Drill: Wrist/Elbow (Throwing Series - Part 1)

Purpose:
Develops players use of wrist and elbow along with emphasizing the correct grip on the baseball.

Equipment:
Baseballs

Setup:
Players pair up with gloves and 1 baseball for each pair.

Execution:

Players get on one knee about 6 feet from their partner. Have each player place their glove on the ground in front of them.
Start by showing the players the proper 4 seam grip on the baseball.
The player with the ball will get the proper grip on the baseball. The player will then bend his elbow and hold his forearm with his other hand.
The player will then bend his wrist back and flick the ball to his partner using only the wrist to throw the ball. Emphasize that the wrist will be used during all throws.
Have players aim for the others players glove as a target.

Have the players back up to about 15 feet.
This time the player throwing the ball will place his other hand under his arm holding his triceps.
The player will then throw the ball using just his elbow and wrist.

Drill: One Knee (Throwing Series - Part 2)

Purpose:
Develops players upper body throwing mechanics.

Equipment:
Baseballs

Setup:
Players pair up with gloves and 1 baseball for each pair.

Execution:
Players get on one knee(throwing arm side) about 15 feet from their partner.
The player with the ball will rotate his shoulder toward the target, bring his arm back with his hand on top, use a good circular motion and throw the ball.
Build on the wrist and elbow drill, making sure the player bends his elbow and uses his wrist.

Drill: Stationary (Throwing Series - Part 3)

Purpose:
Players learn how to line up their body and follow through when throwing the baseball.

Equipment:
Glove and Baseballs

Setup:
Players pair up with gloves and 1 baseball for each pair.

Execution:
One player will get in the proper position to catch the ball and give the other player a target. Player with the ball will place his back foot facing perpendicular to the target. Make sure he has lined up his body in the direction of the throw. He will then step and throw to the other player. Remind the players that this is a continuation of the other throwing drills.

This drill shows them how to place their back foot and close their front side before making the throw. Check the position of the back foot and whether they are pointing their front shoulder and hip toward the target.

Check to make sure they are following through on their throw. The throwing hand should end up down by the knee of the front leg.

Drill: Step and Throw (Throwing Series - Part 4)

Purpose:
Players learn how to catch the baseball and then step and line up to throw in a single movement.

Equipment:
Glove and Baseballs

Setup:
Players pair up with gloves and 1 baseball for each pair.

Execution:
Both players will get in the proper position to catch the ball. Player with the ball will step forward with his throwing side leg placing down in front of him perpendicular to the target. As he places his foot down he brings his back leg forward, swiveling his body as he does this, to get lined up in the correct throwing position. As he completes the step with his back leg, he will throw the ball. Remind the players that this is a continuation of the other throwing drills.

This added step will often result in younger players not getting their back foot positioned perpendicular to the target. Make sure you watch the placement of the foot and that they still close the body and point it toward the target.

Drill: Shuffle (Throwing Series - Part 5)

Purpose:
Players learn how to shuffle in order to get their body in position to throw and to gain momentum toward the target.

Equipment:
Glove and Baseballs

Setup:
Players pair up with gloves and 1 baseball for each pair. Since you want the players to gain momentum toward the target, make sure they have warmed up their arms and are making a long enough throw.

Execution:
Have the player with the ball place it on the ground in front of him. He will then simulate fielding a ground ball. Once he has fielded the ball he will take a couple shuffle steps toward the target getting his body in good throwing position as he does so. After a couple shuffle steps he will step and throw.

Make sure the player is getting his body lined up as he performs the shuffle steps. His lead shoulder and hip should be pointing towards the target. As he gets lined up his back foot should land perpendicular to the target.

Drill: Workup Game (Throwing Series - Combined)

Purpose:
Competition to work on all portions of the throwing series with the emphasis on accuracy.

Equipment:
Glove and Baseballs

Setup:
Players pair up with gloves and 1 baseball for each pair. Have one group stand stationary on a foul line. Have the other group start about 6 feet away (depending on age and skill level) on one knee ready to throw with his wrist only.

Execution:
This is a throwing accuracy competition. Each pair will make the same amount of throws as every other pair. You don't want this to be a race. With the players in position as described above have them wait for you to say 'go' or blow a whistle. They will throw to their partner with just the wrist and the partner will throw back. If they can do this without dropping the ball, they can move back a few feet and then use elbow and wrist to throw.

They will work up through the throwing series stages. If a ball is dropped they have to keep at that stage until they are successful. First pair to complete will win. You can do a number of variations depending on age and skill.

Drill: First Baseman - Covering First

Purpose:
This drill helps your first baseman work on covering first base and the footwork required to receive the throw.

Equipment:
Baseballs

Setup:
Have first basemen in a line at their position.

Execution:
Coach will stand midway between first and second.

First player in line will run to first and get in position to receive the catch. Coach will deliver a throw trying to alternate the location of the throw so players can work on footwork in all directions.

Once a player has caught the ball he will throw it back to the coach and go to the end of the line.

As players go through the line, coach should move to simulate throws coming from other positions.

Drill: Bad Throw

Purpose:
This drill helps your first baseman work on fielding balls thrown in the dirt.

Equipment:
Baseballs

Setup:
Have first basemen in a line by first base.

Execution:
Coach will stand midway between first and second.

Coach will throw the ball in the dirt to the first baseman. Ball should be thrown on all sides to allow first basemen to work on fielding balls in the dirt on different sides and angles.

Once a player has caught the ball he will throw it back to the coach and go to the end of the line.

For younger players, use softer baseballs to allow them to gain confidence. Don't use tennis balls as they won't give a true enough hop.

Drill: Double Play Workup

Purpose:
This infield drill gives players a chance to work on the double play, play multiple positions, field and throw in a game type situation.

Equipment:
Fungo and Baseballs

Setup:
Have players take a position in the infield.

Execution:
Start by hitting the ball to the third baseman. He will then throw to second to start the double play. If he miss plays the ground ball or makes a bad throw, he will go to the end of the line, which in this game is first base. The player who has been at the other positions the longest will move up to the next position. First to Second; Second to Shortstop; Shortstop to Third.

Continue to hit ground balls to all other positions as you would during a normal infield.

To keep it moving and give everyone the same number of ground balls, don't hit more than one ball to each player. So if a shortstop makes and error and has to go to first, don't hit another ground ball to him at first.

Drill: Bare Hand Double Plays

Purpose:
Often players want to catch the ball with one hand when receiving a throw at second. It takes time to transfer the ball to the throwing hand which slows down the double play. This drill will help the players get used to using both hands.

Equipment:
Baseballs, second base area

Setup:
Have a couple of second baseman and shortstops without gloves playing fairly close to second base.

Execution:
Coach will roll ground balls from close to second base to the infielders as they work on fielding and turning double plays.

Players will work on fielding ground balls with both hands and then making a good accurate underhand toss to the other player covering the bag.

Player accepting the throw will work on catching the ball with both hands and then complete the double play with a throw to first.

Drill: Ground Ball Competition

Purpose:
This is a fun competition game for working on fielding grounders and getting in the proper position to field the ball.

Equipment:
8 cones or throw down bases or chalk to define playing area; baseball

Setup:
Split group into 2 teams. Maximum of 3 or 4 on each team. Can be played with as few as 2 players (1 on 1 game).

Execution:

- 1 Player is playing at a time for each team.
- Both players must start behind back cone or line.
- Player with the ball starts the game by throwing the ball toward the player on the other team. Rules for throwing are:

  1. Ball can bounce any number of times before getting to the other team.
  2. If thrown in the air, it must be caught or hit the ground before going over the back line. (see #1 in illustration above)
  3. Ball must be thrown between the cones. (see #2)
- First player in the line from the other team must move forward and field the ball anywhere in the fielding area. He doesn't have to let it bounce as long as he stays in the fielding area. (see #3)
- Once he has fielded the ball, he becomes the thrower and throws the ball back to the player on the other team. He then goes to the end of the line.
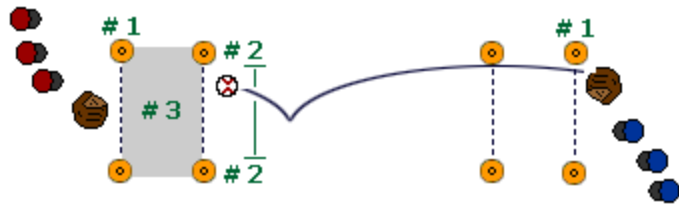
Scoring - Points are given for mistakes and can be given to either the throwing or fielding team. The goal is not to get points. 1 point is added to the team total for each of the following:

- Ball is not fielded cleanly (defined as not hitting the ground after hitting the glove or other body part)
- Ball is fielded outside of the fielding area.
- Throwing team throws the ball outside the fielding area.

First team to 10 points loses.

Notes: You can add additional rules based on what you want them to work on. If you want them to work on fielding the ball in front of them, have a rule that the ball must travel over the back line in play or it is considered a throwing error. This prevents players from trying to cut the

corners with the throw. Now, if you would like them to work on fielding balls to the side as well as in front, allow throws to be legal as long as they hit once in the fielding area.

Drill: Ground ball - Backhand

Purpose:
Helps infielders work on different fielding techniques for ground balls hit to their right.

Equipment:
1 cone or glove for the players and coach to use as a marker; baseball

Setup:
Set cone up between short and third or between second and short. Coach stands on infield grass. Have a player set up between the cone and first base to catch the throws.

Execution:

- Player gets in ready position.
- Coach rolls a ground ball either close to the cone or farther to the right of the player.
    - If the ground ball is rolled close to the cone the player should hustle to get around the ball, plant his right foot and field the ball as he begins moving toward the target. Try to roll it at a speed that allows them to move around the cone. This helps to emphasize the change in direction.
    - If the ground ball is rolled farther away the player should hustle over to get into position to backhand the ball.
- After fielding the ball, the fielder should make a good throw.
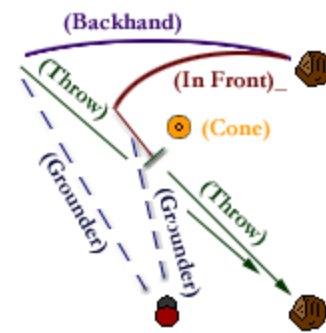
Notes: As your players get comfortable with both techniques, remove the cone and move farther away. This will allow you to throw the ball in different positions, with various hops, and at different speeds. This will help them get comfortable with the footwork required to field most balls that are hit to their right.

With the ball that they can get in front of, make sure you get them to round the ball enough to be able to stop their momentum for going to the right. This will allow them to field the ball smoothly and make a quick throw. Fielding the ball in front of them while still moving to the right is a difficult play to make and puts them in a poor position to throw the ball.

Drill: Carnival Grounders

Purpose:
Players get practice fielding grounders while moving toward the ball. Helps them concentrate on fielding and making an accurate throw.

Equipment:
balls and cones or other equipment to mark off starting and scoring area.

Setup:
Players will start at a specific spot, outfield grass will work if you have it. Otherwise use a couple of cones or something else to mark the starting spot.

Scoring area for younger players will need to be set up similar to image 1 below.

Execution:
This is a fun game to play with 2 to 4 players at a time. Emphasize with your players to work on the rhythm of moving toward the ball, going down to field it, and making the throw in a smooth motion.

First player up will start on line and coach will hit or throw a ground ball (ball should be hit at a speed that will allow the player to move toward the ball).
Player will move in, field the ball and make a throw to first base.

Scoring
Younger players should have multiple ways to score points (See image 1 below). You can modify the scoring based on the skill level. Tee ball kids for example you may allow the ball to roll between the cones and get full points. Coach pitch, you could give them more points if it's in the air. With older players, that you expect to make accurate throws, just use a player at first base.

- Young Players (image 1)
  - Use 3 lines and cones that narrow as they get closer to first.
  - Player throws it between first set of cones they get 1 point. Second set 2 points. Third set 3 points.
  - If the ball gets by them, they can still make a throw from the starting point, but they get 1 point taken away.

- Older Players (image 2)
  - Player or coach can play first base.
  - Player bounces it to first base, but on target, 1 point. Player throws it on target in the air, 2 points. Overthrow or pulling the first baseman off of first, no points.
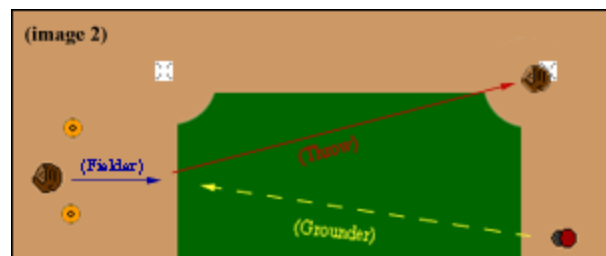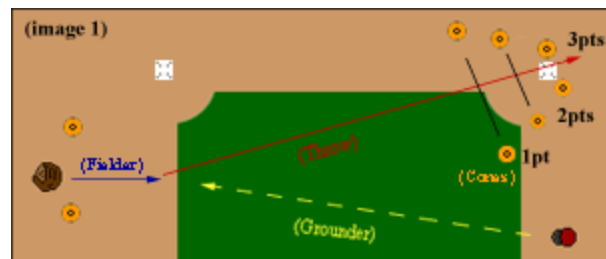
- With older kids they cannot make a throw if the ball gets by them. Take 1 point away from the total if they don't field the ball cleanly, but keep it in front of them.

Play complete rounds, until a player reaches a score of 15 or 20 depending on skill level. If more than one player is tied at the end of the final round, all players continue 1 round at a time until 1 player wins. This will keep everyone involved throughout the entire game and could allow a player to catch up in the extra rounds.

Drill: Infield Rotation

Purpose:
The idea of this rotation drill is to give each infielder a chance to field 3 different types of ground balls and make a throw after fielding.

Equipment:
Two throw down bases or cones; extra cones to mark starting positions; baseballs; bats

Setup:
Split your team into four groups.

One group will split up and catch the throw next to each coach.

Coaches/Parents are shown with hats in the diagram below.

The other three groups will be in the field in a line as shown in the diagram.

Execution:

Each parent/coach will hit or throw a ground ball (yellow line in diagram) to the fielder in front of them. In this example:
- A normal ground ball is hit to the fielder at the top.
- A timed forehand grounder is hit to the fielder in the middle.
- A timed backhand is hit to the fielder nearest 3rd base.

*** Timed forehand or backhand means that the fielder must wait and time his approach to the ball so he can field the ball with either a forehand or backhand.
After a number of balls have been fielded by each player, rotate the groups one spot. Ground balls can be hit at the same time or staggered slightly. The player should field the ball, make a throw and then move to the end of the line.

* As with any drill that involves the use of a bat, safety is a primary concern. Tell your players they are not to go near a coach with a bat as they move from station to station.
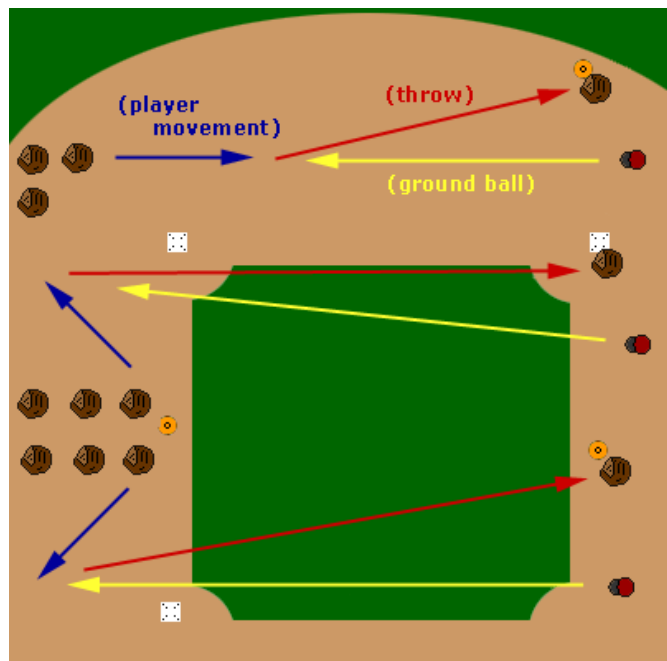
Drill: Short-Hop

Purpose:
To give players practice fielding ground balls that they would have to field as a short hop if they didn't move.

Equipment:
Baseballs

Setup:
Have two lines of players who will work in pairs just as if they are playing catch. Set the distance between the two lines at about 60-90 feet depending on age.

Execution:
Players will take turns throwing short-hops to one another. As the ball in the air the player fielding the ball will need to adjust his position to either get closer to the ball and catch it right at the bounce or back up slightly to catch the ball at a higher point to make the play easier. See the diagram below and have your players try to catch the ball in the green areas.

The ball should be thrown right at the player not to the side. The players should be working on getting the correct depth and learning when to charge the ball, when to stay put, and when to back up slightly.

Players should vary the distance and arc on the ball to help the other player work on many different types of short-hops.

The graphic below shows the best positions to catch the ball and avoid a short-hop.
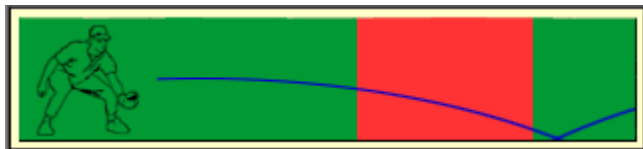
Coaching Tip: Make sure the players understand that it is preferable to charge the ball and catch it as it hits the ground rather than backing up. Depending on age and arm strength, you may have players that won't be able to throw a runner out if they back up. If that's the case you may want to modify the drill so the players do not have the option to back up.

Drill: Around the Horn

Purpose:
This drill simulates throwing down runners, double plays, fielding grounders. Kids really enjoy it.

Equipment:
Infield area with bases and balls.

Setup:
All infield positions are used except for the pitcher. You can use this drill with 5 or rotate more players in.

Execution:
- 5 players - all infield except for pitcher. (can rotate more in if you want, but only 5 active each time around).
- everyone plays their position
- ball starts with the catcher and throws to 3rd to simulate a steal throwdown
- 3rd throws a grounder to 2nd who fields the ball and flips it to the SS covering 2nd
- the SS throws to 1st
- the 1st baseman throws to catcher
- after 2 successful rounds (or whenever), players rotate. Keep rotating until all players have played all positions

You can make this deal into a team competition by keeping track of errors and who made them. Players try to finish drill with no errors.

Drill: Bucket of Balls

Purpose:
Fun competition that allows players to focus on fielding and making good throws.

Equipment:
Infield area with bases and a bucket or bag of balls.

Setup:
All infield positions are used except for the pitcher.

Execution:
This drill requires a minimum of 5 players but can accommodate more. Start with a player at each position and the drill proceeds much like a standard infield. Empty the balls near home plate and count them before the drill starts or keep track of errors. Place the bucket in foul territory next to 3rd base.

- Start the drill by hitting a ground ball to the 3rd baseman and have him throw to 1st. 1st baseman will then throw to the catcher who will throw it to 3rd and the 3rd baseman will put the ball in the bucket.
- Next ground ball to the SS with the throw to 1st and then to the catcher who this time will throw it down to 2nd and then over to 3rd and in the bucket.
- Keep track of any errors that occur or don't place the ball in the bucket. The goal is to make it through the drill without any errors.
- If you have two players at each position you can have two teams and compete between the teams.
- You can also have players rotate positions as a good drill for the beginning of the season or tryouts.

Drill: Bucket of Balls with Runners

Purpose:
The addition of runners to the bucket drill will help simulate real game situations for both the defense and the base runners.

Equipment:
Infield area with bases and a bucket or bag of balls and helmets for the runners.

Setup:
All infield positions are used except for the pitcher.

Execution:
This is a team drill where you'll split your team into two groups. One group will play defense and one group will run the bases. Start with a player at each position, except second base and pitcher. Empty the balls near home plate and count them before the drill starts or keep track of errors. Place the bucket in foul territory next to 3rd base. Have runners at home, 1st base, and 3rd.

- Start the drill by hitting a ground ball to the shortstop and have him throw to 1st. Runner at home and 1st will run on contact. Runner at 3rd will hold until the ball is thrown to 1st and then will break for home. 1st baseman will then throw to the catcher who will attempt to tag the runner going home. The runner who started at 1st will always attempt to make it to 3rd base. Catcher will throw it to 3rd and the 3rd baseman will attempt a tag on the runner and then put the ball in the bucket.
- Keep track of any errors that occur or don't place the ball in the bucket. The goal is to make it through the drill without any errors.
- If you have two players at each position you can have two teams and compete between the teams.

Coaching Notes:
- Like all the drills this can be adjusted for the level of the team and what you'd like to work on. For example if you are rotating players with a younger team you may have the ground balls go to the second baseman so the initial throw is shorter.
- Make sure your base runners are helping the drill by not leaving too early. You want to simulate game type of situations and you can't do that if the runner from home is leaving before contact. One way to prevent this is to have the runner at home turn his back and run when he hears the ball being hit.

Drill: Follow the Ball

Purpose:
Warm-up and conditioning infield drill

Equipment:
Infield area with bases and balls.

Setup:
Place 1 player at each infield position except pitcher. All other players are in a line at SS ready to receive a ground ball.

Execution:
Coach hits a ground ball to the SS who throw to 1B, who throws to 2B, who throws to 3B who throws home. After each throw the player goes to the base they just threw to for the next round, and the catcher goes to the back of the line at SS (thus follow the ball).

In all cases the focus is on good throws, proper catching technique and tagging. 1B should be focused on a proper step and catch, 2B, 3B and Catcher should receive the ball in the correct manner so they can place the tag quickly.

We use this as a warm up drill to work on several different items quickly, while also working on running and conditioning in quick sprints. Good way to get the blood flowing at the start of a practice. You can also make it a game by counting errors for throwing and catching (fewest points is the winner).

Drill: Star Game

Purpose:
Infield, base running, conditioning and competition drill

Equipment:
Infield area with bases and balls.

Setup:
Place 1 player at each infield position except pitcher. 2-3 players are in a line at SS ready to receive a ground ball, and 2-3 players have their helmets on at home ready to be a runner.

Execution:
The coach hits the ball to SS (runner begins running the bases). SS throws to 1B, 1B to 3B, 3B to 2B, and 2B to home. The goal is to make good throws and catches to beat the runner home. Rotate players so that each person gets to field, catch, throw and run during the drill/game.

This works on good throwing and catching techniques, while also working on proper base running. It is a great sort of game as the goal is to beat the runner home…infielders are then working hard to not make errors, while the base runners are working extra hard to make good turns and hit the inside of the base every time.

This drill can be modified for any team by changing where the base runner starts from.

Drill: One-Two Infield Drill

Purpose:
This drill is used to help and infielder develop a method for handling the ground ball hit directly at him.
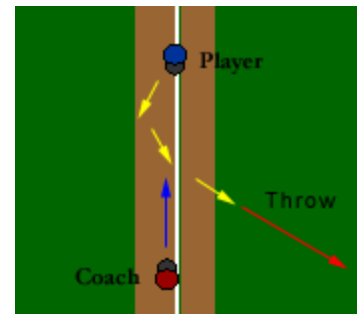
Equipment:
Baseballs

Setup:
Draw a close to straight line in the infield dirt, or you can even use a base line if there is a good fielding area.

Execution:
You've seen it many times where an infielder who has to move to the side to field a ball will normally make the play but the ball hit directly at him will end up in an error. This drill helps an infielder develop some footwork to better handle the ground ball hit directly at him. This will simulate the ground ball that the infielder should charge on, not a ball that's been ripped.

- The player should start by straddling the line in the dirt in the ready position.
- The coach will roll the ball toward the player. As the ball is rolled the player will start to move forward but will move slightly to the right of the line.
- As the ball approaches the player will perform a "one-two" step to get in position to field the ball. Step one is to place the right foot to the right of the line and step two is to place the left foot on the other side of the ball and the line.
- Then the fielder will perform another "one-two" step to throw the ball.

Drill: No Defense

Purpose:
This drill allows players to work on many different base running situations. It is also a good conditioning drill.

Equipment:
Bat and baseballs; Helmets

Setup:
Start with runners on first and second and one player in the batter's box. Have all other runners in a line behind home.

Have a coach in the third base box and another coach out in front of home with a bat and baseballs.

Execution:
Coach will hit a ball to any part of the field. All ground balls will be considered to be through for a base hit. All fly balls will be considered singles also.

All base runners will behave as if there is a defense.

Hitter will run hard through first base on a ground ball
He will round the base on a ball hit in the air to the outfield.
Either way he stays at first base.

Runner at first will run hard strait into second on a ground ball to the infield.
Runner will pick up the third base coach on any ball hit to the outfield. The third base coach will then instruct the runner to either stay at second or proceed to third.

Runner at second will go straight into third on a ground ball.
On a fly ball he will round third and pick up the third base coach to determine whether he will score or not.

Runner at third will tag on a fly ball and run when the ball hits the ground. If there is no runner on second, the third base coach can give the runner instructions on what to do on a ground ball. "Score on all balls except back to the pitcher".

Keep it moving. Players need to quickly analyze the situation and be ready to move.

Drill: Relay Race

Purpose:
This is a good conditioning drill and helps players work on making good turns when taking extra bases.

Equipment:
2 baseballs

Setup:
Split your team into 2 equal squads. Have half the team at home and half at second.

Execution:
Have the first player in line start with the ball in his hand.

On your signal each team will start running around the bases. After each player runs around the bases, he will hand the ball to the next player. First team to get all players completely around wins.

Drill: Pitch Trajectory

Purpose:
Develop base runners ability to read the trajectory of the pitch to determine if it will hit the dirt. Allow the defense to work on defense in the same situations.

Equipment:
Baseballs, catchers in gear, batting helmets

Setup:
Have a complete infield including a couple of catchers in gear. Coach will pitch. Have the rest of the team with helmets on to run the bases. You don't need a hitter.

Execution:
Vary the situation by changing how many runners on base. Start with a runner on first, then first and second, first and third, finally bases loaded.

Coach will throw pitches to the catcher. Every few pitches he will throw one in the dirt.

Each runner should be watching the delivery of the pitch and try to read the trajectory to determine if the pitch will be in the dirt. If the runners read that the ball will be in the dirt, he should be more aggressive taking his secondary lead anticipating that he can advance to the next base on a passed or blocked ball.

With a runner on first only, have the runners steal when they determine the ball will be in the dirt. If they read it correctly, it should be an easy steal even if the ball is blocked and/or caught on the bounce by the catcher.

When on 2nd and 3rd the runners will be aggressive in taking the secondary lead and determine if they should go or stay. The goal is for runners to get used to reading the pitch and avoiding the hesitation that often happens when a pitch bounces in the dirt.

Defensively this drill gives catchers practice at blocking pitches in the dirt with game situations. Encourage the catchers to throw the ball when runners get too far off. This is a chance for them to learn when to throw the ball and when to run someone back. It also benefits the runners as they learn how far they can get off and how to get back quickly.

Youth Coaches Note: In youth leagues where there is no leading off, this drill can still be useful in helping players get a better jump and can help defensively as well. Often young players are not prepared for the ball thrown in the dirt even though it happens many times a game. Have an assistant coach watch the runners for hesitation as they leave the base.

Drill: Shallow Fly Balls

Purpose:
Working on tagging up and coming off the third base on shallow fly balls

Equipment:
Baseballs, batting helmets and a fungo

Setup:
Have a catcher, 2 third basemen, 2 shortstops and 2 left fielders, rest of the team should have helmets.

Execution:
Have a line of runners at third base. Hit soft line drive and fly balls into shallow left field. The runner at third base should move back to tag as he reads the fly ball of the bat. He should then try to determine whether the fly ball will be caught and whether he should stay on the base or come off and move down the line.

Have the next fielders and runner ready to jump in after each play to keep the drill moving along.

Coaching Note: This is one of the most difficult base running situations, so try not to stop the drill each time and critique each decision. The more reps the base runners get in the more they will get the idea.
This drill also gives outfielders and infielders an opportunity to work on calling for a fly ball and being called off by another player.

Drill: First Base Pickoffs

Purpose:
Allow pitchers to work on pickoff moves to first and runners to work on reading the pitchers moves and getting a good jump.

Equipment:
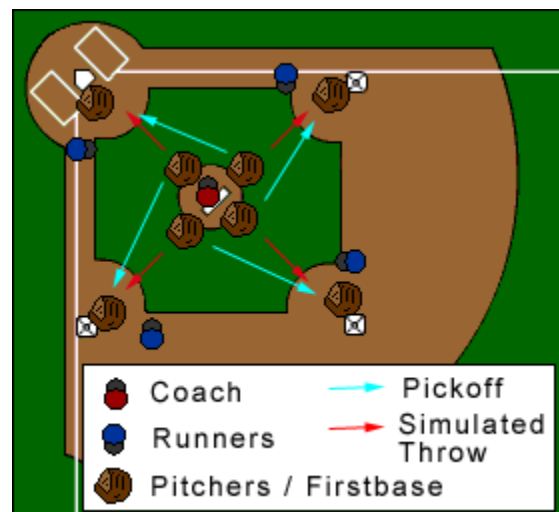Four baseballs, helmets for base runners.

Setup:
Have four pitchers on the mound, each facing a base. Have a player acting as a first baseman at every base and a runner leading off each base. Each pitcher has a different home plate and first base.

Execution:
Coach stays on the mound in the middle of all the pitchers. He will tell the pitchers to either pickoff the runner or simulate a throw home.

Runners will always be trying to steal the base and get a good jump.

Older players can make the throw home, but the simulated throw home for younger players prevents two balls being thrown to the same base.

Drill: Pitching Accuracy Game

Purpose:
This game helps your pitcher work on accuracy and understanding when he starts aiming the ball. The second purpose of this game is for your catcher and pitcher to work on communication.

Equipment:
Catcher in full gear; Pitcher; Mound; 1 baseball

Setup:
A bullpen area where a pitcher can throw. Pitcher will work on fastball and/or changeup only.

Execution:
Pitcher will warm up properly. After warm-up and a number of pitches on the mound, the game will begin.

Catcher has the role of catcher and umpire. Catcher will call a pitch and location. This should be done with signs not verbally. The catcher should set up and give a good target in the location he wants the ball. Have the catcher imagine a ring around his glove with a certain diameter. This will vary in size depending on age and ability. You may give a young pitcher 6 inches on all sides and a high school pitcher 1 inch.

The pitcher will throw the pitch. If the catcher can catch the pitch within the imaginary circle he has set up, the pitch is a strike. If not the pitch is a ball.

Scoring: A walk is a -1 and a strikeout is +1. Catcher and pitcher keep a running total. Record the + or - score at the end of the game.

The catcher should also watch for the pitcher aiming the ball. The easiest way to determine this is be aware of the speed of the pitch. As the pitcher finishes his warm-up the catcher is aware of the speed of the fastball. If during the game the catcher notices a fastball coming in slower and thinks the pitcher is aiming it vs. being tired, he will call it a ball whether it was within the circle or not. In this case the catcher should stand up and tell the pitcher that he is aiming the ball. Discussion and disagreement are normal, but just as with an umpire, the call stands. This will give the catcher a chance to develop some leadership and communication skills and the pitcher some feedback.

The catcher should gauge whether the game is too easy or difficult and adjust the diameter if necessary.

You may want to have a parent or another pitcher counting pitches and put a limit for the game. The one thing you don't want to have happen is a tired pitcher trying to throw the ball too hard in order to keep the catcher from calling a ball based on aiming.

Drill: Pick-up

Purpose:
This is a good conditioning drill that is primarily used for pitchers, but can be used early in the season to help condition all players.
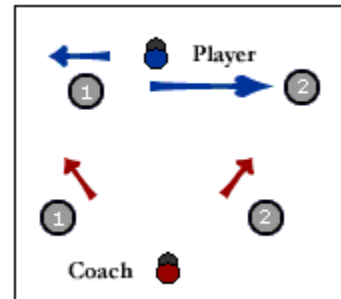
Equipment:
2 - 4 baseballs

Setup:
This drill can be done with 2 players or a player and coach. You need a minimum of 2 balls, but I usually grab a couple extra. Player should stand between 10 and 15 feet away from the coach depending on age.
Player will have no glove. Coach will have 2 balls ready and any extras within reach.

Execution:
Player will get into a fielding position. Coach will start the drill by rolling 1 ball at an angle to the player (Number 1). The player will shuffle to the ball and field it with his bare hands. He will immediately stop and start shuffling in the other direction as he rolls the ball back to the coach. Coach will roll the next ball at an angle to the other side (Number 2). Continue going back and forth for about a minute.

Players should be warmed up before doing this drill. It is tiring and should be used as a conditioning drill towards the end of practice and not as a warm up drill.

Drill: Pitching - Bunt Defense

Purpose:
Give pitchers practice at fielding bunts and making plays both at 3rd and 1st.
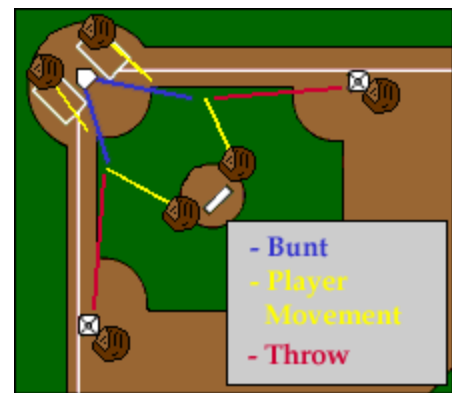
Equipment:
Baseballs

Setup:
You can run this drill with 1 or 2 pitchers at a time. If using 2 pitchers have a pitcher stand on each side of the mound and have 2 catchers on each side of home plate.

Execution:
Each pitcher will go through the pitching motion and throw a pitch to the catcher. The coach will roll out a ball down the third base or first base line. If down the third base line the pitcher will field it and make the pivot and throw to third. If down the first base line the pitcher will make the throw to first.

- Bunt
- Player Movement
- Throw

Have one pitcher throw and then the other to keep the drill running continuously.

You can also roll some just in front of the plate to have the catchers work on the same drill.

Drill: Pitching Accuracy - 40 pitches

Purpose:
Improve a pitchers ability to focus on accuracy and throw strikes.

Equipment:
Catcher in full gear; baseball.

Setup:
Use a rubber home base and a catcher. Put 4 cones down with the first cone being 1/2 way between home plate and the distance to the mound. Place the second cone 3/4 of the way, the third cone would be the distance to the mound and the final cone would be another 1/4 distance beyond the mound.

Execution:
After a proper warm-up the pitcher will start at the first cone (1/2 distance) and throw 10 pitches to the catcher at 3/4 speed. The catcher will count balls and number of pitches. If the pitcher makes it to 10 pitches from a distance before throwing 4 balls, he can move back to the next distance after completing the tenth pitch. If he throws 4 or more balls at the distance, he must stay at that distance for the next 10 pitches. The goal is to successfully complete all distances throwing 3 balls or less at each distance.

Coaching Note:
Since a pitcher is pitching at different distances and not off a mound, don't use this drill to help them work on mechanics. This drill should be used to help them work on concentration and focus. Many pitchers who have good mechanics, simply have a tough time concentrating for an entire inning when they're on the mound. This drill can help them develop that concentration. As you'll see in the modifications below, you should adjust this drill for the skill level of the player. You want to make sure they can be successful enough that they are encouraged to keep improving. If a player doesn't have the skill to make it past the first level, they will most likely be frustrated with their failure and will be too frustrated to work on improving their focus which is the point of the drill.

Modifications:
For younger players have a parent call balls and strikes and keep track of number of pitches. You may also change it so they only have to throw half of the pitches for strikes to move back to the next distance.

As they improve you can then change the requirements to make it more difficult.

This is a great drill to track during the season. Challenge the kids to see if they can make it through all the levels and then make it more difficult.

Blocking With Ball

Purpose:
to develop correct <u>blocking technique</u> while getting used to being hit with the ball.

Equipment:
catchers gear, bucket of balls, someone to throw

Procedure:
Assume the normal <u>ready position</u>. Your coach (server) should be anywhere from 20 to 30 feet in front of where you are set up with a bucket of baseballs. The server takes one knee to prepare to throw pitches in the dirt. The closer the server is to the catcher the easier it is for the server to give good throws. Also, the server should NOT be standing. The server needs to try and replicate the angle at which the pitch will be hitting the dirt.
Start by throwing pitches in the dirt directly at the catcher. The catcher should use correct blocking technique to deaden and control the pitch. The server also needs to be aware of the speed at which the pitch is delivered. Your goal should be a nice firm throw that is age appropriate.
Next, work on blocking pitches to each side of the catcher. A good rule of thumb is to let the catcher know which side you will be serving to.
Sets:
Ideally 3 sets of 10 in each direction.

Extension:
For more advanced catchers, work on side to side blocking but do not tell them what direction if any the pitch is going. Let them react.
Also, you can incorporate a pitching machine into this drill to better replicate the speed of the pitch and for accuracy purposes.

Drill: Hockey Goalie (Blocking pitches in the dirt)

Purpose:
This game builds upon the last drill but adds a little competition while helping your catchers develop the skill of blocking pitches in the dirt.

Equipment:
Catcher in full gear; 2 cones; baseballs

Setup:
Place a cone on each side of the catcher. Vary width depending on age, skill level.

Execution:
Coach will position himself about 30 feet in front of the plate depending on arm strength. For younger players I would recommend having a coach or parent throw the balls instead of a player.

Throw balls to the catcher between the cones. Throw most in the dirt, but also throw some in the air to make sure the catcher isn't dropping early. Vary throws on each side and in front of the catcher.

Throw 10 pitches and count the number of goals allowed.

Repeat the drill 2 or 3 times.

Track goals allowed from practice to practice.

When catcher is consistently blocking most pitches, widen cones to force the catcher to take a step before dropping.

Drill: Blinking & Flinching

Purpose:
This is a 2 part drill that helps the inexperienced catcher overcome the natural reaction of blinking or flinching when a batter swings at a ball.

Equipment:
Catcher in full gear; baseballs; bat and batters helmet

Setup:
Part 1: Catcher in full gear, coach with a number of baseballs about 5 feet from the catcher.

Part 2: Catcher in full gear, coach with a number of baseballs about 15 feet from catcher, coach with a bat in the batter's box.

Execution:
Part 1: Catcher will place both arms behind back. Coach will underhand balls to the catcher aiming for the mask.

Part 2: Catcher will catch a thrown pitch from the coach. Coach should aim for the catcher's mask. The other coach will swing the bat missing the pitched ball.

In both parts of this drill the catcher should concentrate on not blinking or flinching.

Drill: Sway and Frame - 5 to 1

Purpose:
Improve the catchers ability to determine when to frame a pitch.

Equipment:
Catcher in full gear; 5 baseballs

Setup:
Coach should be from 30 to 50 feet from the catcher depending on the arm strength and accuracy of the coaches arm. Catcher should know the basics of swaying and framing. Instruction for both swaying and framing

Execution:
This drill is a 5 round drill where the coach will throw a pitch. The catcher will sway to the pitch if needed, catch the ball, and frame the pitch if necessary. The coach is the umpire and it's up to him to determine if the catcher made the right decision about whether to frame the pitch or not.

If the coach determines that the catcher made the wrong decision or used poor technique, the drill stops, all balls are returned to the coach and the drill starts over.

First round is 5 pitches with the catcher dropping the ball to the side after catching it and framing it if necessary. The coach should throw the pitches rapidly. This helps the catcher develop a good habit of not framing the pitch for too long. Second round is 4 pitches, Third round - 3 pitches, etc.

The goal for the catcher is to complete the drill without having to start over.

Modification:
Changing the number of rounds will help make this drill work with any age group.

Drill: Throwing to Second

Purpose:
Helps to teach the catcher the importance of quick feet and proper technique when throwing to second base.

Equipment:
Catchers gear, baseballs, stop watch

Setup:
Have a player or two cover second base. Have a pitcher on the mound to throw a pitch and your catchers behind the plate.

Execution:
Have the pitcher go through his stretch motion and pitch the ball to the catcher who is behind the plate. The catcher will catch the ball and throw to second as if a runner is stealing.

The coach should time the catcher as he makes the throw. Start the stop watch when the ball hits the glove and stop the stop watch when the tag is applied by the fielder covering second.

By waiting for the tag to be applied, you will be emphasizing the importance of accuracy in throwing a runner out.

For young catchers there is a tendency to take an extra step so they can get something extra on the throw. This drill will show them that it's more important to release the ball quickly than it is to take extra time and throw the ball harder.

This drill can be used when throwing to other bases as well.

Drill: Pitch Trajectory

Purpose:
Develop base runners ability to read the trajectory of the pitch to determine if it will hit the dirt. Allow the defense to work on defense in the same situations.

Equipment:
Baseballs, catchers in gear, batting helmets

Setup:
Have a complete infield including a couple of catchers in gear. Coach will pitch. Have the rest of the team with helmets on to run the bases. You don't need a hitter.

Execution:
Vary the situation by changing how many runners on base. Start with a runner on first, then first and second, first and third, finally bases loaded.

Coach will throw pitches to the catcher. Every few pitches he will throw one in the dirt.

Each runner should be watching the delivery of the pitch and try to read the trajectory to determine if the pitch will be in the dirt. If the runners read that the ball will be in the dirt, he should be more aggressive taking his secondary lead anticipating that he can advance to the next base on a passed or blocked ball.

With a runner on first only, have the runners steal when they determine the ball will be in the dirt. If they read it correctly, it should be an easy steal even if the ball is blocked and/or caught on the bounce by the catcher.

When on 2nd and 3rd the runners will be aggressive in taking the secondary lead and determine if they should go or stay. The goal is for runners to get used to reading the pitch and avoiding the hesitation that often happens when a pitch bounces in the dirt.

Defensively this drill gives catchers practice at blocking pitches in the dirt with game situations. Encourage the catchers to throw the ball when runners get too far off. This is a chance for them to learn when to throw the ball and when to run someone back. It also benefits the runners as they learn how far they can get off and how to get back quickly.

Youth Coaches Note: In youth leagues where there is no leading off, this drill can still be useful in helping players get a better jump and can help defensively as well. Often young players are not prepared for the ball thrown in the dirt even though it happens many times a game. Have an assistant coach watch the runners for hesitation as they leave the base.

Drill: Pitching Accuracy Game

Purpose:
This game helps your pitcher work on accuracy and understanding when he starts aiming the ball. The second purpose of this game is for your catcher and pitcher to work on communication.

Equipment:
Catcher in full gear; Pitcher; Mound; 1 baseball

Setup:
A bullpen area where a pitcher can throw. Pitcher will work on fastball and/or changeup only.

Execution:
Pitcher will warm up properly. After warm-up and a number of pitches on the mound, the game will begin.

Catcher has the role of catcher and umpire. Catcher will call a pitch and location. This should be done with signs not verbally. The catcher should set up and give a good target in the location he wants the ball. Have the catcher imagine a ring around his glove with a certain diameter. This will vary in size depending on age and ability. You may give a young pitcher 6 inches on all sides and a high school pitcher 1 inch.

The pitcher will throw the pitch. If the catcher can catch the pitch within the imaginary circle he has set up, the pitch is a strike. If not the pitch is a ball.

Scoring: A walk is a -1 and a strikeout is +1. Catcher and pitcher keep a running total. Record the + or - score at the end of the game.

The catcher should also watch for the pitcher aiming the ball. The easiest way to determine this is be aware of the speed of the pitch. As the pitcher finishes his warm-up the catcher is aware of the speed of the fastball. If during the game the catcher notices a fastball coming in slower and thinks the pitcher is aiming it vs. being tired, he will call it a ball whether it was within the circle or not. In this case the catcher should stand up and tell the pitcher that he is aiming the ball. Discussion and disagreement are normal, but just as with an umpire, the call stands. This will give the catcher a chance to develop some leadership and communication skills and the pitcher some feedback.

The catcher should gauge whether the game is too easy or difficult and adjust the diameter if necessary.

You may want to have a parent or another pitcher counting pitches and put a limit for the game. The one thing you don't want to have happen is a tired pitcher trying to throw the ball too hard in order to keep the catcher from calling a ball based on aiming.

Drill: Pick-up

Purpose:
This is a good conditioning drill that is primarily used for pitchers, but can be used early in the season to help condition all players.
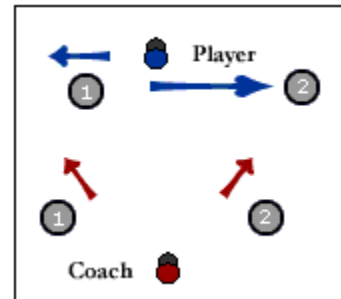
Equipment:
2 - 4 baseballs

Setup:
This drill can be done with 2 players or a player and coach. You need a minimum of 2 balls, but I usually grab a couple extra. Player should stand between 10 and 15 feet away from the coach depending on age.
Player will have no glove. Coach will have 2 balls ready and any extras within reach.

Execution:
Player will get into a fielding position. Coach will start the drill by rolling 1 ball at an angle to the player (Number 1). The player will shuffle to the ball and field it with his bare hands. He will immediately stop and start shuffling in the other direction as he rolls the ball back to the coach. Coach will roll the next ball at an angle to the other side (Number 2). Continue going back and forth for about a minute.

Players should be warmed up before doing this drill. It is tiring and should be used as a conditioning drill towards the end of practice and not as a warm up drill.

Drill: Pitching - Bunt Defense

Purpose:
Give pitchers practice at fielding bunts and making plays both at 3rd and 1st.
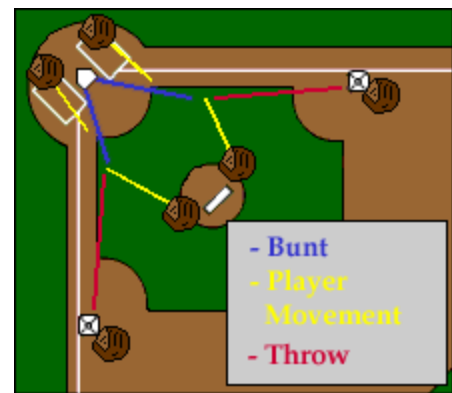
Equipment:
Baseballs

Setup:
You can run this drill with 1 or 2 pitchers at a time. If using 2 pitchers have a pitcher stand on each side of the mound and have 2 catchers on each side of home plate.

Execution:
Each pitcher will go through the pitching motion and throw a pitch to the catcher. The coach will roll out a ball down the third base or first base line. If down the third base line the pitcher will field it and make the pivot and throw to third. If down the first base line the pitcher will make the throw to first.

- Bunt
- Player Movement
- Throw

Have one pitcher throw and then the other to keep the drill running continuously.

You can also roll some just in front of the plate to have the catchers work on the same drill.

Drill: Pitching Accuracy - 40 pitches

Purpose:
Improve a pitchers ability to focus on accuracy and throw strikes.

Equipment:
Catcher in full gear; baseball.

Setup:
Use a rubber home base and a catcher. Put 4 cones down with the first cone being 1/2 way between home plate and the distance to the mound. Place the second cone 3/4 of the way, the third cone would be the distance to the mound and the final cone would be another 1/4 distance beyond the mound.

Execution:
After a proper warm-up the pitcher will start at the first cone (1/2 distance) and throw 10 pitches to the catcher at 3/4 speed. The catcher will count balls and number of pitches. If the pitcher makes it to 10 pitches from a distance before throwing 4 balls, he can move back to the next distance after completing the tenth pitch. If he throws 4 or more balls at the distance, he must stay at that distance for the next 10 pitches. The goal is to successfully complete all distances throwing 3 balls or less at each distance.

Coaching Note:
Since a pitcher is pitching at different distances and not off a mound, don't use this drill to help them work on mechanics. This drill should be used to help them work on concentration and focus. Many pitchers who have good mechanics, simply have a tough time concentrating for an entire inning when they're on the mound. This drill can help them develop that concentration. As you'll see in the modifications below, you should adjust this drill for the skill level of the player. You want to make sure they can be successful enough that they are encouraged to keep improving. If a player doesn't have the skill to make it past the first level, they will most likely be frustrated with their failure and will be too frustrated to work on improving their focus which is the point of the drill.

Modifications:
For younger players have a parent call balls and strikes and keep track of number of pitches. You may also change it so they only have to throw half of the pitches for strikes to move back to the next distance.

As they improve you can then change the requirements to make it more difficult.

This is a great drill to track during the season. Challenge the kids to see if they can make it through all the levels and then make it more difficult.

Drill: First Base Pickoffs

Purpose:
Allow pitchers to work on pickoff moves to first and runners to work on reading the pitchers moves and getting a good jump.

Equipment:
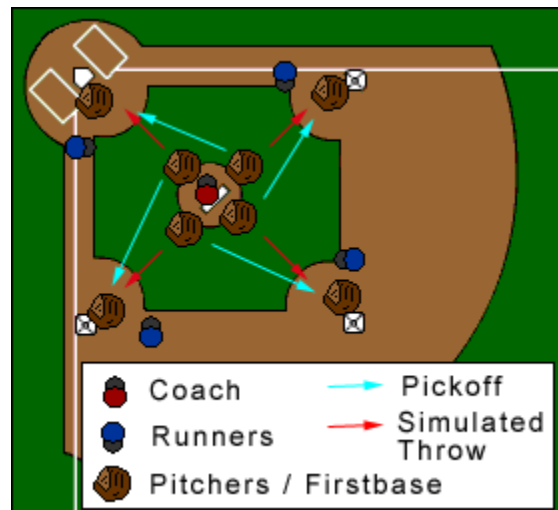Four baseballs, helmets for base runners.

Setup:
Have four pitchers on the mound, each facing a base. Have a player acting as a first baseman at every base and a runner leading off each base. Each pitcher has a different home plate and first base.

Execution:
Coach stays on the mound in the middle of all the pitchers. He will tell the pitchers to either pickoff the runner or simulate a throw home.

Runners will always be trying to steal the base and get a good jump.

Older players can make the throw home, but the simulated throw home for younger players prevents two balls being thrown to the same base.

Drill: Coil (Hitting Series - Part 1)

Purpose:
Helps players develop a routine for getting into the box, getting into their stance and coiling. Also develops the timing used when coiling.

Equipment:
Bat and helmet.

Setup:
This drill can be done as a group with no bats or a batting practice station.

Execution:
Each player will get the proper grip on the bat and step into an imaginary batters box (use a glove to simulate a plate).

Each player will take their stance and get ready for the pitch.

Coach will simulate a windup and deliver an imaginary pitch. The hitter will work on his coil and freeze when he has completed it.

Things to watch for:
- Proper grip.
- Does the player look comfortable and relaxed.
- Is the weight shift enough or too much. Example: Hitter should not be rolling the weight onto the outside of the back foot (too much).
- Are the hands in the proper position.
- Can the hitter still see well. Sometimes players will turn in their lead shoulder and hip too much, which will cause the head to turn also. When the player freezes, check to see that you can see both eyes.

Have the player repeat the drill, stepping out of the box and getting the sign from the third base coach each time.

Drill: Stride (Hitting Series - Part 2)

Purpose:
Helps players isolate the stride and understand the important parts of the stride.

Equipment:
Bat and helmet.

Setup:
This drill can be done as a group with no bats or a batting practice station.

Execution:
Each player will get into his stance

The coach will simulate a windup and deliver an imaginary pitch.

The player will then coil, stride, and then freeze.

Things to watch for:
- Is most of the weight still back. Make sure they are not lunging.
- Are the hands still back.
- Have the hands dropped.
- Is the body still in the same basic alignment. Sometimes players will bend their knees or bend over during the stride.
- Is the head still at the same height.

Drill: Hip Rotation (Hitting Series - Part 3)

Purpose:
Develops the proper hip rotation of the swing and good balance.

Equipment:
Bat and helmet.

Setup:
This drill can be done as a group with no bats or a batting practice station.

Execution:
The hitter places the bat behind his back, holding it with both arms between his forearm and bicep. The barrel of the bat should be facing the catcher.

Have the player take his normal stance with the bat behind his back.

The coach will simulate a windup and deliver an imaginary pitch. The coach will yell inside or outside as he delivers the pitch.

The hitter will take his normal coil, stride, and then rotate his hips open. The hitter will rotate his hips open farther on an inside pitch than an outside pitch. Have the player focus on having the back hip driving the rotation. The key here is rotation, as many players mistake rotation for driving forward toward the pitcher. There is a transfer of weight, but the back foot should still be firmly contacting the ground in the "squashed bug position".

Things to look for:
- Hips rotate farther on an inside pitch.
- Hips should rotate on a level plane. Player should not be leaning forward over the plate or back away from the plate. If so, they are not balanced.
- Back foot must pivot in order to have good hip rotation.
- Player should land on a stiff front leg. Often a player will unnaturally bend his front knee in order to keep his balance.
- Front shoulder opens up first. This can be difficult to see, but when watching a player see if the first movement of the hip rotation is the front shoulder starting to pull open. If this is the case, the player is using his front side to pull his back side open instead of his backside driving the front side open.
- Head level should stay consistent through entire drill.

Drill: Simulated Swing (Hitting Series - Part 4)

Purpose:
Helps players isolate the important parts of the swing.

Equipment:
Bat and helmet.

Setup:
If this drill is done as a group drill, make sure all players have plenty of space and are wearing helmets. For younger players you may want to not use a bat as a group drill and then have them use a bat as part of a batting practice station.

Execution:
Each player will get into his stance

The coach will simulate a windup and deliver an imaginary pitch. The coach will yell inside or outside as he delivers the pitch.

The player will coil, stride, and then swing at an imaginary pitch.

Things to watch for:
- All items from hitting series 1-3.
- Are the shoulders rotating on a level plane.
- Are the hands leading the bat.
- Is the swing level.

Have the player repeat the drill, stepping out of the box and getting the sign from the third base coach each time.

Drill: Plate Discipline - Tee Drill

Purpose:
To help players learn their hitting zones for different counts. This is an introductory drill to learning plate discipline that can be used to get the player thinking about pitch location and get a rough idea of what pitches they like.

For this drill to be useful you'll have had to discuss the concept of plate discipline and adjusting to different counts. If not, do not use this drill. Information on developing plate discipline and a game time approach.

Equipment:
Bat, Batting helmet, Batting tee, Baseballs, Throw down home plate.

Setup:
Have a throw down home plate with a batting tee on top of it in an area where you can have a player hit into a fence or other backstop. Have a coach or parent available to help with moving tee and placing balls.

Execution:
This drill can be used as a batting practice station over a course of any 3 practices or you could have 3 stations set up at a single practice if you have the equipment available. See hitting approach instruction for more information.

Practice 1
Player moves and adjusts the tee to the pitch they like the best and can handle. This is the pitch they would like to hit on a 3-0 count. Have them take a few swings. Now at the same height have them move the tee towards them not going beyond a spot that they still like and is not too far inside the plate. Have them take a few swings and confirm that this is still a pitch they like and can handle. If not move the tee until they have a pitch they like. Then move the tee back to the original spot. Take a couple of swings, now move the tee outside a few inches to find the outside part of the zone for the pitches they really like.
Once you have determined the width, then do the same for the height.
After this station, the player should have a rectangle of a zero strike hitting zone.

Coaching Tip: I find it beneficial to print out a hitting zone chart for each player and have it filled in by a parent or coach at this station. Not only can it be referenced and refined by the player and coach at later times, it can also help a coach determine weaknesses that need to be worked on for that player.

Practice 2
Once the 0 strike hitting zone has been defined, then work on establishing a 1 strike hitting zone, which for most players will be the strike zone. Move the tee location and height to be outside the 0 strike hitting zone, but within the strike zone and have the player take a few cuts at each of these locations.

Practice 3
Now complete this series by having the player work on hitting pitches that they may not be strikes, but are too close to take with 2 strike count. Emphasize taking a short quick swing and putting the bat on the ball.
This drill can also help players evaluate their plate coverage and determine the proper distance from the plate.

Drill: Plate Discipline - Batting Practice or Scrimmage

Purpose:
To help players learn their hitting zone for different counts. This is a drill to learning plate discipline that can be used to get the player thinking about pitch location and get a rough idea of what pitches they like.

For this drill to be useful you'll have had to discuss the concept of plate discipline and adjusting to different counts. If not, do not use this drill. Information on developing plate discipline and a game time approach.

Equipment:
Bat, Batting helmet, Baseballs

Setup:
This is a variation to your normal main station batting practice and works well in a cage as well. It can also be used for a scrimmage situation.

Execution:
Batting Practice
When a new hitters steps into the box, he starts with a zero strike count. I don't track balls in this drill as the goal is to have them adjust to the number of strikes they have in the count (for older teams this might need to be incorporated as a 1-1 count might be different for a hitter than a 3-1 count. The player should put the barrel of his bat in the middle of the zone where he likes the ball the most. That gives the coach an idea of where the ball should be in order for the player to swing with zero strikes. Again if you haven't worked with them on shrinking the zone with zero strikes, then this drill doesn't make any sense in less you just want them to adjust to a bigger zone when they have two strikes.

For batting practice: Throw the first pitch, if the pitch is not in the zero strike zone and the player swings, the player loses a swing in addition to the one just taken. If the pitch is a strike whether in the zone or not, then the count goes to one strike.

At one strike, ask them what their zone is. For most players this should be the standard strike zone. Throw another pitch and again make sure that they are swinging at strikes and laying off balls. Same penalty if they swing at a bad pitch.

Finally go to two strikes and have them work on protecting. I don't penalize the hitter if he swings and misses at a pitch he should be swinging at, but if he swings and misses at a pitch way out of the zone, then just like the other counts, he loses a pitch.

Example - Batting practice where each player gets 5 swings.
Hitter 1
Pitch 1: 0 strikes, pitch is high, batter swings. Loses one swing.
Pitch 3: 1 strike, pitch is in strike zone. Player takes the pitch (good pitch). Loses one swing in addition to this one (if it's close to being a ball I wouldn't have them lose a pitch)

Pitch 5: 2 strikes, pitch is way outside, player doesn't swing. Next pitch is in the strike zone, player swings and runs it out.

Hitter 1 only got 3 swings of the bat instead of 5.

Hitter 2
Pitch 1: 0 strikes, pitch is a strike but not in the zone, batter doesn't swing. Add one pitch to the hitter. I don't give extra swings for balls as I'm just not that accurate all the time. Switch to 1 strike and throw another pitch.
Pitch 2: 1 strike, pitch is in strike zone. Player hits the ball.
Pitch 3: 1 strike, pitch is in strike zone. Player hits the ball.
Pitch 4: 1 strike, pitch is in strike zone. Player hits the ball.
Pitch 5: 2 strikes, pitch is in strike zone. Player hits the ball.
Pitch 6: 2 strikes, bonus pitch. Player hits it and runs it out.

Hitter 2 gets 6 swings because he was a disciplined hitter.

Coaching Tip:

Teaching plate discipline can be difficult to do. I see many coaches who want kids up there swinging as if swinging is the goal. Swinging isn't the goal, getting on base is the goal whether by getting a hit or walking. At the same time we want kids to be aggressive and not let good pitches go by. This drill attempts to promote swinging at good pitches and not swinging at bad pitches. It makes the players think about the strike count during batting practice and to think about their approach. Feel free to modify how you use this drill. Maybe you want two pitches thrown for each count, or to do it in some other fashion. As long as the kids understand the rules and the rewards (extra swings) and punishments (fewer swings), then you'll find that this is a good drill to get kids swinging at good pitches.

Scrimmage
For a scrimmage you'll keep an accurate count, but there are still rewards and penalties. With zero strikes, if a player swings at a bad pitch and doesn't put it in play, then he goes right to two strikes. With one strike, a swing at a bad pitch results in being out. Again, make sure you give a little grey area as you do want players being aggressive if the ball is in the strike zone. You really just want to punish the swings at poor pitches.