

# Outfield Drills

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# Obligatory Safety Comment

- Safety First!
  - 6U and 8U should always use low compression (soft) balls, especially for outfield drills
  - For 10U players, it may be best to do outfielding drills with low compression (i.e. soft) balls the entire season
  - Start with easy drills in the beginning of the season and have the players build confidence
  - In drills that involve runners, the runners must wear helmets

# And Importance of Stations

- Nothing is worse than a coach throwing a ball in the outfield to one player who is one of 10 girls in a line
- We recommend that the coach has multiple stations staffed by coaches and/or parents at a given practice and run multiple outfield drills in parallel

# Outfield Drills for Younger Players

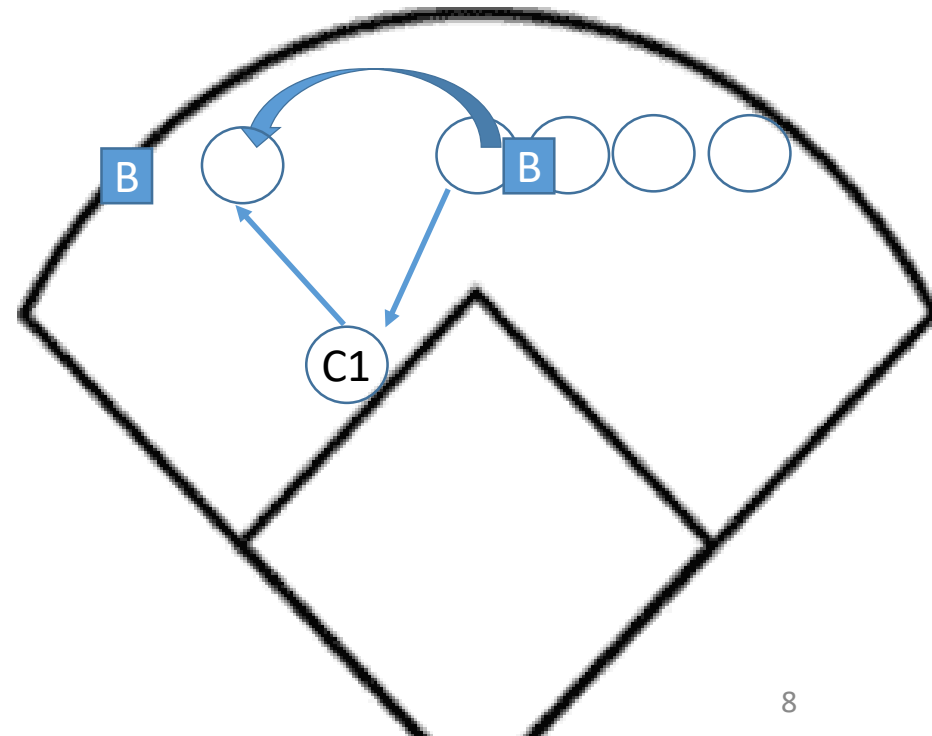
# 1. Self-Toss and Throw

- Goal of this drill is to practice moving into the ball when catching a fly ball
- Each player gets a throwing partner and the players form 2 parallel lines
- Player will toss the ball to herself, catch it, and then throw to their partner
- Players should not throw too high, but toss it slightly above the head and in front of the throwing shoulder
- Players should work on moving into the ball when catching their self-toss
- Also emphasize using both hands to catch

## 2. Outfield Range Drill

- Purpose of this drill to get outfielders to move to the ball and catch, in this case move horizontally
- Players form a single file line in the outfield, with a bucket of balls at the front of the line and an empty bucket about 40 feet away
- First player takes a ball and throws to the coach
- Coach then lobs the ball to a spot about 20 feet to the left from where the player threw the ball
- Player moves to catch ball and puts it in the other bucket and forms new line near that bucket
- Once entire line on right is done, drill starts again but from left

**B** = bucket



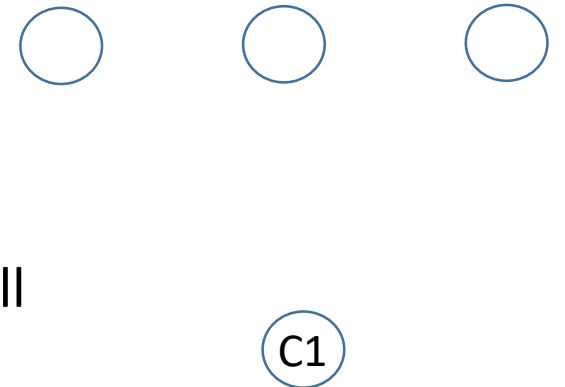


## 3. Tennis Ball Drill

- Coach should bring 5-10 tennis balls
- Players line up near coach without gloves in outfield. When coach calls the first player in line, that player runs to about 10-15 feet away from the coach and faces the coach
- Coach yells “ball” and then underhand tosses the ball to either the right or left of the player and a few feet back (so the player has to move a bit diagonally back), with a nice arc (i.e. pop up)
- Player drop steps to the right or left when the ball is thrown and catches the tennis ball with just their glove hand
- Player rolls or throws the tennis ball back to the coach and goes to the end of the line, and next player is called
- See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0UivkD0K304> (1:00 to 2:00) but don't throw as far and use tennis balls. For older players you can use low compression (i.e. soft balls)

## 4. Turned Back Drill

- Have 3 fielders line up in the outfield in a straight line, spread out about 15 field from each other
- Have them face away from the coach, who is about 20-30 feet away from the players
- While calling out one of the player's names, Coach throws a nice easy fly ball to that player
- When player hears their name, they immediately turn to the coach and spot the ball and catch, and then throw back to the coach, and return to their spot and turn their back to the coach
- For younger/less experienced players, be sure to use low compression balls and adjust your distance and throw accordingly. Also maybe not throw the toss to where the player will turn in case they can't spot it, and don't have the fielders look into the sun for safety reasons
- Coach should mix up who they call/throw the ball, so players should always be paying attention if their name is being called, and can even make it a game



Appropriate for:  
All Ages

# 5. Drop Step Drill

- Drill is done without the coach throwing the ball, goal of the drill is to work on proper footwork including the initial drop step
- Two players line up about 10 feet apart from each other, facing the coach who is about 10 feet from the players
- Coach first points either right or left and the players drop step in that direction (i.e. steps diagonally back with left or right foot) and start running in a back diagonally direction based on where the coach points while always looking at the coach
- The coach then points to the other direction and the players then shift and run in that direction
- After 4 points (i.e. after 4 zig zags), the coach says next, and the next 2 players line up
- See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tjplijgw1bo> (:50 to 1:40)
- Also see [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eBC\\_yX6awNo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eBC_yX6awNo) (2:00 to 2:15) for proper footwork



- POINTS LEFT, DROP LEFT
- POINTS RIGHT, DROP RIGHT

## 6. Football Drill

- Combination of Turned Back Drill and Outfield Range Drill
- Coach has a bucket of balls and the line forms near the coach. Coach is on 1<sup>st</sup> base or 3<sup>rd</sup> base
- Drill can be done with the players initially lining up near 1<sup>st</sup> base or 3<sup>rd</sup> base
- 1<sup>st</sup> player in line is called and positions themselves facing towards the outfield with their back to the coach. Coach yells “go” and they start running in a straight direction down the line (again with their back to the coach, i.e. they are running away from the coach)
- The coach then yells either right or left and then gently lofts the ball in that direction from the line in the general distance where the player is currently at
- When the player hears the direction they turn towards the coach and catch the ball in stride
- After the player catches the ball they either throw the ball back to the coach or runs back to the line and put the ball in the bucket
- Next player is up
- Based on age and experience of the players the coach will determine the distance of the throw and how far the player runs to catch the throw

# Outfield Drills for Older Players

Appropriate for:  
Older Ages

# 7. Progression with Safety Stop

- This drill focuses on a “Safety Stop” in the outfield
- See Progression Drill (B1 in infield drills)
- Once #4 of the progression drill has occurred, have the players line up about 30 to 40 feet from each other
- Have the players throw the balls to each other but in the air about 2/3rds of the distance and then bounce/roll the remaining 1/3<sup>rd</sup>
- Fielders should do an outfielder’s fielding of a ground ball
- Emphasize drop down on throwing side knee and square shoulders and hips to the ball, and alligator the ball
- Do about 5-10 of these and then move on to progression with crow hop (next page)
- See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ryWAF9kJ8pl>
- Also see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tjplijgwlb0> (4:40 to 5:15)



## 8. Progression with Crow Hop

- See Progression Drill (B1 in infield drills) and also prior page's progression drill
- Have players line up about 50 feet (or more) from each other and crow-hop throw and catch to each other
- See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ia1ObJZmsk0> (:45-1:20) – ignore the “jump over the bat” in the video



## 9. Progression with Do or Die Run Through

- See Progression Drill (B1 in infield drills) and also prior page's progression drill
- Have players line up about 50 feet (or more) from each other and the players should throw line drives to each other but have the balls bounce 10 to 15 feet in front of each other
- Instead of "Safety Stop" fielding, have the fielders practice "do or dies" where their gloves skim the grass
- See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tjplijgw1bo> (5:15 to 5:45) but have player throw the ball back to their partner so their partner can also practice the do or die

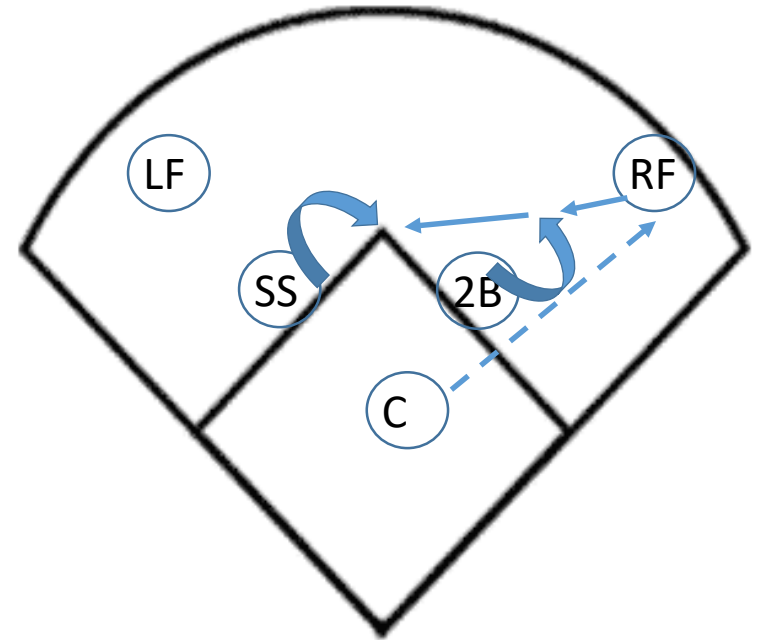


# 10. Zig Zag Drill

- Coach has a bucket of balls and the line forms near the coach
- 1<sup>st</sup> player in line is called and they sprint to a spot about 10-15 feet in front of the coach and face the coach in a ready position
- Coach yells right or left, and the player uses a drop step and runs either right or left in a diagonal direction (i.e. they get further away from the coach) – in effect they zig
- After a few steps the coach yells the opposite direction, and the player uses an inside roll to change direction and again runs in a diagonal direction away from the coach – in effect they zag
- After a few steps the coach yells the opposite direction and either throws the ball for the player to catch or has the player either zig or zag
- Once the player catches it, they throw the ball back to the coach
- Once the coach catches the ball, the next player in line sprints out to the spot about 10 feet in front of the coach and that player does the zig zag drill

# 11. Relay Drill

- 4 lines of players: LF, RF, SS and 2B
- Coach near pitching mound with bat and bucket of balls; empty bucket near 2<sup>nd</sup> base
- Coach hits the ball to right field (if caught, fine, if a grounder, then do outfield block)
- RF fields the ball and QUICKLY gets the ball to 2B who has lined themselves up in a straight line to 2<sup>nd</sup>
- 2B should be active in flagging themselves as cut
- SS covers 2<sup>nd</sup> , catches from 2B, and puts ball in bucket.
- LF should act as backup to SS in case relay is overthrown
- Coach repeats but hits to LF; SS is relay/cut off for LF and lines themselves up to 2<sup>nd</sup>; 2B covers 2<sup>nd</sup> and RF is backup
- IF ball is hit shallow to RF, then 2B should kneel in the outfield and RF should throw directly to SS. Same with LF throwing directly to 2B vs. SS as no need to hit relay on a short hit ball
- Emphasize the players in effect form a straight line from RF to 2B to SS to LF when the ball is relayed in from RF into 2<sup>nd</sup> base



# Multiple Keys to the Relay Drill

- Key to this drill is infielder positions body to catch ball near shoulder of glove side so player can better rotate and make continuous motion to throw to infield
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UGJhKxyo2z0> (0:10 to 0:40)
- Also key is 2B and SS know when to be relay and when to cover base
- Another key is 2B or SS position themselves in a straightline from outfielder to 2<sup>nd</sup> base
- And key for outfield is GET THE BALL to cut off ASAP – do not have it linger in their hands. Also if shallow, throw directly to base vs. cut off



# 12. Hold the Runner to a Single Drill

- The purpose of the drill is to have the outfielder hold the runner to a single with a ball hit into the outfield
- Set up:
  - Have a Coach hitting from Home and a 1<sup>st</sup> Base Coach
  - Have a player playing the 2<sup>nd</sup> Base position (i.e. normal 2B position and not on the bag)
  - Have 3 players lined up in LF, with each one taking a turn playing LF
  - Have 3-5 runners safely lined up behind the coach at Home with helmets on, with each runner taking a turn
- Coach at Home hits a single near the LF line into the outfield. Upon ball being hit, runner at Home heads to first and takes aggressive turn towards 2<sup>nd</sup> Base. LF'er fields the ball and throws to 2B that is covered by player playing 2<sup>nd</sup> base position
- If ball is not fielded cleanly or if the outfielder is not alert, the runner advances to second. The runner should visually pick up the ball as they round first and also gets assist from 1<sup>st</sup> base coach
- Rotate runner and LFER (i.e. next in line)

# 13. Outfield Around Drill

- Purpose of this drill is to field all types of hits from different outfield positions
- Have a single line of players in LF and a coach at 2<sup>nd</sup> Base with glove and with an empty bucket and another Coach hitting near home plate with full bucket
- Coach near home hits grounder or fly ball to 1<sup>st</sup> player in line in outfield. Fielder fields and throws to coach at 2<sup>nd</sup> base (coach puts ball in bucket). Once she throws, coach near home hits the ball (be careful to not hit coach at 2<sup>nd</sup> base) to CF, forcing the player to sprint to that position and field on the run (i.e. don't wait to hit when the player is settled into CF). Again player fields and throws to 2<sup>nd</sup> base, and then sprints to RF where the coach has hit either a fly ball or grounder to RF. Again player fields and throws to 2<sup>nd</sup> base and that player then forms a new line near 1B line (away from RF position)
- Coach after hitting the ball to RF immediately hits the ball to LF for next player in line, and continues drill
- Once all fielders in LF have done the drill, start the drill with the line starting from RF
- Coach should mix up fly balls / line drives / grounders into outfield and the drill should be fast paced
- Once bucket is full at 2<sup>nd</sup> base, coach at 2<sup>nd</sup> should safely swap buckets with hitting Coach
- Variations of this drill have when the ball is hit to RF to have the player throw to coach at 1<sup>st</sup> base, and when hit to LF to have the throw go to home

# 14. Gap Communication Drill

- Goal of this drill is to have the outfielders properly communicate with each other and have whichever player is not fielding the ball to back up the other
- Have a LF, CF and RF. If multiple players have multiple line in the outfield behind each fielder (but not too close)
- Be sure to instill that (a) players should call for the ball (“ball ball ball”) and (b) if multiple players are calling for the ball, then CF has precedence
- Coach sprays balls in the gaps. Outfielder fields and throws to a player or coach at 2<sup>nd</sup> Base who puts ball in bucket.
- After fielding multiple balls, players should rotate lines so they play all positions
- This drill can also be done with a ball machine launching balls into the outfield
- If you have only 2-4 players, you can do the drill with just a CF and a LF or RF (ie 2 players at a time)
- Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0UivkD0K304> (2:16 to 3:28)

# 15. Quarterback Drill

- Goal of this drill is to have proper drop step and be able to catch a ball behind the fielder
- Have the players form a line just beyond 1<sup>st</sup> base in foul territory. A bucket of balls is near the line of players. Coach is near 1B. Have first player grab a ball and position themselves about 10 feet down the 1<sup>st</sup> base line from the coach, and tosses the ball the coach
- Coach lobs the ball about 10-15 feet over the head of the player but the ball should be thrown down the 1<sup>st</sup> base line
- Key to this drill is the proper drop step (for ball straight over head, drop step to the glove side), with the fielder running with their arms pumping (versus running with their glove up – no backpedaling!). Once they catch the ball, they return to the line, and next player in line positions themselves in front of the coach
- See [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ZNz\\_f3rCgs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ZNz_f3rCgs) (:20 to 1:00)
- After 5-10 throws, then have the ball thrown diagonally into left field (see 1:50 to 2:05)

# 16. Two Cone Drill

- Place two cones in the outfield about 40 feet from each other. Coach should be about 10 feet from the first cone, i.e. in a straight line you have coach, then 1<sup>st</sup> cone 10 feet away, and then 40 feet further the 2<sup>nd</sup> cone
- Fielder lines up at 2<sup>nd</sup> cone and coach lobs the ball about half way between the 2 cones, forcing the fielder to run forward to make a catch. After catch, player throws ball back to the coach and then sprints and positions themselves near 1<sup>st</sup> cone.
- Coach then raises their throwing hand to the right or left or straight up to signal where the ball will be thrown, yells “ball” when they begin the throw, and the fielder drop steps and runs diagonally back in that direction (straight up means ball will be thrown straight behind the fielder). Coach then lobs the ball in the direction in which they previously signaled. Fielder catches the ball, throws ball to the coach, and lines up at 2<sup>nd</sup> cone and process repeats
- If multiple players, have line form at 2<sup>nd</sup> cone, and next fielder is up
- Keys to this drill include no backpedaling, running with the glove tucked, and drop step with the foot where the ball is going. If ball is being thrown directly behind you, drop step with foot on glove side
- See [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eBC\\_yX6awNo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eBC_yX6awNo) (1:20 to 2:15)



# 17. Relay to Home Drill

Appropriate for:  
12U+

- Have LF, SS and C in the field and runner at 3<sup>rd</sup> with helmet
- Coach is at Home plate and hits fly ball to LF
- Runner at 3<sup>rd</sup> tags up when ball is (hopefully) caught by LF, unless the ball is clearly hit too shallow
- LF makes catch and either (a) crowhop and throws all the way to home if ball is shallow; or (b) throws to SS who acts as relay if ball is hit deeply
- SS acts as relay and positions themselves as part of imaginary line from where ball is caught and home. SS throws home
- C applies tag at Home but does not obstruct



- Key for LF is to determine if runner is tagging up, if they should throw to home or SS based on depth of ball, if throwing home then properly crow hopping, etc.



- Key for SS is proper positioning to act as part of straight line from LF to Home and catching ball near shoulder of glove side and quick rotation and release to get ball home



- Key for C is to not obstructing runner and making proper tag out



- Key for runner at 3B is to determine if they should tag up, to not leave too early, etc.

- Rotate runners and fielders

- This drill can be done without runners, and instead have LF and SS, and RF and 2B, with one coach on one side of plate hitting to LF and another coach on other side hitting to RF, and SS and 2B relay to the coach who hit the ball to their fielder

# 18. Three Ball “Do or Die” Drill

Appropriate for:  
12U+

- Have a player line up three balls in the outfield in a straight line about 5 feet apart each
- Have the player start about 20 feet behind the first ball, and charge the ball as if fielding a do or die, and pick up the ball with their glove while lowering themselves
- Then transition into crow hop position
- Optionally throw the ball to a coach or teammate
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lvw8J87k3l0>  
(1:33 to 2:05)



# 19. Shoe String Catch Drill

Appropriate for:  
12U+

- Fielder should line up about 20 feet from coach
- Coach lobs ball about 5-10 feet in front of fielder (i.e. fly ball the comes up short vis a vis the fielder), forcing them to catch ball below waist while on the run
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7N GGzIATMeQ> (1:50 to 2:20)

