

GROUND BALLS

Receiving (Basic):

Working barehanded, players break into pairs and kneel about 15' apart. Facing each other, one player rolls a grounder to the other. The player receiving the ground ball starts in a forward-leaning posture (shoulders slightly in front of knees) with the fingertips of his glove hand pointing down and his throwing hand above his glove hand palm down. The player receiving will field the grounder, pull it into his body and then flip it back to the player feeding. 20 reps then switch and repeat.

Receiving - Backhands (Basic):

Working with gloves on, players break into pairs and kneel about 15' apart. Facing each other, one player rolls a grounder to the other's backhand side. The player receiving the ground ball starts in a forward-leaning posture (shoulders slightly in front of knees) with his glove on the backhand side and the fingertips pointing down. The player receiving will field the grounder with his glove moving forward then up. After catching the ball, he will pull it out of the glove and flip it back to the player feeding. 20 reps then switch and repeat.

Fielding (Basic):

Coach sets up 15'-20' in front of the player. Player assumes a standard fielding position and begins with a prep step. Coach rolls a

ground ball to the player. (For a right handed player.) The player moves to and fields the ball; teach the mantra right, left, down, right, left, throw. First, the player steps into the ball with his right foot ("right"), then his left foot ("left"). The objective is to position the ball in the middle of the body prior to fielding it. Then, the player bends at the knees while maintaining a flat back and extending his arms so the glove is fingertips down with the throwing hand above and both hands out in front of the body ("down"). Lastly, receive the ball, pull it into the body and as the player pulls it up to a throwing position, shift the right foot to replace the left foot ("right"), step with the left foot toward the target ("left") and toss the ball back to the coach ("throw").

Tag Drill (Basic):

Position a bucket in front of second base, the defender at shortstop and the coach about 10' away on the second base side of the bag. The coach says "cover," the player sprints to base and the coach feeds an underhand throw to the player. Player works on proper position (straddling the base) for the cover and receiving the throw without reaching for the ball (bucket prevents that). Upon catching the ball, player tags the front side of the bag and flips the ball back to the coach.

Fielding (Intermediate):

Repeating the mechanics described in Fielding (Basic) drill, have a coach hit the ground ball and have the fielder complete the drill with a throw to someone covering first base.

Range Drill (Intermediate):

Working with a glove, player sets up approximately 20' away from coach. Coach rolls three consecutive grounders to the player. The first ball goes to the player's backhand side, the second to his forehand side and the last to his backhand side. The player works on moving laterally with shuffle steps to field each ball. Toss the first two back to the coach and throw the last one to someone covering first base. When working with multiple players, the fielder should sprint to cover first after making his throw, with the first baseman returning to the back of the fielding queue.

Short Hops (Intermediate):

Position players in pairs approximately 20'-25' apart. One player feeds and the other fields short hops. 10 reps each then switch and repeat. Receivers focus on starting in a standard fielding position, including a prep step, and working their glove from the ground up as the ball bounces.

BUNT DEFENSE

1B/3B STEAL DEFENSE (CONT.)

Bunt Defenses (Advanced):

Setup an infield, complete with a pitcher and catcher. Randomly place baserunners and call various defenses. This drill can be run with live pitching and bunting or the pitcher can throw a pitch and coach simulates a bunt by rolling a ball to the infield (the latter will generate many more tries and move the drill faster). Defensive coverages:

1. "Hold 1": For bunt situations with a runner on first where the defense is playing for the sure out at first base. Third baseman charges, pitcher defends the right side, second baseman rotates to cover second and shortstop rotates to cover third.
2. "Hold 3": For bunt situations with a runner on second; this is the best alignment for the sure out at first base and it is the best alignment to defend a steal of third in a bunt situation. First baseman charges, pitcher defends the left side, second baseman rotates to cover first and shortstop rotates to cover second.
3. "Hold 0": For bunt situations with a runner on first, this defense is the best alignment to play for the out at second. First and third basemen charge, second baseman rotates to cover first, shortstop ro-

tates to cover second and the catcher (if he does not field the bunt) rotates to cover third.

4. "Wheel": For bunt situations with runners on first and second, this defense is designed to get an out at third. First and third basemen charge, second baseman rotates to cover first and shortstop rotates to cover third.

For any defense where the targeted play is to the advance base and there is no play on the lead runner, the defense must revert to the out at first. Practice with catchers making a call to throw to the correct base and remembering that any out is better than no out.

1B/3B STEAL DEFENSE

Double Steal Defense (Advanced):

Setup an infield with runners at first and third bases. The pitcher throws a pitch (or attempts a pickoff) and the baserunner at first attempts to steal second (either straight steal, delayed steal or early break). Catcher calls a play and defense practices each of the following:

1. Pickoff at first; attempt to get trailing runner.

2. Pickoff at third; attempt to get lead runner.
3. Catcher throws to second; attempt to get trailing runner.
4. Catcher decoys with an aggressive throw to the pitcher; attempt to get lead runner.
5. Catcher throws to third base; attempt to get lead runner.
6. Shortstop runs toward second base then charges home. Catcher throws to shortstop, shortstop throws back to catcher; attempt to get lead runner.

1B

Stretching and Picking Drill (Intermediate):

With a player at first base, coach makes throws from random infield positions; throws force the first baseman to make decisions about stretching, blocking and moving off the base to make a catch. When the coach sets his feet to throw, the first baseman squares to the coach, reads the throw and reacts, never stepping before the throw is made and catching short hops by starting with the glove on the ground and working up.

RUNDOWNS

Rundowns (Advanced):

Position defenders at first base, second base and pitcher with a runner on first base. The pitcher starts with the ball and the baserunner breaks for second. Defense executes a rundown. Note the following:

- Defenders follow their throws and cover the just-vacated position; i.e., the pitcher throws to first, the first baseman leaves his position to chase the runner and the pitcher cover first.
- Fielders chase runners, carrying the ball in their throwing hand at ear height.
- Defenders call “now” when they want the ball.
- Defenders without the ball should recognize when it is appropriate to move toward the runner and “close the distance”; shrinking the space where the runner can move makes it more difficult to change direction.
- Seek to tag runner as they are changing direction, as this is when they are at their slowest.
- Jog when the runner is moving toward the

advance base and sprint when he is retreating to the back base.

- Do not allow the runner to take the advance base; forcing him to return to the back base is not a bad outcome.

DOUBLE PLAYS

Double Play Feeds (Intermediate):

Station players 25’ apart in a triangle. Working barehanded, player 1 rolls the ball to player 2. Player 2 fields the ball and underhand tosses it to player 3. Player 3 catches the toss and rolls the ball to player 1. Continue for 30 total touches. After 30 touches, repeat in the opposite direction. Field grounders with both hands and step in the direction of the underhand toss (making sure to step back afterwards for the next rep). Receive the underhand toss with both hands, mimicking the catch and transition for a double play turn.

Double Plays (Advanced):

Position players at first base, second base and shortstop. Coach hits a groundball to shortstop, fielders complete a double play. After each try, players rotate to the next position. Once all players have completed a try at each position, reset and repeat with a groundball hit to second base.

PITCHERS

Groundballs/Cover Drill (Intermediate):

Queue players at pitcher and first base. Coach hits a grounder to the first baseman’s right. The pitcher runs to cover first, the first baseman fields the ball and leads the pitcher with a throw to the base. Pitcher runs up the line in fair territory, receives the throw and steps on the base.

Double Plays (Advanced):

Queue players at pitcher, catcher, shortstop and first base. Coach hits three consecutive ground balls and defense rotates through double play executions. First: pitcher to shortstop to first. Second: pitcher to catcher to first. Third: first to shortstop to pitcher. Rotate personnel and repeat.

1B/3B

Bunts (Intermediate/Advanced):

Queue players at first and third bases. Coach rolls a ball to first base. The first baseman charges, throws to third base, then retreats to cover first. Coach rolls a ball to the third base. The third baseman charges, throws to first base, then retreats to cover third. Alternating between bases for the duration of the drill. Increase the difficulty of the drill by immediately following each bunt with a sprint back to the base to catch a pop up.