

HIGHLAND BALL PLAYER DEVELOPMENT POST #1 (3/23/20)

Athleticism and Agility

- 15-20 squats - start in an athletic position with arms in fielding position and squat down and up slowly
- Lunge and Twist - lunge step forward dropping your other knee to the ground; rotate your torso right and then left; stand up and lunge step with the other foot; repeat for 40-50' (2x)
- Side shuffles in athletic position for 40-50'; stay facing the same direction down and back (2x)
- Example: https://youtu.be/93MoCVHZW_o

Solo Fielding Drills

- Wall Ball Fielding Drill
 - You need a tennis ball or other soft ball, your glove, and a hard, durable surface (without breakable stuff nearby); this works indoors if you have the space but is better outdoors particularly for the older players
 - Start on your knees with no glove - Throw the ball off the wall fielding with your glove hand; alternate throwing it so it comes straight back to you (10x), to your back-hand (10x), and to your fore-hand (10x)
 - Repeat from your knees with your glove on
 - Repeat on your feet with your glove on and starting in an athletic position
 - Make sure to field through the ball and funnel it to your chest
 - Example: <https://youtu.be/V3-kVBwh4LU>

Fielding Drills with a Partner

- Hop variations (similar progression to Wall Ball, but with two players or a parent and player)
 - You need a baseball or softball, a glove, and at least 15' of space
 - Fielder is on their knees without a glove to start
 - partner rolls ball right at player; field through the ball in front of body and funnel it to your chest (5x); flip ball back to partner
 - from knees, repeat with ball rolled (5x) to forehand and (5x) to backhand; field through the ball and funnel to your chest
 - Next, player stays on their knees (still no glove) and repeat the above progression except partner throws underhand short-hops to player
 - Next, player stays on their knees (with glove on) and repeat the progressions with a rolling ball and then short-hops
 - Next, player is on their feet (with glove on) and partner varies the location and hops (10x) with the player fielding the ball and gaining power to throwing position; soft throws back to partner.
 - Example: <https://youtu.be/bw6GFuG4HHU>

Numbered Ball Drill

- You need at least 3 baseballs or softballs; with a Sharpie, put a large #1 on all four sides of one ball (where the stitching makes a 'C'), then repeat with a #2 on a ball, #3 on a ball, and so on if you have more than 3 balls
- Roll balls slow to medium speed to your fielder and have them call out the number of the ball BEFORE it gets into their glove (10x right at them; 10x forehand; 10x backhand)
- Track how many numbers they get correct and track their improvement over the course of the week
- This can be done with batted balls at a greater distance as well
- The focus is to see keep your head down and see the ball go into your glove

- Players should still practice fielding through the ball and funneling it to their chest
- Example: <https://youtu.be/LNIP0iw2VB8>

Throwing Drills with a Partner

- Always start with arm circles and stretching
- Play catch from one knee; throwing-side knee down; 15-25' apart; focus on rotating the upper body, finishing the throw directly at your partner and staying balanced (15-20x)
- Throwing progression (every other day)
 - depending on age/strength, start at 20-40' apart with feet wide, toes facing your partner; keep feet still and throw (12-15x each)
 - move back 5-10' each and repeat (12-15x each)
 - move back another 5-10' each, step and throw (12-15x each)
 - For players just starting to play catch, stop after 40-50 throws
 - For players who have been throwing for more than a couple weeks, add long toss from 60-120' depending on age/strength (15-20x each)
 - finish with pull down throws from 30-50'; throw medium-hard on a line (8-10x each)

Solo Throwing Drills

- Always start with arm circles and stretching
- Throwing at a Wall or a Pitch Back (outdoors)
 - You need a glove, a ball, and a sturdy wall or a "pitch back" rebounder
 - on the wall or rebounder, use tape, chalk, or string to make a target (e.g. a strike zone or a circle higher up to represent the first baseman)
 - start short and step and throw softly to hit target
 - as you move back, throw harder to hit target
 - make a total of 30-60 throws depending on how long you have been throwing
 - this drill can be combined with the Wall Ball Fielding Drills

Solo Hitting Drills

- Get into a proper batting stance and take 20-30 swings without hitting the ball; make sure to stop fully between swings and get into stance before the next swing
- Hitting off a Tee (if you have a net to hit into or a nearby park)
 - hit 20 balls, take short break, then hit 20 more
 - focus on mechanics
 - adjust the height and placement of the tee every 5-6 swings

Hitting Drills with a Partner

- Front toss
 - You need a bucket of balls, a screen to stand behind, and a home plate (can be anything flat)
 - put the screen approximately 15' from the batter
 - the partner should throw the ball underhand as flat as possible
 - hit 25 balls, take a short break, hit 25 more