

## **Basic Hitting Drills (for all ages)**

- a. **Basic Hitting off tee** – you can do this into a backstop or tall fence to get more reps, or can have the other members of the group fielding and throwing batted balls toward a bucket or coach at the pitcher’s mound – remember to avoid having **all** kids standing around in the field while one kid is batting...KEEP EVERYONE BUSY as much as possible (you can work on fielding later).
- b. **Soft toss** – also can do this into a fence or backstop – batter hits into the fence, coach is kneeling and faces batter about 5 feet away at a 45-degree angle, “soft toss” ball underhanded toward batter’s front hip. Batter is in stance and in ready hitting position; ready to swing at ball and hit it into fence
  1. Also can use a larger ball for both drills above – beach ball (t-ball age), soccer ball, old basketball, kickball, etc. – this emphasizes taking a good hard cut, especially for kids whose swings are tentative. If using a heavier ball and the kid doesn’t take an aggressive swing, their bat may fling back and hit them, so emphasize proper technique/mechanics with an aggressive swing.
  2. **Hitting mechanics** - focus on good stance and hand position (Dry Swings)
    - a. Hands back (elbow does NOT need to “up” ...be relaxed and ready)
    - b. Don’t over grip. Hold lightly.
    - c. Line up 2<sup>nd</sup> set of knuckles (knuckles right above your ring)
    - d. Feet about shoulder width apart
    - e. Emphasize good hand position (the “load” position)
    - f. A step or foot tap is NOT necessary, but can be talked about in older levels
    - g. “Punch” the bat through the ball. Hands directly to the ball. If you punch someone will you take a big long loop to hit them or will go directly to them? Take hands directly to ball.
    - h. Keep Bat level through the hitting zone
    - i. Swing all of the way through the ball (this is where b1 above can help)
    - j. Wrists should roll over after hitting the ball and bat should end up near front shoulder
    - k. MOST IMPORTANTLY: Emphasize watching the ball
- c. **Advance Hitting off Tee** –place tee on home plate and have batter hit ball into field. Different drills are:
  1. Using 7 positions (no P or C), have batter hit ball to each position from the tee (using an aggressive swing).
    - a. For hitting to left-side of field, place tee/ball on front-inside portion of plate so batters learn that is where you pull the ball.
    - b. For hitting up the middle, place tee/ball directly in middle-center of plate.
    - c. For hitting to right side of field, place tee/ball on back-outside part of plate. This is where you hit behind the runner or right side of diamond.
- d. **Top/Bottom Hand (older level)** – Use small bat or choke up considerably on a normal bat. Younger kids can fold a towel up and swing with it in their hands.
  1. Front leg angled out, back leg bent at knee
    - a. Coach (or teammate) tosses ball soft toss style to batter. Batter keeps **top hand** up and drives it through the ball into net/fence. Bottom hand should be wrapped around waist or chest. Same thing when using bottom hand – keep top wrapped around waist/chest.
  2. This drill can also be done standing up with a tee or by soft toss



e. **Trunk Twists (any level)** – bat behind back at waist level

1. Tee in front of batter at normal position
2. Batter has bat behind bat at waist level with arms behind bat
3. Batter must rotate hips and waist and hit ball off tee with barrel of bat



f. **Wall Drill (any level)**

1. Batters line up against a wall or fence with their bat knobs against their belly button and the end of the barrel against the wall/fence.
2. They then bring the bat up and get in their hitting stance, but do NOT move any further away from the wall/fence.
3. Batter must swing the bat properly without hitting the fence/wall.
  - a. Teaches batters to get their hand through the ball.

- b. If batter drags his hands or has a long swing they will hit the wall. They will need to learn to shorten the swing and get hands out in front.



### Fielding Drills for all ages

#### **1. Creep**

- a. Begin at position and slowly creep forward as pitcher is delivering ball.
- b. Both feet should NEVER be still; always be moving
- c. Glove should be out in front of fielder, ready to field (back slightly bent as are knees when creeping)
- d. Take 5 to 10 minutes practicing this TRULY BASIC, yet necessary, drill every day or every other day.

#### **2. Glove Touches**

- a. Begin in good fielding position (back bent – you can sit a glass of water on your back and it won't fall off, glove out in front of your face at ground level – you should always see the glove, knees bent, and head up)
- b. Side step (usually from home to 1<sup>st</sup> or any base to the next) and touch your glove to the ground and look the ball (invisible – act like a ball is coming to them) into the glove and bring glove up into stomach all while keeping proper fielding technique.
- c. Repeat side steps continuously until you reach the base

#### **3. Alligator Fielding (beginning levels)**

- a. Glove hand out in front on ground and throwing hand above glove (like an alligator's mouth). As ball enters glove the players clamp down with top hand and bring ball into their belly (like an alligator's food would do).
- b. You can have players turn and throw to a base or just work on basic fielding of the ball. Many different things you can do with this drill.

#### **4. 3-ball Rolls (older levels)**

- a. Can do in between 2 bases or 2 corners of a gym
  - i. Start on one base and have a coach roll ball towards the other base (player runs in a LINE towards where ball will be intercepted). Player either backhands or fields normally (dependent on left/right handed fielder).
  - ii. Player fields ball CLEANLY, gets set, and throws ball to player at another base (or a person shagging for coach).
  - iii. Coach rolls another ball to the base where fielder originally started at ONCE FIELDER throws first ball to shagger/player in ii above.

- iv. Fielder runs to backhand/field normally (opposite of whichever way they fielded first ball) and fire a throw to shagger/player.
- v. Coach rolls final ball SLOWLY up the middle, in between the 2 bases once 2<sup>nd</sup> throw was mad and player now must charge the ball (assume it was a bunt) and run through it, field it cleanly, and make a good throw on the run. (Alternate Version: have players field it bare handed and throw to base on the run – more game like)
- vi. Once ALL THREE have been fielded and thrown cleanly a new fielder steps up and goes through the process. Players should NOT be jogging or walking in this drill...it needs to be fast paced.

**5. Fly balls (all levels)**

- a. Work on getting under the ball and catching it with TWO HANDS
- b. Ball should be caught (if a simple fly ball) slightly off-center, above throwing hand; this allows a simpler, smoother transfer into the throwing position once ball is caught.
- c. Older levels: Work on going back behind the ball and catching it while coming forward and then going into a crowhop and throw.