



# The Baseball Drill Book

By

Ben Sondgeroth

Morrison High School

Head Varsity Coach



## **Throwing Routine**

This routine should be followed at all levels in order to increase a player's ability to throw the proper way.

- Wrist flips (10 per partner) should be done at 10 feet
  - Players stand 10 feet apart, have feet parallel to each other, elbow should be rested in glove and at a 90 degree angle, they should then flip the ball with their wrist to their partner.
- Form throws (10 per) 25-30 feet depending on age
  - Form should have ball extended behind the player's ear with wrist perpendicular to the elbow, front arm should be pointed at the target with elbow parallel to the front throwing shoulder. In this drill the feet remain in the throwing position and the player pauses and holds the form position before throwing the ball.
- Walk into throws 50-60 feet depending on age
  - For this drill the player takes one step into the throw and brings their arms up to the form position pausing for a split second and then throwing to their partner
- Extend catch to long toss
  - Long toss should be monitored to be a max range of the player's ability to one hop his partner. Once that distance is reached no more than five throws should take place before they bring it in
- Quick toss to finish
  - Rapid throwing in order to increase quickness of hands and feet in the ball to glove exchange

## **Catching Drills**

### **Receiving Drills**

#### **Tennis Ball Receive**

Catcher will be in receiving position holding tennis ball in his palm. Catcher should leave his index finger, middle finger, and thumb available to catch the ball when tossed to him. This drill promotes soft hands.

#### **Short Hop Receiving**

Catcher is in receiving position and coach throws short hops at him, catcher must react quickly with hands. Extend this drill out by making the catcher slide and make "game savers" by going to his forehand and backhand.

#### **Balance Beam**

A simple 2x4 nailed to two other 2x4's will work for this drill. The catcher takes his stance on the board and focuses on ankle sway and balance while receiving.

### **Blocking Drills**

## **Blocking Ladder**

The coach should put a series of baseballs in a parallel row. The catcher should start at the beginning of the ladder and block the first ball, then hop up and move on to the next ball... This drill teaches balance and lateral mobility. It should be repeated to both sides with no more than 5 balls in the ladder total.

## **Half Blocks**

The catcher will be in the final blocking position with the coach throwing balls at him. Goal of this drill is to have catcher in the proper "C" position and keep ball from rolling away on the recover.

## **Assisted Blocks**

For new catchers have coach stand behind player and push his hips toward the direction they need to slide. Teaches direction and proper form.

## **Freestyle Blocks**

No rules for this drill just have them keep the ball in front at all costs.

## **Block and Recover**

Catcher must block ball and recover the block as quick as possible. Direct the catcher to look at a bag to practice "freezing" the runner.

## **Gain Ground Drill**

Place a mark at the feet of the catcher, have them block, and check to make sure they are moving forward when blocking the ball.

## **Throwing Drills**

### **"T" Pops**

Draw a T in the dirt or use lines in a gym. Have catcher stand on the horizontal line and "pop" onto the vertical line. They should stay low and have both feet clear the horizontal line.

### **Gain Ground Drill**

Catcher should start in stance and "pop" continually moving forward to a distance determined by the coach.

### **Fungo Throws**

Have the catchers make their pops while the coach holds the fungo over their head. This is to make sure the catcher stays low and avoids popping up.

### **Glove to Ear**

Catcher works on transfers from glove to throwing in this drill. Catcher can be standing up and playing catch with a partner at about 10-15 feet. They will have glove out in front of them and working on transitioning baseball quickly.

## **Infield Drills**

### **Pick Ups**

With partner have player shuffle a 5 yard distance while partner rolls a ball to the end spot. Player must keep his hand down as if fielding the ball and give a solid flip back to the thrower before shuffling back to field the second ball rolled by the partner.

### **Ground Balls on Knee**

Glove side knee should be on the ground and the player should work on fielding the ball out in front of them and funneling it up to the belly button. They will then roll the ball back to their partner.

### **Short Hops (can be on knee or standing)**

Work on all angles here, but make sure it is a one hop short hop to increase reaction time and quick hands.

### **Quick Toss**

This drill works on fast exchange of the ball from the glove to the hand and release. Can increase difficulty if a flat paddle is used.

### **Quick Toss Races**

Set up a race with partners trying to reach a certain number of throws first.

### **Slow Roller Drill**

Coach hits a slow roller to the player. Work on attacking the ground ball, going down with two hands, setting feet, and making the throw.

### **Shuffle and Throw**

Field ground balls, take three shuffles and make the throw. This drill works on keeping feet set and not rushing a throw.

### **Field, Pause, Throw**

Player's field the ground ball, pause in the throwing position, and make the throw.

### **Paddle Fielding**

Using flat paddles or gloves the players will work on fielding ground balls. They can be hit with a fungo or thrown with a partner.

## **Fielding Games**

### **Knockout Ground Balls**

Players play knockout just as in basketball but with fielding groundballs.

### **“Jail”**

Split team into two teams, designate an area to be each team’s jail. Teams alternate sending a player to the middle to field a ground ball, if the player makes an error they are sent to “jail” and cannot come out until the other team sends a player to their jail. Game ends when all players from one team are in jail.

### **H.O.R.S.E.**

Players play the same way as in the basketball game. If they make an error they take a letter and when they spell it out, they are out of the game.

### **21 Outs**

The infield must make 21 outs in a row on the field, with base runners running to first. If the infield makes an error they go back to zero and must run to the fence and back as a punishment.

## **Hitting Drills**

### **Upper Body Hands Drills**

#### **Top Hand-Bottom Hand Swings**

Player will hold the bat at the top of the grip with either the top hand or bottom hand. Helps player develop how to get directly to the baseball with both hands.

- Can be done on one knee with front leg extended out
- Soft toss
- Front Toss

#### **Knee swing Drill**

Player is on their knees and coach is in the front toss position. Player cannot drop their bat head or the bat will hit the ground.

#### **Chair Drill**

Player sits in a chair and hits balls off the tee. Wraps his feet around the base of the chair to lock them in. Focuses on the upper body.

#### **Wide Stance Swings**

Hitters feet are spread far apart to not allow the legs to move. This isolates the top half.

### **High Tee drill**

Tee is placed high and inside on the hitter and should have the ball below the pec line. This makes sure the hitter is bringing his hands right to the baseball and is not dropping them or looping. Tee should be placed on a bucket or just extended to full height. Result should be a line drive into the net

### **Two Tee Drill**

A tee will be place in the hitting zone at contact with a ball on it. The other tee will be behind the first tee about a foot with no ball on it and it being raised up above the second tee. This forces the hitters hands into creating a downward angle to the ball.

## **Lower Body Drills**

### **Swinging Squats**

Player takes a normal swing and after finishing it they must touch their back knee to the ground. Works on balance as well as getting their back foot through heel above the toe.

### **Tire behind the back foot**

Place an object behind the back heel of the hitter. This will force him to clear the object with his heel in order to get the back leg through to the hitting zone.

### **Happy Gilmore Drill**

Player sets up behind the tee a step, and has to cross behind, then step, and they are back into the hitting position. They will then hit the ball. This drill works on getting the back leg through the hitting zone.

## **Pulling the Head**

### **Ball to Belt**

Coach soft tosses “soft” balls at the hitters belt while directly across from him.

### **Inside Outside Tee Drill**

One tee is set up on the inside corner another is set up on the outside corner. They both have baseballs on them and when the hitter loads the coach will call out inside or outside for the hitter to hit.

### **Angle front toss**

The coach will set up front toss at a forty-five degree angle to the hitter. If he is facing the hitters front side he should throw the ball to the hip of the hitter to allow him to get his hands

to the inside pitch quicker. If he is facing the hitter's backside he will throw the ball to the back outside corner. The hitter must wait on the ball and hit it up the middle.

### **Finished Swing Drill**

The hitter will hit a ball off the tee and while holding the finished position will reset only his hands. He then has to hit another ball from this position which forces his front side from flying open.

## **Extension Drills**

### **Two tee drill**

The first tee is set up in the middle of the plate at regular contact. The second tee is set up at the point in the hitter's swing where complete extension is made. The hitter then has to hit both baseballs, extending through completely to hit the second ball.

### **¾ swing drill**

During front toss the hitter will take a swing but attempt to stop at complete extension and not follow through.

### **3 ball drill**

Three balls are placed in front of home plate and the hitter has to extend the bat past the 3<sup>rd</sup> baseball.

### **Power Bat**

Coach bounces an old soccer ball or basketball to the hitter and they must extend through it to create bat speed and extension.

## **Visual Drills**

### **Different Colored Balls**

The horseshoe of each ball will be colored differently, and with each color the hitter must react differently. For example a ball colored red would mean take, and a white ball would mean hit. Could also use for working on pitch location, going the other way, bunting, and recognizing off speed pitches.

### **Pencil Drills**

Hold pencil at arm's length and focus on the number, then move it towards the body, when it begins to blur extend arm out and repeat.

**2 pencils-** One as close to eyes without blurring and the other at arm's length. Switch focus between the two.

## **Team Drills**

### **Team Base Running**

Field is set up for live BP, have a runner on each base and a hitter in the box. The hitter will be hitting live. The runners each have a designation: 1B runner is working on reading the pitcher on a steal and taking off with the pitch, 2B and 3B are advancing based on the hitter's contact made. If the hitter takes the pitch, those two runners stay and the hitter goes to first. If the hitter makes contact the runners make the appropriate action at 3B i.e. tag up on a fly ball, stay home on a ground ball to 3B. The drill is to practice reading the ball off the bat and making smart base running decisions

### **“Progressions”**

This is a series of drills that all players should go through immediately after their throwing program to start practice. It is the best way to practice and review fundamentals. It is an absolute must!

#### **Infield**

- Pick ups – 2 sets of 20 each partner
- Ground balls on knee with flat paddle or no glove (10 each)
- GB's with glove standing 10-15 feet apart (10 each)
- Short hops (10 each)
- Middle Infielders work on DP footwork, 3B and 1B work on fielding bunts, and picks

#### **Outfield**

- Pick ups – 2 sets of 20 each partner
- Dominican Drill- start on knee, roll GB, field ball, lean forward and stand into throwing position, emphasize footwork
- Fielding GB's into crow-hop with partner
- Drop-step drill – 10 each side
- Z-Drill - 3 balls throw 1<sup>st</sup> ball over right shoulder, catch, throw over left shoulder, then finish with ball over right shoulder (repeat 5 times each)

#### **Catchers**

- Dry Blocks (10)
- Full Blocks (10)
- Block and Recover (10)
- Hand Transitions (10)
- T-Pops (10)
- T-Pops with ball (10)
- Throw downs (5)



## **Conditioning Drills**

**Getting caught in a run-down:** Have the players run laterally for 10 yards and then sprint.

**Rounding bases:** Have the players run a curve for 10 yards and then transition to sprinting.

**Stealing bases:** Have the players start in a sideways position and then take-off sprinting.

**Tagging Up:** Have the players get into a proper standing start and then take-off sprinting

**See if a fly-ball is caught:** Have the players shuffle for 10 yards and then transition to sprinting.