



Outfield Skills and Drills

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Stationary Throwing Drill

Setup

Group your outfielders into pairs and set them up, facing each other, around 60 feet apart. Both players are wearing their gloves, and standing in an athletic ready position.

The feet should be slightly wider than shoulder width apart with the toes pointed toward your partner. One player in each pair has the ball.

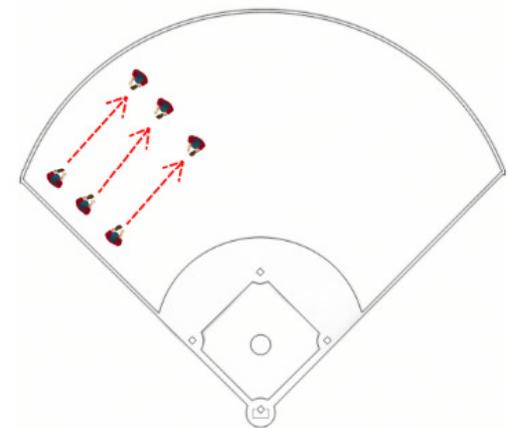
Execution

In this throwing drill, the players will play catch while keeping their feet fixed in an isolated position.

Removing the stride will help your fielders generate more power through their hips and torso, gain more arm extension on the release and follow through, and improve their throwing mechanics.

Coaching Tips

- Outfielders should always use a four-seam grip when throwing the ball. The backspin generated will help the ball fly straight and true, and will also help one-hopped throws bounce harder off the ground and stay on target



4 SEAM GRIP



One Hop Throwing Drill

Setup

Group your outfielders into pairs and set them up, facing each other, around 60 feet apart. Both players are wearing their gloves, and standing in an athletic ready position. The feet should be slightly wider than shoulder width apart with the toes pointed toward your partner. One player in each pair has the ball.

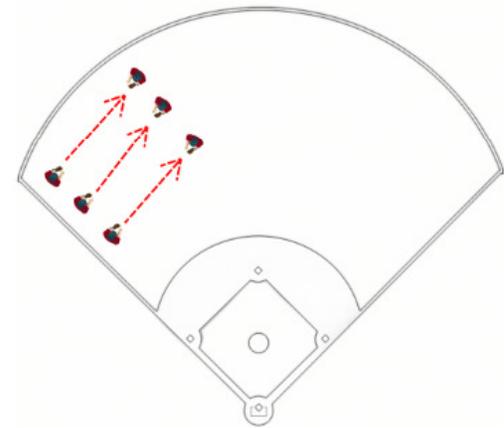
Execution

Each pair will play catch with the feet stationary (the same as the drill above), using one-hop throws instead of regular throws. Try to aim the one-hopper around one third of the distance between thrower and catcher. After a few successful one-hoppers, have the pairs alternate between one-hoppers and regular throws.

The goal of this drill is not only to help your fielders practice fielding one-hop hits in the outfield, but also to improve your fielders throwing mechanics by helping them get "on top of the ball" through the release and follow through.

Coaching Tips

- To get a better one-hop angle, extend the throwing arm as high as possible, and get on top of the ball through the release
- Finish with the throwing arm all the way through and all the way down, across the glove side knee
- After several throws with the feet stationary, allow the players to step with the glove side foot, then follow through by taking a two additional steps toward the target. This will help the drive the ball forward with more momentum, and get more power behind their throws.



Outfield Footwork Drill

Setup

The outfielders will line up single file in the outfield facing home plate. A coach stands at the edge of the infield with a glove and balls.

Execution

The coach will throw a soft fly ball to the first player in the outfielders line. The player will approach the fly ball under control then, using the proper footwork, catch the ball and immediately move into this throwing motion, delivering the ball back to the coach.

As your players get the hang of the footwork, you can move the coach to home plate and begin hitting fungos to the outfield instead of throwing the fly balls.

Coaching Tips

- Keep the feet moving with short choppy steps as the ball is in the air, which will make it easier to step with the correct foot as you catch.
- The proper footwork requires three steps in total to catch, grip, and throw the ball.
- **Step 1: CATCH:** Catch the ball with the glove side foot forward
- **Step 2: GRIP:** While you gather the ball into your throwing hand, take a second step with the throwing side foot.
- **Step 3: THROW:** As you go into your throwing motion, take a final step with the glove side foot and release the ball with your momentum going forward.
- For a right-handed fielder, the step sequence would go left-right-left
- The outfielder should watch the pitcher carefully, and time his movement with the pitcher's delivery.
- Take around 2.5 steps forward with each pitch, which will get the feet moving and enable to outfielder to get a better break on the ball
- Read the direction of the pitch and batter's swing - an inside pitch is more likely to be pulled while an outside pitch is more likely to be hit to the opposite field



Lead Drill

Setup

The outfielders will line up single file in center field, facing home plate. A coach stands at the edge of the infield with a fungo bat and balls. An additional coach or player stands next to the coach to receive throws from the outfield.

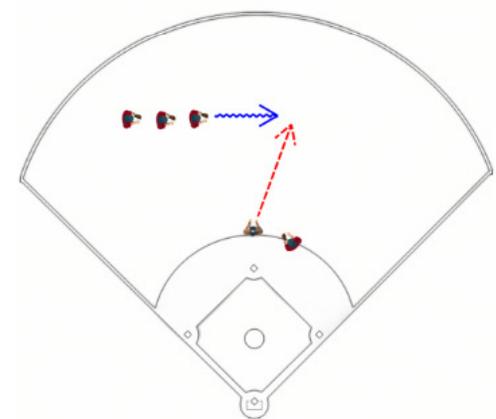
Execution

On the coaches signal, the outfielder will sprint from center field toward the right field fence. The coach will hit a line drive, ground ball, or fly ball in that direction, *leading* the fielder so that he has to sprint to make a play on the ball and stop it from reaching the fence.

He fields it cleanly then throws it into the infield. Complete several reps for each player going in each direction.



LEAD THE BALL OUT IN FRONT OF
THE RUNNING FIELDER



Turn to the Ball Drill

Setup

The outfielders will line up single file in center field, facing home plate. A coach stands at the edge of the infield with a fungo bat and balls. An additional coach or player stands next to the coach to receive throws from the outfield.

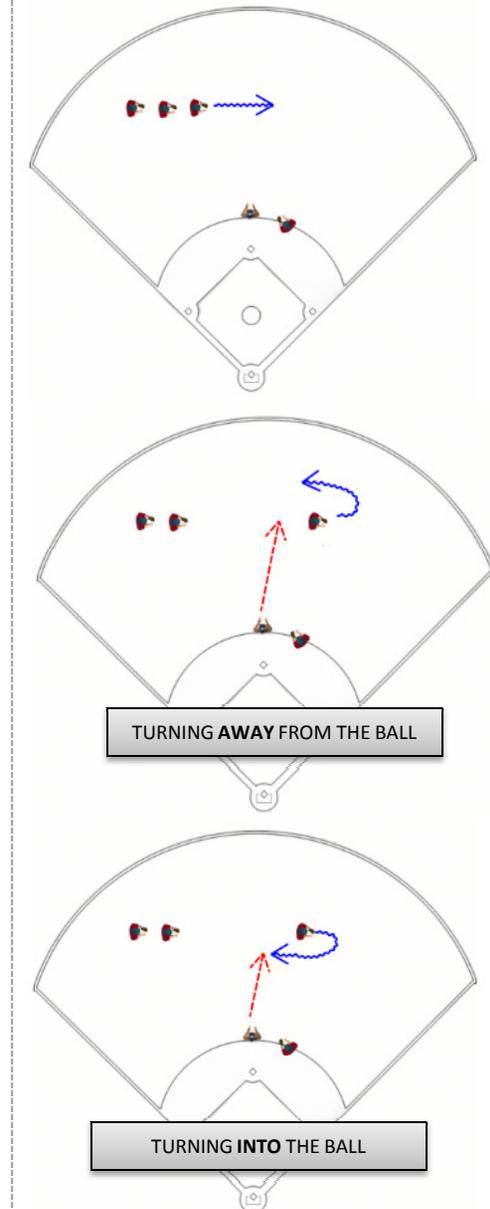
Execution

On the coaches signal, the outfielder will sprint from center field toward the right field fence. The coach will hit a line drive, ground ball, or fly ball behind the fielder, so he needs to change direction, turn to the ball and make a play.

He fields it cleanly then throws it into the infield. Complete several reps for each player going in each direction.

Coaching Tips

- This is a great drill for helping players adjust to a ball in mid-flight. In a real game, this situation could come about when an outfielder misreads a fly ball, it takes a bad hop in the grass, or is lost in the sun in mid-flight
- There are two ways of changing direction in this situation:
- Turning "**away**" from the ball, by making a front pivot. This requires the player to briefly turn his back to the ball in order to change direction, but may be faster and easier to perform for some players
- Turning "**into**" the ball, by making a reverse pivot to change direction. This allows the player to keep his eyes on the ball the entire time without turning his back to the infield



Look Over The Shoulder Drill

Setup

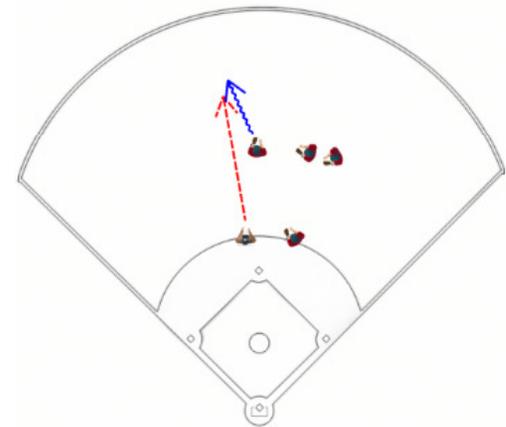
The outfielders will line up single file in center field. The first player in line faces toward the outfield fence and looks over his shoulder, back toward the infield. A coach stands at the edge of the infield with a fungo bat and balls. An additional coach or player stands next to the coach to receive throws from the outfield.

Execution

The coach will hit a high fly ball over the player's head. The player will keep his eye on the ball by keeping his head turned back toward the infield, then chase the ball over his head and try to make a play on it.

Coaching Tips

- Make sure your fielders have plenty of space to work with and you are not too close to the outfield fence, other groups of players, or any other obstructions.
- Make sure the field is clear of debris before you begin this drill.



Recovery Drill

Setup

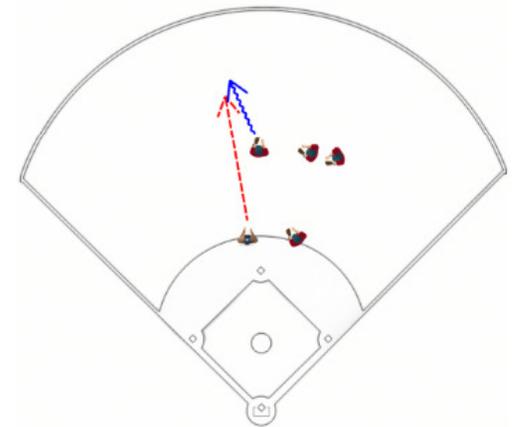
The outfielders will line up single file in center field. The first player sits, kneels, or lies flat on the ground, looking down at the grass. A coach stands at the edge of the infield with a fungo bat and balls. An additional coach or player stands next to the coach to receive throws from the outfield.

Execution

The coach will hit a high fly ball over the fielder's head. On the sound of contact, the player will need to look up, locate the ball, scramble to his feet and make a play.

Coaching Tips

- This drill will help players recover if they slip in the outfield and still need to make a play
- It's also a great confidence builder - if they can make this type of play then "regular" fly balls will seem very routine



Behind the Back Catch Drill

Setup

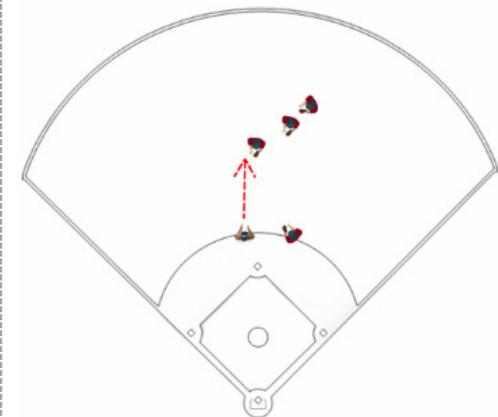
The outfielders will line up single file in center field. A coach stands at the edge of the infield with a fungo bat and balls. An additional coach or player stands next to the coach to receive throws from the outfield.

Execution

The goal here is to develop better footwork, concentration, and glove awareness by catching the ball behind the back. The coach will fungo or throw a soft fly ball to the first player in line, who will attempt to catch the ball with his glove behind his back.

Coaching Tips

- Try to catch the ball directly over the head, without turning sideways, which is much more difficult.
- Use soft baseballs or whiffle balls with younger children to prevent injury



Under the Leg Catch Drill

Setup

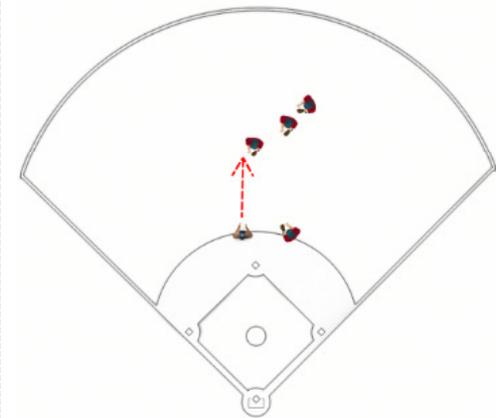
The outfielders will line up single file in center field. A coach stands at the edge of the infield with a fungo bat and balls. An additional coach or player stands next to the coach to receive throws from the outfield.

Execution

The goal here is to develop better footwork, concentration, and glove awareness by catching the ball under the fielder's leg. The coach will fungo or throw a soft fly ball to the first player in line, who will attempt to catch the ball with the glove placed between his legs. Do this by taking the glove hand around the back side the placing it forward between the knees.

Coaching Tips

- To make this catch more difficult, try to catch the ball with both feet flat on the ground (instead of lifting one leg up)
- Use soft baseballs or whiffle balls with younger children to prevent injury



Bent Leg Sliding Catch Drill

Setup

The outfielders will line up single file in center field with their shoes off. A coach stands at the edge of the infield with a fungo bat and balls. An additional coach or player stands next to the coach to receive throws from the outfield.

Execution

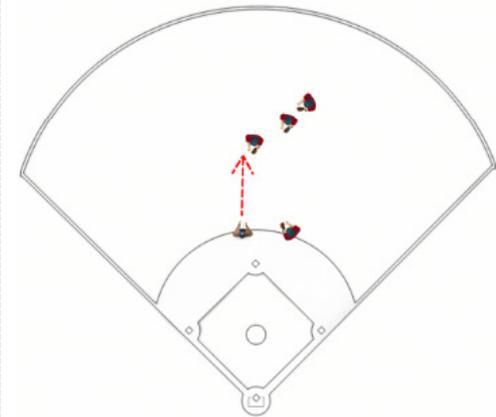
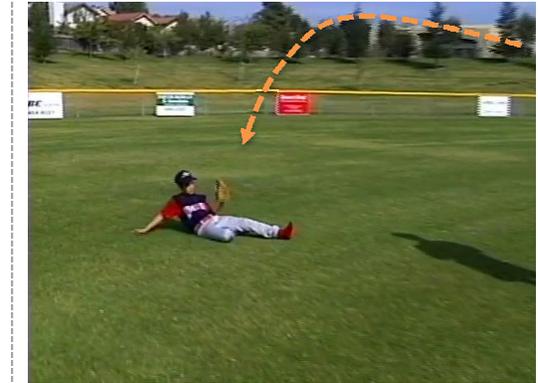
The coach will hit a short fly ball that requires the fielder to charge in at full speed in order to make a play. The bent leg slide in the field uses the same technique as a bent-leg slide in while baserunning.

As the player approaches the ball, he should begin to squat and shift his body weight down toward the grass.

With one leg straight and one leg bent, roll back the rear end, and sit on the grass with your momentum going forward. Bring the glove hand and bare hand up to make the catch.

Coaching Tips

- The bent leg slide is the safest technique for extending out to a ball at the edge of a fielder's range. It's much less risky than a headfirst dive and easier to teach as well
- This drill is performed with the shoes off to help players get comfortable with the technique without the risk of their cleats snagging on the grass
- The player should be sliding on his rear end, not his side
- The straight leg should have a slight bend in it and not be completely locked out. This will prevent it from "sticking" in the grass and prevent injury
- Make sure to practice this drill in the soft grass to start. Players can wear sliding shorts or an extra pair of sweat pants while they are learning the technique



Ground Ball Fielding Drill

Setup

The outfielders will line up single file in the outfield facing home plate. A coach stands at home plate with a fungo bat and balls. An additional coach or player stands to the side of home plate to receive throws from the fielders.

Execution

The coach will hit a ground ball to the first player in the outfielders line. The outfielder will charge hard at the ball, breakdown, field the ball using the Knee Method, Semi-Knee Method or Pro Method, then make an accurate throw back to home plate. The coach will then hit a ground ball to the next player, as the first player rotates to the back of the line.

Coaching Tips

- The **Knee Method** is typically taught to young players as the safest and most reliable way to field a ground ball in the outfield. You can also use this technique when there are no runners on base, when the ground is very bumpy, or when there is no chance of throwing a runner out.
- The outfielder should charge the ball hard for the first 4 or 5 steps, then decrease his speed, get under control, and break down to field the ball.
- To field the ball, drop to the throwing side knee (the right knee for right handed players) and put the back of the glove flat on the ground between the legs. Watch the ball into the glove, trap it with the throwing hand, then rise up and step into the throw.
- The outfielder should center his body in front of the ball, so he can block it with his torso if it takes a bad hop.
- The **Semi-Knee Method** is a faster, but slightly riskier way to field a outfield grounder. The technique is the same as the Knee Method, except the outfielder will only drop the throwing-side knee halfway to the ground while fielding the ball. This will allow him to move into his throwing motion more quickly, and have a better chance at throwing out a runner.
- The **Pro Method** (or Scoop Method) is the riskiest way to field an outfield grounder and should be used only in situations where the game will be lost if the fielder doesn't get the ball in quickly. This technique is for a do-or-die situation in which the tying or winning run is attempting to score and the outfielder must make a quick throw to the infield. The outfielder runs at the ball and scoops it up while on the move, placing the glove to the outside of the glove-side leg (instead of between the legs). If the ball is missed, it can run all the way to the fence, so use this technique with caution!



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