

# T-Ball Drills and Practice Plans

Making you a better coach, one practice at a time!

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## Introduction – How to Use this Book!

We put together a baseball book complete with drills and practice plans, and then realized (with help from our readers) that we might be missing a niche of players where learning fundamentals and love of the game is of utmost importance – at the T-ball level.

Coaching at the T-ball level is not easy either. Aside from feeling at some points that you are doing well just to get everyone to pay attention. That's why the drills and practice plans that you choose are going to be very important.

To be a successful T-ball coach, you need to mix skill development with fun. Since these are kids that are generally between the ages of 4 and 7 years old, they aren't necessarily looking for hard skill development. This is a time to help them learn the fundamentals but also develop a sense of fun and enjoyment for the game of baseball.

This book is designed to help you with your T-ball practices by outlining 36 T-ball drills and games that will build skill development, but also foster the fun and excitement associated with playing the game. Then, in typical **Drills and Practice Plans** we've got 10 practice plans with the drills we have included, so you can have a practice laid out for you.

Each of the practices are going to be one hour long, instead of the typical two hours, because most kids will only last that long during a practice before it can become boring for them. Further, the activities need to be shorter and keep going smoothly, and a shorter practice makes that easier to accommodate.

The drill will be divided into three main areas:

- Hitting
- Fielding / throwing
- Game play

Each drill will show you what you need to run the drill, how to run the drill and then what kind of results you should expect.

When you get to the **Practice Plans**, feel free to mix and match drills that work with your team into the plans we have designed. Some drills are going to be more effective with your team, and you should use those ones!

**Best of Luck!**

## Hitting Drills

### Belt Buckle Batting

Lining up the player in front of the tee so they are in the proper batting area.

**What you need** – You will need to set up a tee with the ball on it. Batters should have a bat and a helmet on.

**How this drill works** – Setting a young player up in the batting area might be one of the toughest things to get them to do when batting. They don't quite understand the concept of a batter's box, so you need to help them understand how to line up through a different method.

Explain to the player they must keep their belt buckle right across from the ball and show them how far away they should be (around 24 inches). If a young player can understand they need to keep their belt buckle in front of the ball on the tee, then you will have much great success teaching them where to stand in order to hit the ball.

**Result** – Once players have learned the grip on the bat and how to stand, the next thing they need to learn is where to stand in order to ensure the highest success when swinging the bat and making contact.

### 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.

## **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.

## **Invisible Ball**

Like the invisible bat drill, this is a drill that puts the bat in the hands for a swing without the ball.

**What you need** – Give the player a bat, helmet and then line them up in front of the tee – without the ball.

**How this drill works** – With the player at the tee, the coach helps them get into the proper batter's stance to make good contact with the ball. The tee should be waist high (or slightly under) and the player needs to focus on the 'imaginary ball'.

The coach will back up, and the player will focus on the spot they are supposed to hit on the imaginary ball. While the other players in the station are waiting, they can pretend they are fielding the ball when the coach says **swing**, and the player takes a swing.

**Result** – Batters might swing too high, or swing too low, but this drill will help them focus on the spot they need to swing to make contact.

## **Kiss and swing**

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.

## **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.

### **Don't Miss**

This is a game that can be played with the players to try and establish the desire to hit the ball.

**What you need** – Set up several stations each starting with one batter and three or four fielders. Set up one base that the hitter will run to.

**How this drill works** – With a batter at the plate and fielders in the field for each station, the batter will hit attempt to put the ball in play by hitting it. If they miss the ball or if they hit the tee without knocking the ball forward, then it will be considered a strike. This is a perfect opportunity to teach them about how three strikes means an out.

This will be one of the player's first introductions to an 'out'. The player needs to understand the importance of making contact with the ball in order to get to first base and to advance other runners.

Each time the player hits the ball, they must drop the bat and run to first base.

**Result** – This drill adds a step to the process, after hitting and then running to first base. Making contact within three strikes is the key.

### **A drop in the bucket**

Sometimes young players have a tendency to throw the bat after they swing. This drill will show them to

**What you need** – Step up a batting drill, and then to the back of the plate, set up an old tire or large bucket.

**How this drill works** – With the tire stationed just behind the tee, it should be in easy access of the batter in order for them to drop the bat once they make contact with the ball.

Once they do make contact, instruct the player to make sure the bat is nicely dropped into the tire or bucket before they keep running toward first base. Repeated work with this drill will reinforce to the player the importance of having to drop the bat when they have hit the ball.

Work on this drill until the batter naturally begins to place the bat into the tire or bucket.

**Result** – This may not necessarily be a skill development drill, however it is an important one to emphasize, in order to make sure that the safety of all players is at the forefront.

## **Spot the ball**

Sometimes a visual mark will help a player understand where they need to make contact with the ball.

**What you need** – Set up a tee with a ball on top of it, and line up a batter in the batter's box. You can have fielders to field the ball if you want. The ball will have a black dot the size of a nickel marked on it (with a black marker).

**How this drill works** – This is a simple batting drill that once again helps the batter to focus on a spot they want to hit. Think of the saying, "aim small, miss small." With the black dot facing back toward the backstop, the player is able to locate and ultimately hit the spot on the ball.

The player will focus on striking the spot with the bat – not just the ball. If a player tries harder to focus on hitting the spot, it can decrease their overall margin of error and make it much easier to hit the ball.

Over time, you can reduce the size of the black mark on the ball, until eventually the black mark is gone and the player is just hitting the ball.

**Result** – More focus and consistency hitting the ball.

## **Target Practice**

Once players get the hang of hitting, you can attempt to begin teaching them the art of hitting to a spot.

**What you need** – Set up a tee and when the batter addresses the ball, they are facing towards the backstop. The back stop should have certain squares set up, with each square being a number of points.

**How this drill works** – This is an advanced T-ball hitting drill, but some of your more adept hitters should be able to understand what they have to do to hit the ball to certain areas. This drill will help them work through the understanding awarding points for hitting the squares with point values.

Start by giving a hitter 5 chances to make 20 points (targets can be worth 10 points each). They have to hit selected targets as the coach chooses. As the player becomes more skilled at hitting the targets the coach suggests, then they can increase the number of points needed to succeed in the game.

**Result** – This drill helps the player become a more skilled hitter by teaching them to hit to certain chosen areas.

### **One knee batting**

Upper body position and movement is important for younger players to learn batting technique.

**What you need** – Get a light bat for the players, so they can hold it when they are on one knee. Each player needs a bat and a ball on a tee.

**How this drill works** – The batter needs to get down on one knee, with their front knee up, and the back knee down on the ground. In order for the batter to actually make contact with the ball, they will have to hold the bat high. This teaches the player to keep the bat held high when they are batting normally.

The hands should be at ear level or higher and their trailing elbow should be up. All you want the batter to do is make contact with the ball and move through the swing with their upper body. A lighter bat usually makes this drill a little easier for the younger players.

**Result** – This drill builds many of the fundamentals for good batting.

### **Three tee batting**

This is a good listening drill as much as it is a drill for the player to hit. Coaches need to watch the batters when they swing.

**What you need** – Set up three tees with ball on them and have three batters with helmets and bats.

**How this drill works** – This helps young players learn to listen to the coaches, and also for the coaches to see their players swing so they can help them with any problems.

Each batter lines up in their batting stance and gets ready to swing the bat. Make sure the players know which tee is number one, number two, and number three. When the players are all ready, the coach will call out one of the numbers and that batter must take a swing and hit the ball.

At this point, the coach is able to watch the individual player and help them with swing technique, but it also keeps the young players excited about hearing their number being called and having it be their turn to take a swing at the ball.

**Result** – The main result of this drill is for the players to improve their batting technique through the help of coaches. It is also a good drill for the players to learn to make sure they listen to the coaches when on the field.

# Throwing and Fielding Drills

## 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 finger 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.

## 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.

## **Bounce to the bucket**

It's good to learn throwing accuracy at an early age – this is a fun game to learn!

**What you need** – Set up a bucket or box at the first base. You can set up more than one station for this drill. Line up kids at each station about 10 feet away to start.

**How this drill works** – The first thrower steps up and tries to get the ball into the box or bucket – and they get 10 points. If they hit the side of the bucket they will get 5 points. The closest ball to the bucket will get 2 points.

You can increase the difficulty of the drill by increasing the distance that the players have to throw. But, don't sacrifice the distance for the accuracy. Once the kids gain the accuracy, then in time they will build the strength to throw the ball a greater distance.

**Result** – The players will begin to develop a sense of how to get the ball to their intended target by aiming at the box or bucket.

## **Learning the Crow Hop**

The crow hop is a basic move that is taught at all levels to help a player gain a little bit of momentum on their throw.

**What you need** – Give each player a ball so they can throw it. Or, you can start this drill by using an 'imaginary' ball.

**How this drill works** – This technique helps younger players learn to generate power and momentum to get the ball a greater distance. Once a player has fielded the ball, they take a short step forward with the foot that is opposite the throwing arm and they shuffle and hop in the direction of the target.

Upon the follow through, the rear leg crosses over in front of the other leg and it lands at a right angle to the target. It would be a good idea to practice this yourself so you can understand how it works and then how you are going to show it to the kids.

Once you show them a couple of times, the kids will usually get the gist of how to do the crow hop.

**Result** – Once the kids are familiar with the technique, they will quite enjoy the ability to throw the ball further.

## **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, wiffle balls, 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.

## **Catch contest**

This is a game that pits the throwing and catching skills of the players against one another. It should be a fun game for all of the kids to participate in.

**What you need** – Pair up the players on the team and give each pair a ball. Each should also have their gloves.

**How this drill works** – Once you have the players paired up, start them off a short distance apart from one another – probably between 8 and 10 feet. The players should throw the ball back and forth executing overhand throws and catches.

The players need to make good throws and good catches, as each time they miss or drop the ball, the pair has to stop in the game. The game ends when the last pair to keep throwing and catching the ball without dropping it is still in the game.

If the game lasts longer (with improved play), you can move the pairs back a step or two.

**Result** – The players will gradually build their throwing and catching skills and learn to work with the other players on their team in this manner.

## **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.

## **Base Relay Drill**

Teaching the players to field the ball in a round the horn game

**What you need** – Put the bases out (shorter than normal if you like, to start), and then put a player at each base. You can have players in a line up behind each base.

**How this drill works** – You can start the drill by hitting a soft grounder, or rolling the ball to one of the players. First they must throw the ball to third base, to second base, then to first base – and finally back to the coach.

The player need to use all of the skills they have learned in order to make this drill work. They should work on throwing the ball properly and accurately and then make sure they stop the ball when it is thrown to them. Reward the team that is able to get the ball around the bases without many problems.

**Result** – This drill might be tough at first, however with time, the player will find it to be a particularly valuable drill when they learn how to get the ball to one another.

### **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.

### **Field and 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.

Adding the extra element of fielding the ball may be difficult for some players, but it is an essential skill to master at this level.

**Result** – This is a step above the basic skill of throwing to a target, by adding the fielding aspect to this drill.

### **Slo Mo Throw**

At an early age, coaches often combat players that cannot throw the ball without throwing it as hard as they can.

**What you need** – Set up a target (or a series of targets for several stations), that is about 10 to 15 feet away. It shouldn't be too far for the kids, otherwise they feel like they have to throw the ball hard. Line up the kids in single file in each station.

**How this drill works** – In order to get the player to throw the ball normally, you need to help them understand that the ball will go as far as they want with a slow motion throw. This drill works as a method to reinforce the basic throwing skills, but also to learn control.

Teach the players to learn control by asking them to throw in slow motion with just enough force to get the ball to the target. Once they can get the ball to the target with the slow motion throw, ask them to do the same thing with their normal throw.

**Result** – Younger players will learn to control their throws. This is important to make sure they have accuracy and that they aren't throwing the ball all over the place.

### **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.

Each side goes on until a player in the line drops the ball. Then they start at one again. You can run this drill in pairs, with the players trying to catch the ball between each other.

**Result** – This drill simply reinforces the skill of the catching the ball.

## Game play Drills

### Call the ball

It is important for younger players to learn that communication on the field is essential.

**What you need** – Line up two single file lines that are about 10 yards apart. One coach will stand in the middle, just slightly away to the side of the players.

**How this drill works** – With the two players ready to catch the ball, the coach will throw a fly ball in between them. The players will converge on the ball and they will watch for the other player.

Teach the players to understand that the player closest to the ball is to call, “**I’ve got it**”. They can scream it, yell it, or just say it softly. They will have fun with that – but they must say it.

The player that calls the ball must try to get under it, and the other player should be their back up in case they miss the ball.

**Result** – This drill will help teach the players basic communication, along with working on their fly-ball catching skills.

### Base Runners

Players need to learn to listen to what their coaches say when they are running the bases.

**What you need** – You can have the tee set up, with a batter at the tee, but without a bat. The coach will be at first base.

**How this drill works** – The player will take an imaginary swing with the imaginary bat and then run as fast as they can to first base. As the runner approaches the base he or she will call out to the runner to either stay at the base, or to keep running.

Run each player through the drill differing each time what you are going to say to the player. They will begin to learn through the repetition to listen for their coaches voice when they are running the bases.

**Result** – Knowing the coach is going to help them will give some players confidence on the base pads. For others it is a lesson in listening to what the coach says on the field.

## **Fast Fingers Drill**

Charging the ball to get to it quickly is a great skill to learn in baseball.

**What you need** – Line the players up in four single file lines along the first or third baseline. The coach will stand out in front of them about 15 or 20 feet away.

**How this drill works** – All of the players will be in their lines and the coach will be in front of them. The coach will point to one of the lines and then roll or hit the ball to them with a slow grounder.

The player needs to run up to pick up the ball and then settle themselves down to throw back to the coach. The object for the kids is going to be to pick up the ball, remember their proper throwing action and make a nice throw back to the coach.

Once the coach tosses the ball, he or she counts out 1001, 1002, 1003... and then stops when the ball gets back to the coach. The object of the game is to have the players get the ball back to the coach as quickly and accurately as possible. The quickest pick up and throw is the fastest fingers player.

**Result** – The players will learn to get the ball to the coach quicker by charging it, picking it up, and then making a good throw.

## **First base drill**

This is the most basic play in baseball and should be taught early

**What you need** – You can start with the players just in a couple of single file line in the infield, or you can put them at positions. You may want to start them in lines and have them closer to first base to build confidence. Have a coach or parent at first base to start.

**How this drill works** – This is a basic fielding drill for beginning players. The coach will softly hit or roll grounders to the players and they need to scoop the ball, set, and then make an accurate throw to the coach.

Coaches should focus on making sure the player gains good control of the ball, faces their target and then goes through a good throwing motion to get the ball to the coach or parent on first base.

You can make the drill more challenging by putting players at the infield positions.

**Result** – The players will learn the fundamentals of making an out.

### **Coach run around (then players)**

This is a base identification drill, and the coach gets a little exercise

**What you need** – Make sure all of the bases are intact and in their proper positions. The kids can watch from the middle of the diamond.

**How this drill works** – At first, get all of the kids attention and go over which bases are which on the field. Then, the coach will stand at home plate in front of the tee and take an imaginary swing at an imaginary ball and then go towards first base. Tell them to yell out which base you are heading to each time.

Once you get to first base, they yell 'first'. Once you round the bag and get to second, they yell 'second'. Etcetera.

After you do this a couple of times, then you can run each player through the bases and have them yell out which base they are on, along with all of the other kids.

**Result** – Base identification is important to learn at an early age. It is the fundamental for baserunning and should be something you work on regularly.

### **Tag out Frozen Tag**

This helps players to learn the importance of tagging with the ball, and also promotes a whole lot of fun.

**What you need** – Mark off an area about 20 yards by 20 yards. The T-ball infield might work if you don't have too many players. Two players will need to have their gloves and a ball inside the glove.

**How this drill works** – This is a tag game that actually requires the taggers to tag the other players with the ball inside the glove. The two players that are 'it' will chase other players and they will have to tag those players with their gloves.

If the ball comes out of the glove, then the player tagged is NOT frozen. If they don't tag with the ball, then the player is NOT frozen. Players that are tagged must be frozen and they need to get unfrozen by their teammates by going underneath their legs or their arms.

**Result** – Players will quickly learn the importance of tagging others with the ball in their glove, and maintaining control of the ball when doing it.

## **Triangle Relay Drill**

This throwing and fielding drill might be best for more advanced or older T-ballers

**What you need** – Match up two players and a coach, and if you have parent volunteers you can have several stations for this drill.

**How this drill works** – This drill works on a player's ability to field the ball (in the outfield for example), and then get the ball back to the relay player and then back to the coach or the parent volunteer.

Start the players out about 30 feet away from each other, and the coach about another 15 feet from the 'relay' player. This drill begins with the coach rolling a grounder to the player that is furthest away. That player must stop the ball, control it, pick it up and make a good throw to the relay player.

The relay player must then grab the ball from the glove and then make a good throw to the coach. Repeat this drill and switch the players.

**Result** – This is the first chance kids will get to learn how to use teamwork (relay) to get the ball where they want it to go.

## **Batter out!**

This is a good game that works on three critical areas: hitting, fielding and catching.

**What you need** – Divide the team into three groups: batters, fielders and first base. You will need a tee and a ball, with proper batting equipment.

**How this drill works** – The batters will try to hit the ball, and the fielders will be in the field and the first base... well, on first base. Give the fielders an 'area' they are to cover, so they are not all chasing after the same ball. The batters will hit the ball and then begin running to first base. The fielders must play their area and get the ball if it goes there. Then, they need to make the throw to first base before the runner gets there.

Coaches should award one point to the runner if he beats the throw and makes it to first base. They should award one point to the fielders for stopping the ball and making a good throw. You can award the first base players one point if they make a good catch with two hands and do not drop the ball. Make it a competition to see which group gets more points. You can switch groups in the same practice or wait until the next one.

**Result** – A good competitive drill that works on three skill areas.

### **Next base drill**

Once a player is on first base, they may not always know where they need to go next.

**What you need** – You can set up a couple of stations if you have enough bases. Set up a diamond with the bases as they would normally be set up. Start with a player on first base and a lineup of batters.

**How this drill works** – This drill starts with a player on first base and one at the tee to bat. Instead of having a real ball, players will 'show' coach their great swing and then run to first.

You will also have to explain to the kids on first base, where they need to go next. Another coach, or a parent volunteer can be on second to help direct the players where to go next. Keep going so each player has a chance to bat and run around the bases.

Coaches should watch that the runner understands which base he or she is headed to, and also that they stop right on the base.

**Result** – This is a basic baserunning drill that helps kids learn where to go during the game.

### **Catch the players**

Speedy baserunning is the key to this fun drill for the kids and lots of work for the coaches!

**What you need** – You can either set up a couple of stations with four bases, or have coaches and parent volunteers alternate. Groups of four runners at a time will go.

**How this drill works** – The coach will start the four runners, one at a time. Give each runner a five second head start and then send the next runner. After all four runners, then the coach heads around the basepads.

The object is for each player to catch the players ahead of them while they are running around the bases. Once it gets to the coach, then the coach needs to run fast to catch the players that are left. If any of the players run off the baseline, or if they go to the wrong base, they will be out of the game.

**Result** – This will probably be one of the most fun games you and the kids are playing. It teaches them they need to run around the bases as fast as they can, or coach will catch them. It translates well to a game situation.

## **Pizza Slice defense**

This helps the players learn to stay in their own area based on the position they are playing.

**What you need** – If you have a chalk liner this works well, or you can use pylons or other markers. Separate the field into ‘slices’ like pizza, and have it correspond with one of the positions on the field.

**How this drill works** – This drill is intended to teach younger players the importance of playing their position on the field – to prevent kids from fighting over the ball when it is hit.

Show the players that they each have a ‘slice’ of the pizza, but they can’t have a slice of any one else’s pizza. When the ball is hit, or rolled to the players, they must stay on their own slice of pizza when the ball comes out. They cannot go to another player’s slice to steal the ball.

Players who go into the other players slice will have someone else come in and take their piece of pizza from them.

**Result** – Gradually, when players lose their slice of pizza, they will understand that they cannot go into other players’ areas to get the ball. This prevents five infielders from going after the same ball.

## **Go to your Base**

Players need to learn to go to their base when another runner is on base.

**What you need** – You can run this as a two base drill to start, and then run it with three bases, and then all of the bases. Have a player playing second base and first base, with a runner on first base to start. You can have a fielder to shag the grounders.

**How this drill works** – This drill may take some time for fielders to understand, but it is important to advance the development of the fielding player. With a first and second baseman playing their position, and a runner on first, the coach must teach a player to recognize that they need to go to their bag and wait for a throw to put the runner out.

Help the fielder to understand by telling them they need to protect their base if they see another runner coming after it. They protect the base by catching the ball if it is thrown there.

**Result** – In time, fielders will understand they have to cover their base when there are runners.

## Practice Plan #1

Time	Drill	Page	Coaching Points
0 to :07	Stretching arms, throwing with partners	-	This is a great chance to do some team building by stretching together
:07 to :15	Show the ball	9	Learn the fundamentals step by step
:16 to :25	One knee throwing	9	Using the proper upper body action is important
:26 to :30	Water Break	-	Keeping kids hydrated in hot weather is important
:31 to :40	Call the ball	15	Make sure one player backs up the other
:41 to :55	Spot the ball	7	Aim small, miss small
:55 to :60	End of practice talk	-	Reinforce terminology or other things kids are to try and remember

## Practice Plan #2

Time	Drill	Page	Coaching Points
0 to :07	Stretching arms, throwing with partners	-	This is a great chance to do some team building by stretching together
:07 to :15	Bounce to the bucket	10	Encourage players to get the ball into the bucket
:16 to :25	Count the catches	14	Contest between players
:26 to :30	Water Break	-	Keeping kids hydrated in hot weather is important
:31 to :40	Fast fingers drill	16	Quickest player is the winner!
:41 to :55	Kiss and swing	5	This helps the batter line up the bat with the ball
:55 to :60	End of practice talk	-	Reinforce terminology or other things kids are to try and remember

## Practice Plan #3

Time	Drill	Page	Coaching Points
0 to :07	Stretching arms, throwing with partners	-	This is a great chance to do some team building by stretching together
:07 to :15	Block the ball	12	Teach players to get the body in front of the ball
:16 to :25	Slow Mo Throw	14	Good chance for coaches to watch mechanics and control wild throws
:26 to :30	Water Break	-	Keeping kids hydrated in hot weather is important
:31 to :40	Triangle Relay	18	Players must learn that teamwork is important to get the ball to the infield
:41 to :55	Invisible Bat	3	After everyone shows the invisible swing, you can add a ball and real bat
:55 to :60	End of practice talk	-	Reinforce terminology or other things kids are to try and remember

## Practice Plan #4

Time	Drill	Page	Coaching Points
0 to :07	Stretching arms, throwing with partners	-	This is a great chance to do some team building by stretching together
:07 to :15	Coach says	5	Shows coaches each batting point
:16 to :25	Drop in the bucket	6	Players need to learn to not throw bat on contact
:26 to :30	Water Break	-	Keeping kids hydrated in hot weather is important
:31 to :40	Soft Fly Ball	11	Kids can be scared, so show them the ball is soft
:41 to :55	Tag out Frozen Tag	17	Players must tag with ball or ball in glove
:55 to :60	End of practice talk	-	Reinforce terminology or other things kids are to try and remember

## Practice Plan #5

Time	Drill	Page	Coaching Points
0 to :07	Stretching arms, throwing with partners	-	This is a great chance to do some team building by stretching together
:07 to :15	Coach run around	17	Gets you warmed up for the practice!
:16 to :25	First Base Drill	16	Stress the accurate throw to the coach or player at first
:26 to :30	Water Break	-	Keeping kids hydrated in hot weather is important
:31 to :40	Field – bounce to bucket	13	Control the ball, then make a good throw to bucket
:41 to :55	Target practice	7	Teach players to hit to different areas
:55 to :60	End of practice talk	-	Reinforce terminology or other things kids are to try and remember

## Practice Plan #6

Time	Drill	Page	Coaching Points
0 to :07	Stretching arms, throwing with partners	-	This is a great chance to do some team building by stretching together
:07 to :15	Belt buckle batting	3	This will help players line up with the tee
:16 to :25	Three tee batting	8	Coaches can watch the individual players while batters wait for their number
:26 to :30	Water Break	-	Keeping kids hydrated in hot weather is important
:31 to :40	Base relay	12	Good throws to each base
:41 to :55	Catch the players	19	Stress running the bases as fast as players can
:55 to :60	End of practice talk	-	Reinforce terminology or other things kids are to try and remember

## Practice Plan #7

Time	Drill	Page	Coaching Points
0 to :07	Stretching arms, throwing with partners	-	This is a great chance to do some team building by stretching together
:07 to :15	Next Base Drill	19	Teach kids where to go when ball is hit
:16 to :25	Pizza slice D	20	Helps players learn to play a position. Stay with their own slice of pizza!
:26 to :30	Water Break	-	Keeping kids hydrated in hot weather is important
:31 to :40	Tee counter	4	Players get hitting practice and fielder count the hits
:41 to :55	Catch contest	11	Great way to end practice – a competition!
:55 to :60	End of practice talk	-	Reinforce terminology or other things kids are to try and remember

## Practice Plan #8

Time	Drill	Page	Coaching Points
0 to :07	Stretching arms, throwing with partners	-	This is a great chance to do some team building by stretching together
:07 to :15	Batter out!	18	Combines real hitting with real fielding
:16 to :25	Go to your base	20	Make sure kids know which base to go to next
:26 to :30	Water Break	-	Keeping kids hydrated in hot weather is important
:31 to :40	Invisible Ball	4	Chance to watch swing mechanics of all kids without the ball
:41 to :55	One and Two	13	Catch at shoulder height or above the waist
:55 to :60	End of practice talk	-	Reinforce terminology or other things kids are to try and remember

## Practice Plan #9

Time	Drill	Page	Coaching Points
0 to :07	Stretching arms, throwing with partners	-	This is a great chance to do some team building by stretching together
:07 to :15	Don't Miss	6	Players don't want three strikes
:16 to :25	Kiss and swing	5	This will help players who had trouble with previous drill
:26 to :30	Water Break	-	Keeping kids hydrated in hot weather is important
:31 to :40	Baserunners	15	Baserunning is essential to learn
:41 to :55	Bounce in the bucket	10	Get the ball in for 10 points... winner gets a prize?
:55 to :60	End of practice talk	-	Reinforce terminology or other things kids are to try and remember

## Practice Plan #10

Time	Drill	Page	Coaching Points
0 to :07	Stretching arms, throwing with partners	-	This is a great chance to do some team building by stretching together
:07 to :15	Crow Hop throw	10	Helps players build momentum behind throws
:16 to :25	One knee throwing	9	Upper body mechanics are watched here
:26 to :30	Water Break	-	Keeping kids hydrated in hot weather is important
:31 to :40	One Knee batting	8	Helps players learn to keep bat high so they can hit down on ball
:41 to :55	Catch the players	19	Great game for coaches to finish with!
:55 to :60	End of practice talk	-	Reinforce terminology or other things kids are to try and remember