

Softball:

Throwing Mechanics

I. Throwing Warm-up

a. Grip softball on seams

b. One knee wrist snaps

- i. Right knee should be down
- ii. Make sure elbow is level with or above shoulder
- iii. Glove hand can support under elbow
- iv. Fingers should be gripping the C, on the seams
- v. Snap with the wrist, not with the arm
- vi. If done correctly, the spin on the ball should be directly back towards the thrower
- vii. 5 feet apart



c. One knee dart throws

- i. Make sure elbow is level with or above shoulder
- ii. Glove hand can support under elbow
- iii. Hinge at elbow when throwing so arm ends pointing at target
- iv. Make sure player is still snapping
- v. 10 feet apart

d. Goal post position

- i. Stand with body already turned sideways
- ii. Glove should be pointed at target
- iii. Throwing elbow is above shoulder and hand is turned backwards
- iv. Grip on ball in fingertips, not palm
- v. Arm comes over top to throw- **1-7 on a clock**
- vi. **CHECK ARM EVERY THROW TO MAKE SURE IT IS IN PROPER POSITION!**

e. Walk through throw

- i. Stand facing partner- glove up ready to receive
- ii. Once ball is received, step forward with dominant foot and turn foot out- this will allow the body to open sideways
- iii. Ball gets pulled out of glove directly to goalpost position (there should not be a loop with the arm)
- iv. Thrower should now be in goalpost position
- v. Finish throw by allowing the back hip to pull through- back leg should drag through naturally to allow for weight transfer

f. Common Mistakes:

- i. Girls have a tendency to push the ball instead of throw it. Make sure the hand is turned backwards and the elbow is above the shoulder. If it is not, the player will most likely be pushing the ball or “shot putting” the ball and it will have little if any velocity.
- ii. Make sure girls turn their body when they throw. Throwing power, just as hitting power, starts from the ground up and comes from the hips.

Softball
How to Throw



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II. Catching

a. Athletic position

- i. Receivers should be in good athletic position and giving a target.
- ii. Catch with two hands!

b. Catch it on your nose!

- i. Wherever the ball is thrown, the receiver should take their nose to the ball and catch with the ball “on their nose”. This will ensure that they are looking at what they are catching!

Infield Techniques

I. Infield Throw

a. Pop your feet- short distance throws

- i. It is important to get rid of the ball quickly as an infielder. The fastest way to do this is to pop their feet to turn their body to get into throwing position
- ii. During the foot pop process, the ball should be pulled out of the glove and brought directly to goalpost position (no loop with arm).
- iii. *DRILL: Draw an L in the dirt. Player will start with both feet on the bottom of the L, with the left foot on the 90-degree angle. When they pop their feet, the right foot will replace the left, and the left foot will land on the upright line of the L. They should now be in goal post position and ready to throw.*

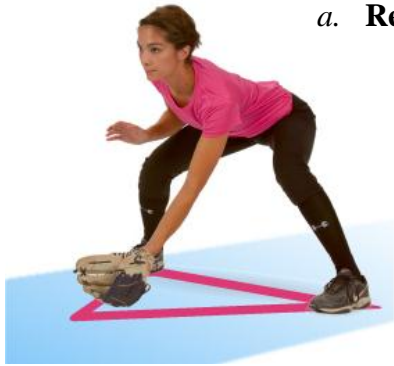
b. Gain ground- longer distance infield throw (ex: 3rd to 1st)

- i. This can only be used if the player has ample time
- ii. Allows the player to cut the distance to the target prior to making the throw
- iii. Ball should be fielded with left foot forward. Right foot should cross in front of left, gaining ground towards target (body should turn at same time). Snap towards target.

c. DRILL: 4 Corners

- i. *4 lines, one line near each base. Throwing in a designated direction, players will gain ground towards target prior to releasing the ball and snapping towards their target. This drill can be used to practice popping their feet as well. Make sure to change direction of throw midway through drill. Receiver should have glove up, giving a target.*

II. Skills and Drills

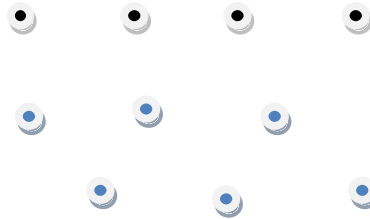


- a. **Ready Position-** Right, left, ready
 - i. Wide stance- left foot slightly in front of right
 - ii. Knees bent at a 90 degree angle (if knees are over toes, you are too far forward)
 - iii. Get that butt down!
 - iv. Glove out in front of body
 1. Glove is a “shovel”- open it wide
 2. Glove should start on the ground (it’s easier to adjust the glove up when fielding than down)

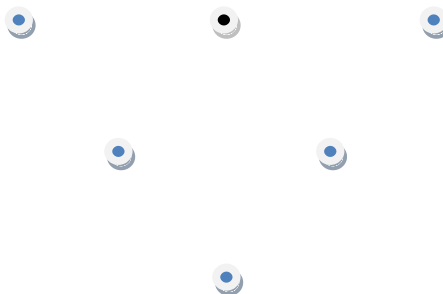
- b. **Fielding-** Move low, field low, throw low!
 - i. When moving to get to a ball, stay low while moving! Standing up to move and throw takes too much time.
 1. TIP: It is important to have strong quad muscles to enable the girls to move easily in a crouched position.
 - ii. Keep glove down and open wide leaving a nice pocket for the ball
 1. NO GLOVE FLASHING!
 2. *LINE DRILL: Drop softballs in a line, about 6 feet apart. Players must move low down the line, touching each ball with their throwing hand as they go. Their glove should be on the ground behind the ball as if fielding it.*

a. Progression:

- i. Balls in straight line
- ii. Balls staggered



3. **5 POINT DRILL:** Set up softballs in the shape of a triangle. Player starts at center ball and moves to the ball you point at with a bat. The ball at the top of the triangle is fielded as a bunt. The balls to the left and right are shuffled to (do not cross legs).

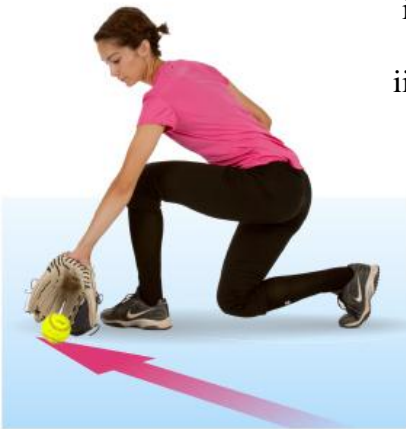




Picture 1

- iii. Ball should be fielded even with belly button (or slightly left) on the body and out in front
 - 1. Knees in front of toes- gets weight forward
 - a. Make sure their rear end stays down!
 - 2. Eyes on ball all the way into glove!
 - 3. Keep hands out in front of head
 - a. If ball travels too deep into body, they will lose sight of it.
 - 4. Drill: Have girls in partners- roll ball back and forth and slowly walk through the proper mechanics
 - a. Progression- hit balls to girls and have them field properly
 - i. Encourage glove down

Hit to the Right



- c. **Backhand-** When performing the backhand, cross the left foot over the right while staying low
 - i. Glove should flip low to the ground
 - 1. Do not stab at the ball! Keep glove low.
 - ii. *DRILL: With partners- one person fields, one person rolls.*
 - 1. *The fielder should begin in the backhand position with glove open wide. Roll the ball to the glove. Once ball is in glove, pull straight up.*
 - 2. *TIP: Do not pull glove backwards- ball will fly out*
 - 3. *Progression:*
 - a. *Start in backhand position*
 - b. *Start in ready position and cross over to field*
 - c. *Stretch out when ready (take several steps in order to field the ball)*
- d. **Short Hops-** Important to be able to do successfully at any time during the game
 - i. Glove open wide- go get the ball!
 - ii. *DRILL: Partners about 5 feet apart*
 - 1. *Begin on knees. Shovel the ball to partner so that it short hops. Describe it as having a hula hoop in front of their partner and they have to dart throw it into the hula hoop.*
 - 2. *Partner should start with no glove. Elbow bent- they should be leaning forward. On the short hop, they must "go get it" with their hand, pushing out, not up.*
 - 3. *Progression: Perform short hop drill from ready-set-go position with gloves.*
- e. **Throws on the Run-** Get used to throwing while moving!
 - i. Players will learn how to adapt their arm angles in order to complete throws at odd angles.
 - ii. Begin with player holding softball. As they move forward, their right arm should meet with their left leg on the release of the ball.

Outfield Techniques

III. Outfield Throw

a. Arm Circle- Longer distance throw

- i. The arm circle helps the player gain momentum for their throw for a nice, direct, line drive.
- ii. Player should reach all the way down and back creating an arm circle prior to reaching proper throwing position.
- iii. When player reaches down and back, weight should shift onto back leg. When arm comes through on the throw, weight should shift to front leg upon release.

b. Crow hop- Used in outfield to gain momentum towards intended target

- i. Begin with left foot forward. With a hop, right knee comes up and in front of left foot. Player should now be standing on right foot only (should look like a baseball pitcher when they bring the knee up to collect their weight). This turns the body and collects weight onto back leg. Left leg then strides forward and weight is exploded into the throw. During this process, the arm circle occurs.
- ii. *DRILL: Have player stand directly behind cones with their left foot forward. The crow hop should be performed OVER the cones. In order to get weight into the proper position to transfer it forward, the player should jump up rather than out while performing the crow hop.*



c. Important things to look for:

- i. It is very important for an outfielder to throw “over the top”. The player’s arm path and snap should be from 12-6 or 1-7 on a clock. This will ensure the rotation on the ball is coming straight back at them vertically. With this rotation, the ball will cut straight through the air to the target without curving. If the ball has a side spin, it will curve over such a great distance.
- ii. Important! Elbow must be above shoulder to make this throw!
- iii. If your players have trouble seeing the spin, take some black electrical tape in put a strip around the ball running directly through the center of the C on the seams. The player should then place their middle finger on the tape when gripping the ball. When the ball is thrown, the tape should rotate in a line, not on a wobble.

- iv. When an outfielder throws, they need to get their entire body into the throw. After performing the crow hop and throw, the player should be falling forward to ensure all weight has been transferred into the throw.

IV. Skills and Drills

- a. Ready Position- Glove tucked in athletic running position
- b. Drop Step- first motion to track a ball over the fielder's head
 - i. Drop step **straight back!**
 - ii. Allow hips to open in direction of the ball's path. Pop hips to opposite direction should the path change to the other side of the fielder.
 - iii. Always keep eyes on ball
- c. Fielding- come through ball if possible!
 - i. Will allow for momentum in the direction of the throw for a stronger throw
 - ii. Catch ball **ON YOUR NOSE!**
- d. After catch, go right into crow hop and throw to target
 - i. *DRILL: Quarterback Drill- works the drop step and catch over the shoulder*
 - 1. *Player starts facing you in ready position. Hold ball up to one side of player and she must drop step that direction. Switch ball to other side and she must switch her feet. Do it a third time, then throw the ball so she must catch it over her shoulder.*
 - ii. *DRILL: Throws on the run*
 - 1. *Player will take off running across field and you lead them with throw to work on catching the ball on the run*
- e. Precedent- who takes control?
 - i. Center field takes charge over everyone else- if center and left both call it, center takes it and left field becomes backup.
 - ii. All fielders should be talking to help each other
 - 1. In in in! or Back back back!
 - iii. Never dive on the line- there is no backup!
 - iv. If an infielder and an outfielder both call the ball, the outfielder gets it and the infielder gets out of the way

V. 3 Stops in outfield

- a. Safety stop- used when no one is on base and there's a ground ball single hit through the infield
 - i. Get behind the ball and drop right knee. Leg is kicked out to side. Ball is fielded in front of body. Makes for a bigger 'backstop' if the ball takes a bad hop.
- b. Infield stop- used when an outfielder has a chance to get a runner out at a base.
 - i. Field it like an infielder with a quick foot pop to get rid of the ball quickly
 - 1. Ex: right field throwing to 1B on a hard hit ground ball to them
 - 2. Ex: center field throwing to 2B
 - 3. Ex: left field throwing to 3B

- c. Scoop or 'do or die'- used with a runner in scoring position and the throw is going HOME.
 - i. Run through the ball and field it on the side of the body. Go directly into the crop hop and throw towards home. Throw should be low enough to be cut if need be.

Sliding

VI. Sliding into 2B, 3B

- a. Figure 4 Slide
 - i. Tuck one leg under the other to make a 4
 - ii. Arms above head
 - iii. Fingers in a fist
 - iv. Lean back
 - 1. *Makes it more difficult for fielder to tag runner*
- b. Pop-up Slide
 - i. Tuck one leg under other to make a 4
 - ii. Lean forward when hitting the base
 - iii. Use tucked leg to push off ground to pop up into standing position on back
 - iv. Used to allow runner to go full speed into a base and then pop up when no play is made- runner is now ready to advance on an overthrow.

VII. Sliding into Home

- a. Slide-by
 - i. Used only at home to go around the catcher
 - ii. Tuck left leg
 - iii. Slide to the right of the catcher and home plate- while sliding past the base, push off tucked leg and flip over- hit back with right hand
- b. Always slide into home feet first!

Hitting Mechanics

*** Refer to the hitting pictures in a separate attached file***

VIII. Proper hitting

- a. Stance

- i. Feet slightly more than shoulder width apart
 - ii. Toes forward or slightly in
 - iii. Body and feet positioned parallel to edge of plate
 - iv. Knees slightly bent
 - v. See pitcher with both eyes
- b. Grip
 - i. Grip bat loosely- allows for bat whip
 - ii. Handle should be in fingers, not in palms
- c. Arms
 - i. V shape- elbow should be comfortable, not too high and not too low
 - ii. Hands in POWER POSITION- near the back shoulder (where you would throw a good punch from)
 - iii. Bat angle should be 45 degrees up
- d. Load/Stride
 - i. Starts with legs- get weight on inside of back quad.
 - ii. Tuck the back knee in towards the center of the body.
 - iii. The small stride will force a load. This is all you need.
- e. Begin Swing
 - i. As your front foot lands from the stride, the back heel comes up- roll up onto the back toes (**there is no more squish the bug!**)
 - ii. Bring hands straight to pitcher- hands stay close to the body
- f. At Contact
 - i. Back knee goes into straight front leg
 - ii. Hips facing pitcher
 - iii. Power L position with arms
 - iv. BAT ANGLE- HIT INSIDE OF BALL
 - 1. If you hit the outside of the ball, you will roll your wrists and get a little ground ball to the left side of the field.
 - 2. In order to hit for power, you MUST hit the inside of the ball
- g. Extension
 - i. Extend bat head through the hitting zone and reach extension
 - ii. Finish high, hugging yourself.
- h. A softball swing is a short, compact swing. Quick to the ball, long through the ball.**
- i. DRILL: Belly to net- prevents casting out*
- j. DRILL: Back shoulder to net- prevents dropping the shoulder and promotes FORWARD movement*



IX. Hitting Stations:

- a.* Middle T
- b.* Inside T- catch ball out front
- c.* Outside T- catch ball deeper in zone- extension is to right field- belly button points towards right field
- d.* High T- keep hands up
- e.* Happy Gilmore- transfer weight
- f.* Front toss- swing at strikes!

X. Bunting

- a.* Pivot feet to square
- b.* Drop handle of bat through hands to grip
 - i.* Bottom hand at top of handle
 - ii.* Top hand triggers on bat
- c.* Head behind barrel of bat
- d.* Bat at top of strike zone- if above bat, pull back- it is a ball
 - i.* On low strike, bend knees to get to ball
 - ii.* DO NOT DROP BAT HEAD- ball will pop up
- e.* Bat angle is slightly up
- f.* Right hand makes bat steady, left hand directs where the bunt will go

Baserunning

I. Running through 1B

- a.* Hit outside front edge of base
- b.* Breakdown after base and open towards 2B

II. Leads

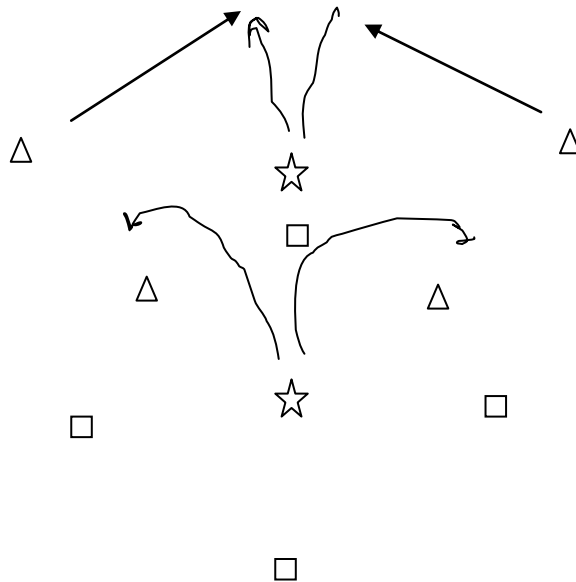
- a.* Rocker start at 1B
 - i.* Left foot on edge of base- allows runner to push off
 - ii.* Right foot behind base
 - iii.* In low position- every time should lead like they are stealing!
 - iv.* In rocker start, runner should start taking their lead when the pitcher lifts her back heel off the dirt to begin her wind-up
- b.* Regular start at 2B
 - i.* One foot on front edge of base
 - ii.* Other foot in front of base
 - iii.* Allows you to see around the pitcher to pick the signs
 - iv.* Take large lead at 2B
- c.* Baseball lead at 3B
 - i.* Start with left foot on edge of base- body facing field



Team Drills

- ii. On pitch, take short lead off 3B- don't want to get picked off

III. Texas Big Leaguer



- Set your girls up in a line behind 2nd base. There is 1 player at the SS position, 2B position, LF position, and RF position. (the triangles)
- A coach is near the pitcher's mound and a coach is near 2B (the stars)
- A pop up will be thrown over the SS head and the SS should dropstep to catch it. The LF is also running in. Once caught, throw ball back to coach on mound.
- The LF then takes off running towards center field and will get a ball on the run from the coach near 2B. Catch the ball and run into bucket at 2B.
- The SS will then replace the LF.
- Repeat on opposite side of the field.
- Continue quickly with pop-ups to left side of field, then right side of field.

IV. *Softball.isport.com*