

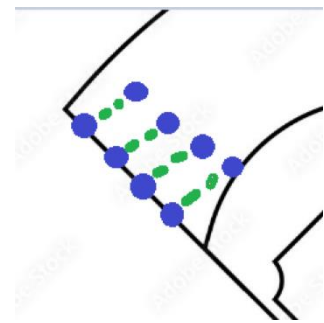


Berlin Youth Baseball – Warm-Ups before Practice

Goal of this document: It's important to have your youth players warm-up and stretch prior to engaging in competitive sports like baseball. By stretching and warming up this reduces the chances of injury such as muscle pulls. This document gives you some ideas of warm-up routines and stretching you can do prior to your practice starting.

Consistency: It's many times helpful for the youth to get used to a routine or consistent warm-up activity before each practice. Therefore if you can come up with 5-10 minutes of stretching and a standard warm-up routine that your team repeats every single practice your youth will start doing it even on their own without much coach intervention.

Warm-ups “when they get there”: It is common tradition when youth players arrive that they will grab their gloves and a baseball and line-up down the out field foul line in the grass playing catch. Each youth should find a partner and grab a ball from the coach's bucket. One partner stands on the outfield white foul line, and their partner stands straight out into the outfield grass to play catch. Each pair of partners is then in parallel to the next group down the white foul line. This type of “pre-practice warmups” can sometimes be a little chaotic as the youth are just getting to say hi to their friends for the first time for the day and have lots of energy and excitement for being at practice.



Stretching: Once every player has arrived, you can stop the team from throwing warm-up catch and collect them in a group to do warm-ups. This is where you could do a quick team huddle first if you have topics to discuss. But for stretching, this is where you'll want to pick a few stretches that work out the legs, a few that work out the arms, and then get them conditioning or running in.

Example of leg stretches:

- Touch your toes
- Lunges
- High Knees
- Karaoke

Example of arm stretches:

- Windmill circles
- Elbow behind head
- Push-ups

Burpees

Example of conditioning:

Jumping Jacks

Planks

Running to the Foul Pole or Center Field sign and back

Running around the entire diamond fence

Warm-up throws: After doing stretching, you can get into true organized warm-up throws, where you try to get the youth to focus and settle into a serious practice. Below are a few common warm-up routines that can help a team improve their throwing and catching abilities while warming up their arms and getting practice started.

Barehanded catches: It may seem odd at first, but having youth practice throwing hardballs to a partner, bare-handed, with no glove is actually very helpful in improving their focus and ability to catch a ball. These throws, of course, should be short and not at a far distance, and you will have to remind the players that the tosses should be soft and not 100 mile and hour fastballs. As your youth improve, you can ask them to try to catch bare-handed, with only one-hand, their glove hand, putting their throwing hand behind their back.

Catch and backup: Another good routine for youth is to get with their partner, using their glove and a hardball, with one partner on the white foul line and the other partner straight out in the outfield a short distance. The youth partners then throw the ball and count. When they get 10 catches in a row, without dropping, the partner in the outfield can take 2 big steps backward. This continues, and they can only move backward if they get those 10 catches in a row. It becomes a competition to see who can get the farthest apart while still catching the ball.

Challenges: It's generally not enough to keep the attention of most youth to just throw back and forth. So you'll want to add challenges, such as the first to partner pair to get to 100 catches, in a row, without dropping, doesn't have to run to the fence. Or another popular one is, anytime a partner pair drops the ball, regardless of who's fault it was, both partners have to do 2 push-ups. Then they have to start back over their count at 0, trying to get up to 100 in a row.

Practice should be LOUD and fun: Encourage the partners to count out loud, so everybody nearby knows what # catch they're on. If a coach is playing catch with a youth partner, make sure you're counting aloud too. Join in to encourage them!