

timbits® SOFTBALL



U7

LESSON PLANS



Session #1 ► Focus: Teamwork

— Warm Up —

BLOB TAG

Learning Objective: Spatial awareness, cooperation, teamwork, running (forward, backwards, starting/stopping), agility, multidirectional movement, endurance.

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: N/A

How to:

- Mark out boundaries of the playing area. One player is chosen to be “it” (beginning Blob) and the rest scatter
- On “GO” the Blob chases, trying to tag others
- Tagged players link arms by hooking together at elbows with the Blob
- When Blob becomes 3, only outside players can tag
- When Blob becomes 4, split to make 2 Mini-Blobs

Tips/Modifications:

If you have a larger group of children, start with more than one Blob.

Questions:

When was it easier to tag another player? With a bigger or smaller Blob?

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

Learning Objective: Catching, throwing, getting to know teammates

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: 1 ball for every 4 players

How to:

- 3 groups of 4, with each group positioned in a square formation
- Distance apart will be according to ability
- As players throw the ball to a teammate in their square, they call out their own name
- On second or third round, they call their own name and the name of the player who is to receive the ball
- Change 2 people in groups at a time, so they get to know players in other groups as well

Questions:

Ask for a volunteer to see if they remembered everyone's name.

— *Main Activities* —

DIAMOND ORIENTATION

Learning Objective: Diamond layout, softball terms

Time: 5-10 minutes

Equipment: Bases in proper field set up

How to:

- Put 1 adult in charge of 2 players. Make sure players know the name of their partner and the adult in charge, as well as the coach's name
- Familiarize players with diamond layout by walking them around and showing them where Pitcher, Catcher, 1st base, 2nd base, 3rd base, Short Stop, Left Field, Right Field and Center Field are located. Include talking about home plate
- Have adult helpers on the field to assist in all the activities
- Start players at home plate showing where the batter stands to hit

- Start players in a group at home plate, yell out a position and players have run to that area on the field
- Demonstrate as you speak
- Let players pretend to hit and run to 1st base, run to 2nd base, run to 3rd base and run back to home plate

Tips/Modifications:

- Have shapes or different markers to signify each position – this will help children remember more easily.
- Have children run to each position to keep them active and moving.

Questions:

What was the easiest position to get to? Which was the hardest?
Which is your favourite position so far?

CHAMP

Learning Objective: Catching, throwing

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: Parent Volunteers, 1 ball for every 2 players

How to:

- 1 adult for every 2 players or players in partners if they can throw and catching the ball back and forth
- Every time the ball is caught by one of the pair, they get a letter of “CHAMP” (or any word you choose – could be shorter for younger kids (BALL) or more difficult if needed).
- Partners can compete against other partners to see which pair can spell CHAMP first. Letters can be awarded for good throws back to the adult as well

Tips/Modifications:

- For variation have players select their own words (i.e. superstar, elephant, etc.)
- Coaches demonstrate proper receiving position and good throwing mechanics before starting.

OVER THE RAINBOW

Learning Objective: Balls, helmets

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: Grip and wrist/finger coordination

How to:

- Line players up in lines with at least two BIG steps distance in between them facing the coach
- Have the players start facing the instructor with the ball in hand and their arm stretched out in front of them parallel to the ground
- Have them spin the ball to themselves out in front of them, trying to get it at least three feet high
- Beginners can have a parent catch the ball for them or they may let it drop to the ground. A more advanced variation is to have players catch the ball themselves
- Once the player is able to catch their own ball – proceed to full “Over the Rainbow” and have the player start with their arms outstretched to the side (ball and glove in hand). Have them toss the ball over their head and catch it with their other outstretched hand. Consider helmets for inexperienced players.

Tips/Modifications:

Coaches should make sure the players are spinning the ball, working on wrist snaps.

Questions:

Were you able to spin the ball? How fast was it spinning?

IN-COMING

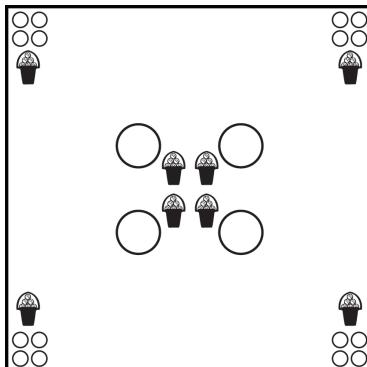
Learning Objective: Throwing, fielding, running

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: 4 Hula hoops, 8 buckets, balls

How to:

- Split into groups of four
- Have one group of four in each corner of a large square
- In the center of the square have four hula hoops and four buckets of balls, and place a bucket in each corner of the large square
- One player from each corner runs to the center grabs a ball from their bucket and steps in the hula hoop
- Once in the hula hoop, they throw the ball to their team members, one player fields the ball and then passes it to the two other players
- The last person with the ball drops the ball in the corner bucket, when they drop the ball in the bucket the player in the center runs back to their corner and another teammate runs to the center until all team members have ran from the center



Questions: Did this activity require teamwork?

— Modified Game —

MODIFIED SOFTBALL GAME

Learning Objective: All softball skills

Time: 45 minutes

Equipment: Ball, bat, bases

How to:

- Coach will pitch to their team
- 7 pitches are thrown to each batter to allow them to hit a fair ball. If the player does not hit a fair ball, they go to first base if a swing was taken on at least four pitches
- All players will play defense
- All players will bat each inning
- There will be no advances on overthrows

Tips/Modifications:

See U7 Introduction for more information.

Session #2 ► Focus: Quickness and Agility

— Warm Up —

PARTNER TAG

Learning Objective: Running, chasing

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: Pylons/markers for designating playing area



How to:

- Partners face each other from opposite ends of designated playing area
- On “GO”, one partner tries to tag the other
- When the partner is tagged, the roles are reversed
- After being tagged, the player performs a task (i.e. 3 jumping jacks) to give the other player time to get away

Tips/Modifications:

Have the players perform various fundamental movement skills to give the other time to move away (jumping jacks, hopping on one foot, etc.).

BUNNIES & BULLFROGS

Learning Objective: Hopping, body awareness

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: N/A

How to:

- Make a center line between 2 end lines.
- 2 teams of 6: 1 team of bunnies and 1 team of bullfrogs. Teams lie down head to head, opposite each other on center line.
- If the coach calls “bullfrogs”, frogs get up and hop back to their swamp (end line) while bunnies get up and bunny hop after them

- If a bunny tags a bullfrog before the frog reaches the swamp, the bullfrog becomes a bunny
- If coach calls “bunnies” they turn and hop to their end line while the bullfrogs hop after them
- Coach could surprise by calling “bears” or “birds”. If they rise on a false name they change sides

— *Main Activities* —

GIMME 5

Learning Objective: Running through 1st base and speed development

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: 4 bases, bat, hula hoop, tee/ball (optional)

How to:

- Put bases down 30’ – 40’ from players.
- Form 4 groups of 3
- Players, in turn, take a swing at an imaginary ball, drop bat, run as fast as possible past their base, give coach “high 5”, return to base as if running to 2nd base, touch base and shout “GREEN LIGHT” to signal next player to leave
- Make sure players are running full speed across the bag, slowing down only after touching it

Tips/Modifications:

- This activity can be set up in the outfield
- An easy way to teach kids where to drop the bat is to use a hula hoop as a visual reminder.
- To make this more game like, dependent on the development of the children you can have them hit off a tee.

PIP SQUEAK & WILBUR**Learning Objective:** Base running, running, multi-directional speed**Time:** 5 minutes**Equipment:** 4 balls, 4 bases**How to:**

- 4 groups of 3, one group at each base
- Bases are set up in diamond formation
- Players in each group are named PIP, SQUEAK or WILBUR
- 4 balls placed at pitcher plate
- When the coach calls out a name (PIP, SQUEAK, or WILBUR), the player with that name runs around the bases
- When (s)he touches the base they started at, (s)he runs to the center to pick up a ball and brings it back to the group
- Balls are returned to the center for the next person
- Score a point for the 1st person back to their starting base

PARTNER THROWS**Learning Objective:** Throwing, catching**Time:** 10 minutes**Equipment:** 1 ball for every 2 players**How to:**

- Partners stand opposite each other at a distance commensurate with ability
- Partners throw ball back and forth
- Various goals can be set (i.e. how many consecutive throws and catches without a miss; how many throws in specified time (30 sec.); throw high balls; grounders; side to side; etc.)

Tips/Modifications:

Coaches should demonstrate good throwing and receiving mechanics before starting.

Questions: What do you aim at when throwing to your partner? Are you making sure your partner is watching and ready for the ball?

SMASH

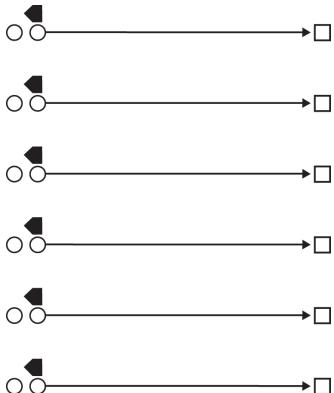
Learning Objective: Getting out of the batter's box

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: Ball gloves, 6 carpet home plates

How to:

- Players should be divided into partners
- Ball gloves are placed on the ground across from where players are standing along the 3rd base line, this simulates where 1st base would be for each batter.
- Draw a home plate (or use carpet plates) on the ground along the 3rd base line for each pair of players
- On the verbal signal “HIT”, all players swing at an imaginary ball, then pivots on lead foot and runs toward their glove (1st base).
- Coaches should emphasize getting out of box quickly, with power and driving the arms rather than the correct pivot
- They then return to behind their plate while their partner takes their turn



— Modified Game —

MODIFIED SOFTBALL GAME

Learning Objective: All softball skills

Time: 45 minutes

Equipment: Ball, bat, bases

How to:

- Coach will pitch to their team
- 7 pitches are thrown to each batter to allow them to hit a fair ball. If the player does not hit a fair ball, they go to first base if a swing was taken on at least four pitches
- All players will play defense
- All players will bat each inning
- There will be no advances on overthrows

Tips/Modifications:

See U7 Introduction for more information.

Session #3 ► Focus: Baserunning

— Warm Up —

UP AND AT 'EM

Learning Objective: Quickness, running, power/endurance, multi-directional speed

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: N/A

How to:

- Split into partners
- One partner (chaser) stands on the end line with hand out
- The other partner (runner) slaps (softly) the outreached hand and runs in the opposite direction to get safely across the other line without being tagged
- The partner, whose hand was slapped, tries to catch the runner before (s)he gets to the safe line

— Main Activities —

REACH THE COACH

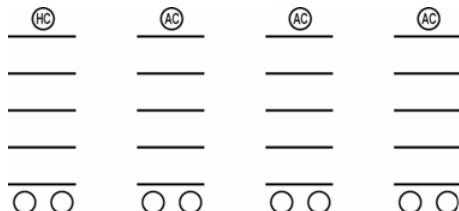
Learning Objective: Proper use of glove and positioning for fielding grounders

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 1 ball for every 2 players

How to:

- 1 adult for every 2 players.
- Each group draws a series of parallel lines 5' - 10' apart
- Coach will demonstrate the Receiving Ground Balls Progressions as shown in the Softball Skills section



- Each pair will start at the line farthest from the coach
- Objective is to get to the coach in the least number of throws
- A grounder is thrown to each player in turn
- If caught, the player advances to the next line

Tips/Modifications:

As a variation the coach can throw fly balls. Coach can also increase speed of roll for more skilled players and roll side to side.

PARALLEL

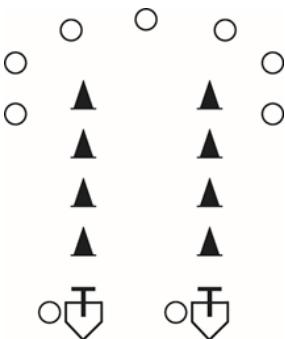
Learning Objective: Hitting, fielding

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 2 batting tees, 8 pylons, 2 balls, 2 bats

How to:

- 2 batters each have a tee in the center of the playing area
- Each batter has a line of four pylons in front of their batting tee
- Batter hits the ball and then runs and touches all the pylons in the line as many times as possible before the fielding team returns the ball to the tee
- Fielders retrieve the ball and return it to the batting tee



Tips/Modifications:

If game is too easy; increase distance between pylons.

Questions: Did fielders have to talk to each other? Team work?

SKY BALL

Learning Objective: Proper use of glove and positioning when catching fly balls

Time: 15 minutes

Equipment: 1 ball and glove for each player

How to:

- 1 adult for every 2 players
- Coach will demonstrate fly ball progressions as in skill section
- Players will then practice catching high tosses from an adult
- Seeing if they can catch a higher one each time
- How many consecutive catches can they make?
- Throw somewhat away from the player so that they must move to get underneath

Tips/Modifications:

You can start this drill with water balloons and no gloves; stressing 2 hands! Then move to ball and glove, still using 2 hands. Also, if you are throwing the ball away from the player, stress they should run to the ball and then glove up rather than running with glove and arm up.

— *Modified Game* —

MODIFIED SOFTBALL GAME

Learning Objective: All softball skills

Time: 45 minutes

Equipment: Ball, bat, bases

How to:

- Coach will pitch to their team
- 7 pitches are thrown to each batter to allow them to hit a fair ball. If the player does not hit a fair ball, they go to first base if a swing was taken on at least four pitches
- All players will play defense
- All players will bat each inning
- There will be no advances on overthrows

Tips/Modifications:

See U7 Introduction for more information.

Session #4 ► Focus: Fielding

— Warm Up —

SHARK IN THE TANK

Learning Objective: Running, dodging, body awareness, co-operation, agility, power/endurance, multi-directional speed

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: N/A

How to:

- 2 or 3 players are the “sharks”, the rest are the “fish”. Mark off an infield area to be used as the “tank”, so that young children can easily visualize
- “Fish” must stay in the tank
- “Sharks” are timed to see how long it takes them to catch all the “fish”. When they do, choose new “sharks”

— Main Activities —

BIG FOOT

Learning Objective: Throwing, catching

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 1 ball for every 2 players

How to:

- Partners start on lines, facing each other, approximately 10' apart. One adult per pair
- Players throw to each other (or adult throws if skill level is too low for accurate throws)
- Every time they make a catch, they move back one giant step
- See which team can get the farthest apart and still catch the ball

Tips/Modifications:

Can start this drill using softer items, like nerf toys, sponge balls, bean bags and progress to balls.



FIELD 3

Learning Objective: Hitting, fielding, catching, throwing

Time: 20 minutes

Equipment: 2 bats, 2 balls, 2 helmets, 2 sets of bases

How to:

- 2 teams of 6: 1 batter, the rest fielders
- 2 separate activity areas set up a safe distance apart
- 1 adult pitcher in each area for each group of 6
- Set up bases in diamond formation for each group
- One batter at a time bats off an adult pitch as many as needed, with an adult in the catcher's position
- When a fielder has successfully fielded 3 grounders or caught 1 fly ball, they become the batter
- Players rotate positions
- Make sure all players get an opportunity to bat

SPELL YOUR NAME

Learning Objective: Throwing, catching

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: 1 ball for every 2 players

How to:

- Partners should be selected by ability and spaced accordingly
- Line the players up, facing their partner or coach
- Remind everyone of the proper way to throw and to catch a ball
- Tell them that the name of the partnership is a combination of both players' names. Coach designates which line of partners gets to be the first name (i.e. players on the north side or south side)
- Have the players call out the name of their team (i.e. Jane Bobby)
- Partners throw the ball back and forth overhand

- They get a letter in their team name every time they make a catch
- When they complete their name, they move back 2 giant steps
- Continue the process to time limit

Tips/Modifications:

Adult may have to be the thrower if skill level is not advanced enough

CIRCLE TOSS

Learning Objective: Catching, eye/hand coordination

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 1 ball per group/team

How to:

- Form groups of 5 and give each group a ball
- One player in the group is the leader and stands in the middle while the rest of their team forms a circle around them, facing the leader
- The leader throws the ball to the first person, who catches it and throws it back to the leader
- The leader throws it to the next person and continues until all players have caught and thrown the ball
- When the last person catches the ball, they become the new leader

Tips/Modifications:

This can be played with a whole team if it is a smaller group. If players still don't know each other, you can make the leader say the name of the player they are throwing to.

— Modified Game —

MODIFIED SOFTBALL GAME

Learning Objective: All softball skills

Time: 45 minutes

Equipment: Ball, bat, bases

How to:

- Coach will pitch to their team
- 7 pitches are thrown to each batter to allow them to hit a fair ball. If the player does not hit a fair ball, they go to first base if a swing was taken on at least four pitches
- All players will play defense
- All players will bat each inning
- There will be no advances on overthrows

Tips/Modifications:

See U7 Introduction for more information.

Session #5 ► Focus: Hitting

— Warm Up —

GRAB THE BACON

Learning Objective: Running, body awareness, quickness, agility

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: 1 ball for every 2 players

How to:

- Partners each start on their own baseline. A ball is placed at the mid-point between the partners
- On “GO” from the coach each partner runs out, tries to grab the ball (bacon) and get back to their baseline before their partner who didn’t get the ball (bacon)
- If the partner without the ball gets to the baseline first the partner with the ball must hand it over
- If the partner with the ball gets back first, they get to keep the ball
- Change partners frequently

Tips/Modifications:

The coach can assign points and challenge the kids to be the first to 5 points



— Main Activities —

MONSTER BASH

Learning Objective: Emphasis on stride and hip rotation

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 6 “shoelace sticks”, 6 bases, 1 bat for every player (minimum 2 bats for every 2 players)

How to:

- 1 adult for every 2 players. Each group will find a safe area to place their base and swing
- The adult will hold the end of the shoelace (pretend it is a monster or something else appropriate) IN FRONT of the base at various heights
- Alternate players for every 5-10 swings. Other players can be taking practice swings

SMOKE 'EM

Learning Objective: Hitting, fielding

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 4 bats, 2-3 balls per group, 4 tee's if hitting off a tee

How to:

- 4 groups of 3 with at least one adult per group
- In each group an adult will pitch to one batter while the other 2 players field
- Fielding players get 2 points for catching a fly and 1 for a ground ball
- Offensive players get 3 points for a line drive, 2 points for a long fly ball or hard grounder, 1 point for pop fly or easy grounder
- See who can get 10 points first
- Rotate batters every 2 min., so that they all get a turn to bat

SUPER SHOES

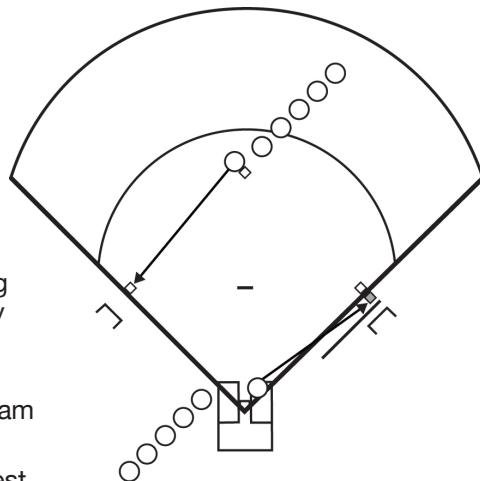
Learning Objective: Base running, speed development

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: Bases set up on diamond, 2 stopwatches

How to:

- 2 groups of 6, 1 group between home and 1st base and the other between 2nd base and 3rd base
 - Each of the groups is broken into 2 groups of 3
 - Each player takes a swing with a bat at an imaginary ball and runs to the next base as fast as possible
 - Total the times of each team of 3
 - Keep a record of the lowest scores for future trials



KILL THE MOSQUITO

Learning Objective: Rounding 1st base

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 4 bases, 4 markers, 4 bats

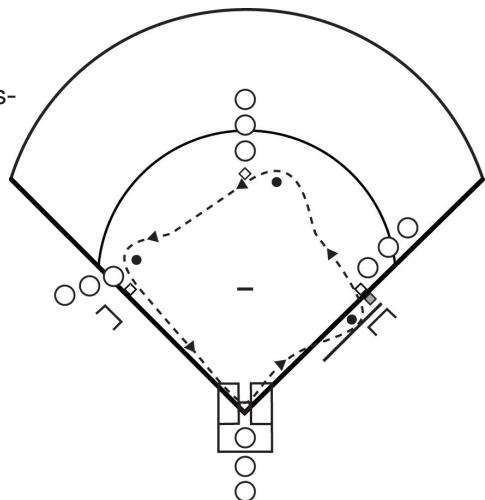
How to:

- Put bases down in proper locations on diamond, with 3 players at each one
 - Pretend there is a mosquito on the INSIDE corner of each base
 - One player at each base concurrently takes a swing at an imaginary ball, drops the bat, runs as fast as possible to the next base, stepping on the “Mosquito” as they round it (4 players will be running at the same time)
 - They then wait their turn at the base they just rounded

- Remind players it will be easier to step on the “Mosquito” if they run a little to the outside of the base line as they approach the base.
- It would be helpful to put some marks down for them to go around as shown in the diagram

Tips/Modifications:

Important to have to coach demonstrate this activity.



— Modified Game —

MODIFIED SOFTBALL GAME

Learning Objective: All softball skills

Time: 45 minutes

Equipment: Ball, bat, bases

How to:

- Coach will pitch to their team
- 7 pitches are thrown to each batter to allow them to hit a fair ball. If the player does not hit a fair ball, they go to first base if a swing was taken on at least four pitches
- All players will play defense
- All players will bat each inning
- There will be no advances on overthrows

Tips/Modifications:

See U7 Introduction for more information.

Session #6 ▶ Focus: Throwing

— Warm Up —

MONSTERS KEEP AWAY

Learning Objective: Throwing, catching, co-operation, space awareness, running, agility, balance, co-ordination

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: 2 whiffle balls

How to:

- 2 teams of 6 with a coach or adult for each team
- Objective is for players to keep the ball away from the monster (coach) as long as possible
- Play stops and starts over when a player is touched by the monster while in possession of the ball OR when the monster gets possession of the ball

Tips/Modifications:

To make the game more challenging break into smaller groups

— Main Activities —

HOME RUN

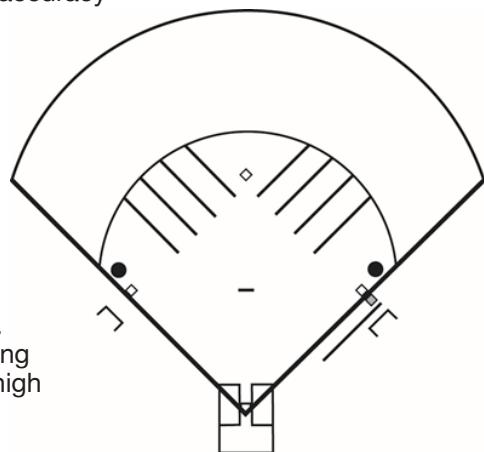
Learning Objective: Throwing accuracy

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: 2 targets, 4 balls

How to:

- 2 groups of 6, with 1 group at each target, which is hung on the backstop.
- Mark out lines at various distances from the target. Distances can be according to ability of the group. A high success rate is wanted.



- Each team is lined up in front of a target.
- Remind everyone of the proper way to throw the ball. Tell the players that they will throw at the target, trying to get closest to the center.
- Players choose which distance they throw from in order to hit the target, with the coach's encouragement and advice to help them choose the greatest distance at which they can be successful.
- Adjustments may be made to move the player forward or back during the activity in case the line they chose was too difficult or too easy.
- When players realize that they get points for being closest to the center, some may wish to stand as close as possible to better their chances. Enthusiastic praise for challenging themselves to greater distances may overcome this tendency.
- Each player gets 2 throws and the points are recorded for the best throw.
- After each player on the team has thrown once, go through the order again as many times as time allows.
- Points are awarded as follows: single – 1 pt; double – 2 pts; triple – 3 pts; homerun – 4 pts.
- Hitting the center of the target is considered a homerun. Each subsequent concentric area away from the center is termed a triple, double and single.
- Objective can be to see if each player can get more points on each consecutive throw or it can be made competitive with other groups by totaling each group's points

Tips/Modifications:

Having more targets is advisable as you may then have smaller teams and each player would spend less time standing around.

PARTNER THROWS

Learning Objective: Throwing, catching

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 1 ball for every 2 players

How to:

- Partners stand opposite each other at a distance commensurate with ability
- Partners throw ball back and forth
- Various goals can be set (i.e. how many consecutive throws and catches without a miss; how many throws in specified time (30 sec.); throw high balls; grounders; side to side; etc.)

OVER THE RAINBOW

Learning Objective: Balls, helmets

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: Grip and wrist/finger coordination

How to:

- Line players up in lines with at least two BIG steps distance in between them facing the coach
- Have the players start facing the instructor with the ball in hand and their arm stretched out in front of them parallel to the ground
- Have them spin the ball to themselves out in front of them, trying to get it at least three feet high
- Beginners can have a parent catch the ball for them or they may let it drop to the ground. A more advanced variation is to have players catch the ball themselves
- Once the player can catch their own ball – proceed to full “Over the Rainbow” and have the player start with their arms outstretched to the side (ball and glove in hand). Have them toss the ball over their head and catch it with their other outstretched hand. Consider helmets for inexperienced players.

FREEZE THE RUNNER *(Throwing)*

Learning Objective: Throwing, catching, base running, co-operation, teamwork

Time: 20 minutes

Equipment: 2 ball, 4 bases, 4 helmets

How to:

- 2 teams of 6: 1 team on offence and 1 team on defense
- Offensive “batter” THROWS the ball into the playing area and runs around the bases until “FREEZE” is shouted (see next point)
- Ball is fielded, then thrown so EVERY fielder catches the ball – the last fielder to catch the ball shouts “FREEZE”. “FREEZE” may have to be shouted more than once at this age
- You score points by counting the number of bases touched – if caught between bases, the last base touched counts
- After everyone has had a turn, switch defense and offence
- Keep total bases touched for each team
- Emphasize proper rounding of bases by using markers

Tips/Modifications:

Players on defense will likely need help from adults to keep them from all running after the ball at once and in knowing where to throw it next. Lack of catching ability will likely mean there is little actual catching going on but at least each player will get to touch and throw the ball

— Modified Game —

MODIFIED SOFTBALL GAME

Learning Objective: All softball skills

Time: 45 minutes

Equipment: Ball, bat, bases

How to:

- Coach will pitch to their team
- 7 pitches are thrown to each batter to allow them to hit a fair ball. If the player does not hit a fair ball, they go to first base if a swing was taken on at least four pitches
- All players will play defense
- All players will bat each inning
- There will be no advances on overthrows

Tips/Modifications:

See U7 Introduction for more information.

Session #7 ► Focus: Hitting

— Warm Up —

TAKE IT BACK

Learning Objective: Agility, quickness, teamwork, running, multi-directional speed

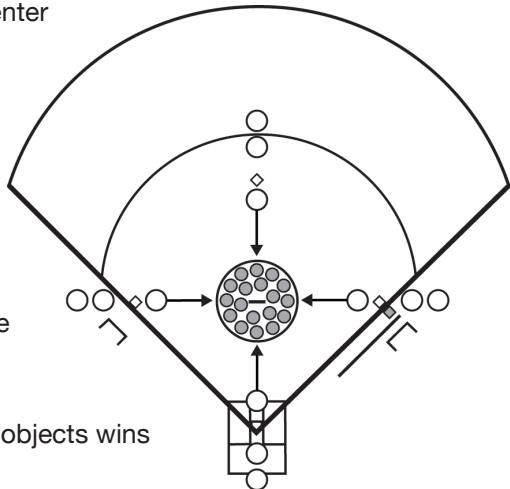
Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: 20 – 25 balls, bean bags or other small objects, 4 markers/pylons



How to:

- 4 teams of 3.
- One team at each of the 4 markers, which are placed in a diamond formation (bases could be used instead of markers).
- Objects are placed in center where pitcher's location would be
- On “GO”, one player at a time from each team runs out and picks up 1 of the objects and returns
- After tagging the returning player’s hand, the next player can leave
- Play continues until all objects are gone
- The team with the most objects wins



Tips/Modifications:

To keep all players actively engaged allow players to take balls from other groups as well as the center, so that players must guard their base. If a player takes a ball and is tagged before they get back to their group, they must return the ball and return to their base before grabbing another ball.

— Main Activities —

HITTING STATIONS

Learning Objective: Proper hitting form

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 1 bat per player, 3 tee's, 3 whiffle balls on a rope, 6 carpet home plates

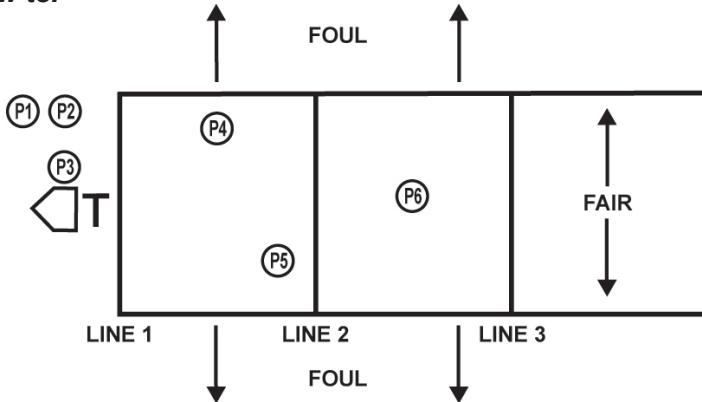
How to:

- 1 adult in charge of every 2 players
- 3 tee stations and 3 whiffle ball stations, with 2 players at each station
- Set T's up in front of carpet home plates
- 6 players will practice hitting off a tee
- 6 players practice hitting a hanging whiffle ball which an adult can hold in front of a carpet home plate
- The partner awaiting their turn can be taking practice swings
- Groups can switch stations after 5 min. That will give each player approximately 2 min. of hitting at each activity

Tips/Modifications:

- Refer to Session #3 (U5) for proper Hitting Progressions
- Make sure that all know the safety of swinging a bat and the “safety areas” when another is swinging
- Have the children move to each station by the movements out-lined above
- Not all children hit from the same side

Questions: Were their hands properly aligned? Were the hips rotating?

OVER THE LINE**Learning Objective:** Hitting, fielding**Time:** 10 minutes**Equipment:** 2 balls, 2 bats, helmets, 2 home plates, 2 marked off playing areas, batting tee**How to:**

- 4 teams of 3. Set up separate playing areas.
- 2 teams of 3 play in one playing area. One team on defense and one team on offence
- Batters hit off tee (or adult pitch), trying to get it in the air over line 1.
- If hit between line 1 and 2, it is worth 1 point; between lines 2 and 3 – 2 points; over line 3 – 3 points
- Fielders set up in fair territory. No point is awarded if a fielder catches it before it hits the ground

Tips/Modifications:

Review/ demonstrate proper swing mechanics before starting this drill. A variation could be to count 1 point if ball is grounder past line 2 and 2 points if a grounder past line 3. If keeping score is too complicated, simply set up the lines with markers and challenge the players to hit the ball past them

Questions: Are players swings level? Are bats the appropriate weight for age level?

GRAND SLAM

Learning Objective: Hitting, fielding

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 3 tee's, 3 balls, ball gloves, 3 bats

How to:

- Groups of 4 – each group has a batting tee and 1 whiffle ball or another type of ball depending on ability
- One batter hits to 3 fielders
- When a fielder catches 2 fly balls OR 4 grounders, they become the new batter
- Players can't bat a second time until everybody has had a chance to bat

SPELL YOUR NAME

Learning Objective: Throwing, catching

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 1 ball for every 2 players

How to:

- Partners should be selected by ability and spaced accordingly
- Line the players up, facing their partner
- Remind everyone of the proper way to throw and to catch a ball
- Tell them that the name of the partnership is a combination of both players' names. Coach designates which line of partners gets to be the first name (i.e. players on the north side or south side)
- Have the players call out the name of their team (i.e. Jane, Bobby)
- Partners throw the ball back and forth overhand
- They get a letter in their team name every time they make a catch
- When they complete their name, they move back 2 giant steps
- Continue the process to time limit

Tips/Modifications:

Adult may have to be the thrower if skill level is not advanced enough

Questions:

Was it easier to spell your name when you were closer or further apart?

— *Modified Game* —

MODIFIED SOFTBALL GAME

Learning Objective: All softball skills

Time: 45 minutes

Equipment: Ball, bat, bases

How to:

- Coach will pitch to their team
- 7 pitches are thrown to each batter to allow them to hit a fair ball. If the player does not hit a fair ball, they go to first base if a swing was taken on at least four pitches
- All players will play defense
- All players will bat each inning
- There will be no advances on overthrows

Tips/Modifications:

See U7 Introduction for more information.

Session #8 ► Focus: Throwing

— Warm Up —

GARBAGE COLLECTORS

Learning Objective: Fundamental movement skills

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: A variety of equipment needed (small objects) and hula hoops

How to:

- Scatter equipment throughout the playing space
- Have the small objects (gloves, balls, bases, etc) as the garbage
- Set up hula hoops as the “garbage cans”
- Players move throughout the space to collect one piece of “garbage” at a time and throw it into a “garbage can”
- Once all the “garbage” is collected repeat the activity using a different form of movement (jog, skip, hop, side shuffle, leap, gallop, etc).

— Main Activities —

BOOM A RANG

Learning Objective: Throwing from positions in the infield

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 2 ball, 8 bases

How to:

- 2 groups of 6
- Set up bases to make 2 diamonds with 6 players at each
- 5 players in infield position including pitching and catching position
- Catcher throws a grounder to each player in succession
- They field it and throw it to 1st base, who throws it back to the catcher



- Rotate positions after each sequence so all players get a chance to throw from each position
- Score 1 point for each successful throw and catch
- See how many points can be scored per sequence

Tips/Modifications:

A variation could be to throw flies instead of grounders

BULLS EYE

Learning Objective: Throwing accuracy, fielding

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 2 targets, 12 balls

How to:

- 2 groups of 6, each group in a file in front of their target, which is placed on the backstop
- An adult will throw either a fly or a grounder to the 1st person in line, who fields it and throws it at the target
- After the throw, the player moves to the back of the line and the next player takes a turn
- Score 1 point for fielding cleanly and 1 point for hitting the target

Tips/Modifications:

Competition can be to see which team reaches 10-15 first OR which team scores the most points in a given time limit

BALL OF FIRE

Learning Objective: Catching, touching base, throwing

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 4 bases, 2 balls

How to:

- 2 groups of 6
- Place bases a distance apart according to ability (30' – 60')
- Players line up in columns behind a base – 3 behind each base
- Player receiving the ball steps in front of the base to receive the ball, catches it, tags the base with one foot, then throws the ball to the opposite base, and then goes to end of line
- Process is repeated until each player has desired repetitions

Tips/Modifications:

- Have adult helpers with each base to retrieve the errant balls
- When less players – only use 2 bases

Questions: Where children turning the right way to tag and throw?

SKY BALL

Learning Objective: Proper use of glove and positioning when catching fly balls

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: 1 ball and glove for each player

How to:

- 1 adult for every 2 players
- Coach will demonstrate fly ball progressions as in skills section
- Players will then practice catching high tosses from an adult
- Seeing if they can catch a higher one each time
- How many consecutive catches can they make?
- Throw somewhat away from the player so that they must move to get underneath

— Modified Game —

MODIFIED SOFTBALL GAME

Learning Objective: All softball skills

Time: 45 minutes

Equipment: Ball, bat, bases

How to:

- Coach will pitch to their team
- 7 pitches are thrown to each batter to allow them to hit a fair ball. If the player does not hit a fair ball, they go to first base if a swing was taken on at least four pitches
- All players will play defense
- All players will bat each inning
- There will be no advances on overthrows

Tips/Modifications:

See U7 Introduction for more information.

Session #9 ► Focus: Base Running/ Sliding

— Warm Up —

FOLLOW THE LEADER

Learning Objective: Fundamental movement skills

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: n/a

How to:

Choose 1 player to be the Leader. The leader performs different actions such as clapping, crawling, dancing, jumping jacks or skipping. The other players follow the actions and path of the Leader. If a player doesn't follow the exact actions of the Leader, he is out. The last player in the game becomes the new Leader.

- Clap
- Crawl
- Walk
- Run
- Climb a hill
- Blow in the breeze like a tree
- Flap your arms like a chicken
- Hop
- Skip
- Jump
- Gallop
- March
- Spin
- Twist
- Walk on tiptoe
- Stomp
- Roll
- Fall like a leaf
- Wiggle
- Fly like an airplane
- Twirl like a helicopter blade
- Shake your hips from side-to-side
- Crawl sideways like a crab
- Kick
- Step-kick like a chorus line dancer
- Swim like a fish
- Swim like a person

Tips/Modifications:

Can use balls/gloves and examples of simple softball movements if desired.



PARTNER SHUTTLE

Learning Objective: Agility, quickness, teamwork, running, jumping, twisting, flexibility, power/endurance, balance, coordination, appropriate equipment, strength training, body weight

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: N/A

How to:

- Players form partners and make 2 end lines with partners starting at the same end
- Partners, joined, move back and forth to end line using various combinations of body parts touching the ground (i.e. 3 legs; 2 legs; 4 legs + 2 hands; 2 hands + 2 legs; 1 hand + 3 feet, etc.)
- Can also be done as singles, using various movements (i.e. skip; shuffle step; grape vine; frog hop; duck walk)

— *Main Activities* —

JAM

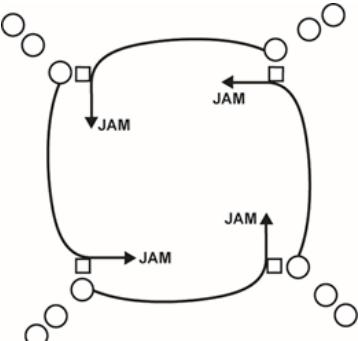
Learning Objective: Rounding base and jamming to stop

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 4 bases, 4 bats

How to:

- 4 groups of 3 with 3 at each base
- Bases are set up in diamond formation
- Each player takes a full swing at an imaginary ball, runs to the next base
- Use proper rounding technique taught earlier in this lesson
- After rounding the base, player “jams” to a stop



Tips/Modifications:

Coach will have to demonstrate proper ‘jam’ technique (on the balls of their feet and low). Ready to blast forward or back!

HOT POTATO

Learning Objective: Quick turn when relaying ball from one player to another, catching, throwing

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: 1 ball for every 3 players

How to:

- 4 teams of 3 lined up
- In groups of 3, the ball is relayed from 1 to 2 to 3 and back
- Go slowly at first to concentrate on proper turn in center
- Rotate players in all 3 positions, so each gets experience as a relay player in the center
- It can be made into a relay competition if skill level is high enough

Tips/Modifications:

Real softballs do not have to be used – nerf balls, squishy balls, lite flights

BEEP BEEP

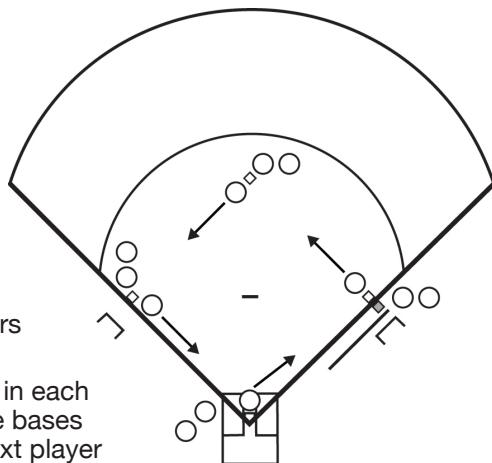
Learning Objective: Rounding the bases, speed development, conditioning

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 4 bases

How to:

- Put bases down in proper diamond location, with 3 players at each. One player starts in front of the base and extra players stand behind
- On “GO”, the first player in each group runs around all the bases and returns to tag the next player in line and then they run the bases
- Emphasize proper rounding techniques including stepping on the inside corner



SLIP N SLIDE (Sliding Mechanics)

Learning Objective: Bent leg slide

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: helmets, players must be wearing pants, bases, sock or no shoes

How to:

- Players line up on a base line to start
- Then break into 3 groups of 4 with 2 adults per group
- **Determining the Sliding Leg**
 - Have players sit down cross-legged
 - Leg tucked under is usually sliding leg
- **Finish Position**
 - Sliding leg bent 90 degrees, tucked under other leg
 - Other leg extended, slightly bent
 - Extended leg foot is 4-6 inches off ground
 - Base is contacted with extended leg
 - Weight of slider is back
 - Chin is tucked into to the chest
 - Arms thrown above head
- **Distance**
 - Start slide about one and a half body lengths from base
- **General Tips**
 - Ensure players are wearing a helmet even in practice.
 - Build confidence by starting easy and progressing gradually
 - Use support people until slider is confident
 - Practice sliding on wet grass, in a sand pit or in a gymnasium
 - Use unfastened bases to start with
 - Teach sliding to players in socks or bare feet
 - To determine where a player should start their slide, have player put feet on the edge of the base and lay on their bellies stretched out as far from the base as possible. Using a marked cone have player place the cone on the ground where their fingers are stretched to. The cone will be a visual aid to help them understand the distance from the base where they should start the slide.

- **Sliding Teaching Progressions**

- Teach sliding progression in outfield with no shoes on
- Determine the bent or tucked leg
 - Have players form a circle around the Coach.
 - Have the players sit down cross legged
 - They will naturally tuck one leg underneath their body which will be the natural slide leg.
- Demonstrate the finish position
 - Slide leg straight but not locked
 - Bent leg tucked
 - Arms thrown above head
 - Chin tucked into chest.
- Finish position with movement
 - Have players move around in the crab walk position. Coaches use cue words “Hit It” and players get into finish position
 - Using a volunteer player who is lying in the finish position, the Coach will grasp their foot and pull them to simulate the movement of the slide.
- Standing in Finish position
 - While standing, get the players to get into the Finish Position.
 - Be sure they throw their hands back over their head and tuck their chin on their chest.
- Sliding with Support
 - With the aid of two strong coaches, have them hold the slider’s arms and gently lower them into the Finish Position
- Sliding with Support while Jogging
 - Same as above but do a slow jog first from about 10 meters.
 - Instead of two adults supporting slider, you can use two adults holding a broom stick or bat that the slider grabs to lower them to the ground.
- Sliding with Support while Sprinting
 - Same as above but from a sprint
- Bent Leg Slide while Jogging without aid
- Bent Leg Slide while Sprinting without aid

Coaching Tip

- Have players slide without shoes
- Teach sliding on wet grass or a slippery surface (soapy tarp or a slip and slide)

Relays

- The relay starts with a strong accurate throw from the outfielder
- The outfielder should try to throw the ball to the relay person's glove at about head height.
- The relay person:
 - Gives a big target with both arms in the air and calls for the ball.
 - Stands at a 45-degree angle to the glove side.
 - Pivots towards glove and throws quickly relaying the ball to the next target.
- **Teaching Progression**
 - Demonstrate proper throwing and receiving technique.
 - Practice movement with NO BALL, with players in a line pretending to receive a ball thrown by the Coach then turning to make throw behind them.

Coach	X	X
	X	
	X	

- Make groups of 3 positioned as shown. A pretends to throw to B, who mimics a catch and makes a proper relay turn, then pretends to throw to C.

A	B	C
A	B	C
A	B	C

- Rotate all 3 players through center position.
- Use a ball in the drill. Start slowly at first, making sure center player is turning in correct direction for a quick throw.
- If time permits and players are able, this can progress into a relay competition between teams of 3.

— Modified Game —

MODIFIED SOFTBALL GAME

Learning Objective: All softball skills

Time: 45 minutes

Equipment: Ball, bat, bases

How to:

- Coach will pitch to their team
- 7 pitches are thrown to each batter to allow them to hit a fair ball. If the player does not hit a fair ball, they go to first base if a swing was taken on at least four pitches
- All players will play defense
- All players will bat each inning
- There will be no advances on overthrows

Tips/Modifications:

See U7 Introduction for more information.

Session #10 ► Focus: Pitching

— Warm Up —

DEFEND

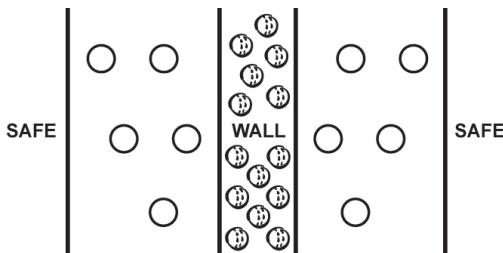
Learning Objective: Agility, quickness, running, teamwork

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: Balls, pylons or markers

How to:

- Mark out a “safe” area at both ends of the playing area and an area to be defended in between them



- Place balls in the area to be defended (wall). Select 3-4 players to defend the “wall”. Rest of the players are scattered in the playing area.
- “Defenders” try to keep the others from grabbing a ball and getting it back to a “safe” area without being tagged
- If caught, they become a defender
- Game ends when all balls are in safe area OR all players are caught and are defenders



— Main Activities —

GOTCHA

Learning Objective: Base running, determination

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: 4 bases

How to:

- Form groups of 3 with 3 players at each base.
- Set up bases in diamond formation 20' – 30' apart
- On “GO”, one player from each group starts running around the bases
- Objective is to run past the person ahead of you
- Score 1 point for your team for every player passed
- Run for a set period (15-30 seconds)

KNEE CLAPS

Learning Objective: Bringing the knees together at the end of a pitch

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: N/A

How to:

- Line players up in a line with at least two BIG steps distance in between them facing the instructor
- Have players start facing the instructor with their hands clasped behind their backs standing on one foot on the line
- Taking a big step sideways, have players step and slide their knees together finishing standing on their other leg
- Once players have mastered the lower body step-slide motion, add the upper body by having the pitcher clap as their legs come together. Say step-clap, step-clap as they go through the movement 10 times

WHIP IT

Learning Objective: Whipping the ball from the top of the arm circle to the bottom to release it

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: Softballs in tube socks (6 for each player), hula hoop targets hung at strike zone height

How to:

- Start by showing players where to grip their “whip-it”. Hands should be placed 6-8 inches from the ball up the sock so the pitcher feels there is some control over the ball but can still appreciate a whipping motion with the sock
- Start the players facing sideways to their hula hoop target grasping the sock in their pitching hand and their glove on the other
- Instruct the player to step to the target while making an arm circle with their “whip-it”
- Use the key words of whipping the ball from the top of their arm circle to the bottom, letting it go at the bottom to go straight for the hula hoop
- Have them repeat these 6 times before all players collect their “whip-its” at the same time
- CAUTION: most inexperienced kids will throw the first couple behind them because they hang on to the sock too long. Encourage them to let go sooner and avoid standing directly behind them during the drill

LEAD ME

Learning Objective: Catching and throwing while moving

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: 1 ball for every 2 players

How to:

- Partners stand, parallel, facing same direction approximately 20ft apart.
- Next set of partners is ready to go as soon as 1st set is out of the way. 2 lines can be going at once
- Partners lead each other with a throw so they both must be moving while throwing and catching

— Modified Game —

MODIFIED SOFTBALL GAME

Learning Objective: All softball skills

Time: 45 minutes

Equipment: Ball, bat, bases

How to:

- Coach will pitch to their team
- 7 pitches are thrown to each batter to allow them to hit a fair ball. If the player does not hit a fair ball, they go to first base if a swing was taken on at least four pitches
- All players will play defense
- All players will bat each inning
- There will be no advances on overthrows

Tips/Modifications:

See U7 Introduction for more information.

Session #11 ► Focus: Baserunning/ Fielding

— Warm Up —

REACTION SPRINT

Learning Objective: Running, changing direction

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: N/A



How to:

- Mark out a starting line
- Have the players spread out along the line
- On your signal have them jog slowly away from the line
- On the next signal they need to turn around quickly and sprint back to the start

Tips/Modifications:

Have the children do different movements when moving away from the starting line (jog, skip, hop, etc).

— Main Activities —

GRUNDBALL

Learning Objective: Grounders, throwing

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 1 ball for every 2 players

How to:

- Adult helper for every 2 players, standing an appropriate distance from players
- Coach throws grounders to each player (one at a time)
- Every time a ball is picked up cleanly and thrown back accurately the pair gets a letter in “GRUNDBALL”
- Partners can compete against each other OR other teams

Tips/Modifications:

The name of this activity can change – based on the ability of your players to spell. Try shorter words or silly words to make it more fun.

Questions: Are players staying low in stance and receiving the ball out in front of their bodies?

SUPER SHOES TO 2nd BASE

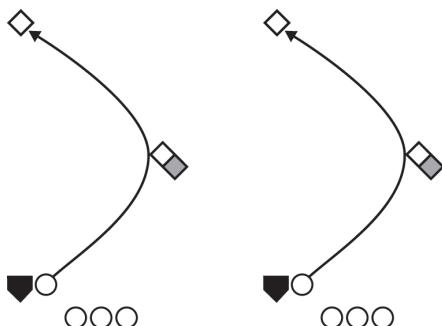
Learning Objective: Rounding 1st base, speed development

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 2 or 3 stop watches, 6 bases

How to:

- 3 groups of 4. Set up 1st base and 2nd base for each group
- Time each player as they run from home to 2nd base
- Encourage proper rounding of 1st base
- Keep track of times so players can try to beat their own time

**JAM & DIVE**

Learning Objective: Rounding base and jamming to stop, diving back to base

Time: 10 minutes

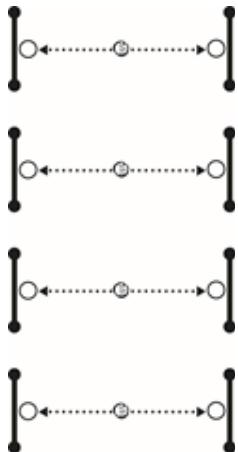
Equipment: 4 bases, 4 bats

How to:

- 4 groups of 3 with 3 at each base
- Bases set up in diamond formation
- Each player takes a full swing at an imaginary ball, runs to the next base. Use proper rounding technique taught earlier
- After rounding the base, player “jams and dives” back to their base using correct technique as in Base Running Progressions in the Softball Skills section

GOAL BALL**Learning Objective:** Fielding grounders**Time:** 10 minutes**Equipment:** 1 ball for every 2 players**How to:**

- Mark off a “goal” area for each player opposite a partner. The distance depends on skill level (up to 10’ wide)
- Each player tries to score a goal by throwing a grounder by their partner through the marked goal posts
- Score a point for each goal
- Switch partners occasionally

*— Modified Game —***MODIFIED SOFTBALL GAME****Learning Objective:** All softball skills**Time:** 45 minutes**Equipment:** Ball, bat, bases**How to:**

- Coach will pitch to their team
- 7 pitches are thrown to each batter to allow them to hit a fair ball. If the player does not hit a fair ball, they go to first base if a swing was taken on at least four pitches
- All players will play defense
- All players will bat each inning
- There will be no advances on overthrows

Tips/Modifications:

See U7 Introduction for more information.

Session #12 ► Focus: Throwing

— Warm Up —

BEHIND ENEMY LINES

Learning Objective: Agility, quickness, running, co-operation

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: All available balls and other appropriate objects

How to:

- Mark out 2 lines 50 to 60ft apart
- 2 teams of 6 line up behind opposite lines and spread out
- Place balls and other objects in “No Man’s Land” in center area
- On “Go” objective is to place as many objects as possible over the OTHER TEAM’S line
- Only one object at a time can be taken
- Objects must be placed, not thrown, across the line
- If all the objects are gone from “No Man’s Land” they may be taken from own end and placed in opposite end
- When time is called the team with the LOWEST NUMBER of objects in their end wins

Tips/Modifications:

Have the players use different types of movement (hopping, skipping, walking, etc.) You can also create targets behind the lines to be worth more points.



*— Main Activities —***SPACE SHUTTLE**

Learning Objective: Throwing for distance

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 1 ball for every 2 players

How to:

(HC)

(AC)

(AC)

(AC)

(AC)



- 1 adult and 1 ball (space shuttle) for every 2 players. 1 marker for each player. Try to assign partners as close in ability as possible
- Partners stand behind a line and see how far they can throw (send the ball into space)
- Their adult leader can be in the area of the throw to mark the spot
- Competition can be introduced by seeing if they can throw farther each time and by competing against each other

Tips/Modifications:

Place hula hoops out on the field at different distances and give points for getting the ball into the hula hoops.

Questions: Are players using good arm mechanics? Check skill section to be sure throwing elbow is back and shoulder level before coming over the top.

GOAL BALL

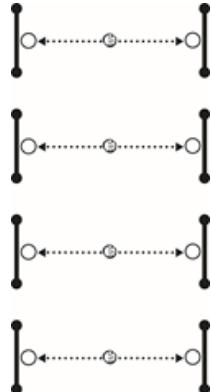
Learning Objective: Fielding grounders

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 1 ball for every 2 players

How to:

- Mark off a “goal” area for each player opposite a partner. The distance depends on skill level (up to 10’ wide)
- Each player tries to score a goal by throwing a grounder past their partner through the marked goal posts
- The other player is trying to catch the ball or stop it from crossing the goal line
- Score a point for each goal
- Switch partners occasionally



Tips/Modifications:

Use softie balls or whiffle balls for this activity.

FREEZE THE RUNNER (Throwing)

Learning Objective: Throwing, catching, base running, co-operation, teamwork

Time: 20 minutes

Equipment: 2 ball, 4 bases, 4 helmets

How to:

- 2 teams of 6: 1 team on offence and 1 team on defense
- Defensive players set up in the infield
- Offensive “batter” THROWS the ball into the playing area and runs around the bases until “FREEZE” is shouted (see next point)
- Ball is fielded, then thrown so EVERY fielder catches the ball – the last fielder to catch the ball shouts “FREEZE”. “FREEZE” may have to be shouted more than once at this age
- You score points by counting the number of bases touched – if caught between bases, the last base touched counts

- After everyone has had a turn, switch defense and offence
- Keep total bases touched for each team
- Emphasize proper rounding of bases by using markers

Tips/Modifications:

Players on defense will likely need help from adults to keep them from all running after the ball at once and in knowing where to throw it next. Lack of catching ability will likely mean there is little actual catching going on but at least each player will get to touch and throw the ball

HOME RUN

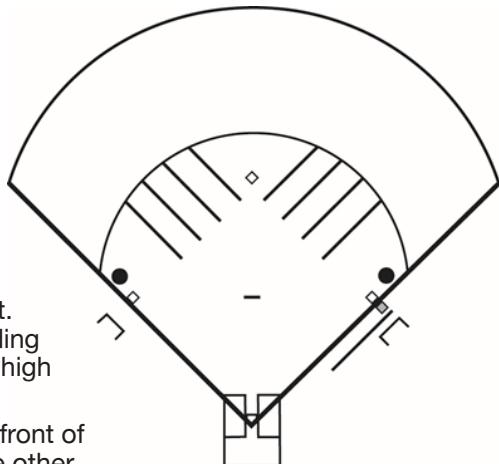
Learning Objective: Throwing accuracy

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: 2 targets, 4 balls

How to:

- 2 groups of 6, with 1 group at each target, which is hung on the backstop
- Mark out lines at various distances from the target. Distances can be according to ability of the group. A high success rate is wanted
- Each team is lined up in front of a target – one behind the other
- Remind everyone of the proper way to throw the ball. Tell the players that they will throw at the target, trying to get closest to the center
- Players choose which distance they throw from in order to hit the target, with the coach's encouragement and advice to help them choose the greatest distance at which they can be successful
- Adjustments may be made to move the player forward or back during the activity in case the line they chose was too difficult or too easy
- When players realize that they get points for being closest to the center, some may wish to stand as close as possible to better their chances. Enthusiastic praise for challenging themselves to greater distances may overcome this tendency



- Each player gets 2 throws and the points are recorded for the best throw
- After each player on the team has thrown once, go through the order again as many times as time allows
- Points are awarded as follows: single – 1 pt; double – 2 pts; triple – 3 pts; homerun – 4 pts
- Hitting the center of the target is considered a homerun. Each subsequent concentric area away from the center is termed a triple, double and single
- Objective can be to see if each player can get more points on each consecutive throw or it can be made competitive with other groups by totaling each group's points

Tips/Modifications:

Having more targets is advisable as you may then have smaller teams and each player would spend less time standing around.

Remember to have players pick up balls only when it is safe to do so. You can also have adult helpers retrieve the balls.

— Modified Game —

MODIFIED SOFTBALL GAME

Learning Objective: All softball skills

Time: 45 minutes

Equipment: Ball, bat, bases

How to:

- Coach will pitch to their team
- 7 pitches are thrown to each batter to allow them to hit a fair ball. If the player does not hit a fair ball, they go to first base if a swing was taken on at least four pitches
- All players will play defense
- All players will bat each inning
- There will be no advances on overthrows

Tips/Modifications:

See U7 Introduction for more information.

Questions: Did players know where to throw the ball? What did you see that you can work on next session?

Session #13 ► Focus: Hitting

— Warm Up —

CRAB TAG

Learning Objective: Fundamental movement skills

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: Pylons or cones to mark playing area



How to:

- Mark off a designated area with cones. Marking a square with cones and you can adjust it as needed
- Select 3-4 players to be taggers and they will start as the crabs and must crab walk
- All the other players will be on their feet and will try to stay away from the crabs as long as they can
- If a player gets tagged by a crab, they become a crab as well and will get down on the ground and can now tag players as well. Crabs/taggers will grow in numbers as the game goes on
- Play until there are only a handful of players left in the game
- Crabs can use both hands and feet to tag others

Tips/Modifications:

If players can't decide if they were tagged or not, just have them play rock, paper, scissors off to the side so gameplay doesn't have to stop

— Main Activities —

SLUGGER

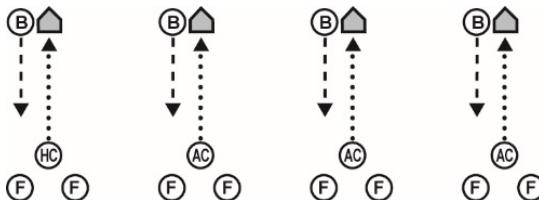
Learning Objective: Hitting, fielding

Time: 15 minutes

Equipment: 4 bats, 4 balls, 4 carpet home plates

How to:

- 4 groups of 3, with an adult with each group



- Adult pitches to the 3 players in their group – one at a time
- Batters hit the ball out to 2 fielders
- Fielders get 2 points for a fly ball and 1 point for a grounder
- Emphasize stride and hip action in batter's swing

Tips/Modifications:

Make sure areas are designated for each team – which are far enough away from each other that teams do not interfere with each other.

Questions: Were all tasks executed with proper technique?

CRAZY SOFTBALL

Learning Objective: Batting, throwing, fielding, teamwork

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: Balls, 2 pylons, 1 hoop, sponges/bean bags, etc.

How to:

- Game is played between two teams of three
- One person on the batting team receives three objects (sponges, bean bags, balls etc.) and throws or hits them anywhere in the playing area

- After all three objects have been thrown/hit into the playing area the batting team runs back and forth from home to a pylon as many times as they can
- The fielding team collects all the objects and places them inside the hoop, which is set up 5 m from home plate
- The fielding team cannot move with the objects. They must throw them to each other to get them into the hoop
- Once all the objects are inside the hoop the batting team stops running, they receive one run for each time they ran to the base and back home
- Switch batting and fielding teams once each player has had a chance to be the batter/thrower

Tips/Modifications:

Have a foul line marked out – if object goes outside area it is a foul ball

Questions: Were proper techniques used in all skills?

BALL RED ROVER

Learning Objective: Fielding grounders

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 2 balls, ball gloves

How to:

- 2 groups of 6, each playing a separate Red Rover game
- 3 players on each team, line up facing the other 3 – side by side
- 10 – 20 feet apart. Place markers or draw lines to show goal area
- A player on one line throws the ball along the ground to try to get it past the players on the other line
- Opposite players can try and stop the ball using proper fielding techniques
- If successful, a player from the side who let the ball get by is picked to join the other line
- Adjust the width of the goal line based on the number of players on the line



— Modified Game —

MODIFIED SOFTBALL GAME

Learning Objective: All softball skills

Time: 45 minutes

Equipment: Ball, bat, bases

How to:

- Coach will pitch to their team
- 7 pitches are thrown to each batter to allow them to hit a fair ball. If the player does not hit a fair ball, they go to first base if a swing was taken on at least four pitches
- All players will play defense
- All players will bat each inning
- There will be no advances on overthrows

Tips/Modifications:

See U7 Introduction for more information.

Session #14 ► Focus: Pitching

— Warm Up —

DRAGON RACE

Learning Objective: Running technique and rounding the bases correctly

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: 2 balls, bases

How to:

- Players form 2 single file lines, one team at 2nd base and one team at home. First player in each line has a ball. Players behind the first player move back a bit to give the runners room as they will be crossing the bases.
- Player at 2nd will be running from 2nd -3rd-home-1st-2nd and handing the ball off to the next person in line.
- Player at home will run from H-1st-2nd-3rd-H and handing the ball off to the next person in line.
- The object is for the person at 2nd to try and catch up or pass the person at home and vice versa.

— Main Activities —

KILL THE MOSQUITO

Learning Objective: Rounding 1st base

Time: 10 minutes

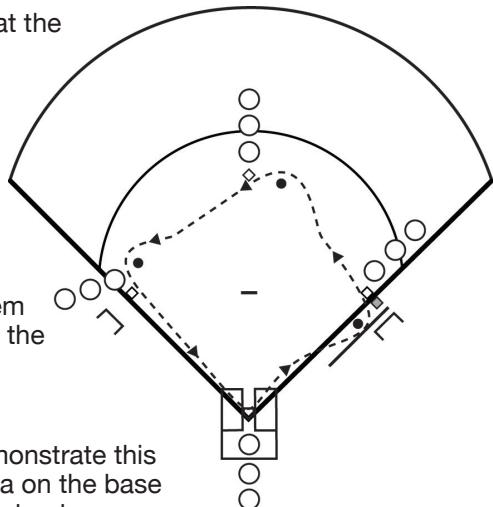
Equipment: 4 bases, 4 markers, 4 bats

How to:

- Put bases down in proper locations on diamond, with 3 players at each one
- Pretend there is a mosquito on the INSIDE corner of each base
- One player at each base concurrently takes a swing at an imaginary ball, drops the bat, runs as fast as possible to the next base, stepping on the “Mosquito” as they round it (4 players will be running at the same time)



- They then wait their turn at the base they just rounded
- Remind players it will be easier to step on the “Mosquito” if they run a little to the outside of the base line as they approach the base.
- It would be helpful to put some marks down for them to go around as shown in the diagram



Tips/Modifications:

Important to have a coach demonstrate this activity. Stickers, or marked area on the base is helpful to show players where to step.

WHIP IT

Learning Objective: Whipping the ball from the top of the arm circle to the bottom to release it

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: Softballs in tube socks (6 for each player), hula hoop targets hung at strike zone height

How to:

- Start by showing players where to grip their “whip-it”. Hands should be placed 6-8 inches from the ball up the sock so the pitcher feels there is some control over the ball but can still appreciate a whipping motion with the sock
- Start the players facing sideways to their hula hoop target grasping the sock in their pitching hand and their glove on the other
- Instruct the player to step to the target while making an arm circle with their “whip-it”
- Use the key words of whipping the ball from the top of their arm circle to the bottom, letting it go at the bottom to go straight for the hula hoop
- Have them repeat these 6 times before all players collect their “whip-its” at the same time

- CAUTION: most inexperienced kids will throw the first couple behind them because they hang on to the sock too long. Encourage them to let go sooner and avoid standing directly behind them during the drill

Tips/Modifications:

Refer to pitching section for more information.

FREEZE THE RUNNER (Throwing)

Learning Objective: Throwing, catching, base running, co-operation, teamwork

Time: 20 minutes

Equipment: 2 ball, 4 bases, 4 helmets

How to:

- 2 teams of 6: 1 team on offence and 1 team on defense
- Offensive “batter” THROWS the ball into the playing area and runs around the bases until “FREEZE” is shouted (see next point)
- Ball is fielded, then thrown so EVERY fielder catches the ball – the last fielder to catch the ball shouts “FREEZE”. “FREEZE” may have to be shouted more than once at this age
- You score points by counting the number of bases touched – if caught between bases, the last base touched counts
- After everyone has had a turn, switch defense and offence
- Keep total bases touched for each team
- Emphasize proper rounding of bases by using markers

Tips/Modifications:

Players on defense will likely need help from adults to keep them from all running after the ball at once and in knowing where to throw it next. Lack of catching ability will likely mean there is little actual catching going on but at least each player will get to touch and throw the ball.

— Modified Game —

MODIFIED SOFTBALL GAME

Learning Objective: All softball skills

Time: 45 minutes

Equipment: Ball, bat, bases

How to:

- Coach will pitch to their team
- 7 pitches are thrown to each batter to allow them to hit a fair ball. If the player does not hit a fair ball, they go to first base if a swing was taken on at least four pitches
- All players will play defense
- All players will bat each inning
- There will be no advances on overthrows

Tips/Modifications:

See U7 Introduction for more information.

Session #15 ► Focus: Throwing/Catching

— Warm Up —

DEFEND

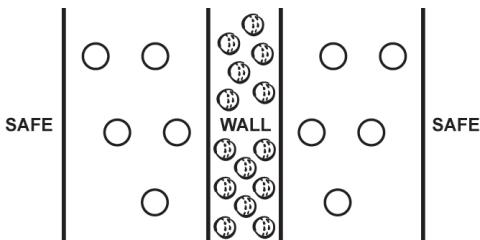
Learning Objective: Agility, quickness, running, teamwork

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: Ball

How to:

- Mark out a “safe” area at both ends of the playing area and an area to be defended in between them



- Place balls in the area to be defended (wall). Select 3-4 players to defend the “wall”. Rest of the players are scattered in the playing area
- “Defenders” try to keep the others from grabbing a ball and getting it back to a “safe” area without being tagged
- If caught, they become a defender
- Game ends when all balls are in safe area OR all players are caught and are defenders



TAKE IT BACK

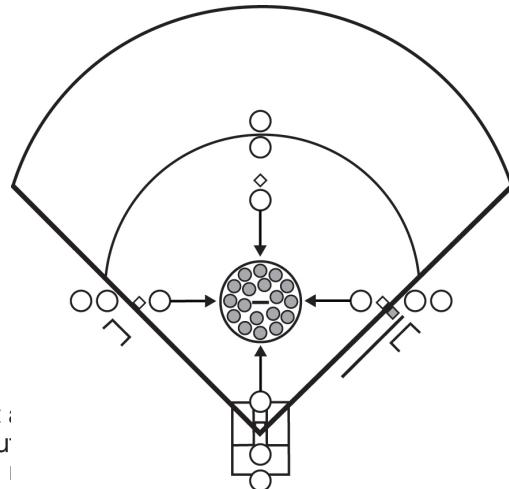
Learning Objective: Agility, quickness, teamwork, running, multi-directional speed

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: 20 – 25 balls, bean bags or other small objects, 4 markers/pylons

How to:

- 4 teams of 3.
- One team at each of the 4 markers, which are placed in a diamond formation (bases could be used instead of markers).
- Objects are placed in center where pitcher's location would be
- On "GO", one player at a time from each team runs out and up 1 of the objects and back
- After tagging the returning player's hand, the next player can leave
- Play continues until all objects are gone
- The team with the most objects wins



Tips/Modifications:

To keep all players actively engaged allow players to take balls from other groups as well as the center, so that players must guard their base. If a player takes a ball and is tagged before they get back to their group, they must return the ball and return to their base before grabbing another ball.

— Main Activities —

ADD 'EM UP**Learning Objective:** Throwing**Time:** 10 minutes**Equipment:** 3 pylons, 1 ball, 1 bat**How to:**

- Divide the group into 2 teams.
- One batter hits off a tee and then the batting team moves as a group between the base and home. One point is scored for each time the batting team touches the base.
- A fielder fields the ball and then the ball must be passed to each member of the team before it can be thrown home. Once the ball reaches home the batting team must stop running.
- Batting team and fielding team switch once all the batters have had a chance to hit.

Tips/Modifications:

Depending on skill level you may want to have the batting team hit off a coach tossed or front toss pitch, or have them throw the ball out to the fielders

Questions: Are players using good throwing mechanics? Check skill section to be sure throwing elbow is back and shoulder level before coming over the top.

FIELD 3**Learning Objective:** Fielding**Time:** 10 minutes**Equipment:** 2 bats, 2 balls, 2 helmets, 2 sets of bases**How to:**

- 2 teams of 6: 1 batter, the rest fielders
- 2 separate activity areas set up a safe distance apart
- 1 adult pitcher in each area for each group of 6
- Set up bases in diamond formation for each group

- One batter at a time bats off an adult pitch as many as needed, with an adult in the catcher's position
- When a fielder has successfully fielded 3 grounders or caught 1 fly ball, they become the batter
- Players rotate positions
- Make sure all players get an opportunity to bat

BOOM A RANG

Learning Objective: Throwing from positions in the infield

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 2 ball, 8 bases

How to:

- 2 groups of 6
- Set up bases to make 2 diamonds with 6 players at each
- 5 players in infield position including pitching and catching position
- Catcher throws (rolls) a grounder to each player in succession
- They field it and throw it to 1st base, who throws it back to the catcher
- Rotate positions after each sequence so all players get a chance to throw from each position
- Score 1 point for each successful throw and catch
- See how many points can be scored per sequence

Tips/Modifications:

A variation could be to throw pop flyballs instead of grounders

Questions: Are players in proper defensive positions and are they using proper throwing mechanics? Check skill section for diamond knowledge and to be sure throwing elbow is back and shoulder level before coming over the top.

SUPER SCOOPER

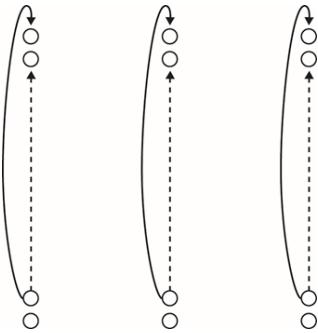
Learning Objective: Fielding ground balls, throwing

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 3 balls

How to:

- 3 teams of 4 in shuttle relay formation
- 1st player in each line throws a grounder to teammate on other side then goes to the end of the opposite line
- Player receiving it throws a grounder to the next player and follows throw to end of that line and so on until they get back to their original positions



Tips/Modifications:

A variation could be to throw pop flies flyballs instead of grounders or throw a slow roller close to tosser and player receiving does a forehand underhand toss

Questions: Are players using proper fielding mechanics? Are they using two hands to field the ball? Check skill section to be they are in a proper ready position and move to the ball

— Modified Game —

MODIFIED SOFTBALL GAME

Learning Objective: All softball skills

Time: 45 minutes

Equipment: Ball, bat, bases

How to:

- Coach will pitch to their team
- 7 pitches are thrown to each batter to allow them to hit a fair ball. If the player does not hit a fair ball, they go to first base if a swing was taken on at least four pitches
- All players will play defense
- All players will bat each inning
- There will be no advances on overthrows

Tips/Modifications:

See U7 Introduction for more information.

Questions: Do players understand the what a strike and ball is? Do they understand what a fair and foul ball is? Do they understand where the defensive positions are? Check skill section for definitions of the rules and diamond knowledge

Session #16 ► Focus: Hitting

— Warm Up —

CATCH THIS

Learning Objective: Throwing

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: Balls, or other items you can throw

How to:

- Split into partners
- The player with the ball tosses to her partner
- Partner takes a step back and passes ball back
- This player passes the ball back and if caught, the partner who caught the ball takes a step back.
- Process continues until someone drops the ball
- When the ball is dropped, the two players return to the starting position and see if they can improve on their previous best

Tips/Modifications:

Use fun equipment like water balloons, sponges, beanbags, stuffed animals or add a player in the middle who relays the ball to the partners on the ends. Progression would be to start with no gloves and fun items to throw to gloves and a softball.

Questions: Are the players using 2 hands to catch? Using soft fun items? Using softballs and gloves?



— Main Activities —

BATTERS BONANZA

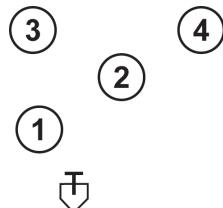
Learning Objective: Hitting, aiming for a target

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: hula hoops, batting tee, ball, bat

How to:

- Have player's split into partners
- Teams will spread hula hoops out in front of the batting tee and assign a point value to each hula hoop
- Partners will play rock, paper, scissors for first bat
- Batter's aim to hit the ball off the tee and into a hula hoop-if they get the ball in the hoop, they earn the points assigned to that hoop
- Each batter gets three turns and then switch
- The non- batting partner retrieves the ball after each hit



Tips/Modifications:

Use a basketball or soccer ball on a tee and reposition it around the field for hitters to aim at. If coach has access to a net, then reposition the net around the infield.

Questions: Are hitters standing correctly in the batter's box? Are players using the proper batting stance and correct batting mechanics? Refer to skills check list for proper batting mechanics

500

Learning Objective: Hitting, fielding, catching, throwing

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 2 bats, 4 balls, batting tee

How to:

- 2 groups of 6 each with their own activity area.
- 1 bat, while the other 5 field. The other group does the same.
- Batter will bat off a tee or adult pitch

- Each batter gets 5-10 swings or hits (dependent on the number of players or time)
- Fielder can get points by fielding the ball
- 100 for caught fly, 50 for one bouncer, 25 for a grounder
- Objective is to reach 500 then that player gets to bat. At this level the batter will likely have to be changed prior to anyone getting 500, so that they all get to bat.

Tips/Modifications:

Instead of points the players could pick a softball related word to spell. First person to spell the word gets to bat

Questions: Are the players communicating and calling the ball? Are they performing all the correct mechanical skills?

GRAND SLAM

Learning Objective: Hitting, fielding

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 3 tee's, 3 balls (whiffle or other), ball gloves, 3 bats

How to:

- Groups of 4 – each group has a batting tee and 1 whiffle ball or another type of ball depending on ability
- One batter hits to 3 fielders
- When a fielder catches 2 fly balls OR 4 grounders, they become the new batter
- Players can't bat a second time until everybody has had a chance to bat

Tips/Modifications:

Players don't use gloves and the batter hits a nerf ball or slightly deflated volleyball or soccer ball off the tee

Questions: Are players getting into proper ready position every time the batter makes is about to contact the ball? Are hitters holding the bat correctly? Are players in a proper hitting stance? Are players watching the ball contact? Refer to Fielding and Hitting Skills section.

KNEE CLAPS

Learning Objective: Bringing the knees together at the end of a pitch

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: N/A

How to:

- Line players up in a line with at least two BIG steps distance in between them facing the instructor
- Have players start facing the instructor with their hands clasped behind their backs standing on one foot on the line
- Taking a big step sideways, have players step and slide their knees together finishing standing on their other leg
- Once players have mastered the lower body step-slide motion, add the upper body by having the pitcher clap as their legs come together. Say step-clap, step-clap as they go through the movement 10 times

Tips/Modifications:

Players should follow the coach step by step through the progression.

- 1) Coach says “lift” and players lift front leg and balance
- 2) Coach says “pivot” and players pivot on back leg so they are sideways to the coach
- 3) Coach says “stride” and players take a large step sideways (towards the coach) with front foot and plant
- 4) Coach says “toe to heel” and players bring back toe of back foot to heel of front foot

Questions: Are players keeping body aligned? (not leaning backwards or too far forwards) Are players landing front foot at a 45-degree angle? Are players strong on the front leg with a little bend in the knee when planting? Are players slamming the back leg into the front leg with heel to toe touch? Refer to the Pitching Skills section.

— Modified Game —

MODIFIED SOFTBALL GAME

Learning Objective: All softball skills

Time: 45 minutes

Equipment: Ball, bat, bases

How to:

- Coach will pitch to their team
- 7 pitches are thrown to each batter to allow them to hit a fair ball. If the player does not hit a fair ball, they go to first base if a swing was taken on at least four pitches
- All players will play defense
- All players will bat each inning
- There will be no advances on overthrows

Tips/Modifications:

See U7 Introduction for more information.

Session #17

— Warm Up —

GRAB THE BACON

Learning Objective: Running, body awareness, quickness, agility

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: 1 ball for every 2 players

How to:

- Partners each start on their own baseline. A ball is placed at the mid-point between the partners
- On “GO” from the coach each partner runs out, tries to grab the ball (bacon) and get back to their baseline before their partner who didn’t get the ball (bacon)
- If the partner without the ball gets to the baseline first the partner with the ball must hand it over
- If the partner with the ball gets back first, they get to keep the ball
- Change partners frequently

Tips/Modifications:

The coach can assign points and challenge the kids to be the first to 5 points. Coach could use softball terms to start the game. Instead of “GO” they could say 1st base, Right Field etc.

Questions: Are players using proper running technique?



— Main Activities —

DRAGON RACE

Learning Objective: Running technique and rounding the bases correctly

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 2 balls, bases

How to:

- Players form 2 single file lines, one at 2nd base and one at home. First player in each line has a ball. Players behind the first player move back a bit to give the runners room as they will be crossing the bases.
- Player at 2nd will be running from 2nd -3rd-home-1st-2nd and handing the ball off to the next person in line.
- Player at home will run from H-1st-2nd-3rd-H and handing the ball off to the next person in line.
- The object is for the person at 2nd to try and catch up or pass the person at home and vice versa.

Tips/Modifications:

Have coaches jump in and participate or have players compete against the parents

BEANBAG TO BALL ARM CIRCLES

Learning Objective: Releasing the beanbag inside the hip to get it to hit the target

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: Beanbags, softballs, hula-hoops hung on the fence at a low height, mat to kneel on (if available)

How to:

- Start with beanbags instead of balls. Have players kneel on the mat facing sideways to their target wearing a glove on one hand and grasping a beanbag in the other
- Instruct the player to “step” toward the target remaining on their knees making an arm circle at the same time “pitching” the beanbag into the hula-hoop

- Focus on the importance of releasing the beanbag inside the back hip and staying sideways to the target
- Once pitchers are comfortable with their release point, give them a ball to experiment with (be aware of park rules regarding throwing balls into fences)

Tips/Modifications:

Have players kneel beside the fence so that their pitching arm is against it. When they do arm circles this will keep their arm in straight circle

Questions: Are the players arm circles big? Are they brushing their pinky along their back-leg thigh?

PLAYERS CHOICE

Time: 10 minutes

How to:

- Allow the players to choose their favourite game!

ADD 'EM UP

Learning Objective: Throwing

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 3 pylons, 1 ball, 1 bat

How to:

- Divide the group into 2 teams.
- One batter hits off a tee and then the batting team moves as a group between the base and home. One point is scored for each time the batting team touches the base.
- A fielder fields the ball and then the ball must be passed to each member of the team before it can be thrown home. Once the ball reaches home the batting team must stop running.
- Batting team and fielding team switch once all the batters have had a chance to hit.

Tips/Modifications:

Depending on skill level you may want to have the batting team hit off a coach tossed or front toss pitch, or have them throw the ball out to the fielders

Questions: Are players using good throwing mechanics? Check skill section to be sure throwing elbow is back and shoulder level before coming over the top

— *Modified Game* —

MODIFIED SOFTBALL GAME

Learning Objective: All softball skills

Time: 45 minutes

Equipment: Ball, bat, bases

How to:

- Coach will pitch to their team
- 7 pitches are thrown to each batter to allow them to hit a fair ball. If the player does not hit a fair ball, they go to first base if a swing was taken on at least four pitches
- All players will play defense
- All players will bat each inning
- There will be no advances on overthrows

Tips/Modifications:

See U7 Introduction for more information.

Session #18

— Warm Up —

BEAT THE BALL

Learning Objective: Running & catching

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: Playground ball or whiffle ball

How to:

- Have children stand in a circle – close enough that they can easily pass a ball to one another
- One of the children is “it”
- When the coach yells “GO” that child must run around the outside of the circle and get back into their spot before the ball gets back to the start

Tips/Modifications:

- Make this activity harder or easier by making the players stand closer or further apart
- Have the children run, jump, skip, etc. around the outside of the circle



SHARK IN THE TANK

Learning Objective: Running, dodging, body awareness, co-operation, agility, power/endurance, multi-directional speed

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: N/A

How to:

- 2 or 3 players are the “sharks”, the rest are the “fish”. Mark off a infield area to be used as the “tank”, so that young children can easily visualize
- “Fish” must stay in the tank
- “Sharks” are timed to see how long it takes them to catch all the “fish”. When they do, choose new “sharks”

— Main Activities —

GAME PITCHING

Learning Objective: Review the game pitching sequence and rules

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: softballs, pitching plates and a hula-hoop hung in a pop-up net or on a fence. Parents may volunteer as catchers if present.

How to:

- Tell pitchers they are to imagine they are pitching in a game.
- Ask them to receive the ball in front of the pitcher's plate, then walk behind the pitcher's plate stopping to take a deep breath before stepping onto it with both feet. If a pitcher is right-handed the right foot is forward and left foot slightly behind and vice versa for the left-handed pitcher.
- Instruct the pitchers to step onto the mound with their hands apart (ball should be in the glove and not in the pitcher's hand) and once on the mound they may bring their hands together and pause.
- There are several starting styles and it is recommended pitchers either keep the hands together or swing the pitching arm backward in a rhythmic motion (see online drill description) to begin the pitching motion.
- Once starting the pitching motion, the pitcher's step toward the catcher and arm circle are coordinated. The pitcher turns sideways to the target mid-motion. Instruct them to imagine stepping along an imaginary line straight to the target.
- After landing, the ball is released inside the back hip at the bottom of the arm circle with the intent to throw on a straight line to the target.
- Follow-through includes staying sideways to the target and bringing the pitching arm to the middle of the chest. See online descriptions for further details.

HITTING STATIONS

Learning Objective: Learning to hit off self-toss (fungo hit), hitting technique, hand-eye coordination

Time: 15 minutes

Equipment: 4 tee's, 12 balls, 12 bats, carpet home plates or bases

How to:

- There will be 3 different stations set up for 4 players to perform the same drill at the same time
 - Station 1 – 4 fungo stations
 - Station 2 – 4 batting tee stations
 - Station 3 – 4 soft toss stations
- 1 adult at each of the soft toss stations (4), 1 adult at the tee stations, and 1 adult at the fungo stations.
- Divide time you have left after setting up into three so that players get an equal time at all 3 activities
- All four players rotate to a different station, when the time is up
- Emphasize stride and hip action
- Make sure the ball is placed IN FRONT of plate. Home plates or bases should be used for each player, so they get the proper feeling of a standing at a plate to hit

Tips/Modifications:

Coaches could have players simulate dropping the bat and running to first after the ball is hit at certain stations

Questions: Are hitters in a proper hitting stance? Are they gripping the bat properly? Are the hands palm up and palm down on contact? Are they dropping the bat properly and not letting go? Are all players in a safe area prior to the hitter swinging?

PLAYERS CHOICE

Time: 10 minutes

How to:

- Allow the players to choose their favourite game!

— *Modified Game* —

MODIFIED SOFTBALL GAME

Learning Objective: All softball skills

Time: 45 minutes

Equipment: Ball, bat, bases

How to:

- Coach will pitch to their team
- 7 pitches are thrown to each batter to allow them to hit a fair ball. If the player does not hit a fair ball, they go to first base if a swing was taken on at least four pitches
- All players will play defense
- All players will bat each inning
- There will be no advances on overthrows

Tips/Modifications:

See U7 Introduction for more information.

Questions: Are players practicing proper positioning, technical skills, rule knowledge, team play and good sportsmanship?