

The 20-Minute Challenge

Sharpen your stick skills with this winning wall-ball routine

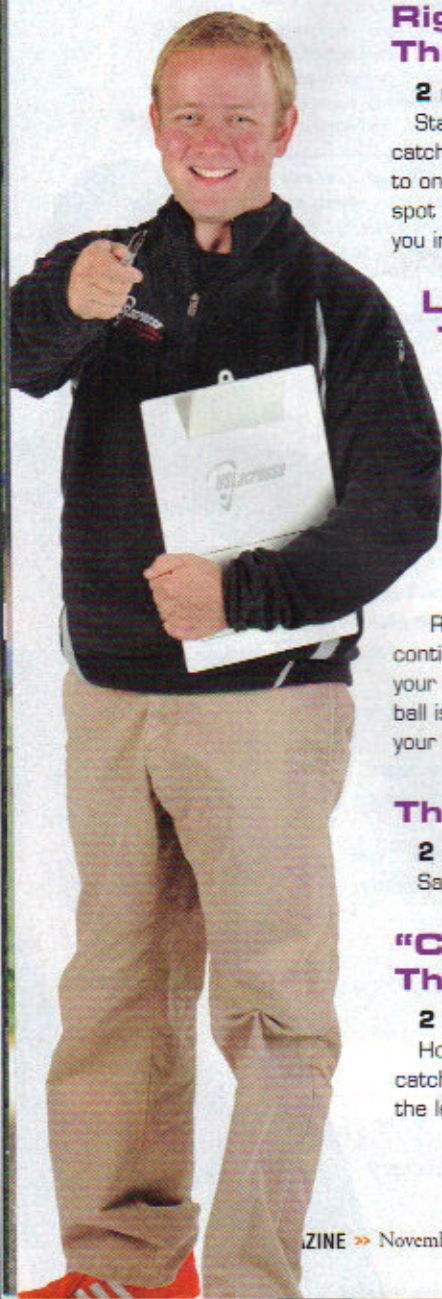
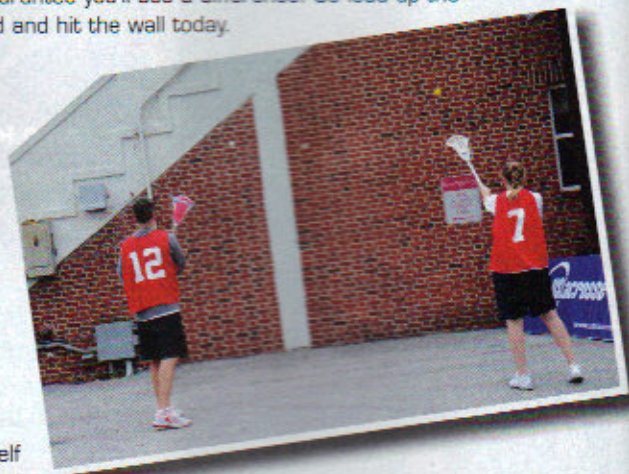
In his best-selling book "Outliers," author Malcolm Gladwell hypothesizes that it takes 10,000 hours of practice to truly master a skill.

That means it would take someone more than a year practicing 24 hours a day to master stick skills. But here's the catch (pun intended): Stick skills are the basis of everything needed to be successful in lacrosse. It doesn't matter if you are the fastest or strongest player if you can't catch and throw. Stick skills are the great equalizer.

Solution: Twenty minutes a day of just you, your stick, a ball and the wall. These wall-ball routines apply for players in all positions and both genders. Doing the math on this one

will get you 40 hours of practice between now and the start of the season in March.

It's a long way off from Gladwell's position on practice, but I guarantee you'll see a difference. So load up the iPod and hit the wall today.



Right Overhand Throw and Catch

2 minutes, 30 seconds

Standing 8-10 feet from wall, throw and catch using overhand technique. Limit yourself to one cradle between exchanges. Focus on a spot on the wall that will return the ball back to you in "the box" near your head.

Left Overhand Throw and Catch

2 minutes, 30 seconds

Same as above, only this time with your left hand.

Throw Right, Catch Left

2 minutes, 30 seconds

Remain at 8-10 feet from the wall and continue using overhand technique. Throw with your right hand and switch to your left when the ball is in the air. Catch the ball, switch back to your right (think split dodge) and repeat.

Throw Left, Catch Right

2 minutes, 30 seconds

Same as above, reversed.

"Canadian" Left Throw and Catch

2 minutes, 30 seconds

Hold the stick as you would if throwing and catching right-handed, but position your stick on the left side of your body.

"Canadian" Right Throw and Catch

2 minutes, 30 seconds

Hold the stick as you would if throwing and catching left-handed, but position your stick on the right side of your body.

Behind the Back

2 minutes, 30 seconds

[Yes, I said it.] For 1 minute, 15 seconds with each hand, throw the ball behind your back and catch it as you normally would "in the box."

Run the Wall

2 minutes, 30 seconds

If the wall is long enough, run along it for 10-12 yards while throwing against it and catching the rebound. When you reach the end of the wall, turn around and repeat using your opposite hand.

— TJ Buchanan

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