



SAMPLE PRACTICE PLANS

Some Suggested Go-To Drills

There are hundreds and hundreds of drills you can use, and a quick search on the internet or in the library is a good place to start. Here are a few to get you started.

Towel Drill

Using clothespins or something similar, pin up a few different size towels to the backstop at about chest height. Line the players up at an appropriate distance (i.e. closer for tee ball, farther away as the kids get older), and have them throw the ball one at a time and try to hit the towels. Start with the largest towel and as they get the hang of it, graduate them to smaller and smaller towels. This is a good drill for accuracy and proper throwing mechanics. This can also be done as they field grounders to simulate throwing accurately to first base.

Soft-Toss

Coach kneels 8-10 feet to this side and slightly behind the player in the batter's stance. Coach tosses the ball so that it crosses the plate in the strike zone. Player hits either into an open field, or into a fence.

2-Sided Infield Drill

If you have several parents eager to help out but aren't sure what to do with them, this drill can take up to 6 adults. Line half the kids up at SS position, and the other half at 2B. If you have enough adults, put one at 1B and one at 3B. If you don't have enough, put kids there, and rotate them through. Two adults stand to the right side of homeplate – one hits grounders to SS. When the SS fields the ball, they throw to first, and go to the back of the line. The person at first tosses the ball to the other adult standing to the right of the plate. Meanwhile there are two adults standing to the left side of homeplate – doing the same drill with 2B. Players at 2B throw to 3B. Run them through several times and then have them switch lines. This is a good way to get all the kids active and throwing and running.

Basic Fielding Drills

Line players up at SS or 2B. An adult plays 1B. Coach at home plate hits grounders to each player. The player has to field the ball cleanly and make an on-target throw to 1B. If they bobble the ball, or miff the throw, they are out (if you choose, players move to play 1B when they get out). Continue until you have only 1 player left.

Another basic infielding drill is to put a player at each infield position, 2 or 3 to a position (taking turns), and hit grounders to each position. Player attempts to field the ball cleanly and make an on-target throw to 1B.

Line Drill

This is a great drill for some of the older kids who will be using cut-offs and relays during games. Line the players up in 3 or 4 straight lines, 4 players to a line. Each player should be a good 50 feet from the next person in their line. The player at one of the ends of the line starts with the ball. They throw to the next person in line, who catches it and quickly releases it to the following person in their line, and so on up and down the line until it comes back to the player who started it. This is a good competition drill to see which lines can do it the quickest. The key here is to teach the proper technique for lining up, catching and turning and quickly releasing the ball at the intended target. Have the players rotate so each one gets a turn at each position in line.

Follow the Ball

This one is a little confusing at first, but it's a great way to get the blood pumping and thus a good drill to begin with after warmups. Start with a person at every infield position except pitcher. The extra players line up behind SS. The drill is called Follow the Ball because after you throw the ball, you run to the position you just threw it to. Coach starts with the ball at homeplate. Coach rolls the ball to SS to start the drill. SS fields the ball and throws to 1B, then quickly runs to play 1B. 1B catches the ball and quickly throws to 2B, then runs to 2B. 2B catches the ball, throws to 3B, and runs to 3B. 3B throws the ball home, then runs to be the catcher. The catcher rolls the ball so the next person at SS, runs to the back of the line at SS and the drill starts all over, but now everyone is in a different fielding position. The drill ends when everyone is back to the position they started. Try to see how long they can do it without dropping the ball. You can also time them to see how fast they can finish one circuit around the infield.

Flyball Drill

Line the players up in each of the 3 outfield positions. Coach stands at homeplate and hits flyballs to LF, then CF, then RF. Position one coach just in the outfield grass to take the throw-ins. The key coaching point here is proper positioning to catch flyballs, and proper technique for throwing the ball back to the infield. If you have enough adults, you can have one each for LF, CF, and RF. This greatly reduces the amount of idle time for each player. If hitting to 3 fields simultaneously, be sure to use enough people to take the throw-ins.

Sliding Drill

Kids love to slide, but it can be dangerous if they haven't learned the proper technique. A great way to do this is with one of those wetted down slip-n-slides. But if people don't want to get soaked, or if you don't have access to a slip-n-slide, a good alternative is to start by teaching them on the grass and not on the dirt basepaths – it's much easier to slide on grass. It's important that kids have on their baseball pants, preferably with slider shorts on underneath. No bare legs! Start them back 30 or so feet from the target, which could be a base, or even a piece of cardboard. Teach them the proper sliding technique (tuck one leg underneath the other as they begin their slide). Doing this a few times will help them understand how far away from the base they should be when they begin their slide, and to end their slide when touching the base.

Base Stealing Drill

Have 2 players at catcher, 2 at SS and the rest in a line at 1B. Coach stands on the pitcher's mound and throws to the catcher. When the ball crosses homeplate, the first runner in line at 1B takes off to 2B, and the catcher tries to throw him out. SS takes the throw down. Alternate between catchers, SS and runners until everyone has a chance to steal, throw and tag. Lots of things to coach on here, including proper catcher's technique with runners on base, proper way to throw a runner out, proper way for runners to steal and slide, and proper way to tag runners out.

Base Running Drill

The most important thing to teach young players is to run *through* 1B when a play is being made on them. Also teach them to take an aggressive turn as they round first base on a ball hit out of the infield. A good drill is to have a stopwatch and time them going from home to first, have them run through the bag, and also from home to 2B, having them slide into the bag. And if you want to really drill them, you can also time them from home to 3B and home to home.

Base running tag: one player on each base, including homeplate, and one or two players equally placed between each base. (Adjust according to the number of players you have.) When coach says "go", players run around the bases and try to tag the person in front of them. Once you are tagged, you are out. Keep going until one person (or any number decided in advance) remains. Players should be positioned so the faster players do not continually tag the slower players.

3 Ball

Do this drill in the outfield or other open area. One at a time, players take turns running and catching a quick sequence of three increasingly hard-to-catch balls thrown by the coach. Player stands 30 or 40 feet away from coach in a ready position. Coach throws the first ball to the players left or right, so the player has to move to catch it. As soon as the player catches it (or doesn't), the coach throws the next ball so that the player has to run to catch it. As soon as the player catches (or doesn't) the second ball, the coach throws the final ball, so the player has to dive or really run to catch it. (As soon as the player catches each ball, he/she should drop it to get ready to catch the next one.) The next player in line gathers the 3 balls up, tosses them to the coach and the drill resumes.

Bucket Ball

This is a great drill to end practice with. Place an overturned 5-gallon bucket on homeplate. Line the players up at the SS or 2B position. Have someone hit (or roll) a grounder to the first person in line. The person fields the ball and makes a throw to home. The object is for them to hit the bucket. Work through the line until everyone has a few chances to hit the bucket.

Ping

You use half the field – home to 2B is one foul line, home to 1B the other. Soft toss, or short toss to the hitters. A foul ball is out. A swing and a miss is an out. Everybody bats. The defense is infield, short outfield and then deeper outfield. A ball that gets fielded cleanly by the infielder is out. A ball that gets past the infielder, but hits the ground before the middle fielder is a single. Past them and before the OF is a double. Past the OF is a triple. Nobody runs bases. Coaches just keep track of runners and who scores. The pitcher or soft toss moves so the kids can hit to the side of the field. The fielders rotate inward each inning. It's a good game because it's soft toss or short toss – so it's BP. Half the field makes them wait and focus. The fielders get a lot of action too. Especially as the batters learn the game and adjust. The kids like it because the pace of the game is very fast. Lots of at bats, lots of fielding chances.

Tee Ball Sample Practice Plan

Here is a basic, simple outline for age appropriate T-Ball practice. Adjust as you see fit. Practices at this level shouldn't exceed 60 minutes or so. Much longer, and kids tend to get bored and distracted. Try to arrive a bit early to get the equipment and field ready and to welcome the players and parents.

Welcome, Warm up and Team Building

5 – 10 minutes

Begin with a very simple 1 – 2 minute overview of the practice schedule. This helps establish routing and gives kids a chance to get focused. Then get the kids ready to go by leading them in a warm-up lap around the bases, and some basic arm and leg stretches. Keep it fun so they remain focused. Conclude with a team cheer.

Throwing and Catching

15 minutes (3 drills / 5 min ea)

Drill 1: Standing about 10 to 20 feet away (more or less depending on skill), Coach throws to players' glove side (opposite side as skills advance). Instruct proper way to catch and hold ball – watch ball into glove, use two hands, squeeze glove closed.

Drill 2: Player throws to Coach. Instruct proper ball grip and mechanics (aim, point, throw).

Drill 3: Pair players up and have them throw to each other while coaches instruct and reinforce proper mechanics.

Batting

15 minutes (3 drills / 5 min ea)

Make sure coaches control bats!

Drill 1: Coach teaches players how to correctly step up to the tee and approach the ball. Proper stance, proper grip on the bat, level swing, step into the swing, pivot, follow-through.

Drill 2: Players hit off the tee into the fence.

Drill 3: Players take turns hitting off tee and running through first base.

Fielding

15 minutes (3 drills / 5 min ea)

Drill 1: Rolls soft grounders to players. Instruct proper “ready position” for fielders, glove up, let ball roll into glove and cover up with other hand. Head down – coach should see the button on the top of the hat when players field ground balls.

Drill 2: Coach gently tosses ball to players' glove side (opposite side as skills advance), simulating pop-ups.

Drill 3: Coach rolls balls a few feet to the left or right of the fielder. Player tries to cleanly field and throw to a coach or other player simulating a first baseman.

Baserunning

5 minutes

Drill 1: Base running tag. One player on each base, including homeplate, and one or two players equally spaced between each base. (Adjust according to the number of players you have.) When coach says “go”, players run around the bases and try to tag the person in front of them. Once you are tagged, you are out. Keep going until one person remains. Players should be positioned so the faster players do not continually tag the slower players.

Drill 2: Run through first base. Use a stopwatch to time them going from home to first, ensuring that they run through first base. You could also time them home-to-home. Or forget the stopwatch altogether and just have them run without being timed.

Conclude Practice

5 minutes

Take a few minutes to reinforce what they did well, ask if they have questions, end with a team cheer.

Single A or Double A Sample Practice Plan

Here is a basic, simple outline for age appropriate A or AA level practice. Adjust as you see fit. Practices at this level shouldn't exceed 60 - 90 minutes or so. Try to arrive a bit early to get the equipment and field ready and to welcome the players and parents.

Welcome, Warm up and Team Building **10 minutes**

Begin with a simple 1 – 2 minute overview of the practice schedule. This helps establish routing and gives kids a chance to get focused. Have kids pair up and throw to each other to loosen their arms up. Have them start slowly, and relatively close together, throwing harder and from farther away as their arms warm up.

Throwing and Catching **15 minutes (3 drills / 5 min ea)**

Drill 1: Long toss. Pair players up and have them stand far away from each other. Teach them proper crow-hop technique while throwing to other player.

Drill 2: Coach throws baseballs to players left and right, above and below the waist, teaching proper way to catch glove-side and backhand, fingers pointed up, and fingers pointed down.

Drill 3: Coach throws soft liners and pop-ups to players' left and right, having players run to make the catch.

Batting **30 minutes (3 drills / 10 min ea)**

Drill 1: Soft toss. Coach kneels to the side of and slightly behind the player in the batters stance. Coach tosses the ball so that it crosses the plate in the strike zone. Player hits either into an open field, or into a fence.

Drill 2: Tee work. Players hit off tee either into the field, or into a fence or backstop. Coach instructs proper hitting technique – grip, level swing, keeping the weight back, quick to the ball, follow through, pivot and turn, eyes on the ball.

Drill 3: Take 5 players – one is the batter and the others each play an infield position except pitcher and catcher. Batter hits live coach pitching. Rotate positions so everyone gets a chance and every position including batter.

Fielding **30 minutes (3 drills / 10 min ea)**

Drill 1: Basic infield drill. Put players at each infield position, 2 or 3 to a spot. Coach hits grounders from homeplate. Players take turns fielding and throwing to first. Rotate through all positions. Stress importance of ready position, fielding with two hands, charging the ball.

Drill 2: Outfield fly balls. Coach throws or hits fly balls to LF, CF and/or RF. Instruct proper catching technique with both hands in front of the body, proper way to get under the ball (sprint first, if unsure, first step should be back not forward, don't run with your glove out, etc)

Drill 3: Double play drill. Line up players at SS and 2B with a coach or player at 1B. Coach hits or rolls grounders to SS and 2B with the intent of turning a double play. Teach proper pivoting, tagging, dart throws, quick turns, quick release, etc.). Rotate players through each position.

Baserunning**10 minutes**

Drill 1: Player starts at home plate and runs to first. Coach acts as first base coach and tells runner to either run through 1B or continue to 2B. Stress importance of running through 1B, and taking a proper turn when advancing to 2B.

Drill 2: Coach acts as 3B coach. Players start from 1B and run to 2B, and must pick up coach while running, who tells them to either stop at 2B, advance to 3B or home.

Conclude Practice**5 minutes**

Take a few minutes to reinforce what they did well, ask if they have questions, end with a team cheer.

Triple A or Majors Sample Practice Plan

Here is a basic, simple outline for age appropriate AAA or Majors level practice. Adjust as you see fit. Practices at this level should be about 90 minutes or so. Arrive a bit early to get the equipment and field ready and to welcome the players and parents.

Welcome, Warm up and Team Building

10 minutes

Begin with a simple 1 – 2 minute overview of the practice schedule. This helps establish routing and gives kids a chance to get focused. Have kids pair up and throw to each other to loosen their arms up. Have them start slowly, and relatively close together, throwing harder and from farther away as their arms warm up.

Throwing and Catching

15 minutes (3 drills / 5 min ea)

Drill 1: Line Drill. See list of Suggested Go-To Drills for description. Great for relays and cut-offs. Stress the importance of proper technique for lining up, catching, turning and quickly throwing. Always turn to your glove-side, and catch the ball with the other hand near the glove for quick release.

Drill 2: 3 Ball. See list of Suggested Go-To Drills for description.

Drill 3: Bullpen Session. Have kids throw 20 or so pitches from regulation distance. Catcher can be player or coach. Stress importance of grip, push-off, balanced wind-up, stable follow through, keeping front shoulder aimed at target, and ready to field the position after delivery. Rotate players through.

Batting

45 minutes (3 drills / 15 min ea)

Drill 1: Soft toss. Coach kneels to the side of and slightly behind the player in the batters stance. Coach tosses the ball so that it crosses the plate in the strike zone. Player hits either into an open field, or into a fence.

Drill 2: Tee work. Players hit off tee either into the field, or into a fence or backstop. Coach instructs proper hitting technique – grip, level swing, keeping the weight back, quick to the ball, follow through, pivot and turn, eyes on the ball.

Drill 3: Batting with live pitching, either coach pitch or kid pitch, either as scrimmage or batting practice. If scrimmaging, break up into two balanced teams. Don't keep track of outs, and switch sides after everyone has batted once through the order. Switch positions each inning.

Fielding

30 minutes (3 drills / 10 min ea)

Drill 1: Various position-specific drills. Each position requires unique and specific skills, including backing up plays, covering bases, etc.

Drill 2: Outfield fly balls. Coach throws or hits fly balls to LF, CF and/or RF. Instruct proper catching technique with both hands in front of the body, proper way to get under the ball (sprint first, if unsure, first step should be back not forward, don't run with your glove out, etc)

Drill 3: Double play drill. Line up players at SS and 2B with a coach or player at 1B. Coach hits or rolls grounders to SS and 2B with the intent of turning a double play. Teach proper pivoting, tagging, dart throws, quick turns, quick release, etc.). Rotate players through each position.

Game Situations**10 minutes**

Drill 1: Advanced baserunning, including stealing bases, first and third situations, learning to pick up the 3B coach as you come toward 2B.

Drill 2: Basic signs, how and when to read them.

Conclude Practice**5 minutes**

Take a few minutes to reinforce what they did well, ask if they have questions, end with a team cheer.