



Softball Sport Drill Book

Compiled by the Sport
Development Committee and
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Coaching Principles

STEPS IN TEACHING A DRILL

1. Introduce
2. Demonstrate
3. Explain
4. Organize
5. Execute
6. Correct
7. Practice

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- Drills should relate specifically to what you are teaching.
- Athletes should be made aware of how drills relate to the sport.
- Drills should only be a part of your practice.
- Drills should be introduced at a slow pace and then gradually increased
- Drills should be accommodated for fitness, age and abilities.
- Drills should move from simple to complex. First perform drills that will help keep the interest of athletes.
- Drills should relate to the system of play that the athletes will use.
- Perform a variety of drills to prevent monotony.
- As fatigue sets in, technique deteriorates so provide frequent rest periods.

EXECUTION PRINCIPLES

- Review the drill procedure before practice so you know how it works.
- When introducing a new drill, walk a group of athletes through it so others can see how it is performed.
- Avoid talking too much, get the athletes performing, they will learn by doing.
- When errors occur, the drill should be stopped momentarily to correct errors.
- Praise those athletes doing the drill well and encourage those having difficulty.
- If equipment is necessary, ensure it is set up before so that progression from one drill to the next can progress smoothly.



Softball Basics- Catching, Throwing and Hitting

Include basic motor skill development in every practice. It helps to reinforce the movements used in the sport and to improve these fundamental skills. Pick 2-3 of these ideas for each practice.

Balance:

- Stand on one foot and swing the other
- Switch back and forth between feet
- Walk with glove/book on head keeping eyes forward

Running:

- Forward, backwards and sideways- practice swinging arms
- Run and freeze
- Run around bases in 2 directions
- Fast and slow, stop and go
- Run and tag other players

Walking:

- Forwards, backwards and zig zag
- Shuffling back and forth
- Knees up
- Lunges



Arm Movements:

- Circle rotation
- Arms out, go back and forth between palms up and down

Field Movement:

- Have athletes move in one direction.
- Shout out change in direction ie. right, left, backwards, hard left etc...

Warm Up: Include basic motor skill development at every practice. It helps reinforce the movements used in the sport and improve these fundamental skills.



Softball Basics-

Catching, Throwing and Hitting

Warm up drills:

- Underhand toss
- Proper grip
- Proper arm extension
- Throw from a sitting position
- Throw from both knees
- Throw from one knee (the throwing side knee stays on the ground)
- Throw at a target.
- Throw at increasingly longer distances



Catch, Pivot, Throw:

- Have one player or coach at each base.
- Have all the players line up at home plate in a single file.
- Coach throws first player the ball and shouts out a base.
- Player must catch the ball, pivot in the direction of the base and throw it.
- Players on the base throws it back to the pitching coach

Throwing:

Distances:

- Throw ball in pairs at 10, 20 and 30 meters
- Throw ball from sitting position
- Throw from one knee
- Throw at a specific target

When throwing, bend knees
and keep your eyes on the
target.
Release the ball slightly above
and in front of the head!

Roller Bat:

- Use one ball, bat and base for 8-10 players
- After the ball is hit, the player fielding the ball rolls it in an attempt to hit the bat which has been placed lengthwise on the ground near the plate by the batter.



Softball Basics-

Catching, Throwing and Hitting

- If the player hits the bat with their ball before the runner gets to the base, then they are out.

Fielding Relay Drill:

- Have players line up side by side stretching across the field.
- The first player throws the ball to the glove side of the second player in the line.
- Do the same all the way down the line
- This teaches quick turn and release of the throw as well as accurately throwing towards the mitt.



25 throws:

- Players form circles of five or ten facing inwards.
- On signal, the player holding the ball throws it to a teammate not on either side of them.
- The object is to complete 25 consecutive passes without dropping the ball.
- If the ball drops, the count starts over.

Hoop:

- Hold a hula hoop upright over a base at an appropriate height.
- (a coach will need to hold it up)
- Instruct players to try and throw the ball through the hoop
- This develops accurate throws

Catching:

For balls above the waist, the ball is caught with arms extended towards the oncoming ball with fingers up, palms down.

For balls below the waist, the fingers are pointing downwards, palms up.

Receiving:

- Catch a ball using both hands without a glove
- Catch a ball using glove with both hands

When catching, think
soft hands and
cushion the ball on
impact!



Softball Basics- Catching, Throwing and Hitting

- Catch using one hand
- Practice catching high, low, to the left, to the right etc...

Ram Drill:

- Set up two cones on a line about 15-20 feet apart.
- Coach tries to get balls past two players that are standing between the cones.
- Coach may either roll balls, throw balls or hit balls in their direction.
- When the players let a ball through, the next pair of players is up.
- Players can either stand at the same depth or one can move closer than the other.

Teacher Ball:

- Teams of 4-8 players line up side by side facing the coach.
- The teacher throws the ball to the player on the far right of the line that then throws it back to the coach.
- The coach then throws it to the next in line who returns it.
- Continue this all the way down the line.
- If one player drops the ball, start again from the start of the line.



Hit Through Line:

- Divide athletes into two groups.
- Have athletes' line up side by side facing each other across an open area.
- (not too large)
- The object of the game is to get a ground ball across the other team's line.
- Each team has a few balls, which they will throw/roll out to the other side trying to aim to get between the players.
- Players must field the balls being rolled at the team and toss them back to the other side. When a ball crosses through the line, it stays there.
- At the end of the game, whichever team let by most balls loses.

Fielding Ground Balls:

- Field rolled balls without using a glove.





Softball Basics-

Catching, Throwing and Hitting

- Field rolled balls with a glove.
- Field bouncing balls.
- Field balls moving to the left and the right.
- Field batted balls.

Infield Play

- Have athletes in pairs with one ball
- Player A rolls the ball to player B
- B fields ball and throws it back to A
- Repeat 10 times, then reverse roles

Pitching:

- Practice motion of shifting weight to the front foot.
- Perform pitching motion without ball
- Perform the pitch without moving feet
- Pitch against a screen

Fielding fly balls:

- Catch the ball from self toss
- Catch the ball from a slow or high toss
- Move to the right, left, backwards, forwards to catch a tossed ball
- Catch batted fly balls

Hitting:

- **Practice grip** Hold bat at the base using the bottoms of the base of the fingers. Right hand over left, grip slightly firm yet relaxed.
- **Stance:** Feet parallel to plate, shoulder width apart, bat coverage of home plate.
- **Ready position:** Shoulders level, arm comfortable with elbows bent a and hands at armpit height, bat at 45 degree angle, knees slightly bent, hitter front foot turned slightly towards pitcher.



Softball Basics- Catching, Throwing and Hitting

- **Swing:**

Short stride forward with front foot, quick rotation of shoulders, swing is level, once contact with ball then wrists roll, complete with follow through.

Keep your eye on the ball!



These drills can be used as part of the fitness component of the practice.

The Running:

- Have half the team line up at second base and half the team line up at home plate.
- On the signal, one player from each line runs all the way around the bases and back to their plate where they tag the next runner.
- This is done until all the runners have run.
- Whichever team gets all their players around first wins.

Base Running Relay:

- Split entire team into two groups.
- Both groups are behind home plate
- Place a ball in a glove on either side of second base.
- Group A's relay route is from home to 1st to 2nd.
- Group B's relay route is from home to 3rd to 2nd.
- A player from each team runs to 2nd base and retrieves the ball, runs back and hands it off.
- Next player runs the ball back into the glove at 2nd base, then runs back empty handed
- Third player runs to 2nd base and retrieves ball and so forth.





Fitness Drills for Softball

- First team to have everyone run and sit down wins.

Thunder

- Divide the players into two teams
- One team is at bat, the other team spreads out in the field and has one fielder on third and one on first. No player is on second.
- The batter hits the ball as hard as possible and runs as many bases as possible while the players on the other team must pass it to each other until BOTH fielders have touched the ball.
- Keep score by counting bases reached before the ball is touched by both fielders. Switch sides, after all the batters have gone.

Glove Ball Relay

- Create groups of 4-6 players- have groups line up single file
- Each group has 3 softballs
- Place 3 gloves 10 meters apart in front of each group.
- First player from each group picks up a softball, runs, and places it in one of the gloves, then repeats the run with the second and third ball.
- Next player retrieves the balls one at a time and returns them to the third player.
- Players 3-6 continue the drill, until one group has finished.



Practice Plan

Unstructured Free Play: (10 mins)

Prior to the practice athletes who have arrived early should be encouraged to participate in free play activities.

Warm Up: (7-10 mins)

Warm-up starts slowly and gradually involves all the muscles and body parts to be utilized in the exercise related instruction phase of the practice.

Basic Motor Skills: (15 mins max)

The Basic Motor Skills phase starts with known content and progresses to the application of skill(s) resembling the game or competition. Instruction may be related to sport skills, personal/social skills or sport values.

Sport Specific Skills: (15 mins max)

During this phase the athletes practice the skills as demonstrated during the instruction. Emphasis should be upon creating competition -like conditions during this phase

Fitness: (12-15 mins)

This phase involves physical conditioning activities that are specific to the fitness needs of your sport. This is done by setting work/ pause ratios for your athletes that stress the correct energy system(s).

Cool Down: (5-8 mins)

Don't forget this portion. Cool downs are a vital part of a practice as they allow the heart rate to return to normal. Stretching should also be included at this time to prevent sore muscles the next day.

Evaluation: (5 mins)



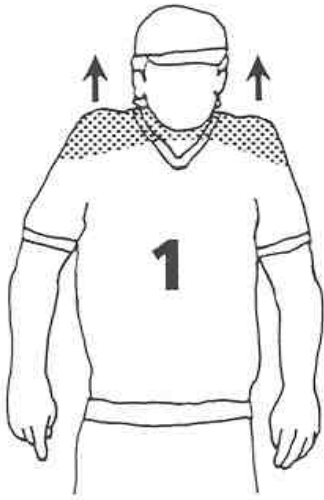
Practice Plan

Evaluation is used to assess the effectiveness of specific activities or the total practice. It is helpful to spend a few minutes with your athletes at the end of a practice to get some feedback on the practice session. It can take the form of a 5 minute rap session about things that went well and things that the athletes and/or coaches need to work on. The topics discussed can then be built into the next week's practice.

Before and After Baseball/Softball

Approximately 8 Minutes

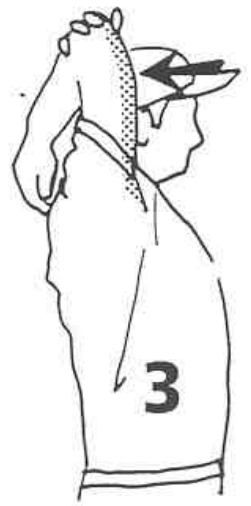
Jog around the baseball field once before stretching.



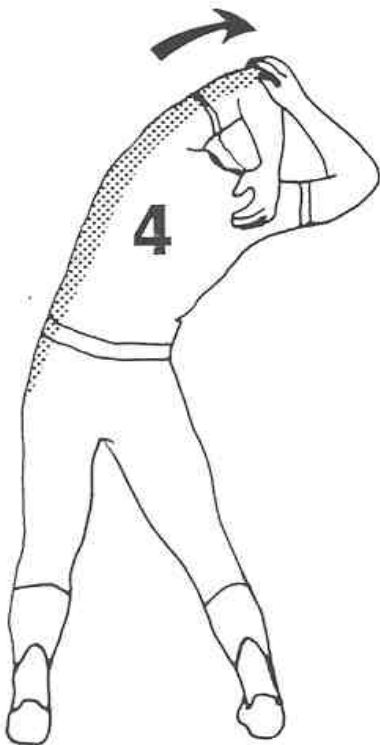
5 seconds
2-3 times
(page 46)



8-10 seconds
each arm
(page 47)



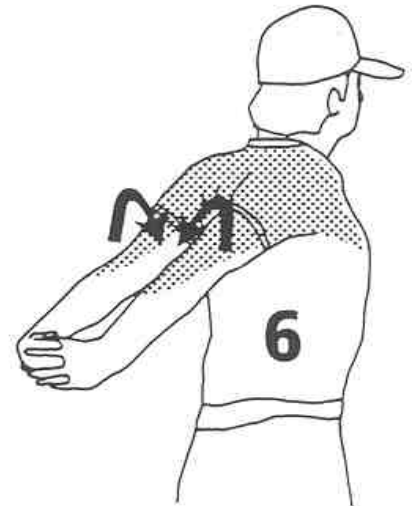
8-10 seconds
each arm
(page 44)



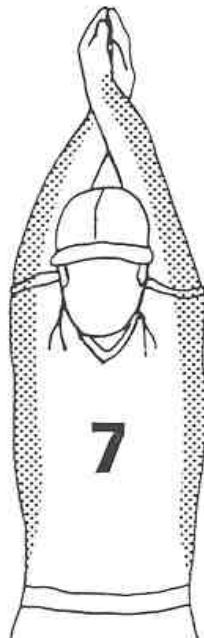
10 seconds
each side
(page 44)



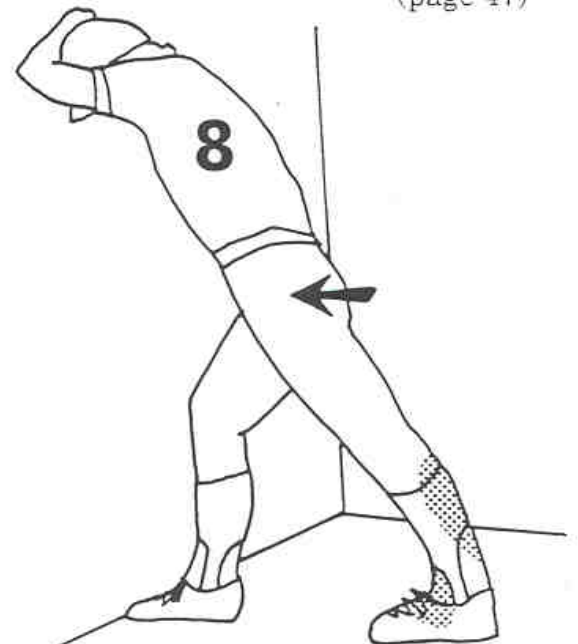
15 seconds
each arm
(page 43)



10-15 seconds
each arm
2 times
(page 47)



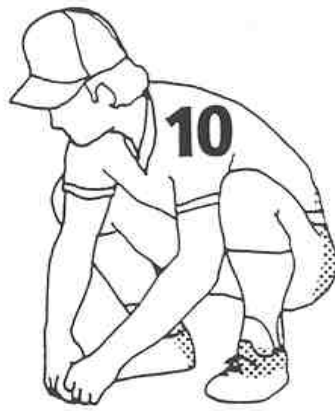
10-20 seconds
(page 43)



15-30 seconds
each leg
(page 71)



10–20 seconds
each leg
(page 53)



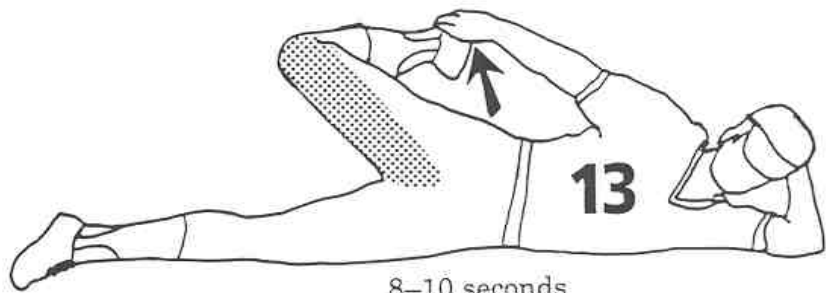
10–20 seconds
(page 65)



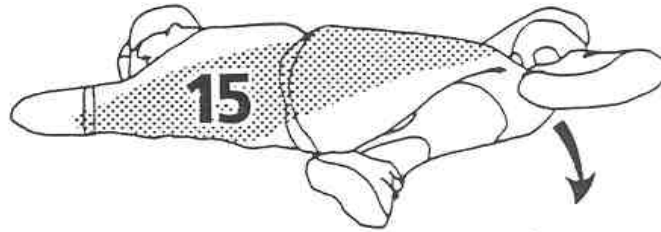
15–30 seconds
(page 58)



8–10 seconds
each side
(page 60)



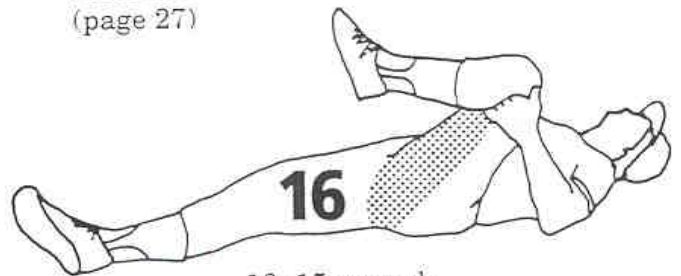
8–10 seconds
each leg
(page 36)



10–15 seconds
each side
(page 27)



10–20 seconds
each leg
(page 58)



10–15 seconds
each leg
(page 31)

Short on time?
Do this mini-routine:
1, 3, 5, 9, 11, 12, 14, 16
Approx. 4 minutes