



SOFTBALL

SUPER STATIONS

INFIELD FUNDAMENTALS

14 Fun and Effective Drills
for Rapid Skill Development



Includes 6
Printable Practice
Plans

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Saseball Super Stations - Infield Fundamentals Edition!

There may be no more poetic sequence in softball than a perfectly executed double play. But this intricate ballet of catches and throws doesn't just happen on its own, it requires hours and hours of practice.

One of the biggest problems with softball practice is that, all too often, you end up with a single player receiving the reps and instruction from the coach while the rest stand around picking grass. This is a recipe for not only stunted skill development, but bored, disengaged, and unmotivated players.

Thankfully, there is a simple solution - station based practice planning!

Instead of having an entire team watch one player go through a drill, we will instead break down the team into 2-3 small groups, and create several stations on the field. Each group will go to their designated station, run the drill for the designated time, and then move on to the next station, as every other group rotates as well.

This ensures that from the moment practice starts until the final whistle, every player on your team will be getting a chance to make the throws and catches they need to develop into a complete infielder.

Inside this guide, we've included 14 proven drills, organized into six station-based practice plans. All designed to help you run the most efficient, most effective, and most stress-free practice you can.

Many of the drills can be done in the infield, or, simply using a large patch of outfield grass. So you can make the best use of the field space you have available.

The plans typically start with a Warmup block, which includes some dynamic warmup exercises, as well as baserunning and/or throwing drills. That's followed by a Stations block which will split the team up into smaller groups and focus on infield fundamentals. Then we'll finish up with a Game Preparation block - usually some kind of modified scrimmage that reinforces the throwing, catching and fielding skills worked on that day.

Here are a few quick tips before we get started:

1. Print a copy of the practice plan and take it with you to the field. It will help you stay on track, and provide quick reminders for all of the drills you'll be running
2. Use your team's water breaks to set up for the next drill. So the kids can get right back to action as soon as you reconvene the practice
3. Take advantage of all the help you can get - if parents are willing to come in and help out, an extra pair of eyes to help supervise and transition through the stations can be a huge help!

Ready to go? Let's get started!

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WARMUP

1.

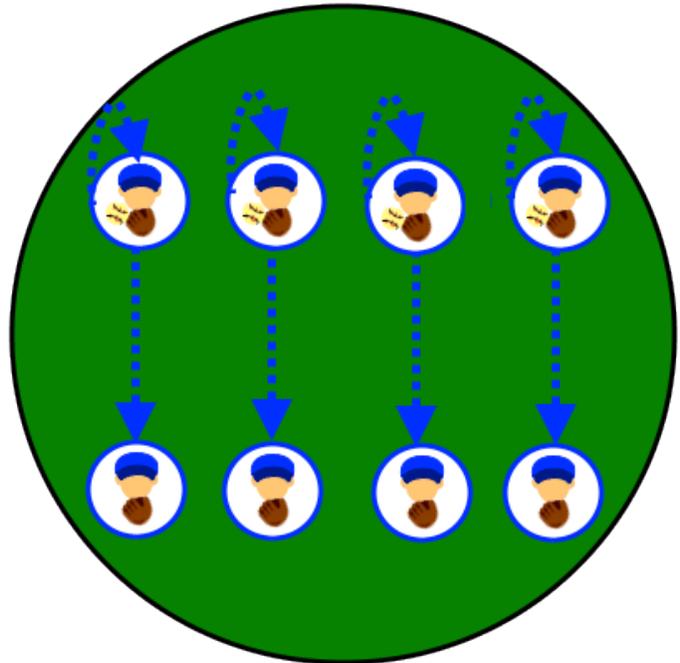
CATCH & TOSS

PURPOSE:

Gets players loose while developing hand-eye coordination and throwing accuracy

SETUP:

Get every player to grab her mitt and pair off with a teammate. They should all go spread out in the field, facing their partner roughly 15-20 feet apart. Each pair will need a softball.



INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The player with the ball will loft it up several feet in the air, then in one motion, catch, step, and throw it to her teammate.
2. Her teammate will catch the ball and repeat the same motion.
3. As players get comfortable with the drill, have them take a couple steps back.

COACHING TIPS:

- See which team can go the most throws in a row without a drop or bad throw!

2.

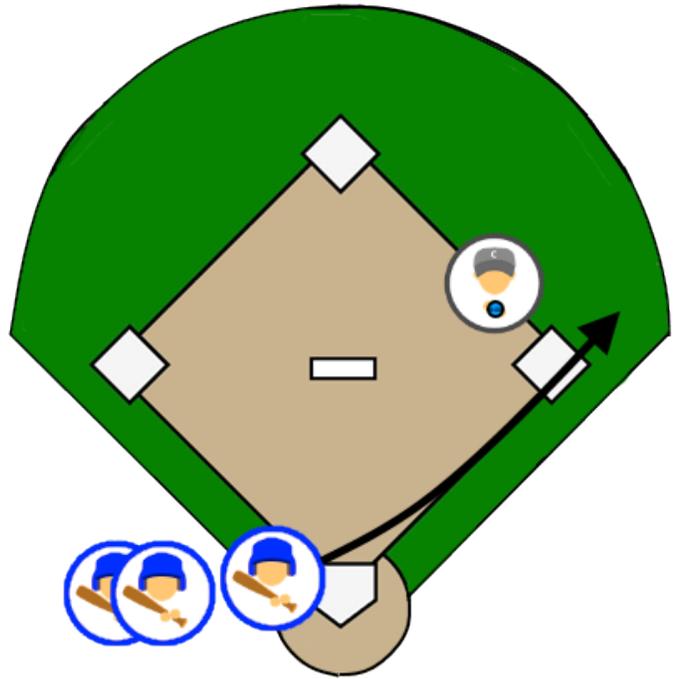
CONTACT TO 1ST

PURPOSE:

Develops proper base running technique, speed, and conditioning.

SETUP:

Have all the players form a line behind home plate, each wearing their helmets and bringing their own bats. You will also need one coach at 1st with a stop watch.



INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The 1st player in line will stand in the batter`s box, and swing as if they were hitting a pitch.
2. As soon as the bat crosses the plate the coach starts her stop watch.
3. Hitter will then drop the bat and get to 1st as fast as they can, with the coach stopping the stopwatch when the player taps the bag.

COACHING TIPS:

- The hitter should be focusing on exploding out of her stance with a good 2-3 steps out of the batter`s box before they glance inside to see whether the ball went through the infield.
- We also want the runner to aim for the front of the base, making it easier to leg out their stride without any unnatural stutter steps or lunges.

3.

SHORT HOPS

PURPOSE:

Teaches players the proper technique for fielding the short hop.

SETUP:

Have players pair off and stand about 10 feet away from their partner. They will all need their gloves and one ball per pair.



INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The player with the ball will throw it to her partner, aiming to bounce the ball off the ground about a foot to a foot and half in front of them.
2. The player should try to get underneath the ball and secure it, then return the same throw to her partner.

COACHING TIPS:

- For an added challenge, see which pair can record the most consecutive catches!

4.

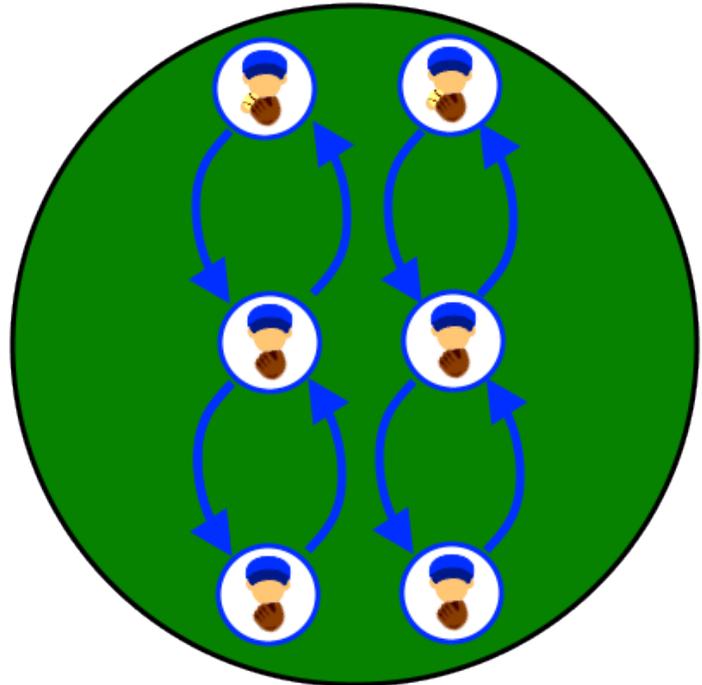
RELAY THROWING DRILL

PURPOSE:

Works on footwork and glove positioning, throwing and catching

SETUP:

Split the team into 2-3 lines, spread out so that they have enough distance between them to safely throw to each other. Each player will need their glove, and the first player in each line will have a ball as well.



INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The first player in line will throw down to the next player in her line, continuing on like this down to the end of the line and back.
2. Players will receive the throw with their glove ready and their weight on their back foot, ready to receive the throw, pivot and throw to the next player in one motion.
3. Make it a race! First team to get the ball down and back is your winner!

COACHING TIPS:

- The player receiving the throw should be showing a target for the thrower that's out toward the glove side.
- With younger kids, it can be helpful the thrower to call out the receiver's name as they make the throw



INFIELD DRILLS

5.

CORNERS AND MIDDLES

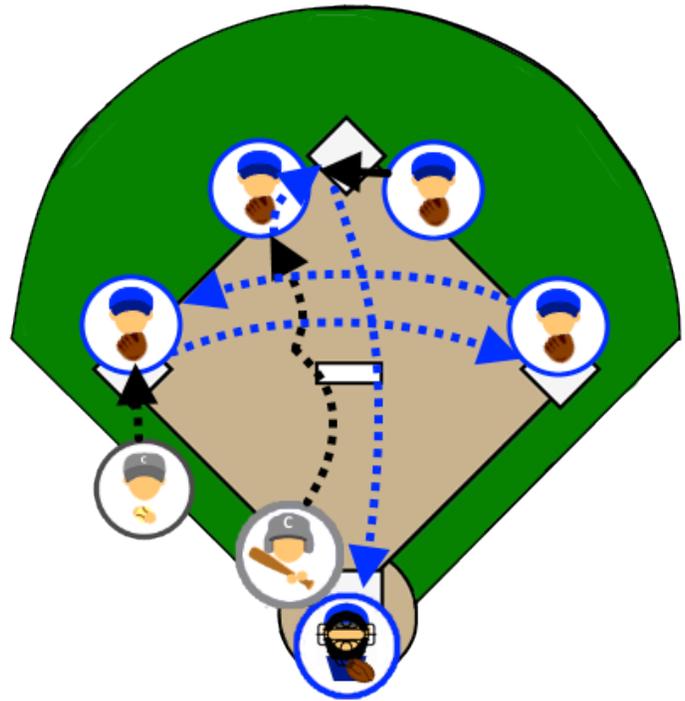
PURPOSE:

Gives players reps working on all aspects of infield play.

SETUP:

Players will line up with their gear at four infield positions – 1st, 2nd, shortstop, 3rd, and a catcher.

Coach is at home plate with a bat, and another coach with a softball is in between 3rd and home.



INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The coaches will begin the drill. The coach at home will hit a grounder to either the shortstop or 2nd baseman. The other fielder will cover 2nd, and receive the toss to get the force out, and make the throw to home.
2. At the same time, the other coach will roll a ball to the 3rd baseman who will make the throw to 1st.

COACHING TIPS:

- The shortstop and 2nd baseman should play an extra couple steps back to stay well out of the way of the throws across the infield.
- About halfway through the drill, flip the coach from the 3rd baseline to the 1st baseline, and have her roll balls to 1st and make the throw to 3rd.
- The goal is to see how long the team can go error free. Bring out a timer and try and set the season record every practice!

6.

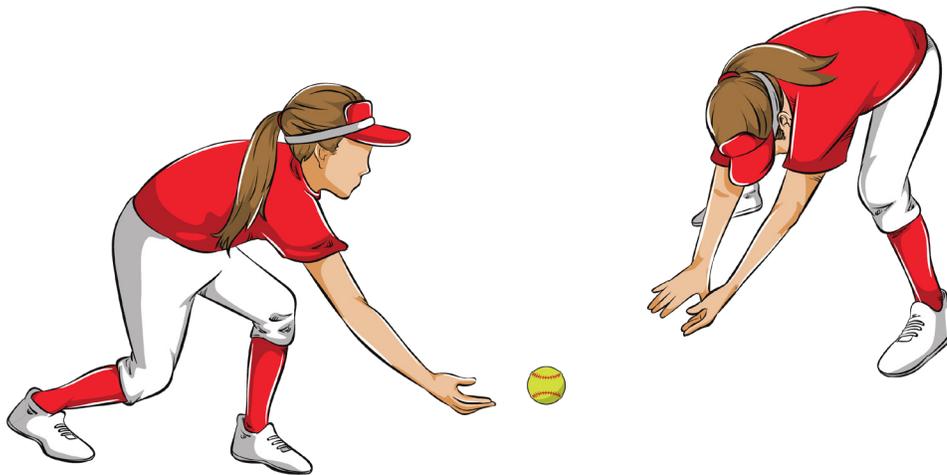
CAP BUTTONS

PURPOSE:

Reinforces proper ground ball fielding technique, using two hands and keeping the head down

SETUP:

Players pair off and stand 10-20 feet away from their partner. Each pair will need one softball.



INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The players will roll the ball to their partners, with their partners fielding the ball with the glove hand, securing it with the off-hand, and rolling it right back.
2. Begin without gloves, but about 5-10 reps in get the players to go gloves on.

COACHING TIPS:

- A fun way to make this a competitive game is to see which pair can make the most successful exchanges in 15 seconds.
- Players should be focusing on watching the ball all the way in and keeping their head down - their partners should be able to see their `cap buttons`.

7.

FORCE OUT

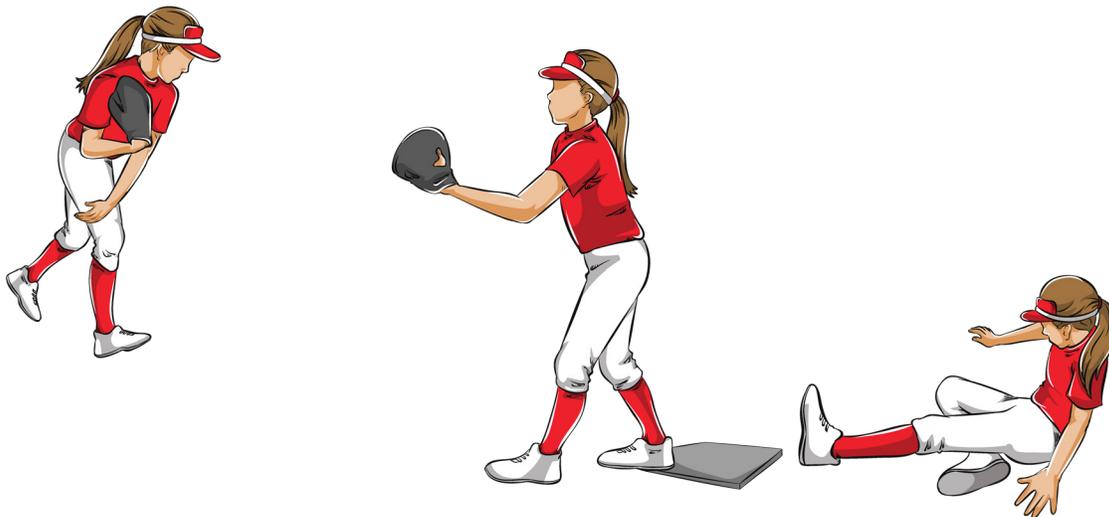
PURPOSE:

Teaches players how to get the runner going from 1st to 2nd out.

SETUP:

This drill can be done in the infield, or with cones set up 60 feet apart like in the diagram to replicate the bases. Split the team into 3 groups - one lined up to play shortstop, one to play 2nd, and one to be the baserunner at 1st.

The coach will line up at home plate with a bat and some balls.



INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The coach will hit a ground ball to either fielder. The runner will take off for 2nd on the hit.
2. The fielder will go get the ball while her teammate goes to cover 2nd.
3. The fielder will throw to the man on 2nd and get the runner out.
4. Rotate fielders from shortstop to 2nd. After every baserunner has gone twice flip the teams.

COACHING TIPS:

- The fielder on 2nd needs to focus on making the catch safely away from the runner coming into 2nd.
- This is a great baserunning drill as well - and works well as a game! See who pulls out the `W`, the baserunners or the fielders!

8.

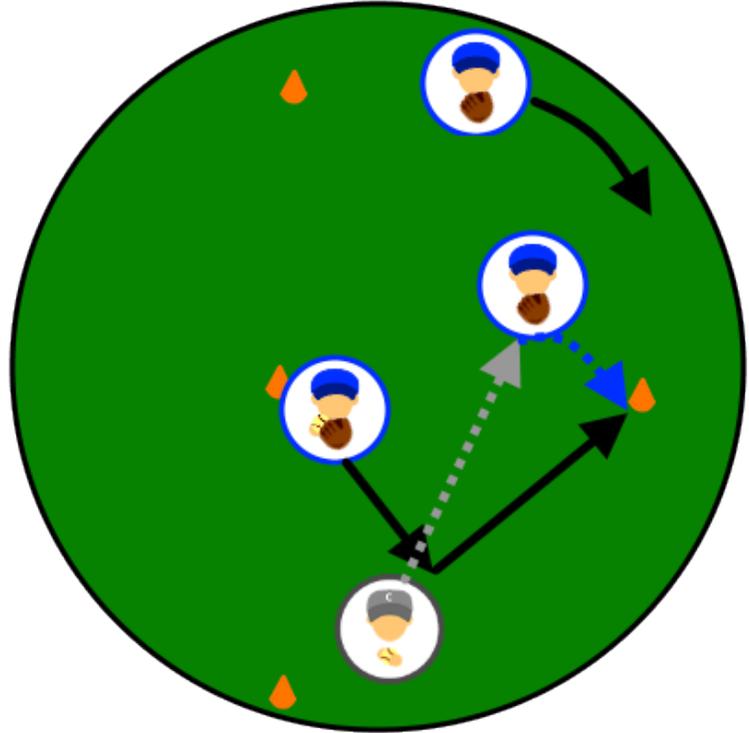
PITCHER COVERS

PURPOSE:

Teaches players how to properly cover first base and make the play.

SETUP:

This drill can be done in the infield, or with cones set up 60 feet apart like in the diagram to replicate the bases and pitcher`s mound. You will need to divide the players into 3 groups - one line at the pitcher`s mound, one line at 1st base, and another at 2nd. The coach will line up at home plate with a bat and a bucket of balls.



INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The coach will hit grounders to the right of 1st baseman, causing her to move off base.
2. The pitcher will run to cover 1st base.
3. The 2nd baseman will run behind the 1st baseman to be a backup to both field the ball and cover 1st if the pitcher forgets or is unable.
4. The 1st baseman will make the toss to the pitcher as they step onto the base.
5. Make sure to rotate players so they get a chance at every position.

COACHING TIPS:

- The correct technique for the pitcher is for them to beeline down to the 1st base line, then run up the line to 1st base from there.

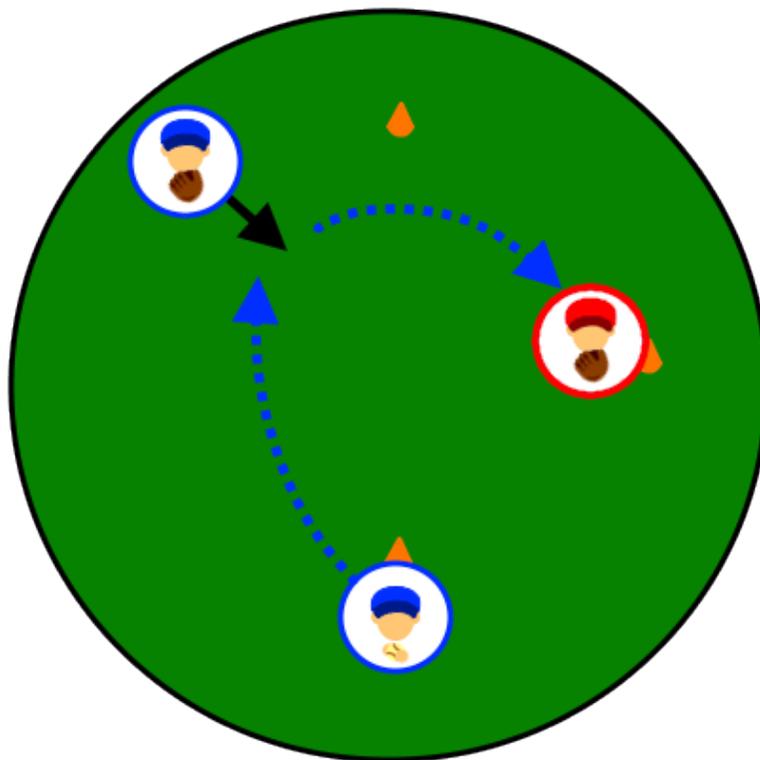
PURPOSE:

Gets players comfortable with fielding slow rollers and making the throw to 1st.

SETUP:

Can be done in the infield, or in the outfield or indoors. You only need two cones - one to represent 1st base and another for home.

Split the players into two groups, with one line to play defense and another at home with balls. You will also need a 1st baseman.

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. The player at home will roll the ball into the infield, with the fielder charging in, picking it up, and making the throw to 1st.
2. The fielder will grab her ball of the 1st baseman, and head to the back of the rollers line, as the roller heads to the back of the fielders line.
3. Have players alternate between scooping using the triangle technique and making bare hand grabs.

COACHING TIPS:

- For an extra challenge see how many consecutive throws the team can make without an error!

10.

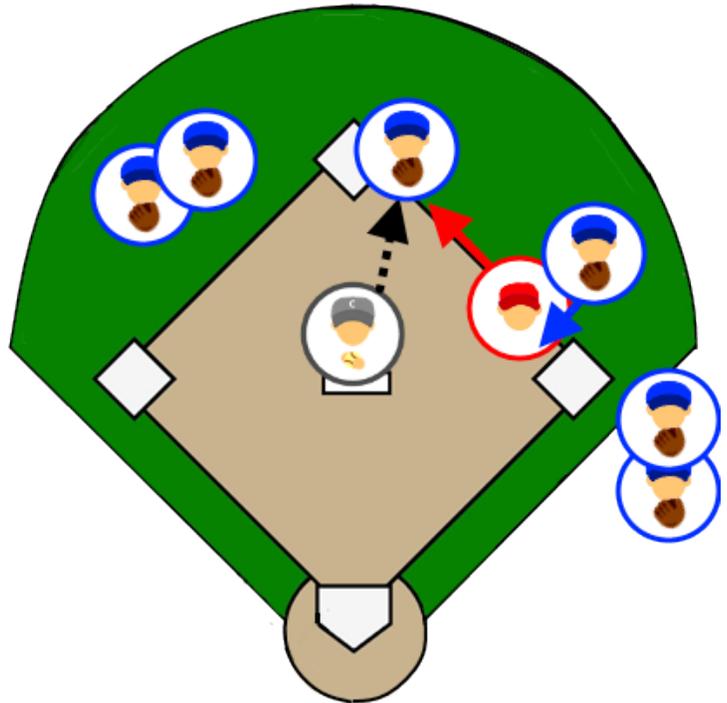
RUNDOWN DRILL

PURPOSE:

To teach defensive players how to properly execute a rundown.

SETUP:

Have players form two lines – one at 2nd and 1st base. Have a baserunner start at first base as well and a coach with a softball in the middle of the infield.



INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The coach will throw the ball, queueing the baserunner to take off for 2nd.
2. The 2nd baseman will field the ball, and step in front of the bag, holding the ball up and chasing down the runner.
3. The 1st baseman will stay in front of her bag, also closing in on the runner.
4. The 2nd baseman will hold the ball and chase down the runner to tag her out. If the throw is to first, the 1st baseman will have to either catch up to the runner or make the throw to 2nd.
5. The defense must get the runner out on either zero or one throws.

COACHING TIPS:

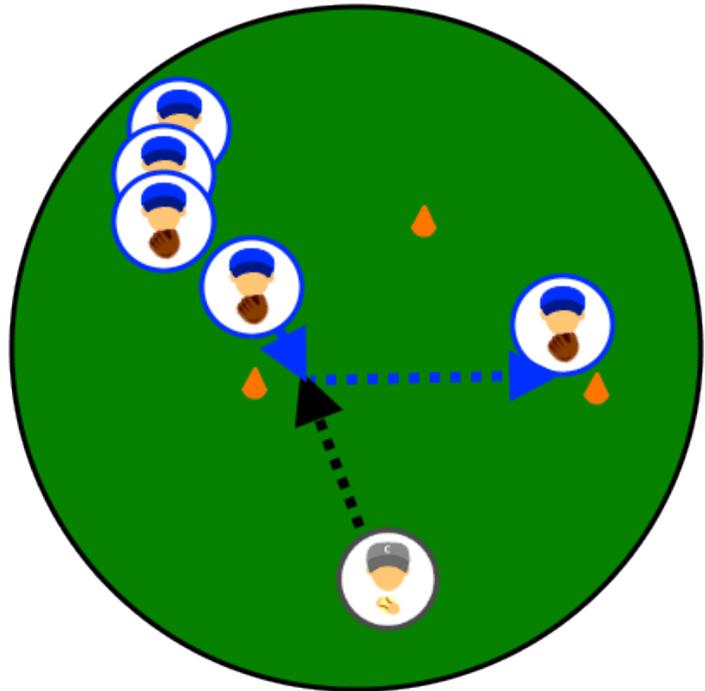
- For this drill, the baserunner will not change directions – the focus here is just on technique for the defense. For this reason, it can be a good idea to have the baserunner be a coach, as it can be tough for players to resist the urge to dance away from the tag.

PURPOSE:

To teach players how to properly field and make the throw to first.

SETUP:

Have the players form a line at shortstop, with one player at first and a coach at home with a bat and a ball.

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. The coach will hit a ball to the shortstop, who will field the ball using the triangle technique, and make the throw on target to first.
2. If the player successfully fields and makes the throw, they stay on for a chance at the 'highlight' – otherwise they go to the back of the line.
3. If the player does get the 2nd turn, have the player point where they want the next ball hit.
4. The player can then try for the highlight, by attempting a bare hand catch and throw to first or a diving backhand and throw to first off the ground.

COACHING TIPS:

- When a player completes a highlight, for fun, you can have the coaches rate it on a scale of 1 to 10, with the top score being your highlight of the night!



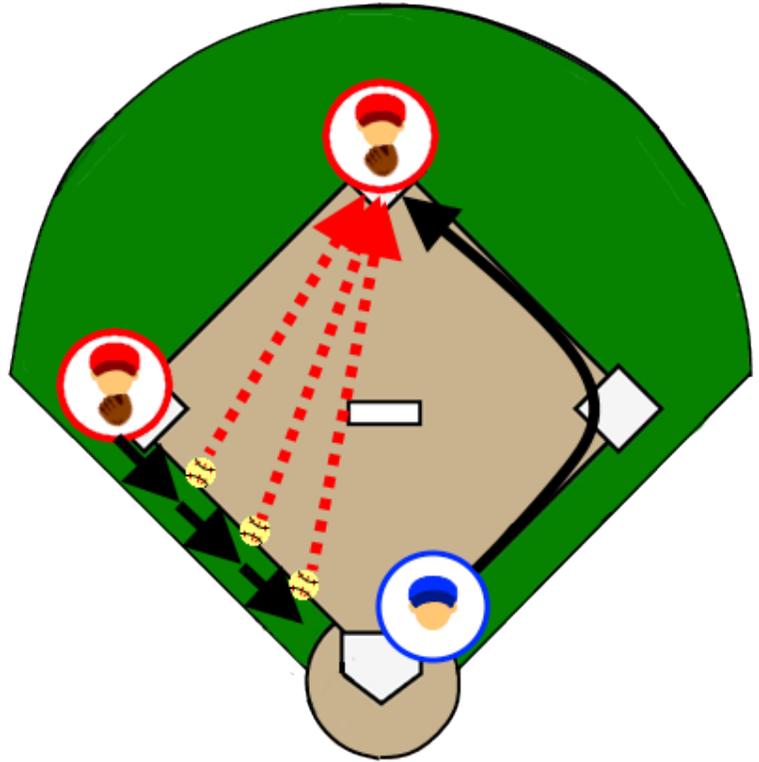
GAME PREP

PURPOSE:

To work on quickly securing the ball and making accurate throws in the infield.

SETUP:

Split the team into two groups - baserunners, and fielders. Have one fielder at 2nd base, with the rest in line at 3rd. The baserunner will begin at home. You will also need to place 3 softballs along the 3rd base line - they should all be on the ground between 3rd and the midway point to home.

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. The drill will begin on the coach's signal. The baserunner will take off, trying to leg out the double, while the 3rd baseman sprints over to the 1st ball.
2. The 3rd baseman will then proceed to pickup and throw each of the 3 softballs as quickly and accurately as she can.
3. If the fielder can throw all 3 balls to 2nd, on target, before the baserunner gets there - she wins!

COACHING TIPS:

- As players get more comfortable with the drill, feel free to move the balls further and further away from 3rd!

13.

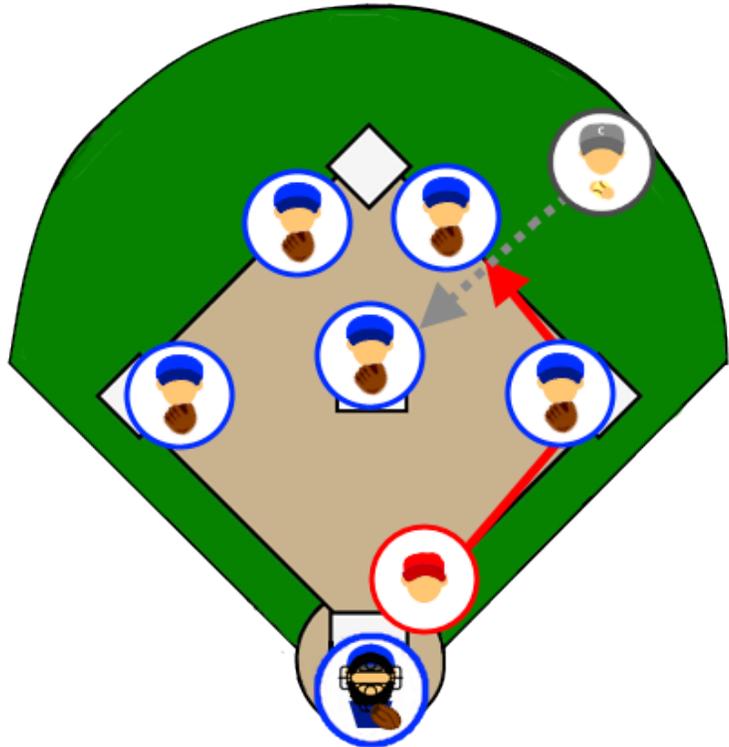
PICKLE DRILL

PURPOSE:

To teach players how to properly handle rundown situations.

SETUP:

Have the entire defensive infield lineup in, including the pitcher and the catcher. The rest of the players will be baserunners. You will also need a coach in right field with a softball.



INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The drill will begin on the coach's signal. The baserunner will take off from home and round 1st heading for 2nd.
2. The coach will throw the ball to the pitcher or shortstop, putting the runner in a rundown situation - or a 'pickle'.
3. The fielders will then try to get the runner out.
4. If the baserunner can get back safe, leave her on, and have the next baserunner go. The rundowns can be played between 2nd, 3rd and home plate as well, and points should be awarded for every out made or base taken!

COACHING TIPS:

- The goal is for the fielders to get the runner out with as few throws as possible. To do this, they will need to follow their throw, meaning that you should run at the baserunner before throwing, and that after you throw, you should be taking the place of the player who caught it.

14.

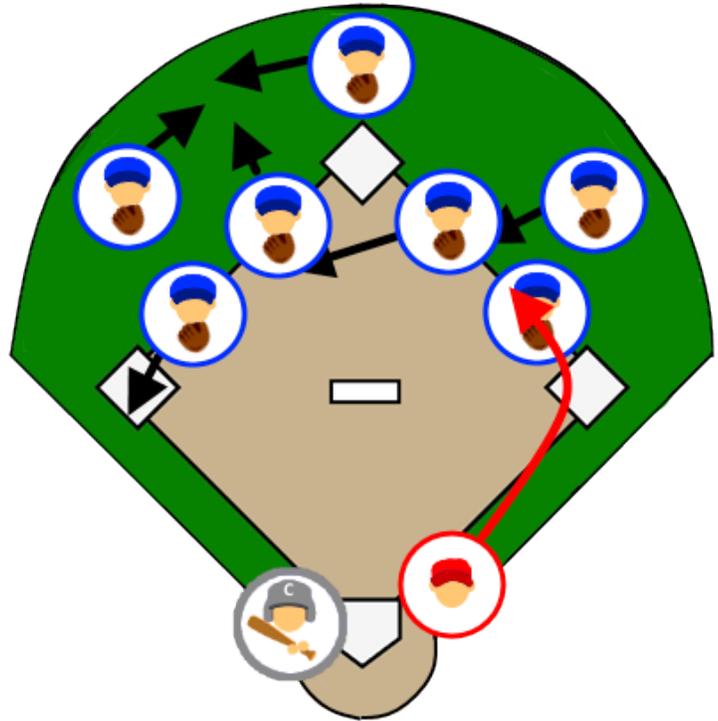
TEAM DOUBLE CUTOFFS

PURPOSE:

Works on double cut-offs in different defensive situations.

SETUP:

Divide your team into 3 groups of 4 - a catcher and 3 outfielders in one group, 4 infielders in another, and 4 baserunners in the last. Coach is at home plate with bat and balls.



INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The first baserunner starts at home. Coach calls out the number of outs and the game situation, then hits a line drive deep into the outfield. The baserunner will try to leg out a triple.
2. The outfielders should corral the ball, while the shortstop and 2nd set up the double cut-off to 3rd. One infielder will be the primary cut off man, or the lead cut off man. The other infielder will be behind her, as the relief valve to get the throws that the lead fielder can't handle.
3. The rest of the infield will shift accordingly, as seen in the above diagram.
4. After the throw has been made, give the defensive players a moment to get back in position, and bring another baserunner up.

COACHING TIPS:

- Have the outfielders either play back, or let the ball go all the way to the fence so as to better simulate a triple.
- This drill can also be done working on cut-offs to 1st, 2nd, and home as well!

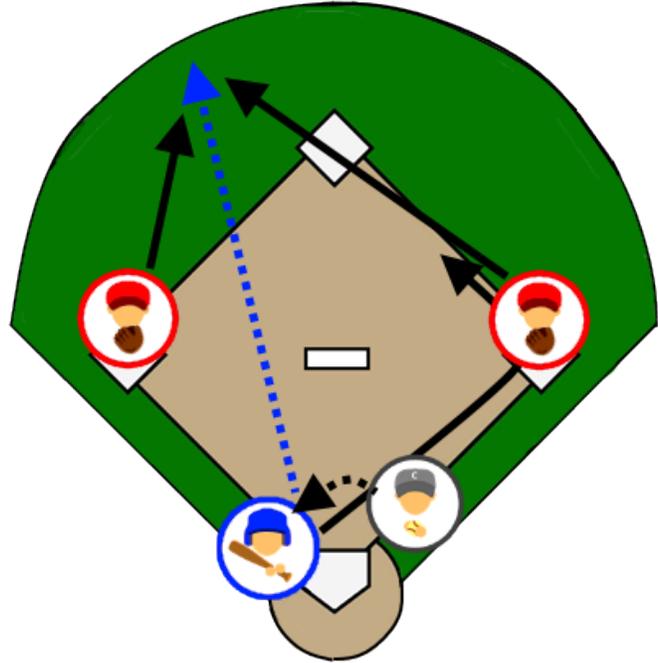
PURPOSE:

A fun game that gives defenders reps chasing down hits and baserunners a chance to work on running bases.

SETUP:

Split the team into two groups. One will form a line at home plate, wearing helmets. The other team will put players at both 1st and 3rd base with gloves.

Coach will be at home plate soft-tossing (or setting up the tee for each hitter)

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. The coach will soft toss the ball to the batter, who will hit it as far as she can and take off around the bases.
2. The fielders will both take off, chasing down the ball
3. The baserunner will keep running until both fielders have touched the ball, at which point two new fielders and a batter will step up.

COACHING TIPS:

You should keep track of the score and see which team records the most bases and award a winner. It's also a good idea to see which players can get the record for most bases off one hit – can anyone on your team hit an in the park homer?



PRACTICE PLANS



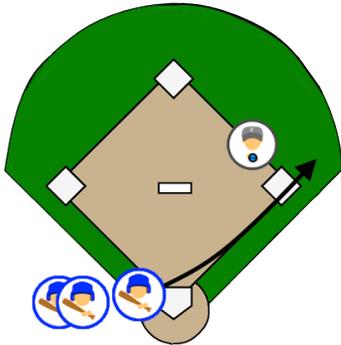
60 MINUTE SOFTBALL PRACTICE (BEGINNER)

Required: 2 coaches, balls, bats, tees, helmets, cones

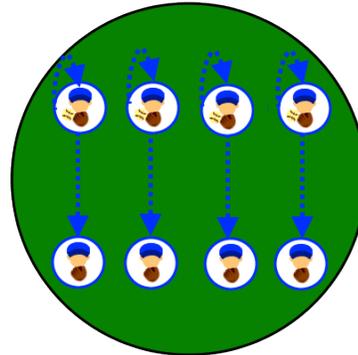
Warmup: 10 Mins (Full Team)

Dynamic Warmup: 5 mins (Jog & Skip Forward & Backward, High Knee Runs, Carioca, Walking Lunge)

Contact to 1st - 5 mins

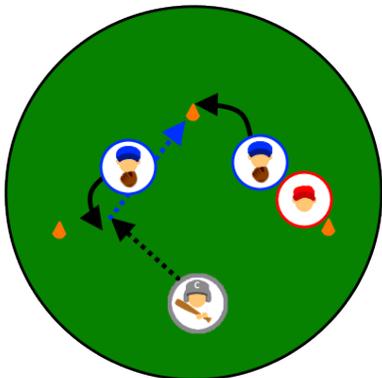


Catch & Toss - 5 mins

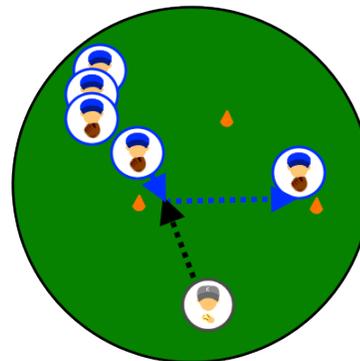


Stations: 20 Mins (Split Team Into Two Groups and Rotate Through Each Drill For 10 Mins)

Force Out - 10 mins (Outfield)



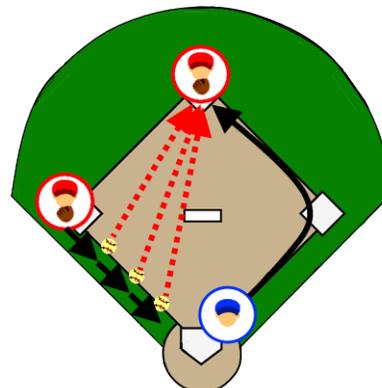
Highlight Drill - 10 mins (Infield)



Game Preparation: 15 Mins (Full Team)

Countdown

Split team into baserunners and fielders. Baserunner tries to run from home to second before 3rd baseman can pick up and throw three consecutive balls to 2nd.



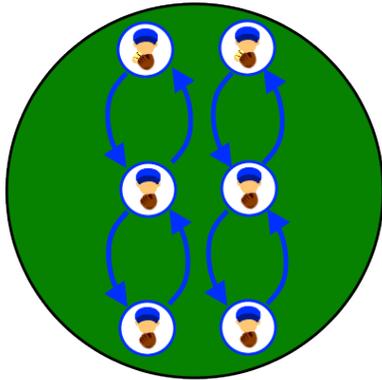


60 MINUTE SOFTBALL PRACTICE (BEGINNER)

Required: 2 coaches, balls, bats, tees, helmets, cones

Warmup: 10 Mins (Full Team)

Relay Throwing Drill- 10 mins

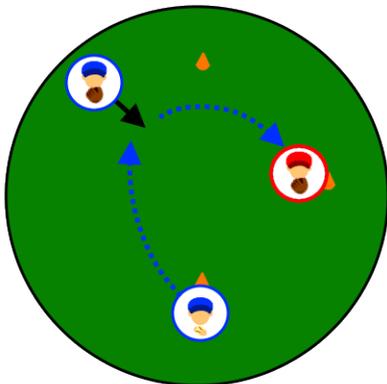


Short Hops - 5 mins

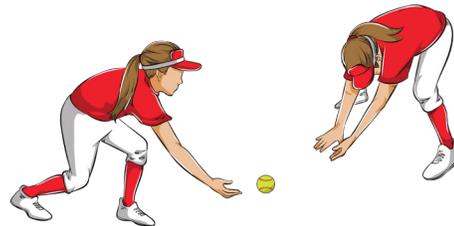


Station Block 1: 20 Mins (Split Team Into Two Groups and Rotate Through Each Drill For 10 Mins)

Slow Rollers - 10 mins (Infield)



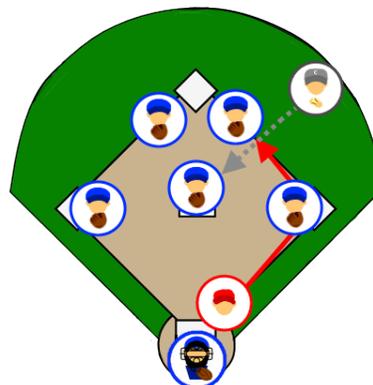
Cap Buttons - 10 mins (Outfield)



Competition: 15 Mins (Full Team)

Pickle Drill

Set up a full infield with baserunners line at home. Baserunner rounds 1st while coach puts ball into play and puts him into a pickle situation.





90 MINUTE SOFTBALL PRACTICE (INTERMEDIATE)

Required: 3 coaches, balls, bats, tees, helmets, cones

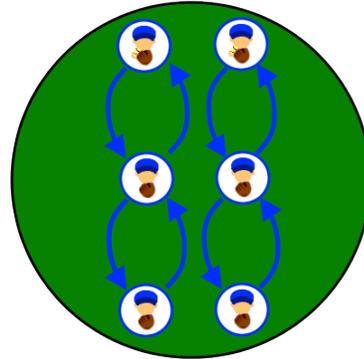
Warmup: 15 Mins (Full Team)

Dynamic Warmup: 5 mins (Jog & Skip Forward & Backward, High Knee Runs, Carioca, Walking Lunge)

Short Hops - 5 mins

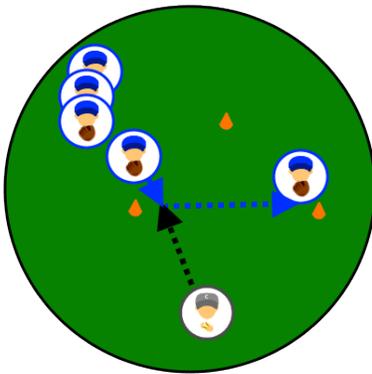


Relay Throwing Drill - 10 mins

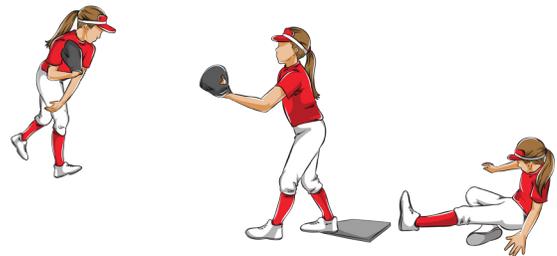


Station Block 1: 40 Mins (Split Team Into Two Groups and Rotate Through Each Drill For 20 Mins)

Highlight Drill - 20 mins (Infield)



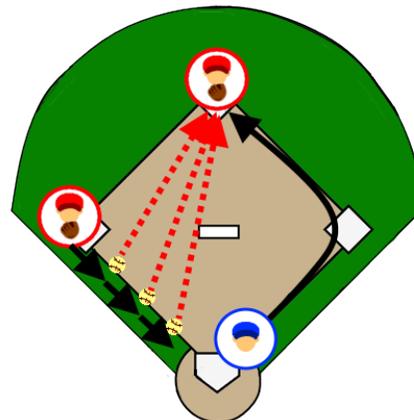
Force Out - 20 mins (Outfield)



Game Preparation: 20 Mins (Full Team)

Countdown - 25 mins

Split team into baserunners and fielders. Baserunner tries to run from home to second before 3rd baseman can pick up and throw three consecutive balls to 2nd.





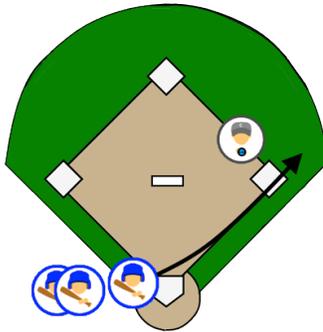
90 MINUTE SOFTBALL PRACTICE (INTERMEDIATE)

Required: 3 coaches, balls, bats, tees, helmets, cones

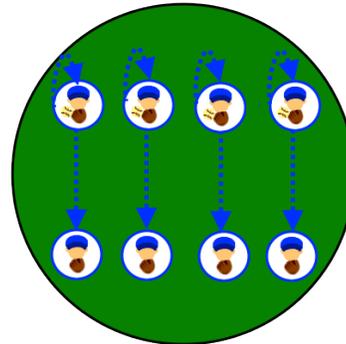
Warmup: 15 Mins (Full Team)

Dynamic Warmup: 5 mins (Jog & Skip Forward & Backward, High Knee Runs, Carioca, Walking Lunge)

Contact to 1st - 5 mins

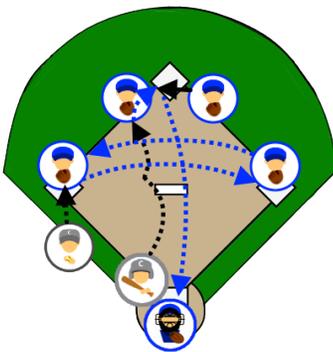


Catch & Toss - 5 mins

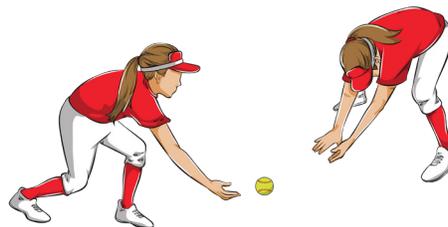


Stations: 45 Mins (Split Team Into Two Groups and Rotate Through Each Drill For 15 Mins)

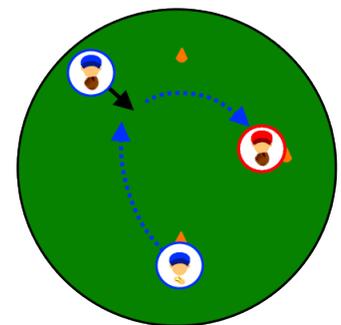
Corners & Middles 15 mins (Infield)



Cap Buttons 15 mins (Outfield)



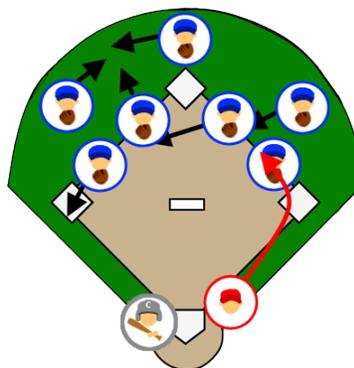
Slow Rollers 15 mins (Outfield)



Game Preparation: 20 Mins (Full Team)

Team Double Cut-offs

Coach hits a deep line drive to the fence. Baserunner tries to run from home to 3rd. Fielders set up a double-cutoff and try to make an out.





120 MINUTE SOFTBALL PRACTICE (ADVANCED)

Required: 3 coaches, balls, bats, tees, helmets, cones

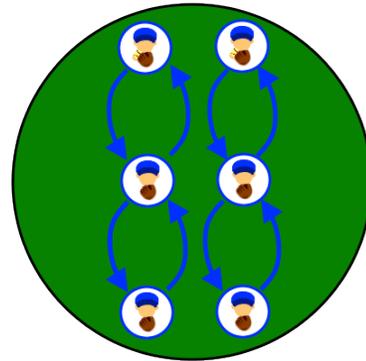
Warmup: 20 Mins (Full Team)

Dynamic Warmup: 5 mins (Jog & Skip Forward & Backward, High Knee Runs, Carioca, Walking Lunge)

Short Hops - 5 mins

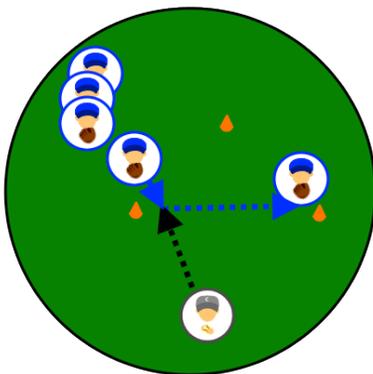


Relay Throwing Drill - 10 mins

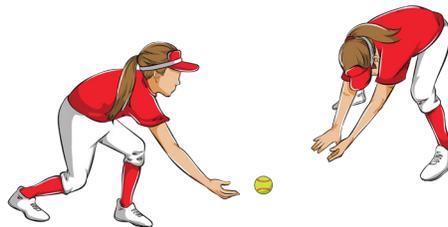


Stations: 45 Mins (Split Team Into Two Groups and Rotate Through Each Drill For 20 Mins)

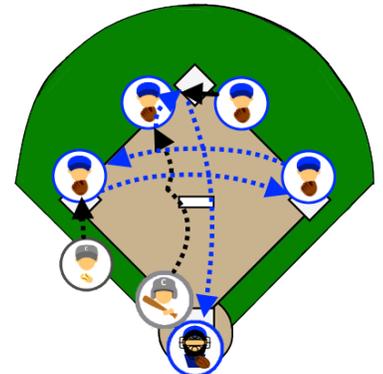
Highlight Drill
15 mins (Outfield)



Cap Buttons
15 mins (Outfield)



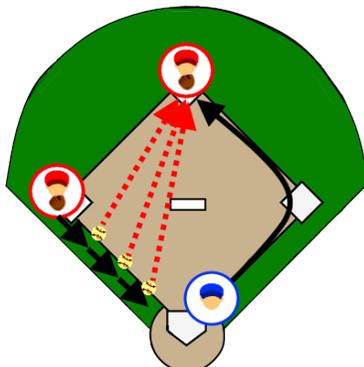
Corners & Middles
15 Mins (Infield)



Game Preparation: 50 Mins (Full Team)

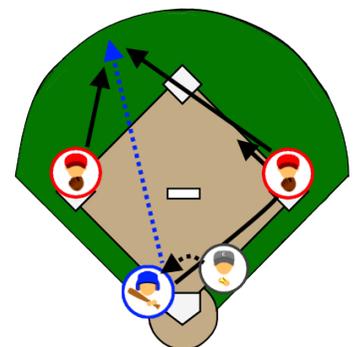
Countdown - 25 mins

Split team into baserunners and fielders. Baserunner tries to run from home to second before 3rd baseman can pick up and throw three consecutive balls to 2nd.



Thunder Ball - 25 mins

Fielders start at 1st and 3rd. Batter hits deep fly ball, and tries to advance as far as she can until both fielders touch the ball, ending her turn.





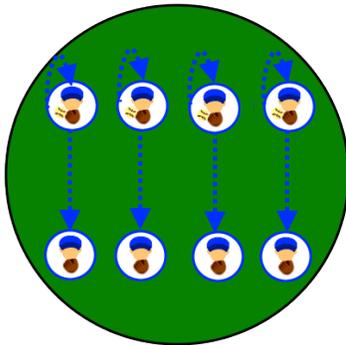
120 MINUTE SOFTBALL PRACTICE (ADVANCED)

Required: 2 coaches, balls, bats, tees, helmets, cones

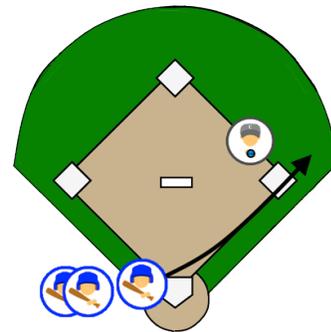
Warmup: 20 Mins (Full Team)

Dynamic Warmup: 5 mins (Jog & Skip Forward & Backward, High Knee Runs, Carioca, Walking Lunge)

Bare hand Catch & Toss - 10 mins

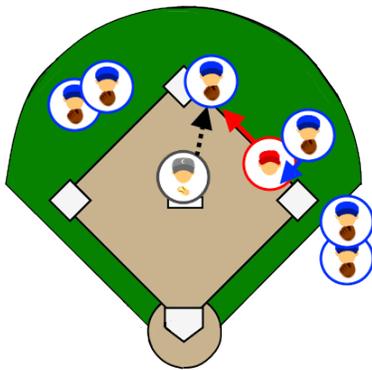


Contact to 1st - 5 mins

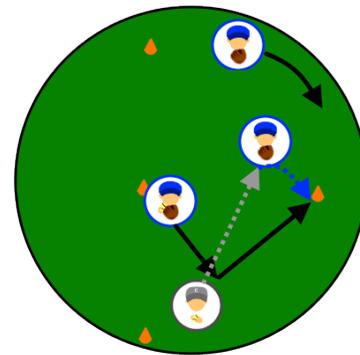


Stations: 40 Mins (Split Team Into Three Groups and Rotate Through Each Drill For 15 Mins)

Rundown Drill - 20 mins (Infield)



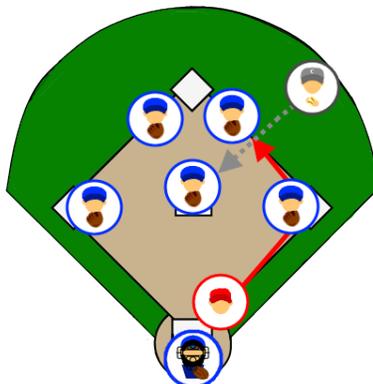
Pitcher Covers - 20 mins (Outfield)



Game Preparation: 60 Mins (Full Team)

Pickle Drill - 30 mins

Set up a full infield with baserunners line at home. Baserunner rounds 1st while coach puts ball into play and puts him into a pickle situation.



Team Double Cut-offs - 30 mins

Coach hits a deep line drive to the fence. Baserunner tries to run from home to 3rd. Fielders set up a double-cutoff and try to make an out.

