

Ready Position & First Step

3-4 min

EQUIPMENT

Gloves only - no balls needed

SETUP & EXECUTION

Line players up facing you. On "Ready!" they get in athletic stance. Coach points left, right, or forward - players take explosive first step that direction. Reset and repeat. Keep it quick - 10-12 reps.

COACHING POINTS

- Feet wider than shoulders, knees bent, weight on balls of feet
- Glove out in front, not hanging at side
- First step is a crossover step for lateral movement
- Eyes stay level - head doesn't bob up and down

SKILLS FOCUS

Ready position First-step quickness Athletic stance

Rolled Ground Ball Progression

8-10 min

EQUIPMENT

1 ball per coach, bucket for extras, gloves

SETUP & EXECUTION

Players line up 20-25 feet away. Roll grounders directly at each player. Player fields, makes good throw back to coach, goes to end of line. Start with slow rollers, progress to faster. Move to slight angles left/right once fundamentals are solid.

COACHING POINTS

- "Butt down, hands out" - field out in front of body
- Glove on ground, fingers pointing down, pinky near dirt
- Bare hand ready above glove to secure ("alligator")
- Field the ball, bring to belly button, separate, throw
- Watch for kids stabbing at the ball - they should move THROUGH it

PRO TIP

Roll, don't hit, during this drill. Rolling lets you control speed and location perfectly. Save fungo work for later when mechanics are cleaner.

Triangle Drill (Ground Ball Footwork)

6-8 min

EQUIPMENT

3 cones per group, 1 ball, gloves

SETUP & EXECUTION

Set cones in triangle (10 feet apart). Player starts at back cone. Coach at front. Player approaches ball (rolled to middle cone), fields it, and shuffles/crow-hops to third cone before throwing. Simulates fielding and getting momentum toward first base.

COACHING POINTS

- Approach ball at angle, not straight on
- Field ball on glove-side foot (left foot for righties)
- Right foot replaces where ball was, then shuffle toward target
- Momentum should be going toward first base on the throw

SKILLS FOCUS

Approach angle Footwork Throwing on the move

Drop Step / Fly Ball Drill

6-8 min

EQUIPMENT

Tennis balls or safety balls (easier to toss high), gloves

SETUP & EXECUTION

Player faces coach 30 feet away. Coach points left or right, player takes drop step that direction and runs back. Coach tosses ball over that shoulder. Player catches on the run. Alternate sides. Progress to not pointing - just toss and let them react.

COACHING POINTS

- Drop step = turn hips and step back with foot on that side
- Don't backpedal - turn and RUN
- Glove-side catches: glove up, thumb down
- Throwing-side catches: glove across body, pinky down
- Run first, then find the ball - don't drift while watching

PRO TIP

Tennis balls are great for this drill - less fear of getting hit, and you can throw them farther with better control than baseballs.

Paddle/Short-Hop Drill

5-6 min

EQUIPMENT

Fielding paddles OR flat gloves OR bare hands, tennis balls

SETUP & EXECUTION

Partners face each other 15 feet apart. One player short-hops the ball to the other. Receiving player fields with paddle/flat glove, using soft hands. Switch after 10 reps. No glove pocket forces proper technique.

COACHING POINTS

- Hands give with the ball - "catch an egg, don't stab"
- Get low - you can't field a short-hop standing tall
- Watch the ball into the paddle - head stays down
- Work both forehands and backhands

VARIATION

No paddle? Have them use bare hands with tennis balls. Forces soft hands or it stings!

Infield Stations

12-15 min

EQUIPMENT

4-5 balls, full infield, bases, 2-3 coaches/parents helping

SETUP & EXECUTION

Put 2-3 players at each infield position. Coach hits/rolls grounders to each position in rotation. Player fields, throws to first, rotates to back of their line. First baseman rotates after catch. Keep pace quick - should be constant movement.

COACHING POINTS

- Encourage players to call the ball: "I got it!"
- First baseman: stretch toward throw, foot on bag
- Everyone not fielding should be in ready position
- Watch for lazy feet between reps - stay athletic

VARIATION

Add a runner at home for game-like pressure. Or call out "Two!" and have them turn a double play.

Communication Drill ("I Got It!")

6-8 min

EQUIPMENT

Tennis balls or soft balls, gloves

SETUP & EXECUTION

Put 2-3 players in a cluster (simulating SS/2B/CF overlap). Coach pops up ball in the middle. Players must CALL for the ball loudly - "I GOT IT! I GOT IT!" - before catching. If no one calls, ball drops. If two players catch it silently, it doesn't count. Repeat 10-12 times.

COACHING POINTS

- Call it EARLY and LOUD - other players need to hear and peel off
- Call at least twice: "I got it! I got it!"
- Once someone calls it, everyone else backs away
- Priority order: SS > 2B > outfielders (players coming IN have priority)
- If you don't call it, you don't catch it - even if you could

PRO TIP

Collisions happen because players don't talk. This drill prevents injuries and errors. Make it a rule: no call = no catch, every single time in practice.

Relay/Cutoff Basics

8-10 min

EQUIPMENT

Balls, full field setup (or use cones for bases), 3+ players

SETUP & EXECUTION

Outfielder fields ball in gap. Cutoff man (SS or 2B) goes out toward the outfielder, hands up as target. Outfielder throws to cutoff. Cutoff catches, turns, throws to base (3B or home). Practice both left and right field scenarios. 8-10 reps each side.

COACHING POINTS

- Cutoff man: get in line between outfielder and target base
- Cutoff man: hands UP high - give a big target
- Outfielder: hit the cutoff man chest-high - he can redirect it
- Cutoff: catch, turn glove-side, throw in one motion
- Ball to left field: SS is cutoff. Ball to right field: 2B is cutoff

SKILLS FOCUS

Relay throws Positioning Team defense

Backup Responsibilities

6-8 min

EQUIPMENT

Balls, full field or infield setup

SETUP & EXECUTION

Coach hits/rolls ball to various spots. After each play, FREEZE and ask: "Where should everyone be?" Every player has a backup job. Run through common scenarios: ground ball to SS, throw to first (who backs up?), ball to outfield (who backs up which base?).

COACHING POINTS

- Pitcher: backup third or home on outfield hits
- Catcher: backup first on infield grounders (if no runner on)
- Outfielders: backup each other on fly balls
- Middle infielders: cover bases and backup throws
- If you're not fielding the ball, you should be MOVING somewhere

PRO TIP

Standing and watching is the enemy. After EVERY pitch, every player should be moving to a backup position. Make "where should you be?" a constant question in practice.