

Throwing

Step Away Toss (Drill)

Learning to throw and catch is two of the most basic elements of baseball. With this drill, you can do both and help the arms of the children condition themselves to throw longer and shorter distances. One of the frustrating parts of coaching young players is they don't have a sense of throwing softly and throwing harder (for longer distances).

What you Need: Balls and gloves and a number of players. You will set the kids up in pairs (or threesomes) facing each other about one stride apart to begin.

How this drill works: In order to help kids learn to throw and catch the ball, and the amount of force needed behind the ball, they need to throw from different distances. Further, it is good for the kids to get used to the ball coming at them from different distances as well.

With the kids facing each other about 3' apart, they should be instructed to place the ball in the other player opposite's glove. The catching player needs to use the alligator arms approach to collecting the ball in their glove. Once both players successfully execute this, they take one giant step back / repeat. Note—for older kids, this is usually a warmup drill started at about 2m apart and the distance increased.

Results: Each time the player steps back, they must learn to adjust their throwing (and catching).

Ball to First (Drill)

It is important for younger players to understand what happens when the ball is hit and comes to them. Most will be focused on actually stopping the ball but when they do secure it in their gloves; they need to know where to throw it.

What you need: The kids should have their gloves on and you can send them out to second base. Have one player play first base to field the throws. You can also have one near you (home plate) to field balls from first base to home.

How this Drill Works: You can either toss or lightly hit the ball to the players in line at second base. Explain to them that when they get the ball, one of the first places they are going to throw to is first base. Then, the first baseman can throw it home.

Players can then rotate: the fielder goes to first, the first baseman goes to home, and the catcher goes to the back of the fielding line. Once the players get the hang of it, you can keep hitting in succession.

Note: So players understand where all of the bases are, you can run this drill from any position on the infield and throw to any base. Keep the throw length reasonably short (for example from shortstop to 2nd or 3rd base or from 1st base to 2nd base, or you can work on double plays for example shortstop fields and throws to 2nd baseman who throws to 1st baseman who throws to catcher, etc.).

Results: One of the toughest things to teach young players is to field the ball, then throw it to the appropriate base. Repetition is extremely important for them to associate fielding with throwing it to first base (or other bases). This drill also helps them learn the bases and positions in the infield.

Rics' Tips (not in the handouts)

Throwing Mechanics

- **Footwork.** When a fielder is ready to throw, they should step towards the target with the back foot (toes pointing to 3 o'clock from the target) and then follow through and step with the front foot.
- **Gripping the Ball.** When reaching for the ball in the glove, grip the ball with a thumb on the seam.
- **Arms.** When removing the ball from the glove to make a throw the fielder should bring the throwing arm out behind the body and up above the shoulder (hit the head of the dwarf and the chin of the giant). If you have a marked a number on the hand (for batting order) the fielder should be able to look back at this number, when the arm is lifted above the shoulder – the fielder has lifted the arm high enough. This is also helpful in teaching beginners pitching mechanics.
- **Focus.** The fielder should focus on the target during the throw – the target should be a receiver who has raised both arms to signal "I am ready." The target is the receiver's eyes, not the glove.

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