

Softball Practice Drills - Loop Drill

Loop Drill—Line up players in foul territory at 3B. One girl is up in fielding position even with 3B. A first baseman is needed as is a catcher. The softball coach begins by placing a softball in the pitcher's circle.

Then, the coach hits a ground ball to the player at 3B. The player is to field the softball and throw to 1B. Then, she is to retrieve and throw the ball from the circle to 1B. She is then to make a loop around 2B and be in fielding position at SS when the coach hits another ground ball.

The fielder fields the softball and throws home and the catcher then rolls a ball to the charging fielder who fields and throws to 1B for the last time to end her round. The next player steps up in fielding position at 3B, the previous fielder goes to play 1B, and the previous first baseman goes to catcher.

This cycle continues until all have had a chance to go through the drill.

Softball Fielding Drills - Roll and Shuffle

Line the girls up in the left field. The first girl stands at second without a glove, legs apart and begins to shuffle towards third. The softball coach is on the mound rolling softballs slowly to the girl as she begins shuffling. The goal is to scoop the ball with both hands back towards the pitcher without letting a ball pass through her legs, as many times as possible before she gets to third (much like a pin ball machine).

Repeat this softball drill from third to second. It can be a competition as well, the further in the rounds you go, the more balls you are rolling, you can even have more than one roller to complicate thing, and for added difficulty you can make them move right or left.

Lead and Read

With my high school softball team I practice pitching, base running, and defense simultaneously. The pitcher gets signs from the catcher and works on all their pitches, speeds and locations. The base runners practice getting off the bag on the release. I have the next runner get in line with the bag and pitcher and give feedback i.e. "you're late, early ,perfect" etc. The runners act just like they would in a game.

I call this "**lead and read**". Run if it is a wild pitch or pass ball. They have to also read the runner(s) in front of them. The 3rd component is I have the catcher call pitchouts and pickoffs to practice this aspect of softball defense, and it keeps the runner's heads up just like a game.

You can have girls at every base to involve more people or just use 1st and second or 1st and 3rd. I also mix it up and give signs such as steal or delayed steal. Our defense changes signs as we rotate runners and infielders which is good in case our signs get picked up in a game. Hope this helps someone.

Overthrow Drill

One of the softball infield drills I use with my team is called the **Overthrow Drill**. The idea of this softball drill is to work on players positioning themselves in case of a bad throw or overthrow.

- All players take their position on the softball field.
- One player in the infield is given the ball and they choose where they want to throw the ball.
- The throw must be out of reach of the intended player on purpose making the other position player who should be backing up to get the ball.
- They then overthrow the ball to another position allowing another backup to take place.

This can go on until the softball coach stops the drill. This works well with pitchers in determining where they need to be at all times. Everyone on the field stays alert because they never know when they will be called on to backup a throw.

Station Speed Drill

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Have all the girls line up behind third base with one on first in fielding position. The first player in line moves into position at third.

Hit a grounder or fly to third who must field the softball and attempt the throw to first. The player will do the same for each infield position (SS, 2nd, P) in quick succession until finally replacing the player at first who, in between each throw attempt from the fielder, must field the throw, tag the bag and get back into position.

This teaches all players fielding from every infield position and the pace keeps them active. As performance improves, an additional player can be added at second to the rotation to simulate a double-play.

Trash Can Drill

I sent out a request recently for my newsletter subscribers to send in their favorite softball throwing drills. Check out this one below. The improvements you'll see in your players make this one a winner.

One softball drill that has worked for us:

Have the kids line up on second base.

Put a large trash can lying down on home plate.

Have the kids throw the ball into the trash can from second base.

Simple Throwing Drill

A simple softball throwing drill to work on strength and accuracy:

A line at each base, catchers and pitchers at home, who throw to second (second and short), who throw to third (third and out), who throw to first (first).

We do this softball drill throughout the season, having a goal of how many cycles we can do without dropping it. If the softball drops it starts over at home. The players rotate through their line as they throw. We increase the number of cycles as we become successful.

Scatter Drill

Scatter Drill: Scatter a bucket of balls behind SS (in shallow LF) and then in short RF. Have one girl go at a time. With their back facing home plate, have the girls pick up each ball, turning and throwing to either 2B, 3B, or home. A softball coach or another player can call out which base the fielder/thrower is to throw to. Have each player make as many throws as you wish.

Expect Anything Drill

Expect Anything Drill—have girls form a line about 30 or 40 feet from a softball coach. Instruct them to sprint (one at a time) towards the coach and the coach is to throw anything at them as they approach (line drive, pop up, ground ball, etc.).

A good softball coaching tip that sometimes goes overlooked—have the baserunners leave late from third base (when the softball is halfway to home plate) for three reasons:

#1) so she never gets called out at third for leaving early;

#2) so she doesn't get picked off at third;

#3) so if there is contact, the base runner doesn't have to lead, stop, gather momentum and head home. She just sees that the ball is down, and advances to score.

Soft Hands Drill

If you're coaching youth softball, you're constantly trying to come up with fresh ideas for softball practice. This is a softball drill I like to use to work on soft hands and footwork.

Have two girls stand across from each other, 3-5 feet. This can be done bare-handed or with paddle gloves. One player starts with the softball and rolls it to her partner who fields it with soft hands and then rolls it back to the player that started the softball drill. The whole time they are rolling the ball to each other they are shuffling their feet side to side and keeping their bodies in front of the ball. The girls also need to keep their butts down.