

Hi Coach! Welcome to Softball Spot!

In this free PDF, we're going to check out 5 fundamental drills that will rapidly improve your team's skill level. There's something here for every phase of the game – fielding, baserunning, hitting, and pitching.

But before we get started with the drills, I want to address something just as important.

Motivating Your Kids!

At Softball Spot, our mission is to give coaches the tools and knowledge to engage their players, improve their skills, and create a positive softball experience for the entire team.

And a big part of that is building your athletes' self confidence and motivation! So, on the following page, we've provided a "cheat sheet" with 94 ways to encourage your kids and build their self-esteem. Feel free to print the sheet out and put it in your coaching binder (or save this file to your mobile device for easy access).

One last thing – if you enjoy the drills and want to see more, you can download the complete set of 34 fundamental drills by visiting this page:

<https://go.softballspot.com/essential-softball-drills>

Okay... enough pre-amble... let's get started!

- Coach Becky

94 Ways To Encourage Your Players and Build Their Self-Esteem

1. You're on the right track now!
2. You've got it made.
3. SUPER!
4. That's right
5. That's good.
6. You're really working hard today.
7. You are very good at that.
8. That's coming along nicely.
9. GOOD WORK
10. I'm happy to see you working like that.
11. That's much, much better!
12. Exactly right.
13. I'm proud of the way you worked today.
14. You're doing that much better today.
15. You've just about got it.
16. That's the best you've ever done.
17. You're doing a good job.
18. THAT'S IT!
19. Now you've figured it out.
20. That's quite an improvement
21. GREAT!
22. I knew you could do it
23. Congratulations!
24. Not bad
25. Keep working on it.
26. You're improving.
27. Now you have it
28. You are learning fast.
29. Good for you!
30. Couldn't have done it better myself.
31. Aren't you proud of yourself?
32. One more time and you'll have it.
33. You really make my job fun.
34. That's the right way to do it.
35. You're getting better every day.
36. You did it that time!
37. That's not half bad.
38. Nice going
39. You haven't missed a thing!
40. WOW!
41. That's the way!
42. Keep up the good work.
43. TERRIFIC!
44. Nothing can stop you now.
45. That's the way to do it.
46. SENSATIONAL!
47. You've got your brain in gear today.
48. That's better.
49. That was first class work.
50. EXCELLENT!
51. That's the best ever.
52. You've just about mastered it.
53. PERFECT!
54. That's better than ever.
55. Much better!
56. WONDERFUL!
57. You must have been practicing.
58. You did that very well.
59. FINE!
60. Nice going.
61. You're really going to town.
62. OUTSTANDING!
63. FANTASTIC!
64. TREMENDOUS!
65. That's how to handle that
66. Now that's what I call a fine job.
67. That's great.
68. Right on!
69. You're really improving.
70. You're doing beautifully!
71. SUPERB!
72. Good remembering.
73. You've got that down pat.
74. You certainly did well today.
75. Keep it up!
76. Congratulations. You got it right!
77. You did a lot of work today.
78. Well look at you go.
79. I'm very proud of you.
80. MARVELOUS!
81. I like that.
82. Way to go!
83. Now you have the hang of it
84. You're doing fine!
85. Good thinking.
86. You are really learning a lot.
87. Good going.
88. I've never seen anyone do it better.
89. Keep on trying
90. You outdid yourself today!
91. Good for you!
92. I think you've got it now.
93. That's a good (boy/girl).
94. Good job, (person's name).

KNOW WHERE TO GO

Skill Level: Beginner to Intermediate

Purpose:

Sometimes when the ball is hit, players just don't know where they are supposed to go. Often times, they will just sit around and watch the play develop and not go to where they really should be. This is a great drill to help them understand their responsibilities on the field.

Setup:

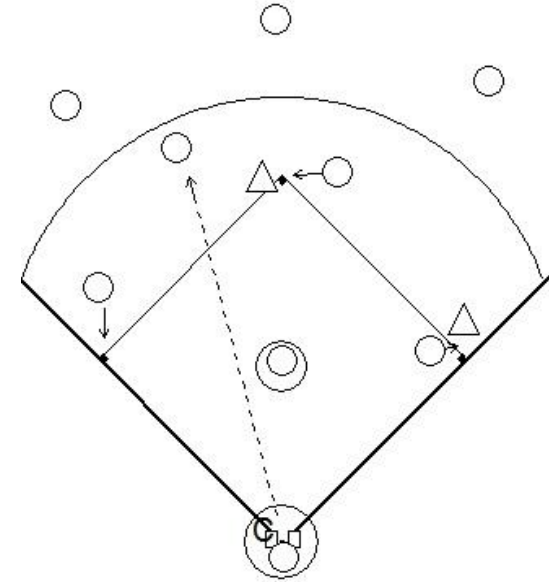
You need an entire infield to start, and you can add the outfielders later. You can increase difficulty by adding baserunners.

Execution:

1. As the players are in the field, you can call out situations. For example, what happens when a player hits a dribbler up the first base line?
2. First base runs after the ball, then second base (or pitcher) covers first, short covers second, etc.
3. You can go through several situations to get the players used to realizing that they have a responsibility on the field. They aren't supposed to be just standing around watching what everyone else is doing.

Coaching Tips:

- Make a game of it by rewarding the players who get to their positions first, after a scenario is called out.
- Further, to make the drill more interesting, you can add batting into the mix. You can run two drills at once: this one, and batters trying to hit a ground ball through the infield. This will help both sides.



Players learn their positional responsibilities during different defensive situations in this drill.

MAKE THE PLAY

Skill Level: Intermediate to Advanced

Purpose:

This drill builds from “Know Where To Go” by introducing live game play.

Softball has many different defensive combinations, and in this drill players gain an understanding of their responsibilities in different situations and how to make the right play when they are called upon.

Setup:

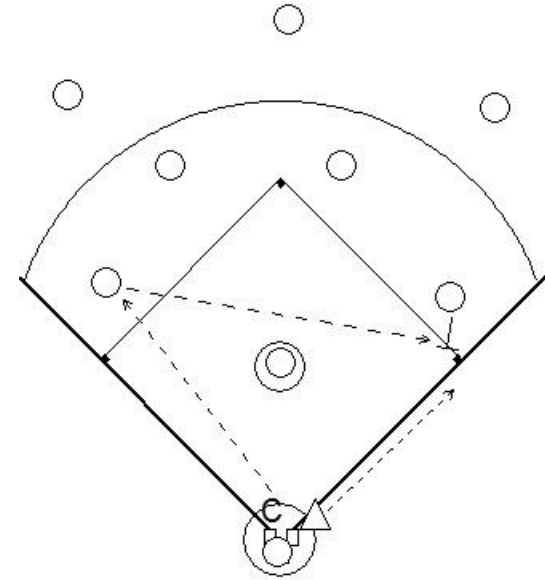
You need to field an entire defensive team for this drill. Along with that, you need one or two baserunners for this drill. The coach will be setting up different scenarios with the runners.

Execution:

1. This is your standard fielding drill, but with a twist. It isn't just a throw to first, although it could be.
2. The coach can set up any number of different plays to cover. It could be a player stealing bases, a fly ball with a runner tagged up on third, or a potential double play ball, etc.

Coaching Tips:

- Don't let the fielders know what is going to happen next. That way they need to read and react to the play that is going on.



Defensive players must read the situation and make the right play.

BASERUNNING RELAY

Skill Level: Intermediate

Purpose:

Running hard around the bases is important for the players to learn. This drill will keep them on their toes and have them compete against their teammates to stay ahead.

Setup:

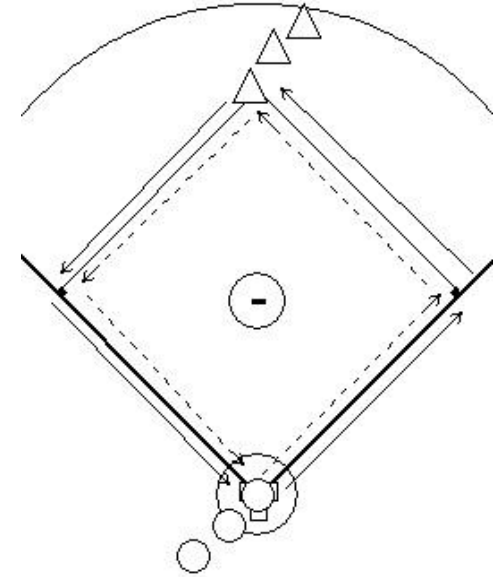
Two lines – one at home plate, the other at second base.

Execution:

1. On the coaches' signal for players to take off, the players on second sprint towards third, and then home, first, and back to second to tag their next teammate.
2. The runners from home do the same thing, only they round the bases in the correct order.
3. The teams will continue to do this, tagging the next player in line when they reach their team bag, until one team overtakes the other rounding the bases, or until all the players on one team have completed a circuit.

Coaching Tips:

- Make sure players are running hard, following tight paths and keeping their heads up so they can see in front of them.



This drill is both a great conditioning drill and a great way for players to learn the value of running the bases as fast as they can.

BALLOON HITTING DRILL

Skill Level: Intermediate

Purpose:

This drill teaches players the right stride length to take when they are hitting.

Setup:

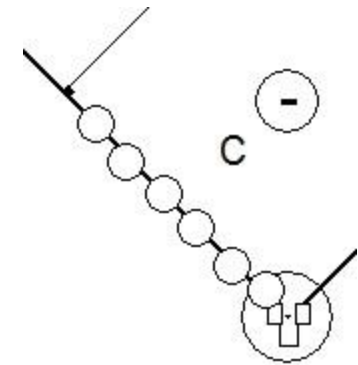
Line up 6 batters with nearly filled balloons. Don't fill the balloons up too much, as they will pop too easily. All batters should have bats and helmets to start.

Execution:

1. Each batter places a balloon between their thighs and assumes their batting stance.
2. When the batter strides forward on their swing, they need to keep the balloon from falling to the ground.

Coaching Tips:

- The ideal stride length is usually between 6-8 inches long. Some coaches call it a "toe tap" to emphasize that it should be light, quick and short, not a big lunging step.
- Balance is extremely important in making solid contact with the ball and will help a player develop hitting consistency.
- Striding too far (dropping the balloon) throws that balance off-kilter and doesn't allow for power hitting so watch for overstriding and correct it.



Players learn the importance of not overstriding when swinging the bat.

THE BEGINNING PITCHER

Skill Level: Beginner to Advanced

Purpose:

Players learn and work on the fundamentals of pitching – grip, wind up and delivery.

Setup:

A pitcher's mound, softballs and players that want to pitch.

Execution:

1. Less like a drill and more like basic instruction, you will provide a few basics to help your players get started as pitchers.

Grip –

To begin, you can teach the players the proper softball grip for a basic fastball. Most coaches will start with a four-seam fastball grip. In this grip, the index and middle fingers go across the horseshoe seam, as opposed to the two-seam fastball, where the fingers go with the seam.

The players should have a firm grip, but the ball should not touch the palm (the more friction, the less speed on the ball). This might take time for younger pitchers to get used to.

(Continued)



Four seam softball grip.

THE BEGINNING PITCHER CONT.

Windup –

Players need to learn the proper windup technique, as this is where they begin to generate the power behind their pitches. Here are the proper steps:

- Placement of foot in front of rubber (for push off)
- Bringing the ball to rest, the step, the kick, reaching back
- Uncoiling the body

Delivery –

The delivery may seem secondary in the entire equation, but it is crucial for a pitchers success.

The one element that is likely most important is to find a release point for a pitch that allows for more strikes. Hitting this release point is a matter of constant repetition, and takes time. This helps to deliver consistency in the pitches.

The different pitches may have different release points, but, in each pitch type, the release point should be relatively similar. Follow through after the pitch should be encouraged.

Coaching Tips:

- The skills of a pitcher are developed over time, and that time should be taken to make sure the technique is proper.
- You should choose to ease your pitchers into specialty pitches (curve ball, change up), as it can injure a player's arm with too much repetition as a young player.

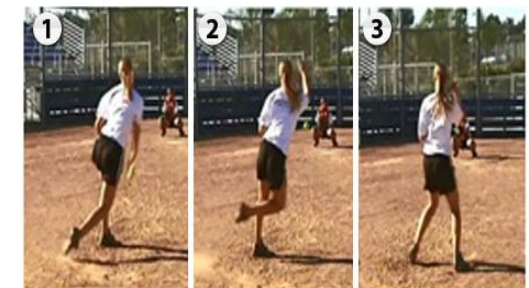


Stance

Backswing



Windup: Arm Circle and Stride in Motion



Delivery: Release and Follow Through

ENJOY THOSE DRILLS? WANT TO SEE MORE?

If you liked those sample drills, you're going to LOVE the Essential Softball Skills and Drills eBook.

It's jam-packed with 34 unique, fun and EFFECTIVE developmental drills for ages 8-16.

Everything you need for a full season of practices.

Each drill is broken down with simple step by step instructions, illustrations and diagrams.

It's easy to learn. And simple to teach.

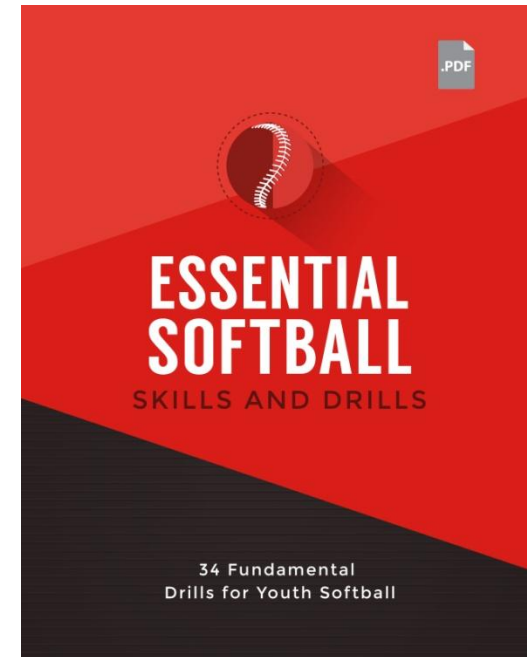
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