock

Once your athletes have moved past the basic performance stage and are able to field ground balls and throw them to first base with no runner, no specified time, and with a high percentage of success, begin having them field ground balls against the clock.

Coaches will hit ground balls at varying speeds. Infielders have 4.5 seconds (average high school runner on 90 feet bases) from the time the ball is hit until the ball hits the first basemen's glove. Depending on your level of play and base distance you can adjust the time appropriately. It may be a good idea to time your players home to first, then use the average of that time as their target.

This tactical game adds the element of variability as the ball is hit at differing speeds. Players will need to get rid of the ball more quickly when the ball is hit slower and will have more time when the ball is not hit as hard. Infielders will need to make adjustments to keep their times under 4.5 seconds. If they are unable to make adjustments, it may be necessary to return to intermediate questioning, or basic performance stage before moving on to the game conditions stage.

Get Behind It

Ages: 7 and up

Purpose: To teach players to set up behind the ball and catch the ball with their glove foot and momentum coming toward the target.

Equipment: 3-4 cones, baseballs

Set up: Set up three to four cones about three feet apart in a straight line. The player sets up about three feet in front of the first cone facing away from the cones. The coach has an appropriate ball and sets up about three feet to the side of the cone he is going to throw the ball over.

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Procedure:

- 1.) The coach says "go" and tossed the ball up in the air over the first cone.
- 2.) The player turns and runs to the second cone to set up.
- 3.) The outfielder catches the ball over their head at the first cone with their momentum coming forward.

- 4.) After everyone has had a turn on the first cone, the coach moves to the second cone and repeats throwing the ball over the second cone.
- 5.) This time, the player will sprint to the third cone, set up, come forward to the second cone and catch the ball with their momentum coming forward.
- 6.) Repeat this all the way to the last cone, or until your players can no longer get to the set up cone fast enough.

Coaching Cues:

- 1.) Sprint to the appropriate cone, do not allow them to jog.
 - 2.) The coach needs to be sure to toss the ball high enough to allow the player to get to the set up cone.
 - 3.) The outfielder should catch the ball with their glove foot coming forward.
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Throw to Cut Man

Set up two lines an age appropriate distance from a target or cut man. Alternate between rolling balls on the ground, or throwing “fly balls” to them to work on betting behind the ball, catching it coming through and throwing to a target.

Turn and Burn

Purpose: To teach outfielders to sprint to the spot where the ball will land, and not try to “time” the ball getting there.

Equipment: Three cones, two baseballs per group

Set up: Three cones are set up in a “V” with about 15 yards between each (more or less depending on the age group and skill level of the players). The outfielder starts at the point of the “V” facing away from the other two cones. The coach has a baseball and is standing facing the outfielder about 5-10 yards in front of him.

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Procedure:

- 1.) The coach points to a cone.
- 2.) The player performs a read step, then “Turns and Burns” to the cone as fast as they can.
- 3.) The coach throws a ball overhand to the cone he pointed at.
- 4.) The player should have enough time to get to the cone and set up before catching the ball.

Coaching Cues:

- 1.) Sprint as fast as they can to the cone while keeping their eyes on the ball.
- 2.) Set up behind the cone and adjust to the ball.
- 3.) Get to the cone as quickly as possible.
- 4.) Catch the ball with their glove foot coming forward.
- 5.) Have the player who caught the ball run it back to the coach, and let the next player go right away.

Ground ball/Fly Ball Communication Drill

Purpose: To work on communicating on fly balls and ground balls.

Equipment: Baseballs

Set up: Two players start at an age and skill appropriate distance from each other. The farther apart you start the players, the more difficult the drill. Be sure to designate one person as being the “center fielder” for determining priority.

Procedure:

- 1.) The coach either throws or hits a fly ball between the two outfielders.
- 2.) The outfielders use the priority system with call and echo to catch the ball.

Coaching Cues:

- 1.) Do not let them call the ball until it gets to its apex for a fly ball.
- 2.) Make sure each player is abiding by the communication system.

Add Competition: Since this is a team effort, set a total number of successful catches the team must make. If they drop one, or one hits the ground start over at zero.

Click [HERE](#) For Catching Drill Menu

Win This Pitch

Each player gets a maximum of five pitches, if they win each one. If they "lose" a pitch, they are done. Seems simple, but it places consequences on making the correct decision, adds competitiveness, and game-like consequences to your hitting session.

Winning a pitch is mostly based on pitch selection. Give the hitter a count, and if he swings at an appropriate pitch with an appropriate swing, it is a win.

Zero strike count - Only swing at pitches they can drive. If they swing at a breaking ball, or a pitch on the edges of the strike zone, it is a loss.

One strike count - Only swing at pitches they can get the barrel of the bat on. If they swing at a pitch on the outside corner, at the knees, or a breaking ball, it is a loss.

Two strike count - Must swing at all strikes, any swing and miss is a loss.

Any hard hit ball is a win. If they swing at a bad pitch but hit it hard, consider it a win.

[Hit/Take Drill](#)

Purpose: To develop the proper hitting position

Progression: This drill can be done after the hitter has a good understanding of the hitting position.

Equipment: Bat, Baseballs, Tee, Hitting Net

Procedure:

- 1.) Set up a tee down the middle with a net to hit into.
- 2.) The hitter assumes his normal stance.
- 3.) The hitter begins the normal loading sequence.
- 4.) When the coach or partner sees the hitter make his first movement the coach will say either "hit" or "take."
- 5.) If the coach says "hit," the hitter hits the ball off the tee.
- 6.) If the coach says "take," the hitter simulates taking a pitch by stopping in hitting position.

Teaching Cues:

- 1.) The hitter should freeze in a good hitting position when the coach says "take."
 - 2.) If there is any movement toward the pitch on "take," it should be with the player's lower half. Their upper half should stay closed.
 - 3.) If the hitter is unable to hold his hitting position on "take," it may be a good idea to back up to the "Stance, Stride, Load, (Separate)" drill.
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Babe Ruth Drill

Purpose: To develop a proper weight distribution and hitting position

Progression: This drill can be done after the hitter has a good understanding of hitting position.

Equipment: Bat, Baseballs, Tee, Hitting Net

Procedure:

- 1.) Set up a tee simulating the ball down the middle with a net to hit into.
- 2.) The hitter starts with his feet together and the bat centered in front of the body centered on his chest.
- 3.) The hitter will slowly stride forward with his front foot controlling the weight distribution while his hands go up and back to the proper hitting position.
- 4.) The front foot should land when the feet are at the hitter's regular hitting position width. At this point the player should be in hitting position.
- 5.) After checking hitting position, the hitter returns to the Babe Ruth position.
- 6.) The hitter then goes through the same process, but when his front foot strikes the ground in the hitting position, the hitter swings and hits the ball off the tee.

Teaching Cues:

- 1.) Check that they are getting to a proper hitting position with their weight about 50/50 front to back.
 - 2.) As hitters get better at this drill, encourage them to step out more slowly with the front foot to learn to control his weight during the swing.
 - 3.) Continue to emphasize that the swing starts with the lower half of the body.
 - 4.) Watch the hitter closely the second time they get to hitting position before the swing. Make sure the hitting position is as good as it was the first time when they stopped.
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Stride/Load Drill

Purpose: To execute the proper loading sequence and get to the correct hitting position.

Progression: This should be one of the very first drills/skills that young hitters work to master.

Equipment: Bat, open space, mirror (if working alone)

Procedure:

- 1.) Have the player get in their regular batting stance (make adjustments as necessary)
- 2.) Coach says "Stride"
- 3.) Player will stride and load his body
- 4.) Coach checks the hitting position

Teaching Cues:

- 1.) Weight doesn't shift more than 50/50
 - 2.) Knees inside feet (weight on the inside of the feet)
 - 3.) Head stays still
 - 4.) Hands go slightly up and back
 - 5.) Knob of bat toward catcher's feet
 - 6.) Back hip pocket toward the pitcher
 - 7.) Eyes level and straight ahead
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Cutoff Verball Communication System

- 1.) Cutoff man is responsible for lining themselves up
 - a.) In line with ball and base
 - b.) Make the outfielder make the long throw
 - c.) Know the outfielder's arm strength and their momentum
- 2.) If cutoff man is off line, player at base lines them up by giving them the direction to move

- 3.) Outfielder throws the ball through the cutoff man's head
 - 4.) Player at target base reads the throw and the baserunner and determines the action by:
 - a.) saying nothing - If the player at the target base says nothing, it means the throw is online, strong enough to make it on one or two hops, and there is a play at the base. The cutoff man lets the ball go through and fakes as if he is cutting it off to hold batter/runner.
 - b.) saying "Cut (base)" - If the player at the target base says "cut 2" the ball will be cut and thrown to 2nd base. The same would apply to "3" (3rd base) and "4" (home).
 - c.) saying "Cut" - If the player just says "cut" the cutoff man will cut the ball and run it into the infield.
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21 Outs

Put at least one fielder at each position (including catcher and pitcher). The goal of the game is to get 21 consecutive outs (a full 7 inning game). If your league only plays 6 inning games, call this game 18 outs.

Hit routine ground balls or fly balls to varying positions in the field. They must field the ball cleanly and throw accurately to first base to record an out, or catch the ball in the air. If someone makes an error, other infielders get to "pick them up" by turning a double play on the next ground ball. If they make an error then fail to turn a double play, they will start over at zero. Leave plenty of time for this drill as it is difficult, and your team will need to start over several times.

This tactical game is about making routine plays, so try to hit fungo to your fielders that will result in a routine play. If you hit a line drive or ball in the gap that outfielders can't get to, don't count it. This is supposed to be 21 routine plays.

VARIATION: Put a clock on your player and require that each out be recorded in under 4.5 seconds.

VARIATION #2: Add runners make the game more like an actual game.