

Practice Plan
09-1

Practice Plan #1 – Beginner

Time	Drill	Pg.	Coaching Tips
00 to :10	Dodging, scooping and taking shots	-	Loosen up and work on shot
:10 to :15	Full body stretch	-	Shoulders, legs, groin, and lower back
:15 to :25	Jog around the field, maybe some sprints	-	Limbering up and preparing for drills
:25 to :35	Cradle the ball	5	Proper technique
:35 to :38	Water break	-	-
:38 to :45	Scoop drill	6	Scooping is key in lacrosse
:45 to 1:00	Passing / catching	15	At this point, proper technique is everything
1:00 to 1:10	Distance passing	15	Helps with getting the right strength on a pass
1:10 to 1:20	Shooting drill	16	Accuracy and technique is more important than speed
1:20 to 1:30	Box area	6	Pass reception technique is key
1:30 to 1:35	Water break	-	-
1:35 to 1:45	Midfield give and go	26	Passing and catching technique
1:45 to 1:55	One on one grid	27	Good drill to finish practice
1:55 to 2:00	Cool down	-	Stretching, and taking a few shots

Ball Control – Scooping and Catching

This is the first, most basic concept in lacrosse, but it still is extremely important. Without the ability to control the ball, a team cannot generate good offensive chances. Just like in hockey or basketball, without control of the ball or puck, then you just don't have control of the game – and you can't score.



Cradle the ball

Cradling is an essential skill for young players to learn right away.

What you need – Players should have their sticks and of course, full equipment to do this drill. Players can spend some time practicing this at home, because it does require some dexterity to do well.

How this drill works – Each player should have their stick and carrying a ball. Cradling is necessary to control the ball while the player is running down the floor and dodging other players on the field.

Coaches should notice the following: **Grip, Wrist and arm action, and stick position.** This is a skill based lesson – and not so much of a drill for the younger players.

Grip – The top hand should be in a position that allows it to control the bounce inside the pocket. The bottom hand will direct the stick when the player is running and if they are trying to make a pass or take a shot. When standing still, the top hand should be underneath the stick, and the bottom hand should be on top.

The wrist and arm action – These should work in conjunction with one another. The idea is to create the least amount of bounce in the pocket of the player's stick. The forearm on the top hand should work like a hinge, and not moving all over the place. The wrist should not curl or flex too much.

Stick position – The stick position for the beginner should be horizontal when they are stationary. It is a standard pose for any player, except for when they may be experiencing pressure.

When a defender must shield their stick from a defender, the stick moves to a vertical position, almost parallel with the player's body.

An easy drill to build on this position is just to have players carry the ball around, either on the run, or just walking around. Coaches should watch for technique.



Scoop drill

When the ball is loose, players need to be able to pick the ball up – and proper technique is important.

What you need – Players with sticks and proper equipment.

How this drill works – If you have ever coached baseball, you will know that players have to gain position and then use the proper technique to scoop up a grounder. The same could be said for picking up a lacrosse ball.

After the coach prepares the player with the finer points of how to scoop the ball, he or she can split the players into two groups and then roll or bounce a 'grounder' to the players to pick up. Proper form is the key to this drill – and will build a solid fundamental base for the young player.

Result – Players will be able to control the ball when it is loose.



Box area

This is the catching area that player's need to learn to accept the ball from passes.

What you need – Two lines of players, each with a coach and some practice balls.

How this drill works – Although players can catch the ball from a variety of areas during the course of a game, it is important players learn the **box area** – the area a few inches away from their pocket side ear. This is the prime receiving area because it provides protection from defenders and it allows for optimum hand-eye coordination – which is essential for good receiving.

To get used to receiving the ball properly, coaches can toss the ball softly so a player can control it in the box area. Once players gain a little more confidence, the coach can increase the speed of the ball.

Result – Good ball reception technique – which is an important skill to learn. Can be combined later with passing drills.

Passing and Shooting

You can't score goals if you can't shoot the ball. You can't shoot the ball unless you are in a good position. You can't get into a good position without the help of passing. The combination of the two goes hand-in-hand and that is why we have put the two drill types together.



Passing and catching

Two fundamentals that should be first on the list of skills

What you need – You can pair players up, or you can put them in groups of threes to do this drill. Each group has one ball they are to pass around.

How this drill works – This is a skill-based drill, so the players are essentially just learning the proper technique for passing and catching the ball.

Passing: Players should be faced at their target with their lead foot being the opposite of his top hand on the stick. The top hand is just under the pocket and the bottom hand is the pivot point for the stick. When a pass is made, the top hand should reach no more than six inches above the shoulder and the pocket should not fall too far back or the ball might fall out. The top hand and arm push the ball in the direction of the pass, but then the bottom arm is the power hand and is pulled toward the body.

Catching – The form is very similar to that of the passing stance, except that the stick is going to be held more parallel to the body – rather than off slightly to the side. The major difference is that the ball should be caught in the box area – mainly to try and protect it from a defender.

Players should work the ball back on forth with close coaching so that they can get the technique properly.

Result – Basic skills are learned and reinforced through this drill.



Distance passing

Younger players need to understand how much force put on the ball when they are passing to get it from point A to point B.

What you need – Pair up players of relatively equal skill and start them at about 5 yards apart. Each pair will need a ball to pass back and forth.

How this drill works – The players will start off just 5 yards apart and they will pass the ball back and forth. Coaches should be watching for proper technique and that the players are passing accurately and under control.

On the coaches whistle, the players will take one giant step backwards and they will continue the drill. Once again, the coaches will watch for proper form. Once everyone is doing things correctly, they will take another giant step back.

You can repeat this process until the players are about 20 yards apart. This might be as far as many of the younger players can throw the ball.

Result – Players will begin to develop a sense of how much power they need to put into each of their passes, when a player is at a different distance.



Shooting drill

This will be a player's first taste of taking a shot on the net

What you need – If you have more than two nets, this drill works better because players will get more repetition. But, they line up about 10 yards in front of the net, in as many stations as you can put together.

How this drill works – Really, just start firing away at the net. Players can move from side to side, they can change their distances, pick the corners, whatever they would like to start getting the feel of shooting the ball.

Coaches should make sure that proper technique is followed. Some quick pointers are:

- Standing facing the target with foot opposite shooting hand ahead of the other.
- Rotate at the waist so that the shoulders are perpendicular to the goal.
- The shooting motion is very similar to the passing motion

Speed is generated in a quick trunk rotation followed by the hinging motion of the bottom hand to pull the stick forward, making the whole thing act like a catapult towards the goal. Also, the larger the stride toward the goal, the more speed.

Players can continue taking shots. This is a good drill to warm players up, and also to warm up goalies.

Result – Repetition of a basic technique, reinforcing good shooting skills.

Offensive and Defensive Tactics

The tactics in lacrosse are quite similar to those in basketball, with the different motion offenses, the defensive skills and the use of picks, rolls, and driving to the net. In this section, we are going to go through several different drills that are going to help simulate these certain game plays and situations.



Screen and roll pass

This is a basic drill to help players understand the use of a screen and roll technique.

What you need – Put players in groups of three to run this drill. Include one ball with each group of three players.

How this drill works – This is a simple screen and roll to open up space to move and then to pass the ball. One player should start with the ball and be covered by a defender. The third player is the one that sets the screen.

The screen player communicates with the passer on which side the screen should be set. The ball carrier moves to his or her left or right, and the screener sets a screen to provide open space. Then the screener rolls toward the net to receive a pass, and then takes a shot on net.

Result – This teaches younger players how to use the screen to their advantage.



Midfield give and go

This uses the midfielder and attacker to give and go to get a shot

What you need – Have a midfielder at the restraining line (you can set up two groups, one on each side) and groups on each side of the net.

How this drill works – This is a basic give and go to the middle of the net. The groups on the side of the net start with the ball, pass it to the midfielder, who returns the pass to them as they break towards the net. After the return pass, the player takes a shot on net.

Result – This is learning just another basic offensive maneuver.



One on one grid

This drill is a set up for basic defensive play

What you need – Set up a 10-yard by 10-yard (grid) area with an attacker and a defender. One ball is included in this drill.

How this drill works – Inside the square area, the defender and the attacker will meet face to face. Each player starts on his or her back line of the square and the drill begins with the defender passing to the attacker.

The object of this drill is to teach the defender to prevent the attacker from moving forward and getting by him or her and breaching their back line. The job of the defender is to try and legally steal or knock the ball away from the attacker, or to drive them out of the square area.

Result – Both offensive and defensive players can get good work out of this drill. Coaches should make sure that defensive players do have a grasp on basic techniques of checking and of body contact before they do this drill.



Foot fire

This helps younger players develop agility and to learn to change direction quickly while maintaining proper defensive position.

What you need – You can have six players, three in a row, about a stick length between them.

How this drill works – The coach will direct players which way to go in this drill. At the start of the drill, the players will lift their feet rapidly up and down (happy feet). The coach will point in a direction and they players will move in that direction.

The coach will yell, "BREAK DOWN", and the player's will assume the proper defensive posture:

- Balls of the feet, shoulder width apart
- Arms slightly extended with bottom hand on the end of the stick and the top hand just slightly above that.
- Players should be prepared to move in any direction to follow the attackers.

Result – This drill will help your players learn to quickness and agility it takes to play good defense.