

# Baseball Positive Coaching Seminar 2011

## Part I - Mechanics

Pitching

Playing Catch

- Receiving a Throw
- Throwing Mechanics
- Throwing Footwork
- Throwing – Supplemental

Short Overhand Throw (Majors)

Underhand Toss

Receiving a Throw at a Base

Batting

Base Running

## Part II – Practice Structure and Content Sequencing

Tips for Greater Efficiency

Standard Practice Structure

Pre Practice Routine

Skill Building Warm up

Stretching Routine

Playing Catch Practice

Daily Drills – INF

Fielding - Ground Balls

Daily Drills - OF

Fielding – Fly Balls

Team Defense

Team Ground Balls

Throwing Across Rotation

Double Plays Rotation

Mass Ground Balls

Infield – Three Groups Routine

Situational Scrimmage - with coach hitting balls

Batting Practice

- Structure
- Batting – “Live 5”
- Base Running

Situational Scrimmage - with players batting

## APPENDIX

Skill Building Warm- up Menu of Activities

Stretching Routine

Building a Practice – Menu of Activities

Sequencing List

Scrimmage: Teaching and Reinforcement Progression

Rain/Wet Day Practice and when no diamond is available – Menu of Activities

Pre-Game Practice

Between Innings Practice

Teaching Phrases

Drills

Practice Progression: Days 1-12

Batting – Teaching the Swing Step by Step

Batting Drill Sheet

Pitching Drill Sheet

## Part I, 2 hours - Positional Mechanics

### Pitching

--- All participate ---

see Pitching Drills and Exercises in Appendix

### Rocking Routine – three to four pitches each

- “Turn and Pull”
- Legs
- Glove Elbow
- “Pull and Snap”

### Playing Catch

#### Receiving a Throw

- 1) “Ready position”
- 2) “Move feet to catch”
- 3) “Reach forward to catch” / “Glove between your eyes and the ball”
  
- 4) “Stick the catch” (later)

#### Throwing Mechanics

- 1) “Power Position” – foundation of throwing
- 2) “Turn & Pull” (Power)
- 3) “Snap” (Acceleration)
  - “Head still and centered” (Steering Wheel)
  - “Momentum in straight line”

SNAP – kids MUST be taught to allow their momentum to continue forward in a straight line after they throw  
HEAD – controlling the head in all actions is a major factor in achieving success – constant reinforcement

- 4) Step to Throw - Orchestra Conductor
- 5) “Step, Turn & Pull” --- shorten this to “Turn & Pull” and “Pull & Snap”

**NOTE:** the above evolves into “Pitching Practice”, which is the first part of Playing Catch Practice

#### Rocking Routine

#### Throwing Footwork

“Throw the Ball with Your Feet”

- 1) Shuffle – “Follow your Head”
- 2) Shuffle, Pull, Snap, Momentum – “Momentum in a straight line following throw”

#### Throwing Mechanics - Supplemental

- 1) Grip – Four Seam Grip
- 2) Palms Away
- 3) Wrist Snap

#### Short Over Hand Throw

(Majors Only...generally speaking)

- an important skill for coaches to master for throwing BP
- $\frac{3}{4}$  arm angle/slot

### Underhand Toss

- 1) "Feet throw the ball"
- 2) Run with ball at the hip
- 3) No arm swing – back or up
- 4) "Extend arm level towards the target" / "Palm up --- Gimme Five"
- 5) "Momentum continues after the Toss"

### Receiving a Throw at a Base

**NOTE:** This is a critical, and challenging, skill to train

- 1) "Ready Position"
- 2) Feet NOT touching base
- 3) Force - footwork:
  - Throwing hand foot at center of base (not on top)
  - "See ball before committing feet"
- 4) Tag - footwork:
  - On the side of the base the ball is coming from (so the throw does not cross runner's path)
  - In front of the base; between the base and the ball
    - Not in the base line
  - NO STRETCH!!!
  - Do no straddle the base (at this level of baseball)
  - "Tag the ground in front of the base"
  - Don't look at the runner (will run to the base!)

- **"Ball first, base second"**
- **"Base is for the runner; ball is for the defense"**

- 5) Covering a Base
  - 1) Eyes on base until arrival to the base
  - 2) then, find ball
  - 3) Ready Position
    - Proper relationship of feet to the bag (runner & ball)

### Batting

--- All participate ---

see Batting Drills and Exercises in Appendix

### Base Running

#### Through First Base

- 1) Eyes on the front of the bag (don't watch the ball)
- 2) See foot touch front of the bag
- 3) Run through the bag ('high five' for younger kids)
- 4) Chop feet
- 5) Look to the right (for overthrow)

#### Touches and Turns

- 1) Approach: 6' x 10'
- 2) Lower shoulder
- 3) ***Touch far side of inside corner***
  - Push off base in a straight line for next base

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**Break**  
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## Part II, 2 hours - Practice Structure and Content Sequencing

### Tips for Greater Efficiency

- Always have a Plan in advance with Times from start to finish
- Kids do not chase missed throws (only in scrimmages....but there should be a back-up eliminating the need to chase)
- Train kids to always RUN from spot to spot (establish concrete expectations)
  
- Buckets ---“Only Dunks; No Jump Shots”
- Cones
- Whiffle Balls
- Synthetic Balls / Machine Balls
- Throw Down Bases
- Mini Infield
- Tees (for all age groups)

### Standard Practice Structure

- I. Skill Building Warm-up, Playing Catch Practice & Daily Individual Skills
- II. Team Defense
- III. Batting Practice / Scrimmage

Stations: Rotation...this is always an excellent alternative

**Pre-Practice** - Whiffle ball batting practice – do not allow kids to play catch unsupervised

**Skill Building Warm up** - see Appendix

**Stretching Routine** - see Appendix

### Playing Catch Practice

- 1) Pitchers Practice, 35'  
- Short overhand throw (Majors) Focus: Big muscles get hand/arm to Release Point (out front)
- 2) Move Feet to Throw, 60'
- 3) Relay Footwork or Catch, Tag & Throw

**Daily Drills** (Content covered in more detail during On-field program)

#### Infield

- 1) Underhand toss
- 2) Throwing on the run
- 3) Ground ball footwork
- 4) Ground balls – 20'
- 5) Ranging laterally for ground balls
- 6) Slow rollers
- 7) MIF, multiple GB routine
  - straight: short overhand throw
  - toward bag: underhand toss
  - away from bag: SS, backhand; 2B, 180

### Fielding – Ground Balls

“Catch the ball with your feet”

- 1) Quick feet to the ball
  - 2) Slow (under control) “Wide Feet to Catch”
  - 3) Quick feet (in a straight line) toward target
- Get in front of the ball when CATHCING the ground ball, not when approaching the ball
  - “Reach forward to catch” / “Glove between eyes and the ball” / line between toes

### Outfield

- 1) Ground balls, hit coach – straight, left, right
  - Quick; Slow (under control); Quick
  - ‘Box mentality’ hitting cut
- 2) Drop step routine
- 3) Fly Ball Communication – 20’
- 4) Toss Drills
  - a. Get behind it
  - b. Going back
  - c. Coming in on pop up (younger kids)
  - d. Ranging back L/R
  - e. Ranging in L/R
- 5) Fly balls off bat – consistency in location of flies, then hit to a different location

### Fielding – Fly Balls

Drop Step Routine:

- 1) Drop Step “Glove Between Eyes & the Ball” / “Power Position”
- 2) Drop & Go
- 3) Drop & Go, Get Behind it, Catch & Throw

### Team Defense (Content covered in more detail during On-field program)

- Backing up Bases – OF/P
- INF Covering Bases
- Fly Ball Communication
- Relays – Lining up, Basic Communication
- **Doubles Game**
- Daily Drills
- Team Ground Ball Drills\*
- Bermuda Triangle / Pitchers Fielding Practice (PFP)
- Rundowns (Not ‘Pickle’)
- Relays – advanced
- Rundowns – advanced
- 1st and 3rd D/O & Bunt Defense

## **\*Team Ground Ball Drills**

### Throwing Across Rotation

### Double Plays Rotation

“Double Plays” – Teaching the four primary skills for fielding:

- 1) Wide to Catch
- 2) Under hand toss
- 3) Receiving a throw at a base: Ready Position – Move Feet to Catch
- 4) Move feet to Throw

Variations:

- 1) 4-6-3
- 2) 5-4-3
- 3) ‘Ranging for Ground Balls’ can be substituted for Underhand Toss, from 1B to next spot in the rotation

### Mass Ground Balls

- Coach taking throws at first; coach taking throws at second

### Infield - Three Groups Routines

**Situational Scrimmage** - with coach hitting balls

**Batting Instruction Format** – Drills and Multiple Batters Getting Reps at the Same Time.

### **Batting Practice Structure**

- I. Batting / Base Running
- II. Defense Playing Balls off the Bat
- III. Side Station

### **Batting – “Live 5”**

- 1) “See Ball, Turn Back”
- 2) “Let the ball get to your feet”
- 3) “Turn (and swing) Full Speed”
- 4) “Head in place”
- 5) “BALANCE”

## Base Running

### Height/Angle of Pitch

- Runner anticipate how the ball will likely be hit
  - Low pitches: more likely to be ground balls
  - High pitches: possible line drive; or fly ball

### Fly Balls

- 'Half Way' distance determined by destination of fly ball (LF, CF, RF)

## Scrimmage

Make every effort to scrimmage at the end of each practice. "Kids don't sign up to practice baseball, they sign up to PLAY baseball." A scrimmage can be a powerful teaching tool.

The coach provides pitches for the scrimmage\* Great pitches to hit are served up by the coach with the goal that most every pitch is put into the play creating a fast moving environment, no standing around and many defensive and base running situations created in a short period of time.

\*Periodically, beginning in late March or early April, you may choose to have kids pitch to each other in order to get exposure to pitching and batting in a game situation. When having kids pitch to each other make it a 'Situational Scrimmage' with base runners (so more kids are involved and more defensive situations are created); also consider limiting each pitcher to throwing to 3-4 batters. **Keep in mind that in a format with kids pitching to each other the pace of practice slows down considerably costing opportunities for reps skill development.** Consider starting each batter with a 1-1 count, which speeds up the pace.

**Situational Scrimmage** - with players batting

----- Conclusion -----

# APPENDIX

## Skill Building Warm-up: Menu of Activities

### Playing Catch Skills

UH Toss (a Major League Skill)  
Throwing on Run (8 or 9 and up)

### Receiving Throws

Move feet to Catch

### Throwing Footwork

Shuffle  
Shuffle, Pull, Snap, Momentum

### Batting Skills

Twist  
Turn back, Turn Fast  
Hand Clap

### Fielding Skills

Drop Step Routine  
Ground Ball Footwork Routine  
Ground Balls - 20'

### Base Running - Through First

### Base Running - Touches and Turns

Three groups:

- 1) Home to Second (stay at second)
- 2) First to Third (then rotate to home plate)
- 3) Second to Home (then rotate to first)

### Base Running - T-ball & Coach/Machine Pitch Players

- 1) Run completely around bases
- 2) Relay Races

## Stretching Routine - against fence

- Hamstrings: Squat-Stand: Feet Together, legs straight, hold toes; hold for 10, squat/stand 1-4, hold for 10
- Shoulders, both: facing the fence, feet a foot or two from fence, arms straight up: lean fwd, turn head down

Next: do all following on one side of the body, then repeat for other side:

- Back/Lat
- Peck
- Shoulder - across
- Shoulder – thumb up
- Shoulder/bicep – thumb down
- Forearm – palm to fence, fingers up
- Tricep – elbow up, palm to fence, fingers down
- Quad
- Groin
- Calf

...younger kids modify by eliminating smaller muscles and repeated shoulder stretches

Other Warm-up / Conditioning Exercises:

- Squats
- Squat Jumps



## **Sequencing List** - Introducing Practice Content – March and Beyond

**NOTE:** Batting, Pitching, Playing Catch Practice, Batting Practice and 'Scrimmage Teaching Content' are on-going

**NOTE 2:** Bold listings are major concepts, non-bold listings are less complex training points

### **Backing up Bases: Outfielders and Pitcher**

#### **Playing Catch:**

- Receiving a Throw
- Throwing Mechanics
- Throwing Footwork
  
- Underhand Toss
- Throwing on the Run

### **Receiving Throws at a Base Footwork**

### **Infield Covering Bases**

### **Catcher's 'Position' & Responsibilities**

#### **Full Team Backing-up and Base Coverage:**

- EACH player MOVES the moment the ball is put into play; EVERY play
- **NOTE:** pitcher backs up first base on ground balls to the second baseman (look out for the runner)

#### **Base Running:**

- Through first base
- Touches and turns

### **Fly Ball Communication**

### **Relays – Phase I (Lining up and basic communication)**

### **Ground Ball Footwork – Infielders**

### **Daily Drills – INF**

#### **Outfield:**

- Fielding ground balls
- Fielding Fly Balls

### **Daily Drills – OF**

### **Bermuda Triangle / Pitchers Fielding Practice (PFP)**

### **Playing Catch - Throwing Mechanics – supplemental**

### **Fielding and Throwing Across to First**

### **"Double Plays"**

#### **Rundowns – Phase I (NOT Pickle)**

- 1) Force runner to 'look away' (run after him/her)
- 2) Get to the side of the runner w/elbow at shoulder height
- 3) Receiving player 5'-10' in front of the base and on same side as player w/ball

## **Infield Ground Ball Drills Series (three groups)**

### **“Mass Ground Balls”**

#### **Live Ground Balls from Coach**

#### **Live Fly Balls from Coach**

#### **Sliding**

- 1) Figure Four
- 2) Roller Coaster (throw hands up, lean back)
- 3) Train on wet grass (ideally a hot sunny day with watered down grass)

Fine Tune Pitchers

Fine Tune Catchers

#### **Rundowns Phase II (down and back) / Rundown Rotation Drill**

#### **Base Running**

- Height/Angle of Pitch: Runner anticipate how the ball will likely be hit
- Fly Balls: ‘Half Way’ distance determined by destination of fly ball (LF, CF, RF)

**Relays Phase II** – add cut, redirecting the ball / incorporate “left”, “right”, “good”

**Relays Phase III** – multiple cut options

**Relays Phase IV** – Ball to the fence / ball past the outfielder

#### **1st & 3rd Defense / Offense**

#### **Bunt Defense**

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Additional Content:

- Starting Pitcher Routine
- Tubing Routine
- Bunting (this can be taught in 1-2 days)
- Backhands for Infielders
- Playing Catch - Short Overhand Throw
- Wild pitch / passed ball communication & back ups
- P & C coordination & Communication
- Include 1B & 3B backing up

## **Scrimmage: Teaching and Reinforcement Progression**

(Sandlot: 20' Pitch / Soft Toss / Front Toss)

### **Batting – “Live 5”**

- See Ball, Turn Back”
- “Let the ball come to your feet”
- “Turn (and swing) Full Speed”
- “Head in place”
- “BALANCE”

**Infield Positioning:** Corners 10' off line; MIF 20' from second base

**Ready Position** prior to every pitch

**Catcher:** outs and base runners prior to each batter

### **Backing up bases: OF/P**

- “Two players in position to receive each throw”
- Straight Line: Ball – Base – Outfielder
- If not sure where to back up run in to edge of infield dirt
- RF = Hustle
- LF/RF also back up second base at times
- Anticipate next throw
- Pitcher backs up first on ground balls to the second baseman (look out for the runner)

### **INF Positioning Responsibilities**

- 1 + 3 = 4
- P toward corner base on the side of the INF a ground ball is hit
- C in FRONT of home plate (Catcher’s Position)

**All nine position players MOVE the moment the ball is put into play**

**“Look for other runners” (next play), immediately after a play is made at a base**

**“Get the ball to the middle of the infield”**

**“Don’t hold the ball while standing in one place” – especially OF’s**  
(Throw the ball OR start running toward the middle of the infield)

**Refer to Sequencing List** – Beginning at “Base Running”

- Before we can correct in a scrimmage we must have taught the concept in drills/practice
- Scrimmages early in the year will be somewhat chaotic. Each day as more content is taught, we can have greater expectations in scrimmages and do more teaching

**GIVE POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT to KIDS FOLLOWING EACH PLAY**

**Make corrections in a TEACHING tone, NOT a scolding tone**

**“TIME”**

- Strand ahead of lead runner
- 1st & 3<sup>rd</sup> – positioning ahead of runner at first base

## **Rain/Wet Day Practice and When no Diamond is Available – Menu of Activities**

**NOTE:** Avoid cancelling practices unless there are extreme circumstances. Scout out your neighborhood to identify covered areas; this includes 10' wide covered walkways at buildings such as schools, etc. A productive practice can be run using a covered walkway. Make it clear to parents that you have a rain day plan and that you have no plans of cancelling practices

- See: Skill Building Warm-up List
- Catcher's Stance and Receiving & Drills
- Pitcher's Drills, Rocking Routine and Pitching Practice
- Base Running
- Backing up Bases / Infield Base Coverage (1 + 3 = 4) including P/C / Full Team (all 9 positions) Movement Responsibilities
- Playing Catch Practice
- Throwing Mechanics Drills
- Receiving Throws at a Base
- Fielding Ground Balls Footwork
- Daily Drills
- Fly Ball Communication
- Relays
- Bermuda Triangle
- Fielding and Throwing Across Rotation / "Double Plays" Rotation
- Team Ground Ball Drills – groups of three
- Batting Mechanics Drills
- Whiffle Ball BP
- Whiffle Ball Scrimmage

## **Pre-Game Practice**

Plan now! Tell your parents and kids, that you will hold a (minimum) Practice for 45 min prior to each game; 60 minutes is ideal. Skills tend to deteriorate during the season b/c of a loss of practice time. Below is an outline of a 60 minute Pre-Game practice. Any of the activities in the above list can be used to design a Pre-Game Practice.

<b>Early Arrivals – 0:10</b>	Whiffle Ball Batting Practice
<b>0:10 - 0:20</b>	Skill Building Warm up
<b>0:20 – 0:30</b>	Playing Catch Practice
<b>0:30 – 0:40</b>	Daily Drills (consider hitting ground balls and fly balls live off the bat)
<b>0:40 – 0:50</b>	Team Defense / Mini Infield Activity
<b>0:50 – Game Time</b>	Starting Pitcher: Rocking Routine and 10-12 full distance pitches Get players hydrated and organized in the dugout.

## **Between Innings Practice**

Plan to, and prep your players, run skills drills between innings of a game. The tradition to just play catch between innings began a century ago by adult players who had developed skills. Young kids can greatly benefit from making better use of this time. If each player (including your subs) can get three skill building reps per inning x 6 innings x 15 games = 270 extra reps to develop skills during the year.

This idea evolved from Ed Chef Head Coach of 10 time NAIA National Champion Lewis and Clark State (ID). Coach Chef would have his infielders practice turning double plays between innings. He recognized how much skill development his club could gain by utilizing this valuable time between each inning over the course of a season.

Get your coaching staff outside the dugout and have a group of kids on the infield dirt on your side of the infield working on infield skills and another group along the outfield foul line working on outfield skills. Also look for a space for a third group to get some live swings hitting pitched whiffle balls

### **Examples of quick drills to run between innings:**

- Ranging Laterally for Ground Balls
- Ground balls 20'
- OF fielding ground balls and hitting cut person (coach)
- Toss Drills – any of the wide variety of fly balls
- Receiving a throw at a base footwork
- Catch Tag & Throw using a Mini Field and Underhand Toss
- Fly Ball Communication
- Relays – Phase I
- Rundowns – Phase I
- Catcher: receiving Pitches, blocking pitchers, etc.
- Fielding bunts footwork
- Etc.

## Teaching Phrases

Skill	Teaching Phrases, Alphabetical	Teaching Phrases, Sequential
<b>1a) Batting</b> - Primary	Balance Centered Full Speed / No careful swings Head in Place Head in Place, Feet in Place Let the ball get to your feet See ball, turn back / See ball, load Turn back, turn fast / Load and turn	Turn back, turn fast / Load and turn Head in Place Full Speed / No careful swings Centered Head in Place, Feet in Place Balance Let the ball get to your feet See ball, turn back / See ball, load
<i>1b) Batting</i> - Supplemental	Half way, all the way (hands) Legs power the swing Lower half rotation has an end point Muscles like rubber bands	Legs power the swing Lower half rotation has an end point Half way, all the way (hands) Muscles work like rubber bands
<b>2a) Fielding, Infield</b> - Primary	Catch the ball with your feet (slow and) Control when fielding a ground ball Gain ground / Shuffle to throw Look the ball into your glove Ready Position Shuffle to throw / Gain ground (Feet) Wide to catch	Ready Position Catch the ball with your feet (Feet) Wide to catch (slow and) Control when fielding a ground ball Look the ball into your glove Gain ground / Shuffle to throw Shuffle to throw / Gain ground
<i>2b) Fielding, Infield</i> - Supplemental	1-2 catch, 1-2 throw Accelerate to throw Glove between eyes and the ball Reach forward to catch	Reach forward to catch Glove between eyes and the ball 1-2 catch, 1-2 throw Accelerate to throw
<b>3a) Fielding, Outfield</b> - Primary	(slow and) Control when fielding a ground ball Drop step Feet keep moving Get Behind It Glove between eyes and the ball Look the ball into your glove Ready position Run full speed	Ready position Run full speed Glove between eyes and the ball Look the ball into your glove Feet keep moving Drop step Get Behind It (slow and) Control when fielding a ground ball
<i>3b) Fielding, Outfield</i> - Supplemental	Always moving (backing up bases) 'Box mentality' (hitting cut) Throw the ball or run toward middle of infield	Always moving (backing up bases) Throw the ball or run toward middle of infield 'Box mentality' (hitting cut)

<p><b>4a) Pitching</b> - Primary</p>	<p>Glove elbow up (to shoulder height) Head still and centered (Steering Wheel) Momentum in a straight line Out front (release point) Power Position Pull and Snap (feel) Release point Snap (down) &lt;down angle&gt; Straight line towards target Stride to power (Position) / Stride to balance Teeter-totter Turn and Pull (to release point)</p>	<p>Power Position Glove elbow up (to shoulder height) Turn and Pull (to release point) Head still and centered (Steering Wheel) Out front (release point) (feel) Release point Pull and Snap  Snap (down) &lt;down angle&gt; Teeter-totter Momentum in a straight line Straight line towards target  Stride to power (Position) / Stride to balance</p>
<p><i>4b) Pitching</i> - Supplemental</p>	<p>4-8-10 / Slow, Medium, Fast Accelerate (down from release point) Chest to Knee Control, Power, Snap (accelerate / follow through) Fingers evenly through the ball Fingers on top of the ball Four seem grip Front foot down a slide (reach at the bottom) Muscles like rubber bands Palms facing away Slow, Medium, Fast / 4-8-10 Wrist snap (straight down)</p>	<p>Four seem grip Palms facing away Fingers on top of the ball Fingers evenly through the ball Wrist snap (straight down) Control, Power, Snap (accelerate / follow through) 4-8-10 / Slow, Medium, Fast Slow, Medium, Fast / 4-8-10 Front foot down a slide (reach at the bottom) Accelerate (down from release point) Chest to Knee Muscles work like rubber bands</p>
<p><b>5a) Receiving Throws</b> - Primary</p>	<p>Catch the Ball with Your Feet Glove Between Eyes and the Ball Look the Ball into Your Glove Move Your Feet to Catch Reach forward to catch Ready Position Stick the catch</p>	<p>Ready Position Catch the Ball with Your Feet Move Your Feet to Catch Reach forward to catch Glove Between Eyes and the Ball Look the Ball into Your Glove Stick the catch</p>
<p><i>5b) Receiving Throws</i> - Supplemental</p>	<p>(always) Anticipate a less than perfect throw Elbows in front of your body (in ready position)</p>	<p>Elbows in front of your body (in ready position) (always) Anticipate a less than perfect throw</p>
<p><b>6a) Team Defense</b> - Primary</p>	<p>Ball first, base second Ball to the middle of the infield Base is for the runner, ball is for the defense Cover your base (if not playing the ball) Look for the other runners (next play) Mine / Get Out (always) Move toward the ball – SS/2B Turn glove side (pitcher and cut person) Two players in position to receive each throw</p>	<p>Two players in position to receive each throw Cover your base (if not playing the ball) (always) Move toward the ball – SS/2B Base is for the runner, ball is for the defense Ball first, base second Look for the other runners (next play) Ball to the middle of the infield Turn glove side (pitcher and cut person) Mine / Get Out</p>

<i>6b) Team Defense - Supplemental</i>		Relay communication: Hit Me / Cut 1,2,3,4 / Go, go / Eat it / Run it in
<b>7a) Throwing - Primary</b>	Follow your head Gain ground / Shuffle to throw (straight towards target) Glove elbow up (to shoulder height) Head still and centered (steering wheel) Momentum continues after you throw Momentum in a straight line (towards target) Move your feet to throw Out front (release point) Power Position Pull and Snap (feel) Release point Shuffle, pull, snap, momentum Shuffle to throw / Gain ground Straight line towards the target Throw the ball with your feet Turn and Pull (to release point)	Power Position Glove elbow up (to shoulder height) Turn and Pull (to release point) Head still and centered (steering wheel) Out front (release point) (feel) Release point Pull and Snap Momentum in a straight line (towards target)  Throw the ball with your feet Move your feet to throw Shuffle to throw / Gain ground Gain ground / Shuffle to throw (straight towards target) Straight line towards the target Follow your head Shuffle, pull, snap, momentum Momentum continues after you throw
<i>7b) Throwing - Supplemental</i>	Fingers evenly through the ball Muscles work like rubber bands Wrist snap (straight down)	Fingers evenly through the ball Wrist snap (straight down) Muscles work like rubber bands
<b>7c) Throwing - Underhand Toss</b>		1) Throw the ball with your feet 2) Run fast, throw gently 3) Extend arm, level towards the target 4) Palm up – Gimme Five 5) Follow your throw
<b>7d) Short Overhand Throw</b>		1) Bow and arrow 2) Small arm circle (elbow action: back and forward) 3) Throw your hand at the target (arm follows hand in a straight line) 4) Wrist snap 5) Legs for power, wrist for accuracy



## Drills List

NDR = No Diamond Required

MINI = Mini Infield format works with this drill

### Infield Individual

UH Toss	NDR		
UH Toss, CTT version	NDR		Diagram
Throwing on the run	NDR		
Ranging	NDR*		Diagram
Slow rollers	NDR*		
20' GB's	NDR*		
GB Footwork	NDR		Diagram
MIF – Multiple GB Routine; throws to the bag	NDR*		

### OF Individual

Drop Step Routine	NDR		
Going Back – Toss	NDR		
Get Behind It – Toss	NDR		
Toss Drills – four directions	NDR		
Coming straight in (younger kids)	NDR		
Ground Balls, Hit Coach (cut man)	NDR		Diagram
Fly Ball Communication – 20'	NDR	MINI	Diagram
Fly Balls off bat (Coach) – consistent spots is key			

### Playing Catch

Receiving a Throw – three points of focus	NDR		
Throwing Mechanics	NDR		Pitching Drill Sheet
Throwing Footwork	NDR		Diagram
Playing Catch Practice – Start of Day Routine	NDR		Diagram
Catch, Tag & throw	NDR		Diagram
Receiving a throw at a base footwork (tag or Force); coach throws	NDR		Diagrams (variations)
GB's w/First Baseman receiving a throw Footwork			Diagram (1B footwork)
FB's Going Back w/First Baseman receiving a throw Footwork	NDR	MINI	Diagrams (variations)

### Team Defense

Infield, Three Groups – Set of Drills	NDR*		Diagrams (variations)
Mass Ground Balls			Diagrams (variations)
Throwing Across – rotation			Diagrams (variations)
“Double Plays” – rotation	NDR*		Diagrams (variations)
Doubles Game - variations: start @ 1B or 2B	NDR		Diagrams (variations)
Backing up - infielders	NDR	MINI	Diagrams (variations)
Backing up – Pitchers	NDR	MINI	Diagrams (variations)
INF Covering Bases (1 + 3 = 4)	NDR	MINI	Diagrams (set of four)
OF/INF Movement Combo	NDR	MINI	Diagrams (variations)
Relays Part I Lining up	NDR	MINI	Diagrams (variations)
Relays Part II – Predetermined Cut			
- 3B	NDR	MINI	Diagrams (variations)
- Home	NDR	MINI	Diagrams (variations)
Ball to RF w/ runner on first	NDR	MINI	Diagram
9-6-5-4-2 Throwing/Communication Drill	NDR		Diagram
Relays Part III – Multi Cut Options			
- 3B	NDR	MINI	Diagrams (variations)
- Home	NDR	MINI	Diagrams (variations)
Relays – Ball past OF	NDR	MINI	Diagrams (variations)
Runners on 2nd & 3rd – Sac Fly	NDR		Diagrams (variations)
Rundowns – Three player rotation	NDR		Diagram
Rundowns Part I – runner to first	NDR		Diagram
Rundowns Part II – runner back to second	NDR		Diagram
Rundowns – three man reinforcement	NDR		Diagram
Rundowns – additional runner at third (1st & 3rd Defense)	NDR		Diagram
First & Third: Home to second and back	NDR		Diagram

General Skills Stations – Rotation	NDR	Diagrams (variations)
Base Running		
Through First	NDR	
Touches and Turns – three groups	NDR	Diagram
Fly Balls – “Half Way” distances	NDR	Diagrams (for each base)
Batting		
Mechanics	NDR	Batting Drill Sheet
Batting Practice		
Whiffle Ball Batting Practice	NDR	Diagram
Tees (etc) along foul line	NDR	Diagram
Soft Toss / Front Toss – Spots: In / Mid / Away	NDR	Diagram
Variations of Defense Positioning		Diagrams (variations)
Miscellaneous		
Run from A to B; “on a knee, eyes up, mouth closed’	NDR	Diagram

\*Thick grass that will not allow ground balls to roll freely may hamper these drills

## Practice Progression: Days 1-12

The progression below is a general guide. The age of your team, the number of practices per week you can schedule, weather, etc. will impact the pace you progress through this progression.

Learning and development continues over the course of the season. Get your team to a satisfactory level of competency before adding new content. Most leagues have all teams making the playoffs. Under this assumption, the goal is to have ongoing growth and development March 1 through early June...."It's not how you start, it's how you finish"

Teaching the kids to play catch with a purpose and with discipline is our number one goal as coaches. With these skills in place most everything else will come together for your club.

Be sure your players understand that there is a preparation plan for them that will take about 12 practices to complete. Also explain to parents the concept that there is a planned progression of teaching over the first dozen practices and the kids must attend each class. Practicing with their summer team and/or working out with a private instructor is not preparing the player to coordinate with their spring team.

In the following sequence of practice plans **new content that is being introduced is in bold**. Important Daily content such as pre-practice batting and batting instruction is bolded in each day's plan

### Day 1

10 min Introductions

10 min **OF Backing up Bases** – Drill (Skill Building Warm-up)

5 min Stretch

### **PLAYING CATCH PRACTICE**

**TEACH:** 'How to Play Catch' and the first parts of the Throwing Routine

**NOTE:** DO NOT allow kids to chase missed throws; Coaches have a supply of extra balls

5 min **Receiving a Throw** – Teach the three parts; run them through moving their feet to catch

Drill Sequence:

- "Ready Position" - IS NOT optional
- "Move feet to catch"- 5x L/R
- "Reach forward to catch" / "Glove between eyes and the ball"

15 min. **Throwing Mechanics**

Drill Sequence:

- "Power Position" explained
- Turn & Pull 5x "Head still and centered"
- Snap 3x "Momentum straight forward, after snap"
- Out front resistance (only need to do this one day)
- Stride 5x "glove elbow up to shoulder height" (orchestra conductor)

(NOTE: only need to do this Stride Exercise a couple of days)

5 min Play Catch from 35' **FOCUS:** Big muscles do the work (later: Release Point), "Head still and centered"

5 min **Throwing Footwork**

Drill Sequence:

- Shuffle
- Shuffle, pull, snap, momentum "Straight line" / "Follow Your Head"

5 min Play catch from 60' "Move feet to catch; move feet to throw"  
"Momentum continues following the throw"  
"Follow your Head"

15 min **BATTING INSTRUCTION**

**The Two Absolutes of an Effective Swing: 1) Legs power the swing 2) Head stays in place**

- 1) **Twist** ...FOCUS: head remains still and upper body relaxed, 5 seconds, 3x
  - 2) **"Turn Back, Turn Fast"** / "Load & Turn"
    - Knees back , then turn lower body fast 5x
    - Front heel up when Turning Back / Loading 5x
    - Switch heels 5x
    - Head stays in place....head focused on contact point 5x
    - Switching heels & keeping head in place 5x
  - 3) **Twist** 1x, 3 seconds
  - 4) **Turn Back Turn Fast** / Load & Turn FOCUS: Switching heels & keeping head in place --- 5x
  - 5) **"See Ball, Turn Back/Load"** 10x
- (NOTE: do this drill before EVERY live batting practice and on each Game Day)

30 min **Live Batting**

Using as many coaches as you have on hand to provide strikes:

- Bat in Groups: ideally 6 & 6
- Soft Toss or Whiffle Ball Batting Practice...location of the toss is CRITICAL
- Take two breaks to review drills and build muscle memory

## Day 2

### Pre-Practice: Whiffle Ball Batting Practice

10 min      **Backing-up Bases, OF & P** (Skill Building Warm-up)  
5 min      Stretch  
20 min      Playing Catch Practice – continue to teach, reinforce good actions; correct those not playing as instructed

**DRILLS** to train Playing Catch Skills:

- Move feet to catch exercises L/R 3x
- Turn & Pull 5x
- Play Catch from 35'
  
- Shuffle 5x
- Shuffle, Pull, Snap, Momentum 3x
- Play Catch from 60'

**NOTE:** DO NOT allow kids to chase missed throws; Coaches have a supply of extra balls

15 min      **TEACH:** Approach, Positioning and Footwork for Receiving a Throw at a Base and Making a Tag  
**DRILL:** **Receiving a Throw at a Base (and Tag) Footwork**

15 min      **TEACH:** **Infield Positioning Responsibilities (1 + 3 = 4)**  
**DRILL:** Infield Covering Bases

20 min      **Batting Instruction** and Batting Practice

30 min      **Scrimmage** – Sandlot: 20' Pitch / Front Toss / Soft Toss  
Ready Position prior to every pitch

**Batters ('LIVE 5'):**

- 1) See Ball, Turn Back
  - 2) Let the ball come to your feet
  - 3) Turn (and swing) Full Speed
  - 4) Head in place
  - 5) BALANCE (later, after this has been taught)
- OF's / P – backing up
  - INF Positioning Responsibilities: 1+3=4
    - MIF: "Always move towards the ball" / "One player cut in two"
    - Corners: "Eyes on your base, find the ball, Ready Position"

**NOTE:** Do not use a catcher on the first day (the position responsibilities have not been taught). Coach can rotate in after pitching to cover the plate, or have another coach play catcher.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** We only teach and reinforce what has been taught. Very little has been taught at this point. Let chaos reign in this first scrimmage. As crazy (and aggravating) as it looks, they will be having a blast! This is only the second day of practice. Scrimmages will become very ordered in just a couple of practices.

### Day 3

**NOTE:** The repetition during the first few days serves two purposes:

- Reps are needed to **develop muscle memory and cognitive discipline**
- **If some kids miss** they must get this foundational instruction before you/they move ahead with new content.

#### **Pre-Practice: Whiffle Ball Batting Practice**

10 min	Skill Building Warm up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Teach &amp; Drill: <b>Underhand Toss &amp; Throwing on the Run</b></li><li>- Review Throwing Mechanics &amp; Footwork Drills</li></ul>
5 min	Stretch
15 min	Playing Catch Practice
20 min	Receiving a Throw at a Base (and Tag) Footwork
20 min	<b>Batting Instruction</b> & Batting Practice
10 min	Scrimmage Prep *
25 min	Scrimmage **

**\*Review:** Ball first base second / The base is for the runner, the ball is for the defense

**Review:** The catcher's 'Position' - outs and runners before each batter

Coach pitching from a knee ~ 25' - 30' in front of the batter; with older kids you'll need a screen or use the soft toss method from the side (~45 degree angle)

**NOTE:** Scrimmages early on are for FUN and they will be somewhat chaotic in the quality of play. Scrimmages are also great teaching tools. The primary rule in teaching during scrimmages is that we only correct things that have been taught in practices. This means that we let a lot of things go early on. It is likely that the extent of the scrimmage will be each batter getting one at-bat. That is fine; they got to play; try to scrimmage each practice.

**NOTE 2:** Make every effort not to coach while the ball is in play; wait til after the play. If you do coach during a play (and there are a variety of instances where it is appropriate), avoid telling them where to throw the ball.

Don't hesitate to STOP a play that has gotten out of hand...so to get on to the next batter

\*\* Teaching points in the first scrimmage(s)

- Defense: Ready Position when the pitcher shows the ball to the batter
- Batter: "See Ball, Turn Back/Load"
- Each throw is backed up by an outfielder or the pitcher – "Two players in position to catch each throw"
- "Move feet to catch and throw"
- "The base is for the runner, the ball is for the defense" / "Ball first, base second"

## **Day 4**

### **Pre-Practice: Whiffle Ball Batting Practice**

10 min	Skill Building Warm-up: <b>Base Running - <i>Running through first base</i></b>  <b>TEACH:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• “Eyes on First Base” until you “see your foot touch the front of the base”</li><li>• “Chop Feet”</li><li>• “Look Right”</li></ul> <b>DRILL:</b> (high five, younger kids) ...use multiple bases, 3-4 kids in each group. Start from 30' (don't run the full 60'), this will save a lot of time.
5 min	UH Toss & Throwing on the Run
5 min	Stretch
10 min	Playing Catch Practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Review Drills to train Playing Catch Skills:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Move feet to catch exercises L/R 3x</li><li>• Turn &amp; Pull 5x</li><li>• Play Catch from 35'</li> <li>• Shuffle 5x</li><li>• Shuffle, Pull, Snap, Momentum 3x</li><li>• Play Catch from 60'</li></ul></li></ul> <b>NOTE:</b> DO NOT allow kids to chase missed throws; Coaches have a supply of extra balls to feed kids who miss.
10 min	Playing Catch Practice, add new component: <b>TEACH &amp; Drill: Cut/Relay Player Footwork &amp; Communication (“Hit Me”) – 70'</b>
20 min	<b>Relays - Phase I</b>
20 min	<b>Batting Instruction</b> & Batting Practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Turn Back, Turn Fast --- Introduce: Hips have an end point in their rotation</li><li>- Lower Half Turn</li><li>- Sideways Karate Chop</li></ul>
25 min	Scrimmage

## **Day 5**

### **Pre-Practice: Whiffle Ball Batting Practice**

- 5 min Skill Building Warm up – see list in appendix
- 15 min Skill Building Warm up (cont.) - **Base Running instruction**
- **Rounding bases: “Always think of advancing two bases on balls to the outfield”**
  - Straight line to a point **6’ x 10’** from first base
  - *Lower shoulder* to initiate turn toward base
  - Touch **FAR SIDE of inside corner of base**; push off in a straight line towards the next base
- 5 min Stretch
- 15 min Playing Catch Practice
- Review Drills to Train Playing Catch Skills:
    - Move feet to catch exercises L/R 3x
    - Turn & Pull 5x
    - Shuffle, Pull, Snap, Momentum 5x
  - 1) **“Pitching Practice” - 35’** Now point out to your players that the first few minutes of playing catch practice, when throwing from 35’, they are effectively training their Pitching Skills; and refer to this portion of the routine as ‘Pitching Practice’ the remainder of the season.

**FOCUS:**

    1. Stride to Power (Position)
    2. Turn and Pull (to Release Point, ‘Out Front’)
      - (Big Muscles Initiate the Action and Power the Arm)
    3. Arm snaps down (accelerates) from Release Point
      - Head Remains Still and Centered
      - Allow momentum to flow In a Straight Line Towards Target, following the throw
  - 2) Move Feet to Throw – 60’
  - 3) Cut/Relay Man Footwork – 70’
- 5 min **DRILL: Outfield fielding ground balls; Hit Coach** (from ‘Daily Drills – OF’ List)
- 15 min **Doubles Game** (Home to Second)  
Develops actions and skills:
- 1) Cut man lining up and communication
  - 2) Backing up bases
  - 3) Base Running, Touches and Turns
- 20 min **Batting Instruction & Batting Practice**
- Turn Back, Turn Fast --- Introduce: Hip/Lower Half has an end point in their rotation
  - Lower Half Turn
  - Sideways Karate Chop
- 25 min Scrimmage



## Day 6

### Pre-Practice: Whiffle Ball Batting Practice

10 min	Skill Building Warm up – see list in appendix
5 min	Stretch
10 min	Playing Catch Practice
5 min	Introduce and Teach: <b>Short Overhand Throw (Majors)</b>
10 min	Introduce and Train: <b>Catch, Tag &amp; Throw</b> (in place of Cut/Relay)
20 min	<b>Fly Ball Communication</b> (“Mine”, “Get Out”) & <b>INF Ground Ball Footwork</b> (L/R; not straight on yet): <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- additional ground ball footwork if time</li></ul>
20 min	<b>Batting Instruction</b> – Review all drills learned days 1-5 / & Batting Practice
25 min	Introduce and <b>Train the Three Station Batting Practice Format</b> (next practice we’ll really run BP) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- including <b>Base Running: Reacting to balls off the bat</b>: 1) Fly ball 2) Line drive 3) Ground ball</li></ul>

## Day 7

- Daily INF & OF Drills are introduced.
- Set aside 10-15 minutes for teaching the ‘**Rocking Routine**’ for pitchers.
- Identify your two catchers and make time to train them in stance and receiving drills. Ideally you can spend 10-15 minutes before or after practice just with these kids for a couple of days around practices days 7 & 8. Insist that they dedicate 10 minutes a day at home working on their stance and receiving pitches

### Pre-Practice: Whiffle Ball Batting Practice

10 min	Skill Building Warm up – see list in appendix
5 min	Stretch
15 min	Playing Catch Practice (continue to wrap up with Cut Man Footwork or Catch, Tag and Throw...on alternate days). <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Continue to develop short overhand throw following ‘Pitching Practice’ and prior to ‘Move Feet to Catch’</li></ul>
40 min	<b>Teach and implement Daily Drills: INF &amp; OF</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Also: basic <b>Team Ground Ball Drills</b>: Throwing Across, 6-3 rotation; “Double Plays” (6-4-3) rotation, if time</li></ul>
45 min	First attempt at running a structured Batting Practice* <b>TEACH: Base runners reacting to balls off the bat</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Height of pitch: anticipate ground ball or line drive/fly ball</li><li>- “Half Way” distance based on location of fly ball (cones can help)</li></ul>

\*Refer to ‘**Live 5**’ for focus of instruction when pitching live. (We must resist the urge to teach batting mechanics when kids are hitting live. Mechanics are taught on the side.)

## Day 8

### Pre-Practice: Whiffle Ball Batting Practice

10 min	Skill Building Warm up – see list in appendix
15 min*	Stretch & Playing Catch Practice (Alternate Cut/Relay & CTT, day to day)
30 min	Continue to Teach and implement Daily Drills: INF & OF (need two days to really cement the actions...coaches skills also) <b>Also</b> : basic Team Ground Ball Drills (need two days to really cement the actions...coaches skills also)
25 min	Batting Drills & Batting Practice (same set up as Days 2-5)
25 min	Scrimmage

**NOTE:** On days 7 & 8 the practice begins to take on the flow of a standard practice structure

**NOTE:** By days 8 and 9 the players (and coaches) should have a good feel of these routines and be able to complete them more efficiently.

## Day 9

### **Pre-Practice: Whiffle Ball Batting Practice**

10 min	Skill Building Warm up – see list in appendix
15 min	Stretch & Playing Catch Practice (Alternate Cut/Relay Footwork & CTT, day to day)
15 min	Daily Drills
25 min	<b>Rundowns – Phase I</b>
40 min	Batting Practice

**NOTE:** Practices 6-9 are intense on teaching and training groundball footwork. No balls off the bat from coaches yet. We get footwork trained very well, then progress to balls off the bat.

#### **Next:**

Starting with Day 10 and beyond our goal is to gain more efficiencies in the flow of practice and shorten the drill sessions and focus more on team play, batting practice (pitcher & catcher development), and scrimmage

## Days 10-12

Incrementally add Team Defense as a regular aspect of the flow of practice. See Sequencing List for which Team Defense content to add in each subsequent practice. Do not hesitate to review a Team Defense concept 2-3 times before moving on to a new concept.

The following is your standard practice template. You will adjust the time dedicated to each aspect based on your team's needs.

### **Pre-Practice: Whiffle Ball Batting Practice**

10 min:	Skill Building Warm up
15 min:	Stretch / Playing Catch Practice
10 min:	Daily Drills
20 min:	Team Defense
50 min:	Batting Practice / Scrimmage

### **Days 10-12:**

- Mass Ground Balls implemented
- Infield 'Groups of Three' drills implemented
- Step by Step batting instruction continues
- Three days focused on Pitching Specific – per drill sheet
- Get Catchers some focused work

**NOTE:** As more team/individual skills are introduced, more points are taught during scrimmage

You Don't Need a Diamond/Field to Practice...strive to get in two practices per week during in the season...strive to practice three days per week prior to the season. Strive to get your kids together (practice or game) four days per week throughout the season.

## Day 13 and Beyond

- Advanced Rundowns
- Advanced Relays
- Continue through 'Sequencing' list

## **Batting – Teaching the Swing Step by Step**

--- The drills below are covered in the Baseball Positive Coaching Seminar and in the Baseball Positive Batting I & Batting II Classes

- NOTE:**
- Encourage your League to keep three (3) tees at each field in lock box (solid rubber Tees = \$25/each)
  - Use of whiffle balls for Tee work will increase reps and ensure safety with multiple batters hitting at one time
  - Each team should be issued 3-5 doz whiffle (pickle) balls

**NOTE 2:** The load, stride (if a player uses one) and follow through are not part of the effort the batter puts into the actual swing,

**NOTE 3:** Every coach/staff/parent must learn, and practice, soft tossing skills. The ability to give a batter a good pitch to hit, every time is critical in giving them the opportunity to practice, execute and reproduce a mechanically sound swing, each swing. Early in the teaching process we focus on hitting pitches in the middle of the plate/strike zone. Pitches in the middle of the plate/strike zone are struck at a point even with the front foot. A good soft toss reaches the apex of its arc at the middle of the plate, belt high, and even with the front foot.

### **The swing\* has three parts**

- 1) Lower Half Rotation
- 2) Bottom Hand guides the bat in a straight line toward contact point (steering wheel)
- 3) Top Hand extends (in a straight line) through contact point

<b>FOCUS AREA / DRILLS – BATTING ACTIVITY</b>	<b>TEACHING POINTS / TEACHING OBJECTIVES</b>
<b>----- PART I -----</b>	
<b>Legs Power the Swing Head in Place is Key</b>	
<b>DRILL:</b> Twist (standing on dirt is better than grass)	<b>TEACH:</b> Upper body remains still and centered <b>OBJ:</b> Recognize Power in Lower Half <b>OBJ:</b> Focus effort on Legs <b>OBJ:</b> Eliminate shoulder/upper body movement
<b>DRILL:</b> Turn Back, Turn Fast (Hands on Hips) - Knees back, turn fast - Turn Fast w/Head in Place (looking down at contact point)	<b>TEACH:</b> Turn legs/feet/hips as fast as possible; “Full Speed” <b>TEACH:</b> Head in Place <b>OBJ:</b> Focus effort on Legs <b>OBJ:</b> Eliminate shoulder/upper body movement
<b>BAT:</b> Tee is ideal (or soft toss) - Front foot even with ball/contact point - Tee: distance of feet away equal to length of bat	<b>TEACH:</b> “Turn Back, Turn Fast” / “Head in Place” <b>FOCUS:</b> Turn Back, Turn Fast, Head in Place <b>OBJ:</b> Awareness of Power in Lower Half; Awareness of Head  <b>NOTE:</b> Teaching Phrase, “Head in Place”, rather than ‘Head Still’. The head does move slightly while tracking ball to contact point.
<b>DRILL:</b> Turn Back Turn Fast (Hands on Hips) - Allow front heel to come up as knees go back - Front Heel: Down & Back - Back Heel Turns Up	<b>TEACH:</b> Switch Heels <b>FOCUS:</b> Switch Heels <b>OBJ:</b> Awareness of Power in Lower Half
<b>BAT:</b> Tee is ideal (or soft toss)	<b>TEACH:</b> Switch Heels <b>FOCUS:</b> Switch Heels <b>OBJ:</b> Awareness of Power in Lower Half

----- PART II -----	
<b>Torso remains CENTERED throughout swing</b>	
<b>DRILL:</b> Twist – Review/Repeat	<b>FOCUS:</b> Upper body remains still and centered
<b>DRILL:</b> Turn Back Turn Fast (Hands on Hips)	<b>Review:</b> Turn Back, Turn Fast; Switch Heels Turn Back, Turn Fast; Head in Place Turn Back, Turn Fast; Full effort with legs
<b>BAT:</b> Tee is ideal (or soft toss)	<b>TEACH:</b> Turn Back, Turn Fast, Head in Place <b>FOCUS:</b> Switch Heels <b>OBJ:</b> Increase quickness of turn <b>OBJ:</b> Awareness of power in lower half <b>OBJ:</b> Increase comfort in utilizing lower half
<b>DRILL:</b> Turn Back Turn Fast (Hands on Hips) - Hold position at end of movement - Check heel position each time	<b>TEACH:</b> Legs Only (no shoulders, no forward movement of upper body) <b>FOCUS:</b> Stay Centered <b>OBJ:</b> Awareness of torso remaining centered between feet during turn <b>OBJ:</b> Awareness of use of legs (100%) v use of shoulders (0%)
<b>DRILL:</b> Lower Half Turn - Hold hands up like holding a bat - Turn back, switch heels (75% effort) - Upper Body remains in place	<b>TEACH:</b> Legs Only (upper body <hand and shoulders> remain in place...there will be some slight movement...many kids will look uncomfortable/out of sync, the first few attempts) <b>OBJ:</b> Awareness of torso remaining centered between feet during turn <b>OBJ:</b> Awareness of use of legs (100%) v use of shoulders (0%)
<b>BAT:</b> Tee is ideal (or soft toss)	<b>TEACH:</b> Turn Back, Turn Fast, Head in Place <b>FOCUS:</b> Switch Heels <b>OBJ:</b> Increase quickness of turn <b>OBJ:</b> Awareness of power in lower half <b>OBJ:</b> Increase comfort in utilizing lower half
----- PART III -----	
<b>BALANCE, consistently in each swing is ultimate goal</b> <b>Body works like a whip: Lower half, handle; hands/bat, end of whip</b>	
<b>DRILL Review:</b> 1) Twist 2) Turn Back, Turn Fast 3) Lower Half Turn	<b>FOCUS:</b> Upper body remains still and centered <b>FOCUS:</b> Switch Heels; Head in Place <b>FOCUS:</b> Legs Only (upper body: hands and shoulders remain in place)
<b>BAT:</b> Tee is ideal (or soft toss)	<b>TEACH:</b> Turn Back, Turn Fast; Head in Place <b>FOCUS:</b> Switch Heels <b>OBJ:</b> Increase quickness of turn <b>OBJ:</b> Awareness of power in lower half <b>OBJ:</b> Increase comfort in utilizing lower half
<b>DRILL:</b> Turn Back Turn Fast (Hands on Hips)	<b>TEACH:</b> Head in Place, FEET IN PLACE <b>TEACH:</b> Explain that when feet move, power from the legs is lost <b>FOCUS:</b> Feet Turn, but REMAIN in place

<b>BAT:</b> Tee is ideal (or soft toss)	<b>TEACH:</b> Turn Back, Turn Fast; Head in Place , FEET IN PLACE <b>FOCUS:</b> Feet Turn, but REMAIN in place <b>OBJ:</b> Batters gain awareness of their feet moving out of place at the conclusion of their swing
<b>DRILL:</b> Turn Back Turn Fast (Hands on Hips)	<b>TEACH:</b> Head in Place, FEET IN PLACE <b>TEACH:</b> BALANCE <b>FOCUS:</b> Hold position at the conclusion of each Turn, Check: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Front heel pointed back to some degree (each child is different)</li> <li>2) Back foot is he is turned and heel is off the ground to some degree</li> <li>3) Feet have remained in place; Head is in place; Torso is centered</li> <li>4) Batter is aware of being balanced; or not balanced...self-correct each; then repeat the drill</li> </ol>
<b>DRILL:</b> Lower Half Rotation Stops at Contact Point Turn Back Turn Fast (Hands on Hips)	<b>TEACH:</b> Handle of a whip concept
	<b>FOCUS:</b> Limiting rotation to contact point: middle of zone & even w/front foot <b>FOCUS:</b> Awareness of level of Balance at conclusion of turn <b>OBJ:</b> Awareness that rotation has an endpoint <b>OBJ:</b> Players maintain full effort in turn; still switch heels
<p><b>Note:</b> The players will feel stress in their hip flexors when stopping their rotation. After a few days of executing this action their muscles will adapt and this will become more comfortable. The 'end point in the rotation' is paramount in transferring power from the legs to the hands/bat. Balance is greatly improved and bat speed is significantly increased.</p>	
<p>----- PART IV -----</p>	
<p><b>Muscles Work Like Rubber Bands</b>  <b>A Fast Turn creates a Greater Stretch in the Muscles across the Torso</b>  <b>The Hands/Bat Snap Faster and More Accurately with a Fast Turn</b></p>	
<p>At his point in the teaching sequence we tie together the lower half actions. We point out the power generated by the lower half (handle of the whip) is transferred to the hands (end of the whip). The torso, especially the shoulders, is not part of the swing. The torso only 'conducts' energy to the hands.</p> <p>Light switch analogy: Legs are like a light switch; they <u>move</u> and initiate energy. The hands are like the light; light <u>moves</u> to fill the room. The torso and shoulders are the wires in the wall; they conduct the energy, but <u>don't move</u>.</p>	
<b>DRILL Review:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Twist</li> <li>2) Turn Back, Turn Fast</li> <li>3) Lower Half Turn</li> </ol>	<b>FOCUS:</b> Upper body remains still and centered  <b>FOCUS:</b> Switch Heels; Head in Place  <b>FOCUS:</b> Legs Only (upper body: hands and shoulders remain in place)
<b>DRILL:</b> Sideways Karate Chop <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Turn Back, Turn Fast</li> <li>- Legs power the chop</li> <li>- Palm stops at contact point</li> <li>- Elbow bent and close to body; palm up at conclusion of movement; conclusion is at contact point.</li> </ul>	<b>TEACH:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 'Lower Half Turn' snaps the top hand to contact point</li> <li>• The action of the top hand/elbow is like a "Sideways Karate Chop"</li> <li>• The elbow, forearm and top hand move in a straight line towards contact point when swinging the bat.</li> <li>• Elbow bent and close to body; palm up</li> </ul>

	<p><b>FOCUS:</b> Action of the elbow and hand</p> <p><b>OBJ:</b> Gain awareness that the elbow follows a path close to the torso as the hands approach contact.</p> <p><b>OBJ:</b> Gain awareness that the elbow is bent and close to the torso when the bat contacts the ball.</p>
----- PART V & VI -----	
<b>Spend a couple additional days reinforcing the first four drills and applying these learned actions to additional live swings.</b>	
<p>Review all the above, ideally with focus on rotation ending at contact point and the Sideways Karate Chop accelerating past contact point. These workouts are also the time to help kids get comfortable with all that has been taught to this point; some will need this extra time to get fully tuned in. Even your advanced players will benefit from the additional repetitions and gaining a greater familiarity with how the body works in producing an efficient and effective swing.</p>	
<p><b>DRILL Review:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Twist</li> <li>2) Turn Back, Turn Fast</li> <li>3) Lower Half Turn</li> <li>4) Sideways Karate Chop</li> </ol>	<p><b>FOCUS:</b> Upper body remains still and centered</p> <p><b>FOCUS:</b> Switch Heels; Head in Place</p> <p><b>FOCUS:</b> Legs Only (upper body/hands/shoulders remain in place)</p> <p><b>FOCUS:</b> Action of the elbow/forearm/hand</p>
----- PART VII -----	
<b>The Hands move in a Straight Line throughout their contribution to the swing.</b>	
<p><b>Review DRILLS</b></p> <p>Introduce Hands – “Hands move in a straight line”: Bottom hand ‘Half Way’; top hand ‘All the Way’</p> <p><b>DRILL:</b> Lead Hand (Half Way)</p>	<p><b>TEACH:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Elbow remains bent</li> <li>- No shoulder movement</li> <li>- Bottom of hand moves straight toward contact point (not toward the pitcher)</li> <li>- <u>Lead hand stops at mid-point of torso</u></li> </ul> <p><b>FOCUS:</b> Straight line path of lead hand; toward contact point</p> <p><b>OBJ:</b> Eliminate unnecessary movement of lead hand</p>
<p><b>DRILL:</b> Hand Clap (“All the Way”)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This drill replicates the full swing action.</li> <li>- The lead arm elbow is placed against the stomach.</li> <li>- Lead hand moved back to center of torso.</li> <li>- Top hand held up where it would hold the bat in the stance.</li> <li>- Lower body: Turn Back, Turn Fast</li> <li>- Top hand accelerates to and through contact point (lower hand) in a straight line.</li> </ul>	<p><b>TEACH:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All focus on contact point (lead hand position)</li> <li>- Power from Lower Half Rotation is transferred to top hand, which accelerates in a straight line through contact point to full extension.</li> </ul> <p><b>FOCUS:</b> Straight line path of top hand, powered by lower half turn</p> <p><b>OBJ:</b> Top hand learns to take energy from lower half and accelerate through contact point in a straight line.</p>

<p><b>BAT: Tee, Soft Toss of Short Front Toss</b></p>	<p><b>TEACH:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bottom hand half way; top hand all the way</li> <li>- Bottom hand is 'steering wheel'</li> <li>- Bottom hand straight toward contact point; only moves about eight inches (in its contribution to the swing)</li> <li>- Top hand continues in a straight line, "All the way" through contact point.</li> </ul> <p><b>FOCUS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bottom hand toward contact point</li> <li>- Top hand through contact point</li> </ul>
<p>----- Part VIII -----</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Torso remains centered between feet while top hand accelerates through contact</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Emphasis on Balance at the conclusion of the swing ...Head in Place, Feet in Place</b></p> <p><b>Every aspect of the swing is directed toward Contact Point:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Head</li> <li>2) Lower Half Rotation</li> <li>3) Lead Hand, 'Half Way'    4) Top Hand, All the Way</li> </ol>	
<p>Review the <u>FOUR</u> Lower Half <b>DRILLS</b></p> <p>Focus most time on the <u>TWO</u> 'Hands' <b>DRILLS</b></p>	
<p><b>BAT Routine:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- First two DRILLS, then BAT</li> <li>- Next two DRILLS, then BAT</li> <li>- Hands DRILLS, then BAT</li> </ul>	
<p>----- Part IX -----</p>	
<p><b>Review core points in the swing:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Legs Power the Swing</li> <li>2) Head in Place</li> <li>3) Rotation stops at Contact Point</li> <li>4) Feet in Place / Balance</li> <li>5) Hands in a Straight Line</li> </ol> <p>and go through all SIX (6) DRILLS</p>	
<p><b>BAT Routine:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- First two (2) DRILLS, then BAT</li> <li>- Next two (2) DRILLS, then BAT</li> <li>- Hands DRILLS (2), then BAT</li> </ul>	
<p>----- Part X -----</p>	
<p><b>Apply mechanics to Live Pitches</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Focus on the swing, not the result</li> <li>- Results will improve with reps and consistency</li> <li>- No Reaching / Centered and Balanced</li> </ul> <p><b>BAT: "LIVE 5"</b></p>	<p><b>TEACH:</b> Let the ball come to your feet</p> <p><b>DRILL:</b> See Ball – Turn Back</p>

----- Plan to spend 20 minutes per day in the first 10 practices to teach the swing -----

All this teaching can take place in any type of weather and in any environment, general open space when no diamond is available, any covered area including walkways at the local school, indoors (gymnasium), etc. Please set it in your mind and the minds of your players and parents that no practice will be cancelled b/c of weather, short of a snow storm or frigid high winds. Be sure to scout out your neighborhood schools, churches, etc for locations to work on batting skills regardless of weather or field availability. Many throwing, catching and fielding skills can be trained in any non-baseball diamond environment. The use of synthetic or pitching machine balls eliminates wet fields as being an excuse to not practice.

**NOTE:** Your players will not understand why they don't get to hit live pitches in the first 9-10 practices, but it will do them a great service in the long run as they develop solid, consistent swings and they gain an understanding of their swings. This foundation will also set you up with a set of teaching phrases that will allow you to be a better coach the final 2 ½ months of the season and the kids will be well prepared to understand and follow your instruction.

If you choose to follow the practice structure suggestions your kids will get to hit live pitching every day:

- 1) Pre-practice Whiffle Ball BP
- 2) End of Practice Scrimmage

**KEY POINT:** when hitting off a tee or soft toss it is **CRITICAL** that the ball/contact point has a proper relationship to batter's base/body. Proper tossing is a skill that requires development and on-going practice.

...if your kids are balanced at the end of every swing, they will develop great consistency and reduce mechanical flaws a great deal.