



## 30 Day Wall Ball Challenge/Routine

You are going to create muscle memory. You use muscle memory every day, you just don't realize it because your muscles know exactly what to do. When you walk, do you think about every step? When you go up the stairs, do you think about every step? You don't have to because your muscles have memorized what to do. These drills use the same concepts. Do them enough and your muscles will know what needs to be done not only when you do the drills, but when you take the field.

### SET-UP

**Holding the Stick:** Let's start with the most basic skill: properly holding the lacrosse stick. Always hold the stick and practice with your helmet and gloves on. You will never play in a game without a helmet and gloves. You want to create muscle memory that includes helmet and gloves. You are creating muscle memory. Create the correct memory.

You've been playing for awhile. Hold your stick as you would normally when you pass and catch. Note your top and bottom hand locations. Now, do the following two tests and see how your "normal" hand position compares.

There are two ways to find the proper location for your hands on the stick. The first way is to hold the stick perpendicular to the ground with your offhand at the butt end of the stick, with the butt sticking out of the bottom of your glove. We'll assume for this example, you are right-handed, so your left hand is at the butt end of the stick. Put your right hand around your stick, and slide it down to meet the top of your left hand glove. Now, holding the stick with your right hand, move your left hand above your right hand, grasp the handle and slide your left hand down to meet the top of your right hand glove, do this one more time, now holding the handle tight with your left hand, moving your right hand above the left, grasp the handle, and slide it down to the top of the left hand glove. Slide your left hand down the handle to the butt of the stick. This is where your hands should be when you are holding your stick. Many players like to put tape on their stick just under their top hand, so they can feel the position where their top hand should be placed.

The second way to do this: taking into account the balance of your particular stick, with no ball in the stick, lay the stick parallel to the ground on your strong-hand shoulder and slide it into a position where it is balanced on your shoulder, perfectly parallel to the ground. Now, with your gloves on, reach up and without removing it from your shoulder,



grab the handle with your strong hand at your shoulder and your off-hand at the butt of the sticks. Lift it off of your shoulder. If you mark your top hand position with tape as before, it will be within an inch of where your first tape was placed. Somewhere between the two marks is where this particular stick should be held.

**Position to the wall:** Holding the stick parallel to the ground, put the head of your stick against the wall and the butt of the stick against your belly. You should not stand farther from the wall than this distance (you can stand closer if you prefer). It is going to be difficult at first until you get used to the quickened response time.

To become proficient in passing and shooting, players must be able to propel the ball from the stick with the wrist “snap”. Many beginning players pass and shoot with an arm motion, or “push” the ball, which results in loss of control. Your goal is to strengthen your wrists, to become proficient in releasing the ball with the snap of the wrists, and to gain hand speed.

### **QUICK STICK DRILLS (i.e. How to Be Amazing)**

All of these drills are quick sticks. The purpose is to throw and catch without any additional movement. You want to be efficient. **DO NOT TWIRL YOUR STICK WHEN YOU CATCH THE BALL.** Your goal is to be fast so when you are close to the goal or in a tight situation you can pass and catch the ball quickly and efficiently. It is much more challenging to pass and catch without twirling. Twirling is a bad habit. Let’s break it.

How long should routine take? There are 6 drills with 100 repetitions each. That’s 600 times the ball bounces off the wall. The first day will probably take you about 30-45 minutes. You’re going to miss a lot of catches at first. Don’t expect to be perfect or even close to perfect – if you were close to perfect we wouldn’t be doing this. (Time how long it takes you to do the drills the first day. Then put away the timer and focus on doing the drills well.) After 30 days, it will only take about 15 minutes to do all six drills because your stick-work will have improved that much. That is amazing progress in a month! (But you’ll only see this progress if you commit to these drills for 30 days in a row.)

We suggest that you place a couple balls in front of you on the ground, so when you miss a ball off the wall, you won’t have to chase it down to continue on with the drill, but just reach down and pick up the next one.

Each drill will have 100 repetitions. A repetition is when the ball bounces off the wall. If you miss the catch, the repetition still counts, just pick up another ball and continue.



### **DRILL #1: Throw Strong, Catch Strong**

Start out with the easy drill to warm up. With the toes of your feet square and parallel to the wall at the proper distance from the wall, with gloves on and holding the stick as previously described, put the stick with ball on your strong shoulder. Throw the ball straight onto the wall with your strong hand with the head of stick coming off of your ear. Without changing the position of your hands on the stick, catch the ball coming straight back to where you threw it from. **Do NOT twirl the stick!** Catch the ball and quick stick it back onto the wall, catching the ball the same as previously described.

### **DRILL #2: Throw Weak, Catch Weak**

Using the same body position; move the stick with ball to your off-hand. Perform the same drill as Drill #1, except this time, using your off-hand.

### **DRILL #3: Throw Strong, Cross-Catch Strong**

Same body position; move the stick with ball back to your strong hand. Holding the stick with ball on your strong shoulder, throw the ball up and onto the wall, not straight at the wall as you did in Drills 1 & 2, but at an angle, dead center to the center of your body. Without moving either hand on the stick, bring your top hand and stick across your body so that you can catch the ball on the opposite shoulder as it comes off of the wall at the same angle it was thrown onto the wall. Catch the ball with your top hand across your chest. Bring the head and ball back across your chest and repeat.

### **DRILL #4: Throw Weak, Cross-Catch Weak**

Using the same body position, move the stick with ball to your off-hand. Perform the same drill as above in Drill #3, except this time with your off-hand.

### **DRILL #5: Throw Strong, Catch Weak, Throw Weak, Catch Strong**

Same body position, move the stick with ball back to your strong hand. Holding the stick with ball on your strong shoulder, throw the ball up and onto the wall, not straight at the wall as you did in Drills #1 & #2, but at an angles you did in Drills #3 & #4, dead center to the center of your body. This time, change hands so that you can catch the ball on the opposite shoulder as it comes off of the wall at the same angle it was thrown onto the wall. Catching the ball with your opposite hand (since you changed hands) throw the ball up on the wall to your body's center again, and now changing the stick



back to your strong hand, catch the ball coming back at the original angle from which it was thrown.

**DRILL #6: Throw Strong, Cross-Catch Strong, Cross-Throw Strong, Catch Strong**

Same body position; move the stick with ball back to your strong hand. Holding the stick with ball on your strong shoulder, throw the ball up and onto the wall, not straight at the wall as you did in Drills 1 & 2, but at an angle, dead center to the center of your body. Without moving either hand on the stick, bring your top hand and stick across your body so that you can catch the ball on the opposite shoulder as it comes off of the wall at the same angle it was thrown onto the wall. Catching the ball with your top hand across your chest, throw the ball up on the wall to your body's center again, and without moving your hands on the stick, bring your top hand back to it's strong side and catch the ball coming back at the original angle from which it was thrown.

Six drills. 100 repetitions per drill. 30 days. That's 18,000 repetitions. One amazing result!

Go Landsharks!

\*\*Special thanks to Coach Brent Harris for some of the content and routine.