

PROPER FIELDING POSITION

One of the most common mistakes softball players make is not getting into the proper position to field the ball.

Here are the keys to getting in a good fielding position:

- Nice wide base with weight equally distributed on feet
- Up on the balls of the feet
- Bend at the knee and the hip
- Flat back
- Head down on the ball
- Arms outstretched so that she can field the ball out in front of her head and body

In this fielding position the hands and glove form “the tip of the triangle.” The triangle is formed from the tips of the two feet to the outstretched hands.



Player gets in proper fielding position, forming “the tip of the triangle” with her hands.

STANCE WITH GLOVE OUT FRONT

Purpose:

This drill helps the player work on establishing a good base and fielding the ball out in front.

Setup:

Drill can be done anywhere on field. Coach places cones inside the defensive players feet and at tip of triangle.

Execution:

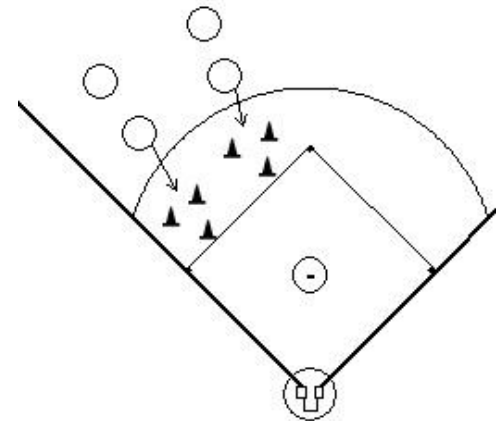
1. First, players get in proper defensive position and coach places cones on inside of feet and at tip of triangle.
2. Players then step back and line up.
3. Coach says, "Ready, go."
4. Players run up to the cones and get in defensive position, then fall back and do it again.

Coaching Tips:

- Players should be focusing on their approach and on setting up properly when they reach the cones.
- Remember, cone placement will depend on player size. Larger players will need a larger triangle.



Players get in proper defensive position at the cones in this fielding drill.



ON KNEES: PADDLES WITH TENNIS BALLS

Purpose:

Forces the fielder to use two hands when receiving the ground ball.

Setup:

Players line up approximately 15 feet apart from each other on the infield. Players get on their knees. They have a paddle on their glove hand.

Execution:

1. Players take turns rolling a tennis ball to each other.
2. The person receiving the ball catches it with two hands.

Coaching Tips:

- Players should receive the ball out front with the bare hand coming down on the paddle hand.



Players roll the ball back and forth in this drill.

STANDING: PADDLES WITH TENNIS BALLS

Purpose:

Forces the fielder to use two hands when receiving the ground ball.

Setup:

In this version of the drill, players stand up 15 feet apart from each other. They have a paddle on their glove hand.

Execution:

1. One player rolls the tennis ball to the other, who gets into a defensive position and catches the ground ball with both hands.
2. Players then take turns rolling the ball back and forth.

Coaching Tips:

- Watch that players are getting in proper defensive position – wide base, athletic position, nice bend at the knee and hip.



Player at right fields the ground ball and prepares to roll it back to player at left.

ON KNEES: IN BETWEENER

Purpose:

Teachers players to turn a difficult “in betweener” into a fieldable short hop.

Setup:

Two players get on knees, approximately 15 feet from each other. Players have paddles on their glove hands.

Execution:

1. Player 1 throws the ball to player 2 who attempts to catch it with two hands on the short hop.

Coaching Tips:

- Players should stay down and forward and attack the ball when it comes to them.



Players work on fielding the ball on a short hop in this fast-paced drill.

ON KNEES: SMALL BALL, SMALL GLOVE TRAINING

Purpose:

Forces defenders to stay down on the ball and also develops their hand-eye coordination through the use of a smaller target.

Setup:

Players get on knees about 15 feet from each other anywhere on the infield. Players use a smaller 11-inch softball and a smaller glove than usual (10-1/4 to 10-3/4 inches).

Execution:

1. Players roll the ball to each other, catching it with the smaller glove.

Coaching Tips:

- Watch that players are using two hands to field the ball and are keeping their heads down.
- As the drill progresses, players should roll the ball faster and further out. Players should also work on fielding with their backhand.



Player gets ready to catch the ball while using a smaller glove.

MODIFIED STANCE: FOREHAND

Purpose:

Teaches players how to properly field balls that are to their right or left.

Setup:

Players line up 15 feet apart and simulate that they have started to move to get to a ground ball to their side. Players use a smaller 11-inch softball and a smaller glove than usual (10-1/4 to 10-3/4 inches).

Execution:

1. Players roll the ball back and forth, catching it with the smaller glove.

Coaching Tips:

- Players should do this drill both with their glove side foot forward and with their glove side foot back.
- Players should have a deep knee bend, back flat and their bottom low.



Above, players field the ball to the side with glove-side foot forward. Below, a player with non-glove side foot forward. Drill should be performed both ways.



MODIFIED STANCE: BACKHAND

Purpose:

Teaches players how to properly field balls that are to their right or left with their backhand.

Setup:

Players line up 15 feet apart and simulate that they have started to move to get to a ground ball to their side. Players use a smaller 11-inch softball and a smaller glove than usual (10-1/4 to 10-3/4 inches).

Execution:

1. Players roll the ball back and forth, catching it with the smaller glove.

Coaching Tips:

- Players should do this drill both with their glove side foot forward and with their glove side foot back.
- Players should have a deep knee bend, back flat and their bottom low.



Above, players practice their backhand using a smaller glove. Below, player puts her non-glove side leg forward. Drill should be performed both ways.



EXTENDED: FOREHAND & BACKHAND

Purpose:

In this drill, players work on being on the run and fielding with either their forehand or their backhand.

Setup:

Players line up 15 feet apart anywhere on the field. Players use a smaller 11-inch softball and a smaller glove than usual (10-1/4 to 10-3/4 inches).

Execution:

1. Players roll the ball to the side of each other so that they have to run a few steps to catch it in the smaller glove that they are using.
2. Players should practice using both their backhand and their forehand to field the ball.

Coaching Tips:

- Most important thing to look for is that players are staying down, with their bottoms low, to field the ball.



Player ranges to her right to field the ground ball with her forehand.



Player fields the ball with her backhand.

ON THE RUNS

Purpose:

This drill emphasizes fielding mechanics and being able to execute on demand. It is also a great conditioning drill.

Setup:

Coach sits near third base with a bucket of 11-inch softballs. Players lineup to the outside of third base. Players use a glove than usual (10-1/4 to 10-3/4 inches).

Execution:

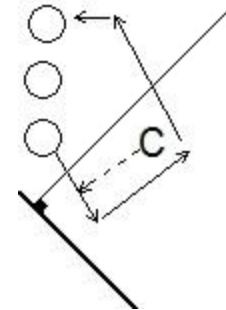
1. Coach rolls the ball toward third base.
2. Player fields the ball on the run.
3. Fielder runs by coach and drops ball in bucket, then runs to back of line.
4. Drill continues until coach stops it.

Coaching Tips:

- Watch for good fielding form. Make sure players are hustling throughout the drill for maximum conditioning benefit.
- Also, be sure to reverse the drill and go the opposite way, with players on the home side of third base and running toward the outfield.



Players run the “On the Runs” drill.



Drill setup

DO OR DIES

Problem:

Players practice making the play on a short chopper when they have to rush to get a player with speed out at first.

Setup:

Players line up near third base. Coach sits with a bucket of 11-inch softballs near pitcher's mound. Players use a smaller glove than usual (10-1/4 to 10-3/4 inches).

Execution:

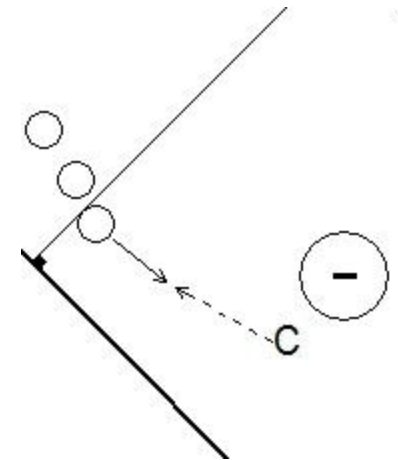
1. Coach throws a short chopper toward the player, who rushes forward and tries to field the ball as fast and as cleanly as possible. In this drill, players only field the ball. They do not throw it to first.

Coaching Tips:

- The key for the fielder is staying low, trusting their glove and going out and sticking it. In this type of play, the player may not have time to catch the ball with two hands.



Player charges in to make the do or die play.



Coach simulates a short chopper to the infielder in this drill.

GROUND BALL SERIES

Purpose:

Works on fielding and fielding mechanics.

Setup:

You can put players at their regular positions or you can use two lines. One line would be for corner fielders and pitchers, the other line for the middle fielders. Drill uses a smaller 11-inch softball. Players wear a smaller training glove (10-1/4 to 10-3/4 inches).

Execution:

1. Coach hits ground ball to player who fields the ball.
2. This drill includes:
 - Forehand
 - Backhand
 - Weak ground ball
 - Extended forehand and backhand
 - Over the shoulder
 - Line Drive

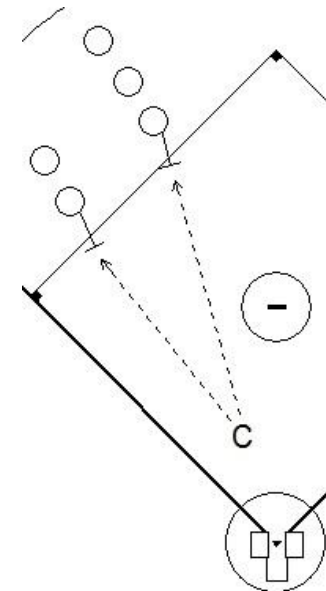
All are hit by the coach except for the over the shoulder and line drive, which are thrown by the coach.

Coaching Tips:

- Watch for proper fielding form with head down, knees bent, back flat, and bottom low.
- Players only work on fielding the ball. They don't throw the 11-inch softball since it's not used in games.



Player gets ready to field the ball with her backhand.



Ground ball series with two lines.

GROUND BALLS (OUTFIELD)

Purpose:

Excellent warmup series for the outfielders. Stresses proper fielding mechanics.

Setup:

Players get in their outfield positions or form a line. Balls can be hit by a fungo hitter or tossed by a player or coach.

Execution:

1. Ball is hit to the outfielder, who fields it using proper technique.
2. Balls should be hit straight to the outfielder as well as to her backhand and forehand sides.

Coaching Tips:

- Players should be rounding the ball and fielding it with body, ball and target lined up.



Player fields the ground ball to the outfield.

FLY BALLS (OUTFIELD)

Purpose:

Excellent warmup series for the outfielders. Stresses proper fielding mechanics on fly balls.

Setup:

Players get in their outfield positions or form a line. Balls can be hit by a fungo hitter or tossed by a player or coach.

Execution:

1. Ball is hit to the outfielder, who fields it using proper technique.
2. Balls should be hit straight to the outfielder as well as to both sides, over her shoulder and finally in front of her as a do or die play where she needs to dive to catch it or get it on the short hop and throw the runner out.

Coaching Tips:

- Players should be using two hands to catch the ball, except on some over the shoulder catches when they need full extension.



Player makes over the shoulder catch in the outfield.



Player makes the forehand catch in the outfield.