



INSTANT

SOFTBALL PRACTICE

BASERUNNING SKILLS AND DRILLS

5 Pre-Designed Softball Practice Plans

**Packed With 14
Skill-Building Drills for
All Ages**

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Consult Your Physician

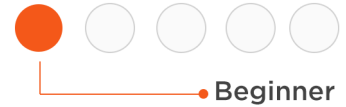
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SWING AND SPRINT

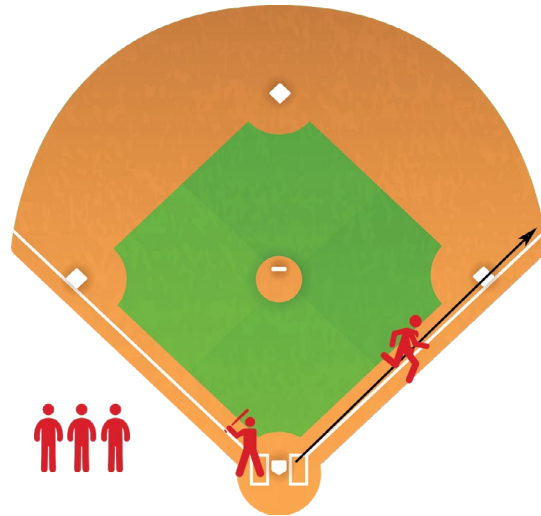


PURPOSE:

Helps players learn to get out of the box quickly, emphasizing the acceleration phase of the sprint to first

SETUP:

You can run this drill in the infield, or set up a home plate and first base in the outfield the appropriate distance apart. Players line up at home plate with a bat and helmet



Baserunners practice sprinting through the bag at first base

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The first player in line steps up to the plate and gets in her normal batting stance
2. She simulates a full, game-like swing, drops the bat, then explodes to first base with three powerful strides
3. She sprints hard through first base, then breaks down to slow into an athletic position
4. Repeat with the next player in line

COACHING TIPS:

- During the acceleration phase, the baserunner's strides should be short and powerful. As she picks up speed, the stride should lengthen
- Try to touch the front part of the bag with your foot - it's the closest to home and will save a fraction of a second
- Coaches can time the sprint from home to first and keep track of progress throughout the year

MAKE IT HARDER

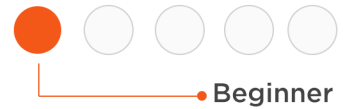
- Take three powerful strides, then take a quick peek into the field to locate the ball.
- In a live situation, this would influence their decision to run straight for first or start taking a turn for a potential double
- After touching first base and breaking down, take another peek into the infield and locate the ball again.

MAKE IT EASIER

- Skip the swing and just have players sprint from home to first. Then introduce the bat and the swing after they get the hang of it



LEARN TO SLIDE



PURPOSE:

Teaches players how to execute a safe bent-leg slide with proper technique, starting with the basics.

SETUP:

You can do this drill in the infield or set up in any grassy area.



Players learn how to safely execute a bent-leg slide

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Start by having all players sit on the ground and extend one leg out while tucking bottom leg under their knee, forming a figure four. extend their arms overhead and lift their legs slightly off the ground to feel the correct body position and weight distribution. Try extending either leg to see what's more comfortable
2. Players stand up and spread their arms out wide. They imagine kicking an imaginary soccer ball with the lead foot, then bend the opposite leg and sit down on the ground, extending the hands up over the head.
3. Set a cardboard box, slip-and-slide, plastic tarp or other smooth surface on the ground. Players run half-speed, then break down and slide across the surface
4. Finally, players a live slide into a base in the infield or outfield

COACHING TIPS:

- Ask players to wear sliding shorts or other protective clothing
- Use an unanchored base.
- Loosen the dirt in the sliding area to reduce friction.

MAKE IT HARDER

- Have players hold a softball, water cup or other small object in each hand to avoid bringing their hands to the ground

MAKE IT EASIER

- Coaches can hold the slider's hands and help lower her down if necessary.



SLIDE UNDER THE TAG



PURPOSE:

Teaches basic sliding technique under defensive pressure

SETUP:

You can run this drill in the infield, or just set up two bases in the outfield. Players line up at first base. One coach stands at second base. Another coach stands near the pitcher's mound with a ball.



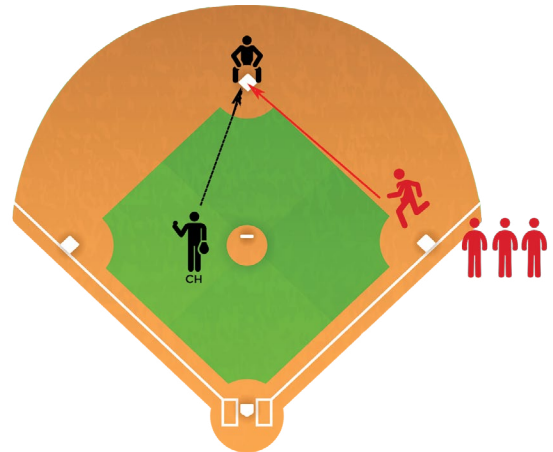
Bent-leg slide



Pop-up slide



Hook slide



Baserunners slide into second while avoiding the tag

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The first baserunner stands on first base
2. On the coach's signal, she takes a short lead, then breaks for second
3. The coach throws to second as the baserunner begins her slide
4. The second coach catches the ball and tries to make the tag as the baserunner slides underneath
5. Repeat with the next player in line

MAKE IT HARDER

- Practice more advanced sliding techniques, including full speed headfirst slides, pop-up slides and hook slides

MAKE IT EASIER

- Lay out a flattened cardboard box in front of the base. This will reduce friction and allow players to slide more easily.



SECOND BASE STEAL

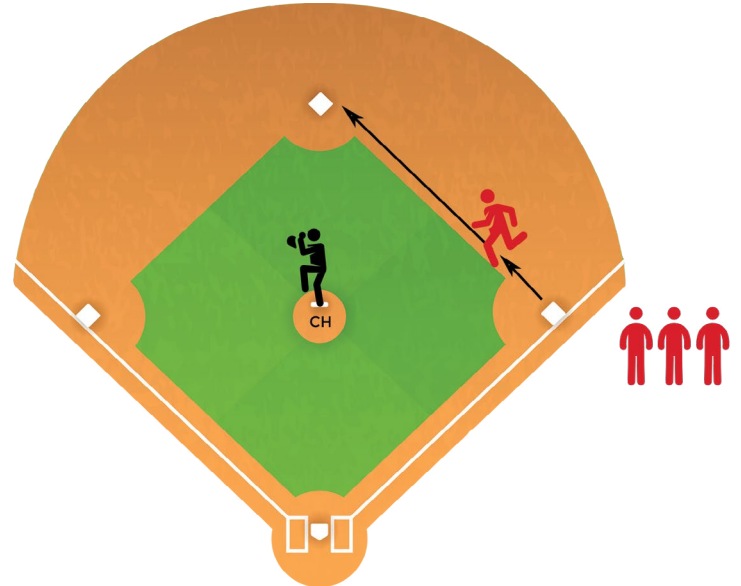


PURPOSE:

Trains baserunners to read pitchers, understand timing, and get an effective jump to steal second base

SETUP:

You can run this drill in the infield, or set up a first base and second base in the outfield the appropriate distance apart. Coach stands on the pitcher's mound. Players line up at first base.



Baserunners learn how to time the release of the pitch and get a great jump to second

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The first player in line steps up to first and stands in a “ready” position on the bag, similar to a starting position in a track meet.
2. The coach will simulate a wind up and pitch
3. As the coach releases the ball the baserunner sprints hard and slides into second base
4. Repeat with the next player in line

COACHING TIPS:

- The baserunner should start with her left foot on the front of the bag and her right foot behind the bag and off to the side. (this will prevent her from tripping over the bag on the first step)
- She should lean toward second base with both arms bent at a 90 degree angle
- Watch the pitcher’s back foot. As soon as that foot comes up or turns sideways, that’s the cue for the runner to begin taking off
- Stay low and powerful for the first three steps, then lengthen your stride to reach top speed



BASERUNNING CIRCUIT

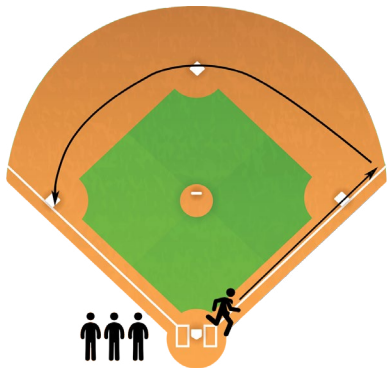


PURPOSE:

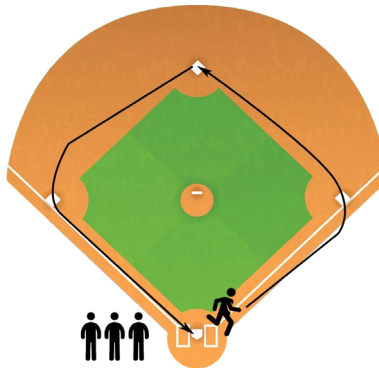
A comprehensive baserunning drill that's also great for conditioning

SETUP:

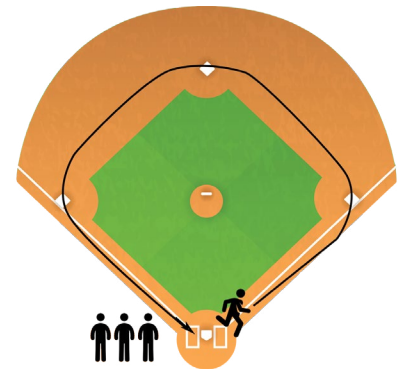
You can run this drill in the infield, or set up bases in the outfield at the appropriate distance. Players line up at home plate. One coach or parent helper stands at each base to provide assistance.



1st Circuit



2nd Circuit



3rd Circuit

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Coaches will send players through a baserunning circuit one at a time, allowing a 4-5 seconds of space between each player.
2. **1st CIRCUIT:** On the coach's signal, the runner sprints to first, touching the bag and running through it. She then takes a crossover step and runs first to third, then jogs to home plate to join the back of the line.
3. **2nd CIRCUIT:** On the coach's signal, the runner sprints to second for a double. She will pause briefly at the bag, then sprint from second to home.
4. **3rd CIRCUIT:** The runner will sprint around all four bases for a home run

COACHING TIPS:

When making the turn and proceeding to the next base, runners should veer outside the basepath slightly, then come back across the inside of the bag to maximize speed

MAKE IT HARDER

- Baserunner must bent-leg slide to complete each circuit

MAKE IT EASIER

- Add cones or coaches at each base to show baserunners the proper path to take around the bases



DELAY STEAL

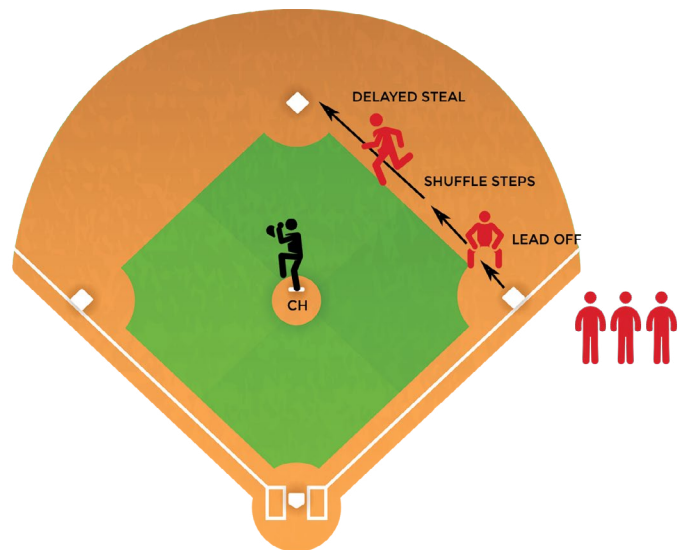


PURPOSE:

Helps players learn to read the pitcher and infielders, and get a great jump on the delayed steal

SETUP:

You can run this drill in the infield, or set up a first base and second base in the outfield the appropriate distance apart. Coach stands on the pitcher's mound. Players line up at first base.



Baserunners take second base on a delayed steal

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The first player in line steps up to first and stands in a “ready” position on the bag, similar to a starting position in a track meet.
2. The coach will simulate a wind up and pitch
3. As the coach releases the pitch, the baserunner will take three shuffle steps, then sprint hard and slide into second base
4. Repeat with the next player in line

COACHING TIPS:

- The delay steal is most effective when the middle infielders don't move toward second base after each pitch. Or if the catcher is throwing from her knees, or being lazy getting the ball back to the pitcher.
- The shuffle steps allow the baserunner to move toward second without over-committing. If the catcher is alert and the middle infielders move toward the bag, the baserunner can easily shift gears and get back to first

MAKE IT HARDER

- Add middle infielders for the baserunner to read and react to

MAKE IT EASIER

- No pickoffs allowed. The pitcher always throws home
- Have a first base coach call out cues to the runner - “Lead Off... Shuffle Step... Go!”

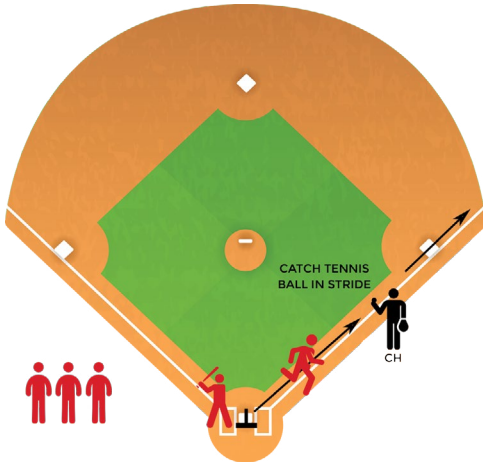


TENNIS BALL CATCH



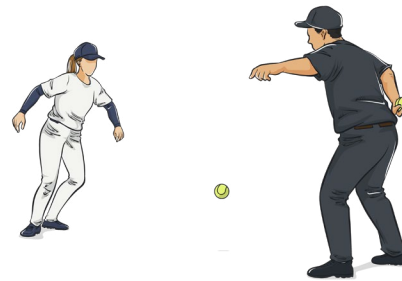
PURPOSE:

Develops quickness and agility out of the batter's box



SETUP:

You can run this drill in the infield, or set up a home plate and first base in the outfield the appropriate distance apart. Place an empty tee on home plate. Players line up at home plate. Coach stands 10 feet up the first base line holding a tennis ball.



Baserunners explode out of the box to catch the tennis ball before it bounces

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The first player in line steps up to the plate with a bat and helmet
2. She swings and hits the top of the tee (no ball is needed)
3. At the moment of contact, Coach bounces the tennis ball into the ground
4. The player explodes out of the box, drops her bat and sprints to catch the tennis ball before it reaches the ground
5. After catching the ball, she sprints through first base, then gives the tennis ball back to the coach
6. Complete one round with every player. Then gradually increase the distance to make it more of a challenge

COACHING TIPS:

- If the ball won't bounce properly, try placing a home plate or other hard, flat surface on the ground to bounce the ball onto
- You can also do this drill running from first to second, second to third, or third to home

MAKE IT HARDER

- Move the ball drop location closer to first base.
- Have a contest to see who can make the catch the furthest up the first baseline

MAKE IT EASIER

- Use a larger ball and toss it softly into the air first. The player has to touch it before it bounces twice



PROGRESSIVE TAG UP

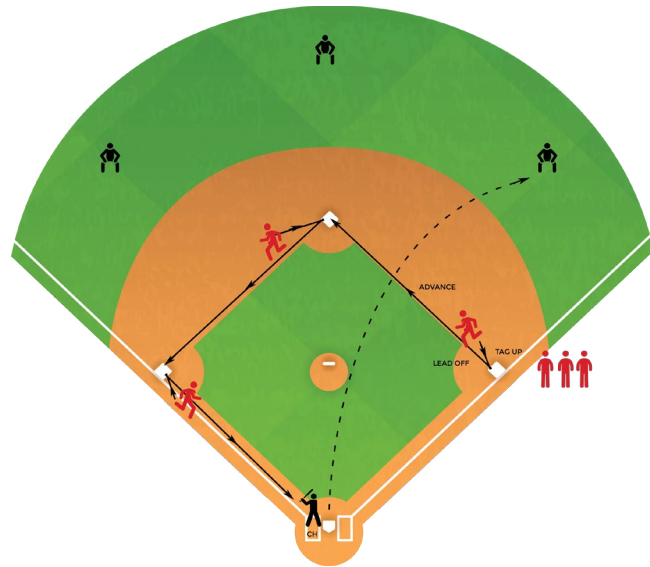


PURPOSE:

Teaches players when and how to tag up on fly balls

SETUP:

You can run this drill in the infield, or just set up four bases in the outfield the appropriate distance apart. Set up three outfielders, and a line of baserunners at first base. Coach stands at home plate with a bat and balls.



Baserunners practice tagging up situations at first, second and third

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The first baserunner in line begins at first base
2. Coach hits or throws a fly ball into the outfield
3. The baserunner takes a short lead, then a larger lead after the ball is hit
4. If the ball is caught in the outfield, she returns to first. If it is not caught, she can advance to second at her discretion
5. Reset the drill by moving the baserunner to second base. And the next player in line starting on first.
6. Repeat steps 2-4, this time with a runners on first and second.
7. This time, the runner on second can tag up on fly balls to right field
8. Reset the drill by moving the baserunners to second and third base. And the next player in line starting on first.

COACHING TIPS:

- The majority of the fly balls should be catchable, to give the baserunners an understanding of when and how to tag up

MAKE IT HARDER

- Establish the number of outs, inning, and score before each play. Teach the baserunners when they should be aggressive and when they should be conservative.

MAKE IT EASIER

- For younger teams, Coach can lob balls to the outfielders from near second base.



THREE LINE SLIDING

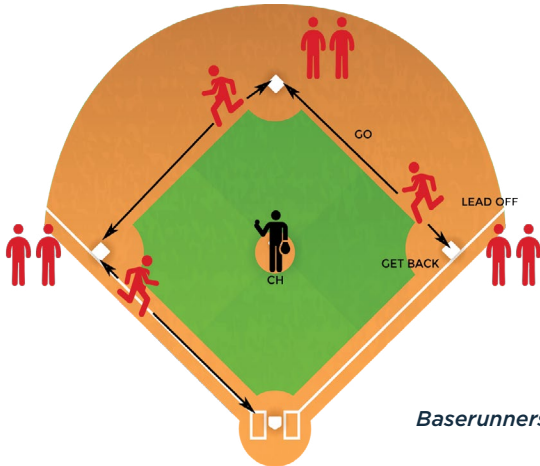


PURPOSE:

Teaches players how to slide with proper technique, both back to the base and advancing to the next base

SETUP:

You can do this drill in the infield or set up four bases in any grassy area.



Headfirst dive back to base

Baserunners practice leading off, getting back to the bag, or advancing to the next base

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The first player at each base starts with a foot on the bag
2. Coach calls out “Lead Off” – the baserunner takes a 6-8 foot lead
3. Coach calls out “Go” – all three baserunners sprint and make a bent-leg slide into the next base.
4. The next player steps up, players move to the back of the next line and continue.

COACHING TIPS:

- Begin the slide around 6-8 feet away from the bag. Sprint hard and lower yourself into the slide. Do not slow down and lose momentum or you’ll come up short.
- Extend the top leg forward while tucking the bottom leg under your knee, forming a figure four.
- Throw the hands up and lean back while gliding into the bag, touching it with your lead foot

MAKE IT HARDER

- If coach calls out “Back” – all three baserunners dive back to the base using proper headfirst slide technique

MAKE IT EASIER

- Lay out a flattened cardboard box in front of the base. This will reduce friction and allow players to slide more easily.



SCORE FROM SECOND

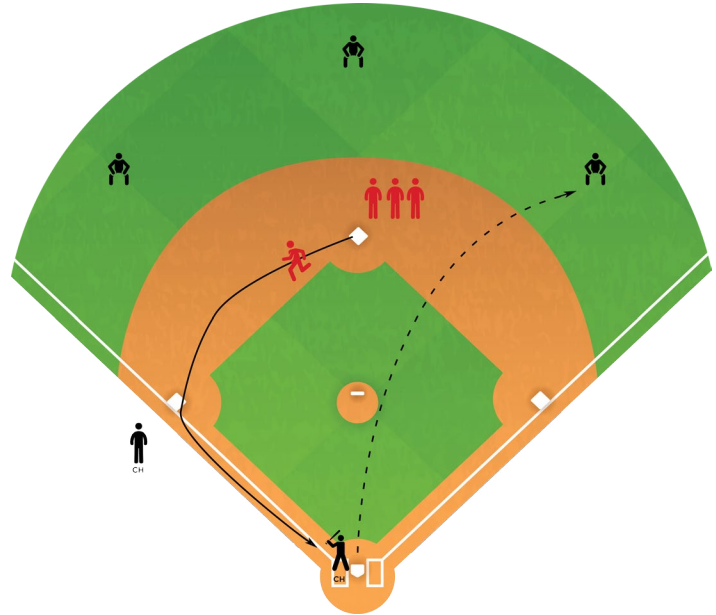


PURPOSE:

Teaches players how to score from second on a base hit

SETUP:

Set up three outfielders in their positions, and a catcher at home. The remaining players line up behind second base. Coach stands at home with a bat and balls. Another coach or player acts as third base coach.



Baserunners read the third base coach and try to score from second on a hit into the outfield

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Coach hits fungo singles into the outfield
2. The baserunner will try to score, unless the third base coach stops her
3. Repeat, rotating new players into the baserunning and outfield positions

COACHING TIPS:

- The third base coach should use verbal as well as visual cues to signal to the runner. Both hands up means "Stop." Windmilling one arm while pointing home means "Keep Going." Going down on one knee and pointing to the dirt means "Slide."

MAKE IT HARDER

- Line the runners up at first and hit balls deep into the outfield gaps or down the line. The runner will try to score all the way from first.

MAKE IT EASIER

- Add an additional base coach at second



SAC FLY TO SCORE

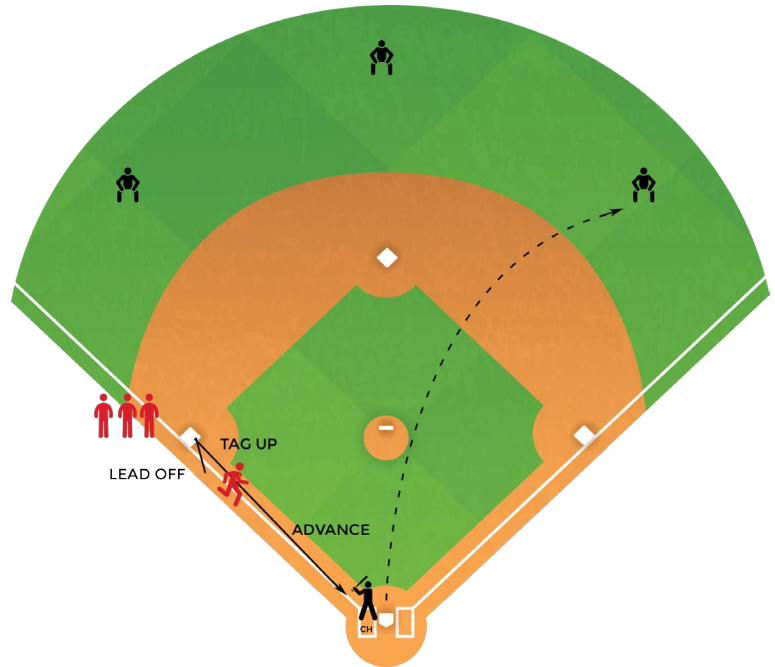


PURPOSE:

Teaches players how to tag up and score on a sacrifice fly

SETUP:

Set up three outfielders in their positions, and a catcher at home. The remaining players line up behind third base. Coach stands at home with a bat and balls.



Baserunners tag up and score from third on a fly ball

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Coach hits fungo fly balls into the outfield
2. The baserunner at third takes a lead, tags up, then goes home on the catch
3. The outfielder attempts to throw out the baserunner
4. Repeat, rotating new players into the baserunning and outfield positions

COACHING TIPS:

- The baserunner can slide or swing wide of the catcher to avoid the tag
- A low, bouncing throw from the outfield is better than a high, slow throw

MAKE IT HARDER

- Alternate between fly balls, ground balls and line drives. The baserunner must read the hit and decide whether to tag up or run straight home
- Add a runner at second base into the drill. She tries to advance to third.

MAKE IT EASIER

- Have a base coach at third to call instructions out to the runner - Lead, Tag Up, Go!



WILD PITCH

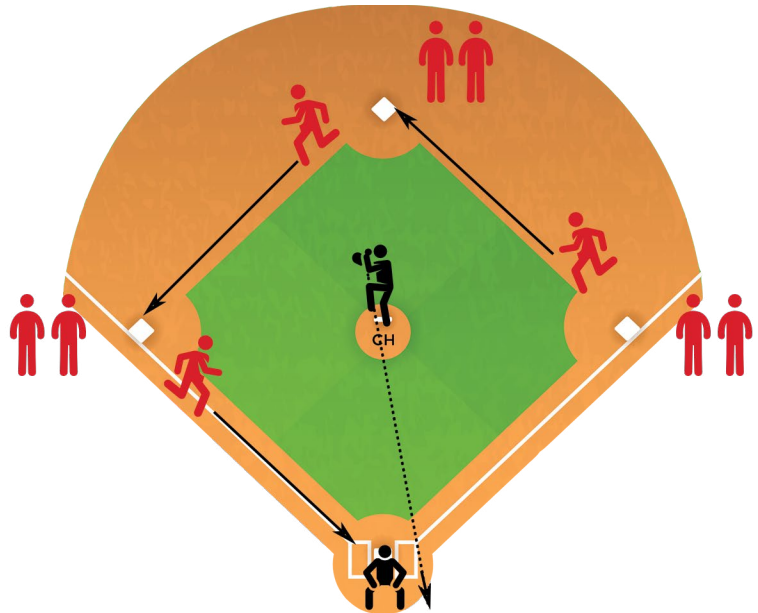


PURPOSE:

Helps baserunners learn to advance on wild pitches

SETUP:

A coach is on the mound playing pitcher, with a catcher in full gear behind the plate. Set up a line of baserunners at each base.



Coach throws a wild pitch, then baserunners try to advance to the next base

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The first baserunner in each line starts on the bag.
2. The coach goes into his windup and releases the pitch, while the baserunners take a short lead
3. The coach will throw a ball in the dirt, or a wild pitch that sails over the catcher's head
4. The baserunners read the play and try to advance to the next base

COACHING TIPS:

- Baserunners should take an aggressive extended lead after the pitcher releases the ball
- Baserunners can watch how the ball bounces off the backstop and react
- Use a fundamentally sound bent-leg slide into the next base

MAKE IT HARDER

- Add infielders and have the catcher try to throw the baserunners out

MAKE IT EASIER

- Add base coaches at each base to give cues to the baserunners



RACE TO HOME



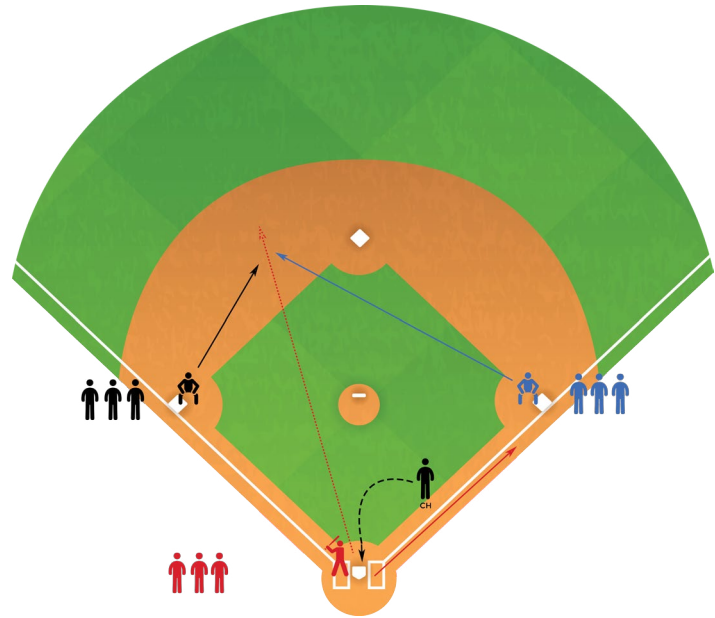
PURPOSE:

A fun, game-like drill that works on baserunning and conditioning

SETUP:

Split your players into three teams. One team lines up at home plate as baserunners. The second team lines up behind first base as fielders. And the third team lines up behind third base as fielders.

Coach kneels in soft-toss position 10-12 feet from home plate.



Players compete to see how far they can advance before two fielders can reach the hit ball

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The first player on the baserunning team steps up to the plate with a bat and helmet.
2. Coach soft-tosses to the player. She makes a line drive swing, then begins sprinting around the bases.
3. The first player in both fielding lines immediately sprints to retrieve the ball. Once both fielders touch the ball, the baserunner stops running.
4. The baserunning team earns one point for every base the baserunner managed to reach.
5. Repeat with the next player in the baserunning line.
6. After all players have had a turn, rotate the teams to a new position. Keep track of the points and crown a champion.

COACHING TIPS:

- Place a cone in front of each base to help baserunners make the proper turn when approaching the base. Their goal is to try for an inside the park home run.

MAKE IT HARDER

- Hit off live pitching instead of soft-toss
- Have the fielder retrieve the ball then make an accurate throw to the coach to stop the baserunner.

MAKE IT EASIER

- Hit off the tee instead of soft toss



AROUND THE HORN BASERUNNING

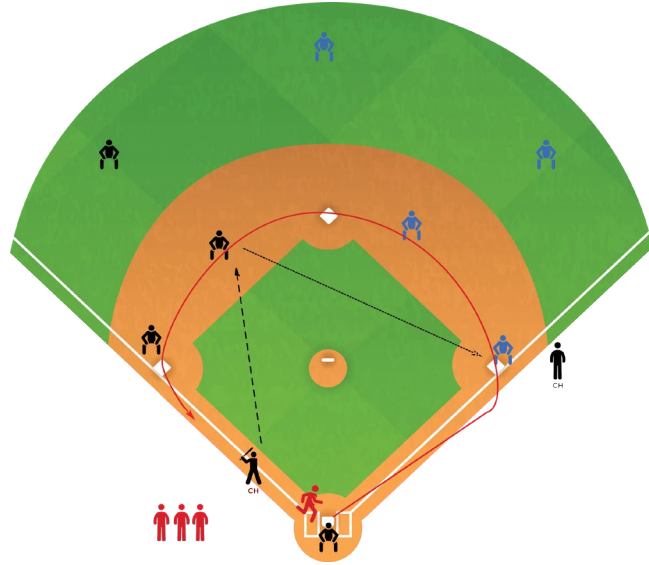


PURPOSE:

Helps fielders to throw with speed and accuracy, while training baserunners to sprint hard and round the bases with proper technique

SETUP:

Split your players into three teams. One team lines up at home plate, the other two fill the defensive positions. Coach stands beside home with a bat and balls.



Baserunners try to reach home before the defensive team can throw the ball all the way around the horn.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The first player on the baserunning team steps up to the plate with a helmet.
2. Coach hits a ground ball to an infielder, while the baserunner begins sprinting around the bases.
3. The infielder plays the ground ball and throws to first.
4. The infielding team then throws the ball around the horn, from first to second to third to home, while the baserunner continues to sprint around the bases.
5. If the ball reaches home before the baserunner, the fielding team gets a point. If the baserunner reaches home first, the baserunning team gets a point.

COACHING TIPS:

- For younger teams, the ball should arrive at home at roughly the same time as a fast runner.
- Extra players can act as outfielders and back up the appropriate bases

MAKE IT HARDER

- Have the infielders throw the ball back to first before throwing it to the next base (i.e.. First -> second -> first -> second -> third -> first -> second -> third -> home)

MAKE IT EASIER

- Roll the ball to the infielders instead of hitting ground balls



SMALL BALL

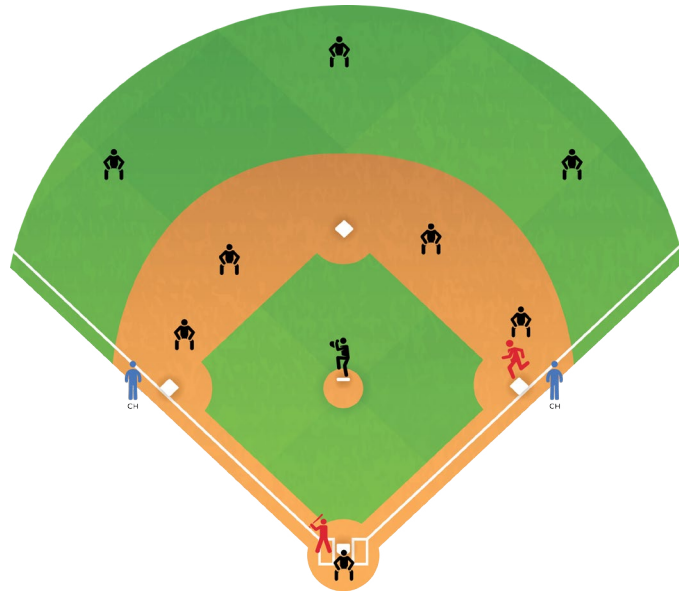


PURPOSE:

A game-like drill that teaches your players to advance runners and put pressure on the defense. Fielders get opportunities for game situation reps

SETUP:

Put a full defensive lineup into the field, including a pitcher. Coaches or parent-helpers will act as base coaches. The remaining players are ready to bat.



Players practice different small ball scenarios in a game-like environment

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Place runners on base and call out the situation. For example:
 - Bunting for a base hit
 - Sacrifice bunt to move runners from first to second or second to third
 - Squeeze play with runner at third
 - Bunt and steal
 - Fake bunt and slash
2. Base coaches signal to the batter and baserunners what to do
3. The offensive executes the play while the defense tries to make outs
4. After each out, rotate a fielder onto the offensive team and replace her in the field

COACHING TIPS:

- Use this opportunity to evaluate your team's execution on offense and defense.
- Identify the situations they need to work on more and the plays that could be most effective for you in real games.

MAKE IT HARDER

- Use live pitching

MAKE IT EASIER

- Use soft-toss or pitching machines
- Practice these scenarios with "dummy defense" – then progress to live defense



60 MINUTE SOFTBALL PRACTICE - BASERUNNING EMPHASIS

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

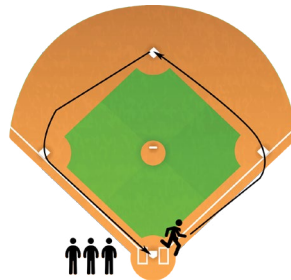


Warmup: 15 Mins (Full Team)

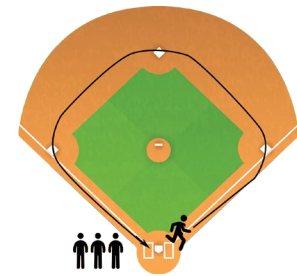
Baserunning Circuit: 15 mins



1st Circuit



2nd Circuit



3rd Circuit

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)

Learn to Slide:
10 mins (Infield)



Players learn how to safely execute a bent-leg slide

Swing and Sprint:
10 mins (Outfield)



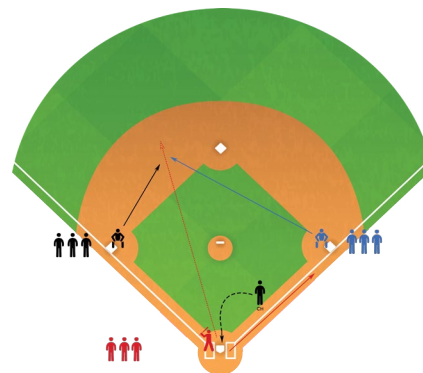
Baserunners practice sprinting through the bag at first base

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

Game Preparation: 20 Mins (Full Team)

Race to Home: 20 Mins

Players compete to see how far they can advance before two fielders can reach the hit ball





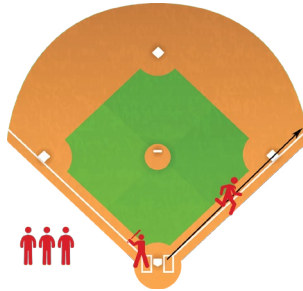
60 MINUTE SOFTBALL PRACTICE - BASERUNNING EMPHASIS

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



Warmup: 10 Mins (Full Team)

Swing and Sprint: 10 mins

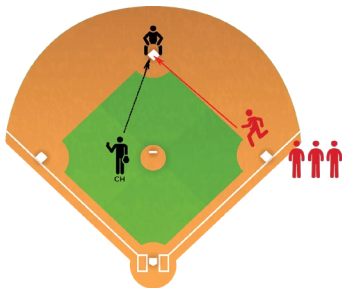


Baserunners practice sprinting through the bag at first base

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)

Slide Under the Tag: 10 mins (Infield)



Baserunners slide into second while avoiding the tag

Learn to Slide: 10 mins (Outfield)



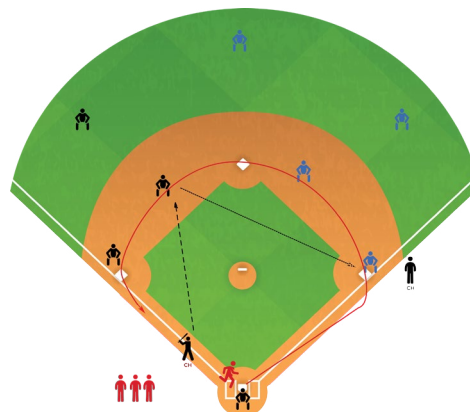
Players learn how to safely execute a bent-leg slide

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

Game Preparation: 20 Mins (Full Team)

Around the Horn Baserunning: 20 Mins

Baserunners try to reach home before the defensive team can throw the ball all the way around the horn.





90 MINUTE SOFTBALL PRACTICE - BASERUNNING EMPHASIS

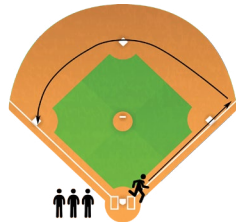
Required: 2 coaches, balls, bats, helmets, tees, bases, cones



Warmup: 20 Mins (Full Team)

Dynamic Warmup: 10 mins

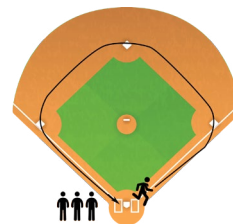
Skip Forward and Backward. High Knee Runs. Carioca. Butt-kickers. Walking Lunges.



1st Circuit



2nd Circuit

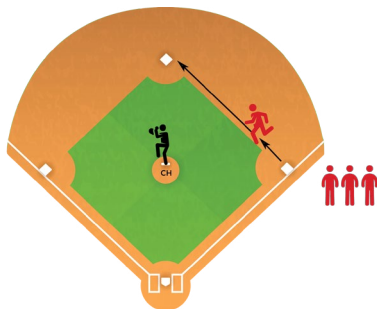


3rd Circuit

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)

Second Base Steal: 10 mins (Infield)



Baserunners read the pitcher and steal second base

Tennis Ball Catch: 10 mins (Outfield)

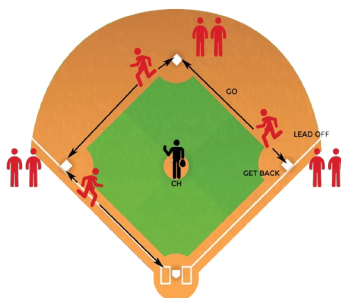


Baserunners explode out of the box to catch the tennis ball before it bounces

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

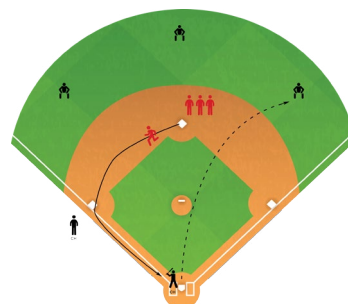
Game Preparation: 40 Mins (Full Team)

Three Line Sliding: 20 Mins



Baserunners practice leading off, getting back to the bag, or advancing to the next base

Score From Second: 20 Mins



Baserunners read the third base coach and try to score from second on a hit into the outfield



90 MINUTE SOFTBALL PRACTICE - BASERUNNING EMPHASIS

Required: 2 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.

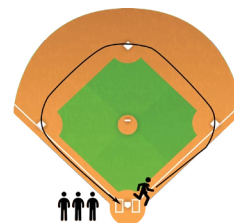
Baserunning Circuit: 10 mins



1st Circuit



2nd Circuit

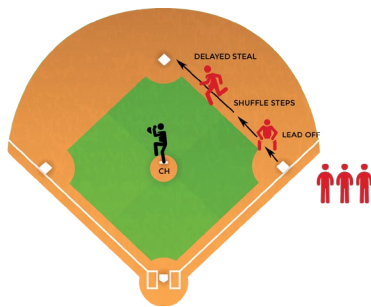


3rd Circuit

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

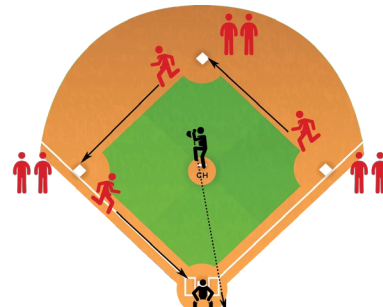
Stations: 20 Mins (Split Team Into Two Groups and Rotate Through Each Drill For 10 Mins)

Delay Steal: 10 mins (Infield)



Baserunners take second base on a delayed steal

Wild Pitch: 10 mins (Outfield)

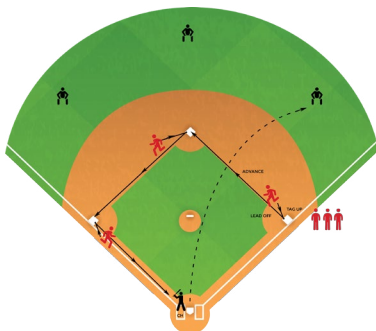


Coach throws a wild pitch, then baserunners try to advance to the next base

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

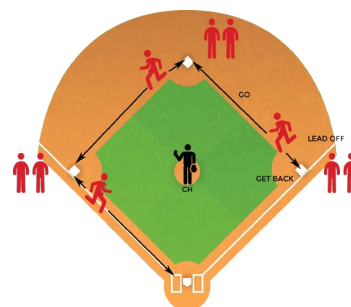
Game Preparation: 40 Mins (Full Team)

Progressive Tag Up: 20 Mins



Baserunners practice tagging up situations at first, second and third

Three Line Sliding: 20 Mins



Baserunners practice leading off, getting back to the bag, or advancing to the next base



120 MINUTE SOFTBALL PRACTICE - BASERUNNING EMPHASIS

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

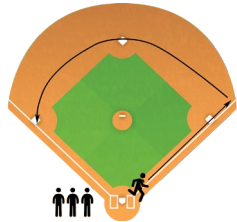


Warmup: 20 Mins (Full Team)

Dynamic Warmup: 10 mins

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

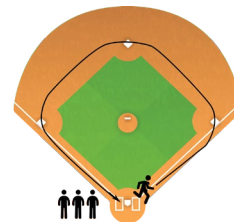
Baserunning Circuit: 10 mins



1st Circuit



2nd Circuit

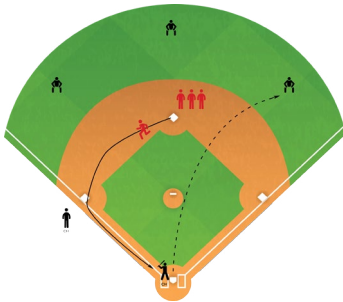


3rd Circuit

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

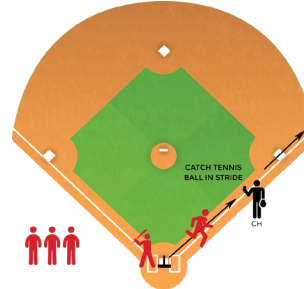
Stations: 40 Mins (Split Team Into Two Groups and Rotate Through Each Drill For 20 Mins)

Score From Second: 10 mins (Infield)



Baserunners read the third base coach and try to score from second on a hit into the outfield

Tennis Ball Catch: 10 mins (Outfield)

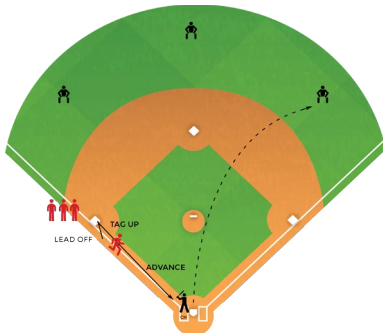


Baserunners explode out of the box to catch the tennis ball before it bounces

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

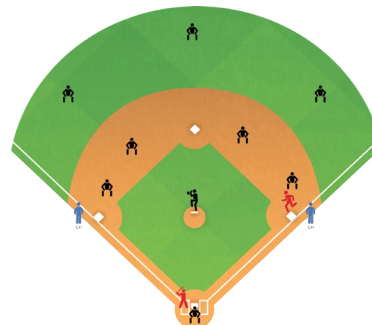
Game Preparation: 50 Mins (Full Team)

Sac Fly to Score: 20 mins (Infield)



Baserunners tag up and score from third on a fly ball

Small Ball: 20 mins (Outfield)



Players practice different small ball scenarios in a game-like environment