

Fast paced (grounders and pop ups)

Team 12 players

Line up 2 players at 1st, 2 at 2nd, and the rest at third. The coach hits a ground ball from home plate to the first person in line at third, that player throws to second and then runs as hard as he or she can to second and gets in line. The player at second throws to 1st and then runs to first as fast as they can go and gets in line there. The player at first throws to home and then runs around the outside of home plate as fast as they can go and gets in line behind third. Repeat this for ground balls and then do pop-up's. After a bit switch and run it from first base.

Simple fast paced conditioning drill to get them moving. The coach can hit and catch the balls at home or alternate players to hit and catch.

Three cone drill

Place three cones in a straight line with the first one deep infield, the second one mid infield and the third short infield (all in a straight column) this can be done on both sides of the infield to get more reps for the fielders. Have one coach per line hit ground balls. The kids start at the cone deep in the infield, when the ground ball is hit to him he advance to the middle cone to receive the ball then crow hops to the third cone to make his throw. Each cone should be 3-4 ft away from each other. This drill demonstrates proper ready stance, advancement on the ball, and crow hop footwork.

Range Drill

1 line at first base
1 line at third base
1 coach with bucket of balls at home
1 coach with bucket of balls at 2nd

Players at 1st run toward 2nd and players at 3rd run toward home. Coach at home hits ball into 2nd base gap for the player at first base – they must run and field the ball. Start with balls close to them and then extend the range. Depending on age and skill level get them to the point of diving for the ball. The player fields the ball and puts it in the bucket of the coach who is at second base. Then they run to the end of the line at 3rd base. While this is going on the coach at 2nd base hits a ball for the player on third – same thing. Start close and then work on their range and extending them. They field the ball and put it in the bucket of the coach who is at home. Then they run to the end of the line at 1st base. After you go through some series of fielding switch where the coaches hit to and where the players run to so you work their range to the other side. Coach at home hits towards second base and players at 3rd run towards 2nd – coach at 2nd hits towards home and players at 1st run towards home.

Look the Runner Back

One of the things that we started to do last year when we were hitting ground balls to our players was to get them into the habit of "looking the runner back" before making the throw back to the coach. This became routine for them and they never forgot to do it in game situations.

Field, Tag, Slide.

Place one player at 3rd base and one player at shortstop. The rest of the girls create 2 lines at 2nd base (one line for runners and one for fielders). The coach hits a ground ball to the shortstop, while at the same time the runner takes off from 2nd to 3rd. Shortstop must field the ball and throw to 3rd baseman who applies the tag to the runner who is sliding. We use this drill for practicing the tag, fielding a ball with a runner next to you, and sliding. We rotate like this: shortstop goes to 3rd, 3rd to running line, runner to fielding line.

Around the Horn Drill.

Have 2 teams of 5 players - 1 player at each infield position including catcher (but not pitcher). Have the catcher throw to 3rd who throws to 2'nd who throws to SS who throws to 1'st who throws to catcher. Do this 5 times. Each dropped or errant throw costs that team a point the team with the least points wins.

Big Drill

A player stands on 1st, 2nd, and 3rd. Everybody else on the foul line in left. Coach hitter has a coach catcher feed him 5 balls one at a time of course!

Player comes off of foul line to ready position. Coach hits a fly ball. Player catches and throws home. While player is running in towards third, coach hits a ground ball, player fields and flips to third, Coach hits ground ball to SS position as player moves in that direction, player fields it and flips it to 2nd, while moving towards 2B position coach hits ground ball, player field it and throws to 1st. while moving toward 1B position coach hits one last ground ball, player fields it and throws to coach catcher. That player then stays at 1b and the others rotate toward left field. Coach pushes the player to move faster by hitting ahead of player. Have the players at the bases hold the ball until the drill for that player is through, and then throw to coach catcher. If player fails to field the ball, have them let it go and keep moving. Great for Conditioning, as well as fielding balls on the run.

Infield Pressure

Divide the girls into two equal groups, placing one group behind third, and one of those girls will be on second. The other group stays at home plate with batting helmets on.

Start out by hitting the ball to the girl on third, as soon as you hit the ball the runner starts running as if she hit a double. The player on third has to make the catch, and throw to second base. As soon as she throws, you hit another ball to her, she has to make the catch and throw to second again, while the runner is still running to second base. As soon as that throw is made you hit the final ball to her, which she must make the play on and throw to second base before the runner gets there. If she gets all three balls there before the runner, her team gets 1 pt. If the runner gets there first, the runner's team gets 1 pt.

Now the girl that was making the plays goes to second to catch the ball, and the girl on second goes into line on third base. The runner goes back to her team at home.

They work as a team to field and catch to get the point. The runners are required to run as they hit a double and slide into second.

You can really have fun with this because you can mix up the hits, grounders/flyes/bunts to make the final throw a close play at second.

Our girls love this. When one team has all had a chance to make the play, you switch, and they now run for points while the other team throws for points.

React

Put a girl at each base and after throwing it to each girl I start yelling the base number out and the girl must throw to that base as she is hearing it. I believe it helps her think on the fly and react quickly. It has really helped us over the years.

2 Hands

Technique I use with 7-9 year old girls to get them to field the ball with two hands. Have them stand in pairs about 5 to 10 feet apart. You can start them at five and have them back up a foot or two after a few successful exchanges. Do NOT have them use their glove. Have them either roll or toss the ball to their partner. I have them do both and switch it up. They will naturally use two hands with no prompting from a coach during the exchanges. All you have to do is point out to them what they are doing. After a few go rounds have them put their gloves on and repeat the exercise. Now verbally reinforce the use of two hands while they are using the gloves. This also works as a good warm up thing to do and constantly reinforces the two hands fielding.

Speed and Accuracy

This is a fun exercise/contest that works on both accuracy and speed. I line up three balls about 3' apart at the pitchers mound, 2nd base position, and shortstop position, and along the 1st base line closer to the catcher.

The player starts at home plate, sprints to the pitchers mound to throw the three balls to first base, then goes to 2nd base throws to first, shortstop position throws to first and finally home to throw the last three balls to first.

This is a timed exercise. When a ball is thrown inaccurately to 1st base the player gets a 2 second penalty for each badly thrown pass.

The fastest 3 times get rewarded along with the most improved time.

Shuffle Drill

Player 1 stands with two balls as player 2 is 15 feet away (directly in front of player 1). Player 1 rolls one ball to the right or left of player 2. Player 2 shuffles, breaks down, and fields the ball cleanly and tosses it back to player 1. As the ball is being tossed back, player 1 then rolls the other ball the opposite direction of the first ball they tossed. Player 2 must now shuffle to field ball 2 cleanly and then tosses back to player 1. You continue this for 12-20 tosses and then switch. This is a good conditioning drill that works best with players 10 and up.

Base to Base

One line of players positioned at first base and one line at second base. After the player throws the ball he runs to the back of the line and the next player runs up to the base and position's themselves to catch the ball from the person who just caught the ball at the other base. I emphasize to them this is not a drill to see how hard you can throw the ball but work on hitting the other person's outstretched glove.

Circle Drill

One of the drills we do is for conditioning as well as fundamentals, it is fun, so the girls forget they are conditioning. Form a circle with all players, but one starts in the middle. We call this the circle drill. One girl on the outside of circle rolls the ball to player in the middle. She receives the ball using P.F.P. (perfect fielding position) then throws the ball backhand side, one hop, this player rolls back to middle. Every player is following their throw or roll-sprinting.! Once circle is completed clock wise, switch directions and go

counter clockwise. This allows all players to receive ball in the middle, working on backhands and conditioning. Great warm up drill, players will get aggravated at first, but once they get the hang of it, it works well.

Bucket Drill

The following is a very effective infield drill that I use at every practice. It allows the infielders to take a large number of ground balls in a short time and really develops muscle memory.

I call it the "bucket drill".

Players take their position at 1B, 2B, SS, and 3B. There are two coaches at home plate, each with a bat and a bucket of balls. There is an empty bucket at each base. The drill consists of three rounds.

Round 1 - Coach #1 hits 1/2 bucket of grounders to 3rd baseman who field and throws to 1st baseman that puts balls in empty bucket. At the same time, Coach #2 hits 1/2 bucket of grounders to shortstop who fields and throws to 2nd baseman covering 2B, who puts balls in empty bucket. Next, coaches turn and Coach #1 hits other 1/2 of bucket to 1st baseman that fields and throws to 3rd baseman that puts balls in empty bucket. At the same time, Coach #2 hits other 1/2 of bucket of ball to 2nd baseman that fields and throws to shortstop covering 2B, who puts balls in empty bucket. Players then bring in buckets and refill coaches' buckets.

Round 2 - Coach #1 hits 1/2 bucket of grounders to 3rd baseman who fields and throws to 2nd baseman covering 2B. At the same time, Coach #2 hits 1/2 bucket of grounders to shortstop who fields and throws to 1st baseman. Next, Coach #1 hits other 1/2 of bucket to 1st baseman that fields and throws to shortstop covering 2B. At the same time, Coach #2 hits other 1/2 of bucket to 2nd baseman that fields and throws to 3rd baseman. Players refill coaches' buckets. (Make sure that corners play up and middle infielder's plays back during this round to avoid anyone getting hit with throw).

Round 3 - Coach #1 hits 1/2 bucket of grounders to shortstop who fields and throws to 3rd baseman. At the same time, Coach #2 hits 1/2 bucket of grounders to 2nd baseman who fields and throws to 1st baseman. Next, Coach #1 bunts other 1/2 buckets to 3rd baseman who fields and throws to shortstop covering 3rd base. At the same time, Coach #2 bunts other 1/2 bucket to 1st baseman who fields and throws to 2nd baseman covering 1st base.

This sounds much more complicated then it actually is. It's a great drill that takes less than 15 minutes and each of the infielders get about 40 grounders, throws, and catches.

Bucket Drill 2

This is a great drill for keeping the competitive juices going and working on fielding and throwing accuracy. Split the team into two equal groups with one group lined up at short stop and the other group at 2nd. Stack two buckets one on top of the other on home plate. Coach will start the competition on the left side hitting ground ball to each of the player's one at a time. The player then makes a throw home trying to hit the bucket. The player gets 3 points for knocking the top bucket off, 2 points for hitting either bucket in the air, and one point for hitting either bucket on a bounce. Go through all of the players at short stop and total points. Follow the same for the players at second base. Now players switch positions and continue the drill. We usually say the first team to 15 points wins depending upon the time you want to spend on this drill. As players develop throwing accuracy it actually goes pretty quick. This drill encourages the girls to charge the ball (shorter throw to home) and they figure that out pretty quick! As they develop in their skills, we incorporate good fielding by subtracting 1 point for not fielding the ball properly. Obviously we call this the "Bucket Drill". Our girls love this drill and don't want to stop!

Catch, Tag, Throw

This is a very good drill for throwing accuracy, catching, quick footwork, and tagging the runners. Have a catcher straddle home plate facing first base, first baseman straddles 1st base facing the catcher, second baseman straddle 2nd base facing first, and third baseman straddle 3rd facing second base. Let the shortstop and second baseman alternate at second base. Catcher will throw the ball to first; first base throws to second, second throws to third, and third throws to home. Repeat several times around the bases and then reverse by going from catcher to third, third to second, second to first, and first to home. Also repeat this direction several times. This is a good every practice drill for ball handling and quick foot speed as they have to spin and throw to next base. Idea is for the players to not let the ball touch the ground. Coaches will definitely see the improvement as their ball season starts and the ball handling will be even better by the end of season.

2 Catchers

Here's a fielding drill that we like to use to warm up and give our catchers a little extra practice at the same time.

We have two catchers so we start with one of them behind the plate with everyone else in the third base coach's box and one other player on first base. Our second catcher is the last person in line at third base. The first fielder takes the third base position and fields a ground ball throwing the ball to first base and then sprints to second base while the player at first throws home. The catcher catches the ball and throws down to second base to the player who was just playing third base. The ball is then thrown back to first and then home. The person at first base runs behind the field and gets at the end of the line at third base. The player at second now runs to first and becomes the first baseman for the

next fielder. The next player in line now takes the third base position and the drill is repeated.

We go all the way through the order until our second catcher (last in line) occupies first base. After the last throw home the second catcher takes the place of the first catcher and goes through the order. This can be done very quickly and everyone gets an opportunity to experience situations at all three bases. It's also a great drill for figuring out positional strengths in young teams.

Infield/Base running

The object is to run around the bases starting at 1st before the infield can throw around the bases.

There is a catcher, 1b, 2b, SS, and 3b.

Runner starts on 1st. Coach hits a grounder to 2b and the runner starts running. 2b throws to 3b, 3b throws to 1b, 1b throws to SS and SS throws to c trying to get the runner. Then another runner can start again.

Infield Quick/Accurate

Set up 5 balls randomly arranged, in and down the 3rd base line. Spread the balls about 2 to 3 feet apart and no more than 10 feet in length. Example, start at the base, drop 1 ball, go about 1 foot, place another ball on the ground, drop a 3rd ball, 1 foot to the left of the 2nd ball, the 4th ball is dropped about 1 foot in front of the 3rd ball. The last ball is placed to the right of the 4th ball, down the 3rd base line.

Have a group of players start at home and one player will run from home to 2nd while the infielder is fielding & throwing the placed balls to 1st base. Object is to field all 5 balls, throw accurately to 1st base before the runner gets to 2nd base. Keep score so that each group performs under pressure. Coach determines what to do with the winning group, runners or fielders. An errant throw to 1st counts as a miss. Fielder must throw all 5 balls to 1st without an error to get 1 point. If the runner reaches 2nd base before the 5 throws are made, they get 1 point.

Flip/flop groups so that the fielders become runners and runners become the fielders throwing to 1st base. After 2 rounds the groups will become very competitive which is good. Fastpitch softball is about quick, accurate plays. You also get to practice running the bases correctly without the players realizing it. It is a fun drill if presented to the players correctly.

3 Man Weave

I have one that I tried in the spring. I thought this would work for my infielders, but I let the whole team in on it. One of the things infielders need work on at an early age in flipping the ball in way the teammate can catch easy. I am a big basketball fan, so I thought back over drills we use to do on the court. The three man weave is something I came up with. The girls had fun and the ones that had played basketball new how to do it as and example to the others. I ran it close together. How do you do the weave? Get three lines. Girl in the middle line has the ball. All three start moving the middle girls flips underhand to the girl to her right and curls around back of her, the girl to the right moves to the middle-flips to the girl on her left and curls around the back of her-- then she goes to the middle and the cycle starts over. It is fun for the girls and does not take to much time. The coaches even get involved.

Back-up/grounder drill

Use this drill/game towards the end of a practice. It works on reacting to & fielding grounders, and backing up plays. Have 2 lines facing each other (distance apart depends on level of players, space available, indoors or out)

X X X B PP B X X X

X players in line

B back up player (fields a missed ball)

P player (fields grounder and throws one back)

"P" starts drill by throwing grounder to other team.
1 point is given to throwing team every time a ball gets by player.
Another point is given if the ball gets by the back-up player.

Set boundaries to the right and left (out of bounds) I use the basketball court (paint and free throw line) as the box for fielder and back-up player.

Rotate people through "P" fields throw, returns throw and goes to end of line. Back-up player moves up to "P" position, X player moves up to back-up position.

This drill starts out slow and intensity increases as teams try to get the grounder by the opposing player. It also speeds up for the same reason.

Excellent drill for working on fielding, reacting to ball, moving right/left, fielding and popping up quick ready to throw and being there to back up a play. Plus it's good competitive fun (loosing squad picks up equipment at the end of practice)

Eye on the ball.

Take 4 balls and number the first one with # (1) equally on four spots on the ball, next with # (2), next with # (3), last with # (4). Hit or throw the balls to them and have them yell out the number on the ball before they catch it. This will keep their eyes on the ball watching it go into their glove. Once they start the drill keep feeding them the balls faster and faster.

Soft Toss Scrimmage.

Put a defense on the field and have the rest of the players in the dugout ready to hit. Treat it just like a game, but a coach kneels beside the hitter and soft tosses the pitch. "Play" 5 innings and switch.

This gives the players a lot of looks at game situations. You can stop and explain different things as you go. It moves pretty fast, so it doesn't take up the entire practice. Have the tosser make sure they are varying the location of the tosses to keep all fielders involved.

In The Hole.

Use this drill to teach the progression of squaring a ground ball backhanding or forehanding it or diving for it. Use a machine to place ground balls in the hole. Have the players move into a position that challenges them. After a few attempts we have them move where the stop must be made with a backhand or forehand stop. Then add more of a distance to teach them to lay out or dive for the stop. After each progression has been completed a few times we mix it up. We work this drill from all positions in the infield and have each player take one turn, then rotate. Also, you can have a player play any base to teach a quick recovering into a throwing position and the release of the ball as they throw to the designated base.

In The Hole #2

Here is drill that I run to expand the player's lateral range and overcome their fear for diving for a ball:

I put a player about 5 feet in front of a fence or net.

To their left and right I put 3 cones each at the 12ft, 14ft, and 16ft range away from the player.

I have 2 other players (1 on the left and 1 on the right at a 45 degree angle to be a target once the player catches the ball to come up and throw to the target.

I either use a batting machine or I will hit grounders to the players left and right gradually increasing the distance to help them become quicker to the ball.

They will ultimately need to dive for the ball and come up and make a strong, accurate throw to the target.

Each player will catch and make 10 throws as we rotate between fielding and targets.

The players don't know where the ball is going so they must react quickly.

This drill should be done on the grass to a softer landing and then can be moved to the infield as their confidence grows.

You can break the players into teams and make a competition out of it to see which team makes the most plays.

You need to keep them moving and spend about 10 minutes on the drill.

Infield Conditioning.

This drill combines ball handling with conditioning. Start with an equal number of players at each base including home. A girl standing at home throws to first and then sprints to first. After catching the ball the girl on first turns and throws to second, then sprints to second. This continues around the bases until all the players have thrown and sprinted. You may want to start with a shorter distance for younger players. You can also reverse the direction for something different. Coaches can time it or record the number of drops/bad throws to track improvement. Having all of the players throw and sprint 2 and 3 times improves the conditioning aspect.

Around the Horn.

Place a player at third, second, first and home. Everyone else lines up at home plate. The drill starts with a player at home throwing to third then sprinting to third. The player on third throws to second and sprints to second, the player on second throws to first and that player throws home. With younger kids this is hard, but they get better and faster at this drill as they master it. The key is to keep the players moving and raise the intensity of the drill once they get better at it. This is a good way to begin a practice in that it gets the players loose and focused. It is good to position coaches and volunteer parents near the bases with a bucket of balls in case of overthrows, to keep the drill going. This is good for confidence in younger kids and shows them that they can make the throws under some pressure.

2 Total

Team up in 2s and have a contest to see which team can make the most throws and catches in 45 seconds. Teaches girls to get rid of ball quickly; teaches accuracy and obviously catching of ball. My team of 16-17 year old girls likes this drill a lot.

Star Drill

Have a girl at all the infield positions except pitcher. Start the ball at home, where the rest of the team will be. Catcher throws to short and follows the ball to shortstop position. Shortstop, who has just caught the ball, throws to 1st base and follows her throw. Girl at 1st, who has just caught the ball, throws to 3rd and follows her throw. Girl at third, who has just caught their ball, throws to 2nd and follows her throw. Girl at 2nd, who has just caught the ball throws to home and follows her throw. Person at home, who has just caught the ball, throws to short and does sequence again.

Pop Up Drill

We usually finish off practice with this one. It is designed to teach the girls how to judge pop-ups and the proper way of letting every one know that you are going to "call" it. I have the whole team gather around you in a loose group-stretching their arms out so that they are at least arms length away from all the other players. I then randomly throw the ball up in the air. The girls then have to decide if it is one that they can catch and then "call for it". They are awarded points for "calling" for the ball loudly, making the catch or stepping back to allow someone else who has called the ball to make the catch. The first girl to 10 points get to sit down. This continues with me alternating where I throw the ball until the all the girls have reached 10 points. The girl who finishes last then has to run the bases while the rest of the team cheers loudly for her, and some times even chase her around the bases. This teaches the girls to judge pop-ups, take control of a fly ball, as well as avoid collisions with other fielders. My girls love this-especially the ritual of chasing the last girl around the bases.

Catcher/Infield

You really need two catchers and eight infielders to run this drill. Everyone will rotate and the catchers will take turns throwing down to 2B.

I place a coach on the mound to start the drill with an overhand pitch. I place two girls at every other position on the infield. I start the drill with a pitch to home. The "first" catcher squats behind the plate to receive the pitch and make a throw to the SS at 2B. (For now, the second baseman just learns to position herself to back-up the SS.) The SS makes a catch & tag, and then with good footwork makes a strong throw to 3B. The third baseman makes a catch & tag and throws home to the "second" catcher. She hands the ball to a coach at home who hits a grounder to 3B. The third baseman fields and makes a throw to 1B. The first baseman returns the ball to the coach on the mound and the drill starts over again - beginning with the "second" catcher. All infielders rotate counter-clockwise after each turn - 2B moves to the SS position after backing up the throw to 2B, SS follows her throw to 3B, 3B follows her throw to 1B after fielding the ground ball, and 1B moves to 2B after the catch. By the way, I don't allow SS or 2B to move until the ball hits the catcher's glove - they must sprint to their spots. If the throw from home gets by the SS, I expect the second baseman to make the stop and throw to 3B. The second

girl in line at 1B & 3B should be prepared to back-up bad throws and keep the drill moving. It's fun to watch once they learn the drill and get in rhythm, (which might take a few practices with a young team).

VARIATION:

1) The second baseman cuts the throw from the catcher at a spot halfway between the mound and 2B and makes a quick throw to 3B on the run. (SS still goes to 2B as before to backup the throw) The drill continues as above.

Star Drill

Five players- catcher, third, SS, second and first base form a star, Catcher starts by throwing a ball to SS, SS throws to first, first throws to third, third throws to second, and second throws to catcher. Keep repeating throws 4 or 5 times then add a second ball with catcher and third having a ball to start the drill. If a ball is dropped drill stops immediately. We do this drill before we take infield pre-game, also in practice with any five players forming a star.

Monkey in the Middle

I'm sure many coaches know about this drill, but you put a player between coaches and each coach hits a ground ball and the fielder scoops it up and throws it to a catcher. Following their throw they turn directly 180 degrees and field another grounder that is coming from a coach behind them. You can make the drill go faster and faster until it's almost as if a regular grounder in a game doesn't seem so hard to field anymore.

McDonald's Drill

Line all the kids around the perimeter of the infield. The coach hits ground balls to them one after the other from home plate. The kid has to field the ball and make the throw to 1st without error. The kid is allowed 3 errors, after she commits 3 errors; they are out of the game. Last player standing is the winner. They can make an error fielding or throwing. The girl that plays 1st, has to make the throw to 3rd. "Any" bad throws in the infield is an error. After each round, the kid has to call out the number of errors they have committed. In later rounds you can hit hard grounders to test them a bit, or test their range. The last player standing wins a \$5 McDonald's gift certificate. We have also called it the Potato Ole ~ (Taco John's) game as well, because if a kid is scared of the ball and plays it off to the side and not get in front of it, we will yell OLE~!

Fence Drill: Game

Explanation:

Around most softball fields there is a chain linked fence. On our practice field the fence is 7 feet high and is divided by poles every 11 feet or so. Choose a three pole section to use as the backdrop for this drill.

The two outside poles are the boundaries for the basis of this challenge. Pick any two fielders (side by side position players such as third and short really works well) and stand them (backs to fence) about 1-2 feet away from the fence.

Place the hitter 35 feet away lined up centered with the middle pole. IMPORTANT....Be sure fielders stagger themselves so that if both dive at the same time for a middle ball, the drill will not end in disaster.

Hit a set # of balls at the fence. We usually do sets of 20. Fielder's objective: Keep the ball from touching the fence within the set boundaries. Every time the ball hits the fence in fair territory the batter scores 1 point. If the ball is blocked but not completely stopped the fielder must hustle after it to keep it from touching the fence. As long as the fence is not touched...no points are scored. Keep in mind the top of the fence is in play so line drives and low pops are legal.

Goal is to have the fewest balls hit the fence in a set number of fungo attempts. I often hit as a fun, coach to team challenge. We have fun with this and the kids get bragging rights if the coach can't score off them.

Bunt Drill

My players love drills that have a competitive component. For simultaneous bunt offense and bunt defense (for advanced 10U players or 12U and up), I form teams of 4 or 5 (great if you have 8, 10, 12 or 15 players at practice). One team in the field (1st baseman, 2nd baseman, shortstop, and 3rd baseman (+ defensive pitcher if you have multiple of 5)), one team on offense and, if you have enough players for a 3rd team, they can start in the outfield doing fly ball drills.

Using a batting practice coach as pitcher or a pitching machine (if done with a pitcher playing defense, she simply starts next to the batting practice coach or pitching machine (or if you have a pitcher that pitches consistent strikes, have the girls bunt off a "live" pitcher)), we start with a runner on 1st. We allow the 1st baseman and 3rd baseman to start no closer than $\frac{2}{3}$ the distance from home to their respective bases (everyone knows we're bunting). The defense can charge once the hitter shows bunt. We play this game without a catcher, so there is no stealing.

Teams earn points based on:

Offense earns 1 point if: The bunter is out at 1st, but the runner advances to 3rd.

Offense earns 1 point if: The bunter is safe at 1st, and the runner advances to 2nd.

Offense earns 2 points if: The bunter is safe at 1st, and the runner advances to 3rd.

Offense loses 2 points if: The bunter does not get a bunt down fairly after 3 strikes or bunter pops up, defense catches the ball, and the runner does not advance.

Defense earns 2 points if: The bunter is out at 1st and the runner is tagged out attempting to go to 3rd.

No points awarded if: The bunter is out at 1st and the runner advances to 2nd.

The play is re-set after each hitter, putting the hitter on 1st after their turn at bat. The runner returns to the dugout to get in line for her turn to bunt.

Assign a captain of each team to keep track of their points.

Establish how many times each bunter will get up for each "inning"(twice each usually works best).

The objective is to keep the action moving quickly with no one player standing idle for any length of time. If played with 3 teams, simply rotate after a team completes their turn on offense (offense moves to defense, defense moves to outfield drills, and team in outfield moves to offense). Play the game for multiple innings with a reward for the winning team (or a penalty for the losing team(s)).

WOW

Here's something that we came up with that helps the girls focus before every pitch. We tell them to think of **WOW** - **W**here are the runners, how may **O**uts, **W**hat am I going to do.

Target Throw

One of the most fun drill at end of practice fielding and throwing drills is to set up a target on top of an old stool or batting tee at 1st base.

The girl's favorite target so far is a "Baby Bop" (Barney's green friend) stuffed animal. The girls line up at SS or 3rd base and the coach hits the first fielder in line a ground ball. If the girl fields the ball cleanly she gets to continue to throw and try and knock over the stuffed animal on first. If the ball is booted the girl must throw the ball back to the hitter without throwing at the target and goes back to the end of the line. The girls really get into it and have fun at the same time they are sharpening there fundamentals!

Catcher Drill

Quick feet and alignment drill for catchers throwing to second base. To begin, have your catcher line up straddling a foul line by first or third base, facing the outfield wall. Have each of them practice their jump pivot footwork and throwing motions down the foul line. This can also be done indoors along a painted line or a seam in the carpet.

The catcher should start from their “Runners On” stance and simulate receiving a pitch right down the middle of the foul line. They should begin their jump pivot footwork, making sure that when they do the jump pivot that their right foot lands directly on the foul line followed quickly by their left foot. This will train their feet to get properly aligned toward second base and will help them make more accurate throws. They can visualize throwing the ball right down the foul line accurately to second as they do this shadow box drill, or you can actually have them throw to a fielder stationed the proper distance away, if you have the room. To practice throwing to second base on a tough inside pitch, which I feel is the most difficult throw for a catcher, have the catchers switch from straddling the line to standing with just their left foot on the line. Have them simulate receiving a pitch coming down the line. They should then be able to complete their jump pivot with their feet landing on the foul line again. This drill will help catchers stay properly aligned to their target with their center of gravity and power base underneath them, which makes for a lot stronger, quicker and more accurate throw. To work on throwing to second on an outside pitch, have the catcher line up facing down the foul line with their right foot on the line this time. In this drill have the catchers simulate backhanding an outside pitch to a right handed batter. There are two basic ways to make this throw in this drill. The first is with the standard two step jump pivot; however, the catcher’s feet should land just to the left of the foul by 6 inches or so. The second is only recommended for catchers with really strong throwing arms and is often referred to as the “Rock and Fire” or plant and throw technique. For this technique have the catcher simulate backhanding the ball down the foul line while loading up over the right foot. The catcher then needs to step directly down the foul line towards the target to complete the throw. This technique requires just one step with the left foot, and is an extremely quick and effective throwing technique provided that the catcher has a quick and smooth transfer of ball from glove to hand and a strong arm as previously mentioned.

Bare Hand

With the girls lined up at shortstop and two coaches at first base we dump out a bucket of balls near the pitchers mound. We then set the bucket by the coach at first base. The girls must run up one at a time and bare hand the ball and throw to first. Every good throw gets put back in the bucket and with every bad throw another coach puts three more balls out for the girls. They must move fast and make all good throws to get rid of all the balls.

Find It Drill (great drill for catchers)

Have the player get in fielding position. Coach stands behind the player. With a ball in each hand extend arms out to each side so player can barely see each ball. Toss 1 ball into the air, yell "now", and get out of the way. The player needs to find the ball and catch it before it hits the ground.

Popcorn

We call this popcorn. I have my girls stand in pairs one girl has three balls in their hands and the other gets ready to catch the pop flies. As soon as the first one is caught the next one is in the air in the opposite direction. You can't let any of them hit the ground. After a little while they can throw the balls a little quicker. My girls like to make it a competition to see who can do it the longest before they let a ball hit the ground. This helps them with changing their direction and judgment of how deep the ball is going.

Conditioning/Throwing

I love this drill after we are fully warmed up (throwing) and stretching. Line up your team around the shortstop position. Place one person at 1st and one at home. Start with the first person at shortstop and have a coach hit to the shortstop position. The rest of the kids are backing -up. Shortstop fields and throws to 1st base then takes off running down the bases to home behind the catcher. 1st base throws to home, and then runs to last shortstop place. Catcher runs to 1st. Shortstop now catches. This drill will tire everyone based upon how long you run it!

3-Ball Drill

This is a team drill that works on throwing accuracy and base running at the same time.

1. Set up three cones down the 3rd base line with a ball in front of them, evenly spaced 10-30' from 3rd base. Half the team is fielders at 3rd base and half are base runners at home plate. The first fielder sets up like a base runner on 3rd base, and the base runner sets up at the corner of home plate.
2. On the coach's whistle, the base runner runs from home to 2nd base while the fielder is approaching the first ball. The idea is for the fielder to have all three balls accurately thrown to the 2nd baseman before the base runner slides safely into 2nd base.
3. The key points are for the fielder to approach the ball and set up in line with 2nd base. The fielder will have to stay low approaching each ball instead of standing straight up running to each ball.
4. The key point for the base runner is to cut the inside bag at 1st base and slide to the outfield side of 2nd base, opposite the direction of the throw.
5. The drill can be modified for outfielders, setting up the three cones in centerfield. The base runners will have to slide to infield side of 2nd base.

Infield Work While Conditioning

*Players at 1B and 3B, a ball in the pitching circle and a player catching with a fungo hitter at the plate.

-Ground ball to third, throw to first.

-Player runs and picks up the ball in the circle, throws to first.

-Player then loops around second base to shortstop position, fields a ground ball and throws to first.

-Player then receives another ball at the shortstop position and throws home.

-Player then charges the plate as catcher rolls a bunt, which the fielder throws to first

Infield Grounders

Line the players up spaced out from 1st-2nd-3rd. Hit ground balls anywhere. The player must field the ball properly and throw to the 2nd catching coach at home. The throw must not force the coach to move anything other than his hands. If they do not succeed they are out and must run a lap. It's a little competition. If a ball goes between any of them and nobody makes an attempt... they all do a lap.

Third to Second

I have a drill that kills two birds with one stone. Take three balls and put them half way down the third base line about three feet away from each other all in a row from the foul line towards the pitching circle. Take two fielders and one base runner, one fielder waits on second and the other fielder waits on third next to the base. When you say go, the base runner runs to second while the third base man runs down the line to throw all three balls one by one as fast as they can to second before the base runner runs past second base. This teaches the runner to corner first base well and makes them run at top speed. Third baseman will realize once they throw the ball they still have something to do besides watching their throw and the second baseman learns how to receive balls from another fielder. The fielders have to complete all the throws and beat the runner to win.

Pitchers Fielding Practice

I like to call this drill PFP, or pitchers fielding practice. Basically, you just have the right side of your infield (1B, 2B, P, & C) take a bunch of ground balls and have them "make the play". By isolating these 4 positions you get a lot of reps, and we also like to stress communication. How many times have we seen a young pitcher not know where to go on a bunt? How many times have we seen a pitcher and a 1st baseman both chase the little dribbler that's headed toward 2nd? Giving these positions a lot of reps during PFP will minimize their mistakes come game day.

Infield Drill

Hit a grounder or line drive at an infielder and have fielder make the throw to the catcher. Your catcher tosses out a short bunt in front of the plate so that the infielder has to keep charging. As soon as the infielder fields the bunt and tosses it to the catcher, throw (or hit) a pop fly back out so the infielder has to catch it over his or her shoulder or head.

Kite Drill

I have adapted a drill that I use during INF drills: C, 1st, 2nd, 3rd and SS are all in their positions. Ball begins with the C who throws down to 2nd with the 2nd basewoman covering (game like situation), who then throws to the 3rd base who is moving back to make a sweeping tag she then comes up throwing over to 1st, 1st then throws to 2nd with the SS coming over to 2nd and the SS is quick to react and makes the throw back to home where the C is putting a tag on a sliding runner. The key to this drill is having everyone move like a "game situation" to cover and place tags in correct positions. I call this my "Kite Drill" If you were to draw it out it resembles a kite.

Toss Up

One of the drills I work with my softball team is a basic drill that involves 2 players. I have the players face each other; I then have them stand about eight feet apart. One player will turn and face away the other player will hold the softball and toss it high in the air. Once the ball is in the air, the player that tossed the ball tells the other player to turn around. The player turns around and begins to look in the air for the ball. This drill has improved my players with hand eye coordination and catching the ball. We call this toss-up.

Bunt Drill

Everybody moves:

One of the drills that I use for my catcher and corner fields starts with a runner on 1st base less than 2 outs. Bunt situation ball is fielded by either corner, catcher sees that the basemen are going to field the ball runs to 3rd base. 3rd or 1st fields' ball, throws to 1st for the out, 2nd baseman that is covering 1st throws to 3rd where the catcher is ready for a tag play on the runner whose was on 1st sliding into 3rd. 3rd baseman covers home in case of an overthrow and the 1st baseman is a backup. Right fielder backs up 1st, left fielder backs up 3rd and center fielder backs up Short stop at 2nd.

Bucket Drill

We place a 5 gallon bucket in front of home plate. We line up half the girls at second base and the other half at shortstop. We hit ground balls to them and watch as they field the ball and throw at the bucket. They receive 2 points for a direct hit and 1 for a bounce hit. The girls realize early on that they have a much better chance when they charge the ball!!!

Count the Hops

I'm sure that you have heard a number of pointers on how to help players catch fast moving grounders. Here is my favorite. As you know, most grounders hop up and down from the ground back up into the air. Have your players count the hops. The results are amazing!