



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
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# VIRTUAL PRACTICE PLAN

T-Ball

DAY OF THE WEEK: Monday, March 30

FOCUS: Hitting

## Invisible Bat Drill

**Teaching the kids the proper swing is important to building a foundation for hitting the ball.**

**What you need – Line the kids up on the first and third baselines, and ask them to get into a batters stance.**

**How this drill works – This will be a fun drill for the kids, as they get to show off their swing without the bat as an impediment. When they line up, ask them to assume the batter's stance. They should have their arms up with their hands raised to their ears and their back elbow raised. When you call out 'swing', all of the kids will show you their swing with the invisible bat. At this stage, you (and assistant coaches) can view the swings of each player and you can make small adjustments to the swings. Make it a fun time and a game to swing without a bat. Make sure the players don't swing too hard, and that they maintain the same fundamentals throughout.**

**Result – With coaches watching over their swing, better instruction can be given to help the players swing properly.**



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**DAY OF THE WEEK: Tuesday, March 31**

**FOCUS: Hitting**

### **Tee Counter**

**This is a basic batting drill to help a player work on the contact they make with the ball.**

**What you need – A player with a helmet and a bat at the tee. Make sure the tee is at the appropriate height (waist high, or just under). You can set up other stations with a few players at each, with another coach or parent helper.**

**How this drill works – Once the player gets to the tee, they must get into their batter stance. The coach should help them set up properly so they can increase the chance of good contact. The other players in the station are waiting, gloves in hand, to field the ball. The coach says, 'hit', and the player swings. If the ball is hit the first time, the rest of the teams yells 'one'. For each hit, they say the corresponding number. This provides encouragement to the player when they are hitting. The coach should give each player five swings on the tee. On the final swing (and hit), the player should drop the bat and run to 'first' base.**

**Result – This drill helps players get used to making contact with the ball and using the encouragement of their teammates to help them along the way.**



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**DAY OF THE WEEK: Wednesday, April 1**

**FOCUS: Throwing**

### **Show the Ball**

**Learning how to properly hold the ball is the first step to throwing it well. What you need – Each player needs to have a ball and a glove in order to work in this drill.**

**How this drill works – Gripping the baseball is essential to throwing properly and accurately. At a young age, learning the proper grip is the best way to help them build the foundation for throwing. Each player has the ball, and they must grasp the ball with the thumb on the underside, and the two top fingers spread slightly apart over the top. The ring finger and the pinky should be touching the side of the ball slightly on the outside. When the coach says 'show me', each of the players gets into the proper throwing stance: legs apart (one in front of the other), foot on the throwing side is behind the body, and the arm is up, with the elbow raised to shoulder height and the forearm and bicep at a 90 degree angle (L-shape).**

**Result – Coaches will be able to watch how their players are gripping the ball as they show them the grip and the throwing stance. Problems can be corrected at this point.**



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**DAY OF THE WEEK: Thursday, April 2**

**FOCUS: Throwing**

### **One Knee Throwing**

**This helps players learn the upper body action of throwing, without using their legs. Also builds throwing strength.**

**What you need – Each player needs to have a ball to perform this drill. To start, you may want to give the players a softer ball, like a tennis ball.**

**How this drill works – This drill emphasizes the upper body action: right from the grip, to the raised arm and elbow, the L-shape between the forearm and bicep, and then turning the body and following through towards the intended target. The player starts with the body facing the target and the ball raised. The player can throw at a target, a fellow player, or a coach. The proper throwing mechanics should be watched for as the player throws the ball toward the target. A good follow through toward the target is important.**

**Result – This drill helps the player learn to upper body action for throwing, along with building throwing strength and accuracy.**



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**DAY OF THE WEEK: Friday, April 3**

**FOCUS: Fielding**

### **Soft Fly Ball**

**Sometimes younger baseball players have a fear of catching the ball because they are afraid it is too hard.**

**What you need – You will need enough softer balls (tennis balls, wiffleballs, puffy balls) for all of the players. The player should have their gloves.**

**How this drill works – It is tough for some young players to get over the fact that the ball is very hard and they may get hit. This prevents some players from making the effort to catch the ball. They are afraid that if they miss, the ball is going to hit, and therefore hurt them. Start off by showing the players that the ball is very soft, and even if it hits them in the head, they are not going to get hurt. Then, you can start off with the players in the lines and throw the ball to them one by one. Once the players get the hang of it, they can start throwing the ball to each other to try and catch it.**

**Result – Younger players will get over the fear of catching the ball by working with the soft ball and eventually moving up to the harder ball.**



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**DAY OF THE WEEK: Saturday, April 4**

**FOCUS: Fielding**

### **Block the Ball**

**This is the first step to getting kids to learn the prospect of fielding the ball.**

**What you need – Set up two or three lines of players so the kids can get maximum repetition. Have a coach or parent volunteer at each line with several balls.**

**How this drill works – With this drill coaches need to first instruct their players on how to move to get in front of the ball. Start the players off in the ready position (hands on the knees, slightly bent, and with their head up watching the play). The coaches or volunteers should roll the ball directly at the players at first, but then to either side. The player needs to shuffle to get their body in front of the ball to knock it down. For each ball that the player knocks down they get three points. If the player scoops the ball with their glove, they get five points. The players will get excited about getting points for knocking the ball down. To teach players how to use their gloves properly, try using plastic milk jugs with one side cut out to form a “scoop”. Have the kids use the scoop to field the ball. This will help them learn to use their gloves to scoop up the ball, rather than trap it.**

**Result – Learning to knock the ball down and ultimately to try and scoop the ball is the first part of fielding the ball.**



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**DAY OF THE WEEK: Sunday, April 5**

**FOCUS: Fielding**

### **One and Two**

**Award points to the players for throwing and catching the ball at shoulder level or above. What you need – Pair up the players and give them each a ball. (You can get a softer ball to start).**

**How this drill works – This drill helps players to understand the importance of accurate throws and catches that are at the shoulder level. It makes it easier for kids to throw and catch if they have something to aim for. It makes it especially better if it becomes a game and there are points at stake. If the pair throws and catches at shoulder height, then they get two points. If they throw the ball and then catch it at waist level, then they get one point. If it is lower than the waist they get no points. This will help the players learn to keep the ball up where their teammates can catch it much easier.**

**Result – More accurate throws and players can compete against each other in a game-like setting.**

**DAY OF THE WEEK: Monday, April 6**

**FOCUS: Fielding and Throwing**

### **Bounce to the Bucket**

**This puts together the basic idea of fielding a grounder and then throwing the ball to a spot on the field.**

**What you need – You can set up several stations for this drill in order to increase the amount of repetition. You have a line of fielders and a box or bucket at a base.**

**How this drill works – This puts the original drill of bouncing to the bucket together with fielding the ball. The coach will roll a grounder to the player and they pick it up and throw it to try to get it in the box. The emphasis is for the player to knock down the ball, gain the proper grip, throwing motion and then aim it to the bucket. Players will get the same points as they would get in the bounce to the bucket drill.**



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**DAY OF THE WEEK: Tuesday, April 7**

**FOCUS: Hitting**

### **Kiss the Ball**

**This will be a fun drill for the kids as they try to get the bat to kiss the ball**

**What you need – Place a ball upon the tee, and have a batter with a helmet and bat standing in the proper position to hit the ball. You can have two or more stations for this drill with a parent helper or assistant coach at each station.**

**How this drill works – Coaches will help the batter assume the correct stance in the batter's box. The rest of the drill is up to the batter. Sometimes, taking a swing in slow motion so a player can visualize where they want to hit the ball is valuable in building memory. Before the batter takes a swing, they need to slowly go through the batting motion and stop the bat right where they want to hit the ball. This is the 'kiss' the bat will give the ball. The player then brings the bat back up and then takes a normal swing at the ball. Focusing on the spot they want to hit (the kiss) is a fun way for kids to learn what motion they need to hit the ball where they want.**

**Result – Your players will begin to develop the muscle memory and coordination to make consistent contact with the ball.**



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**DAY OF THE WEEK: Wednesday, April 8**

**FOCUS: Hitting**

### **Coach Says**

**This will help the players learn the different steps involved in a good swing.**

**What you need – Start off this drill the same as you would start off the drill with the invisible bat. Line up the kids on both the first and third baselines.**

**How this drill works – This is a batter’s version of ‘Simon Says’ where the players must do what you say in order to demonstrate their understanding of a skill. You will focus on three key areas: grip, stance and swing. When you say any one of those three words, the player must show you their best grip, stance or swing (after instruction, of course). As the coach, you can watch, and go to individual players to help them with different aspects of their swing.**

**Result – You will be able to help the players with each step of their swing, and sometimes that is more helpful than seeing the entire swing all at once.**

**DAY OF THE WEEK: Thursday, April 9**

**FOCUS: Catching and Throwing**

### **Count the Catches**

**This is a good drill to help players strive toward making good catches, and also a drill they can work on at home.**

**What you need – You can either do this as a group drill, or you can make it a drill that has players paired up with each other.**

**How this drill works – if you do this as a group, you can get two stations going in order to compete against each other, and have a coach or parent volunteer at each station. With a group, the coach will underhand toss the ball to the player in the line and they must make the catch. Everyone yells out, “one!” Then, another toss and “two!” And so on.**



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**DAY OF THE WEEK: Friday, April 10**

**FOCUS: Hitting**

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**How this drill works – Once the player gets to the tee, they must get into their batter stance. The coach should help them set up properly so they can increase the chance of good contact. The other players in the station are waiting, gloves in hand, to field the ball. The coach says, 'hit', and the player swings. If the ball is hit the first time, the rest of the teams yells 'one'. For each hit, they say the corresponding number. This provides encouragement to the player when they are hitting. The coach should give each player five swings on the tee. On the final swing (and hit), the player should drop the bat and run to 'first' base.**

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**DAY OF THE WEEK: Saturday, April 11**

**FOCUS: Throwing**

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**How this drill works – This drill emphasizes the upper body action: right from the grip, to the raised arm and elbow, the L-shape between the forearm and bicep, and then turning the body and following through towards the intended target. The player starts with the body facing the target and the ball raised. The player can throw at a target, a fellow player, or a coach. The proper throwing mechanics should be watched for as the player throws the ball toward the target. A good follow through toward the target is important.**

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**DAY OF THE WEEK: Sunday, April 12**

**FOCUS: Fielding**

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