

Practice Drills – Examples

Catching & Throwing Drills

When you practice it is important to keep the team actively engaged. Standing around should be kept to a minimum. We recommend the use of “stations” or the team divided into small groups that rotate through various practice drills. This will allow for each player to practice key baseball fundamentals throughout each scheduled practice time. Additionally, coaches may try group competitions to facilitate a drill in a fun, yet competitive way. Coaches should use the Practice Template to design specific drills needed prior to a scheduled practice.

1. Catch

This is the single most important activity you, as an adult, can do to enhance their baseball abilities. Focus on mechanics. It can be done almost anywhere at anytime.

2. Long Toss

This is a great way to develop arm strength and it helps lengthen a players’ arm. It is especially useful for players who “push” the ball in their throwing motion. Depending on arm strength, start the players at 30 feet apart and gradually have them back up, eventually getting to 75-80 feet. Be sure your players aren’t straining to throw. Have them utilize the “crow hop.”

3. Two Knee Throw

To emphasize upper-body throwing mechanics, pair off team about 20-30 feet apart depending on arm strength. Players get on both knees and throw to each other, focusing on holding hands to chest as they rotate and line up chin, front shoulder and lead elbow with target. Keep elbows at chest level, and head focused on target.

4. One Knee Throw

To emphasize upper-body throwing mechanics and proper arm follow through, pair off team about 20-30 feet apart depending on arm strength. Players get on one knee, with lead leg forward (foot underneath the knee), and throw to each other, focusing on holding hands to chest as they rotate and line up chin, front shoulder and lead elbow with target. Keep elbows at chest level, and head focused on target. Concentrate on extending throwing arm toward target and finishing over lead knee.

5. Cross-Legged Sitting Toss

To work on proper throwing release, separate the team into pairs, facing each other 10-15 feet apart. Player with the ball extends his throwing arm in an L-position in front of him, elbow shoulder height. He holds the throwing elbow with his glove hand, and holds the ball across the seams. Using the glove to prevent the forearm from moving, he throws the ball to his partner utilizing wrist action only. Emphasize wrist flick, proper release, and rotation, not velocity. A more advanced version of this exercise allows thrower to incorporate the forearm into the throwing motion, combining the wrist flick with the elbow snap. Again emphasize rotation rather than velocity.

6. Ten Toes

To emphasize lower-body weight transfer, pair off team about 20-30 feet apart depending on arm strength. Players stand with feet shoulder-width and knees slightly flexed and throw to each other without taking a step, focusing on upper body mechanics and generating power through knee and hip action.

7. Ten Toes Figure 8

To emphasize lower-body weight transfer and throwing rhythm, pair off team about 20-30 feet apart depending on arm strength. Players stand with feet shoulder-width and knees slightly flexed as in the Ten Toes drill. They perform a figure 8 with their hands by starting with their hands on the glove side, belt high, to a throwing position and then through the throw, again without taking a step. The focus is on upper body mechanics, generating power through knee action and hip rotation, and an aggressive finish (release, arm extension).

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8. Walking Figure 8

To emphasize compact delivery and throwing rhythm, pair off team about 60 feet apart depending on arm strength. Players execute a figure 8 with their hands (see Ten Toes Figure 8) as they walk toward their partner. They perform 2-3 figure 8s while continuing to walk before actually releasing a throw; they then return to their original spot. The focus is on compact upper body mechanics (hands together), generating power through knee action and hip rotation, ingraining throwing rhythm into muscle memory, and an aggressive finish (release, arm extension).

9. Quick Hands

Separate players into pairs. Place them in two lines 30-40 feet apart, well spaced. Create a race to see which pair can successfully throw and catch the most times in a 30-second period. If a ball is thrown away or dropped, they must go back to zero!