



## Bread and Butter Position Drills

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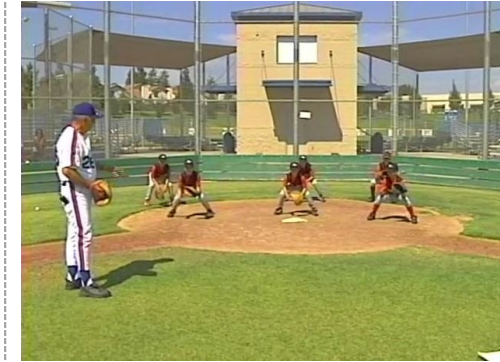
## Catchers – Stance Drill

### Setup

The catchers stand facing the coach with around 4-5 feet of space between them. You can practice this with gloves only or full equipment.

### Execution

1. Help the players get into the proper catcher stance by using the following cues:
2. Get in an athletic stance, with the feet slightly wider than shoulder width apart
3. Drop your elbows to your knees with the back flat
4. Point the toes slightly to the outside
5. Keep the knees inside the feet
6. Shift your weight back and forth from side to side, while staying in the stance
7. Slowly get lower and lower, shifting back and forth until you reach a comfortable position



## Catchers - Step to the Ball Drill

### Setup

The catchers are down in their stance with the glove up, facing the coach. You can practice this with gloves only or full equipment.

### Execution

While facing the players, the coach will point to the right or the left. The catchers will immediately take a short, controlled step in that direction with the outside foot (staying down in their stance), then move back to the middle position.

Once they have the movements down, slowly lob a baseball the left or right of the catcher, instead of pointing. Rotate through each of the players, throwing each of the ball one at a time while the other players mimic the movement (but do not receive a ball).

### Coaching Tips

- The head should stay level as the catcher moves side to side
- Place slightly more weight on the glove side foot, which will allow the catcher to shift to the non-glove (riskier) side more quickly



## Catchers - Grip Drill

### Setup

The catchers are in their stance, facing the coach with around 4-5 feet of space between them. You can practice this with gloves only or full equipment.

### Execution

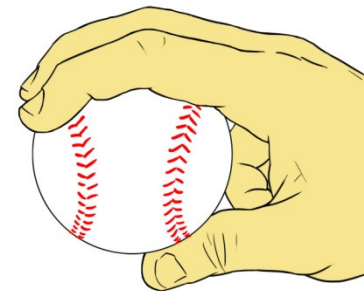
The coach will lob the ball to the right or left side of one of the catchers. The catcher will step to correct side make the catch. Then, in one fluid motion, the catcher will rise, and step forward with the glove side foot, while reaching into the glove to grip the ball. Cock back the arm to throw, then freeze.

Once the players get the hang of it, they can play catch back and forth, focusing each time on getting a firm grip before separating the glove hand and throwing hand, then cocking back to throw.

### Coaching Tips

- Practice using a four-seam grip by taking the middle and index fingers of your throwing hand, and placing them perpendicular to the horseshoe of the seams on the baseball. This allows you to use the seams to pull down and get maximum backward rotation, helping the ball fly straight and true.
- Always establish the grip before pulling the ball out of the glove. Don't allow your players to fiddle with the grip as they cock back to throw, as this is a major cause of bobbled balls and costly errors.
- Over time, players will develop a muscle memory and "feel" for the ball which will allow them to establish the proper four-seam grip in just a split second

FOUR SEAM GRIP



## Catchers - Ball in the Dirt Drill

### Setup

The catchers are in their stance, facing the coach with around 4-5 feet of space between them. You can practice this with gloves only or full equipment.

### Execution

From about 5-10 feet away, the coach will toss the ball softly into the dirt, directly in front of the catcher. With the ball in mid-air, the catcher will quickly lower himself to block it by first dropping the butt down, then softly lowering the knees to the ground

### Coaching Tips

Catchers must be in a stance that allows their first move to be down, rather than up when they begin to execute the block. The easiest way to accomplish this is to insure that their feet are far enough apart so their heel are in contact with the ground, toes are pointed up the baselines and their thighs are parallel to the ground.

If they are in a deep crouch then their hips will have to go up before they can begin to move towards the ground. A deep crouch will only add to the amount of time it takes to block a ball by making the athlete travel upward before they are able to drive to the ground.

*(continued on next page)*



## Catchers - Ball in the Dirt Drill

Work on the following cues when teaching catchers to block balls in the dirt.

- Replace your feet with your knees in one, fluid motion: Drive your knees into the ground to where your feet were (about shoulder-width apart, with your upper body centered between them).
- Clear your feet: So that you can get to your knees easier, clear away your feet by sliding them out to the side of your body. Keep your shins on the ground and your toes pointed back and away from you to be in the best position to block the ball.
- Drop your mitt: As you see the ball approaching the dirt, drop your mitt between your legs. The web of your mitt should be in contact with the ground, and the palm of your glove should be squared towards the pitch. Your fingers will be below the ball.
- Tuck your arms: As you drop your glove, keep your throwing hand poised above the mitt or tight to your throwing-side. Your glove-side arm should be tight to your body, making a larger blocking area.
- Angle forward: Your upper body should be straightened and angled forward, over the ball. By doing this, you can knock down the ball and deflect it straight into the ground, rather than away from you.
- Keep your eyes down: Tuck your chin and always watch the ball.

Try mixing it up by throwing dirt balls to the left, right and middle of the catcher. As the catcher gets the technique down, put on full equipment and begin throwing dirt balls from a longer range and with more velocity

## Catchers - Bunt Fielding Drill

### Setup

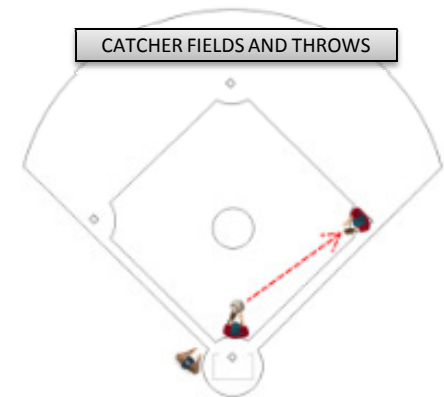
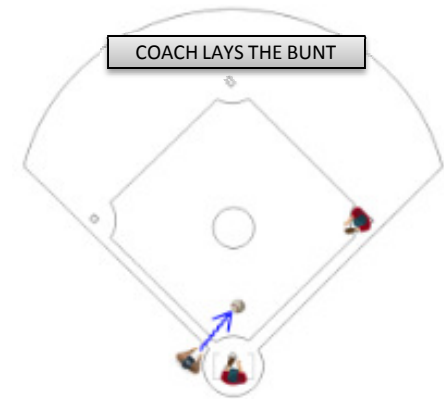
Line up the catchers single file behind home plate, with the first player in line in his stance. The second player (or a coach) stands directly behind the first player, holding a ball.

### Execution

To begin the drill, the player with the ball simulates a bunt by tossing the ball softly past the first player and into the infield. The catcher will immediately spring from his stance, sprint to the ball under control, field it cleanly and throw it to first base.

### Coaching Tips

- Make sure to pick the ball up with both hands, while simultaneously lining up the feet to throw to first base.





## Infielders - Barehand Catch Drill

### Setup

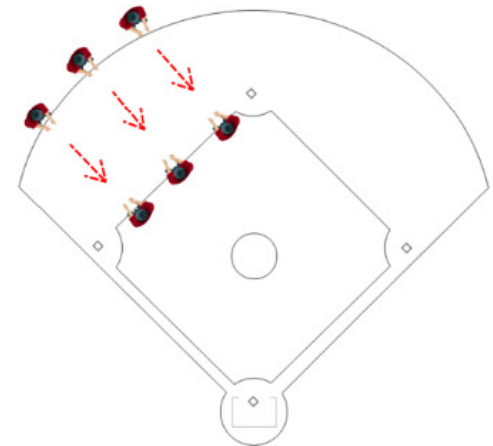
Group your infielders into pairs and set them up, facing each other, around 10-15 feet apart. Both players are in an athletic stance. One player in each pair has the ball. You do not need gloves for this drill.

### Execution

Each pair will toss the ball back and forth, catching it barehanded using the hand the glove is normally on. The object is to catch the ball without actually closing the fingers around it. Instead, practice cradling the ball and cushion its impact with the hand and fingers, but avoid the urge to squeeze the fingers to secure it.

### Coaching Tips

- Improve your hand-eye coordination by focusing on a specific seam of the ball, and following it all the way from the thrower's hand into your hand
- After 5 consecutive catches each player should take a step back. Continue moving back until a ball is missed, then take one step forward and begin the count again.



## Infielders - Back of the Glove Drill

### Setup

Group your infielders into pairs and set them up, facing each other, around 10-15 feet apart. Both players are wearing their gloves, and standing in an athletic ready stance. One player in each pair has the ball.

### Execution

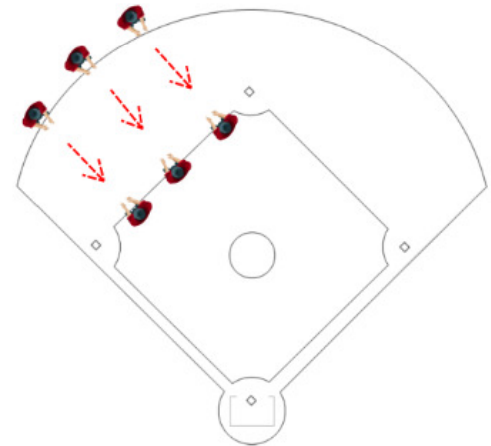
Each pair will toss the ball back and forth, catching it by trapping the ball between the back of the glove and the throwing hand. Use the back of the glove to cushion the impact, while securing the ball with the throwing hand at the same time.

### Coaching Tips

- Try to trap the ball out in front of the body, which will allow you space to bring the hands toward the midsection to cushion the ball's impact
- After 5 consecutive catches each player should take a step back. Continue moving back until a ball is missed, then take one step forward and begin the count again.



CATCH BALL ON BACK OF GLOVE



## Infielders - Open Pocket Drill

### Setup

Group your infielders into pairs and set them up, facing each other, around 10-15 feet apart. Both players are wearing their gloves, and standing in an athletic stance. One player in each pair has the ball.

### Execution

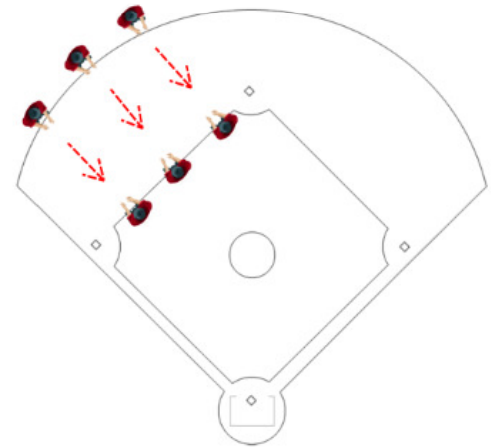
Each pair will toss the ball back and forth, catching it in the glove while keeping the pocket open.

### Coaching Tips

- Try to catch the ball out in front of the body with the palm up, then pull the glove back toward the midsection to cushion the impact and help the ball stay in place
- This is a useful drill for second basemen and shortstops because it allows them to catch the ball with an open pocket, then quickly pull it out to complete a double play throw



GLOVE STAYS OPEN ON CATCH



## Infielders - Glove Drill

### Setup

Group your infielders into pairs and set them up, facing each other, around 10-15 feet apart. Both players are wearing their gloves, and standing in an athletic stance. One player in each pair has the ball.

### Execution

On the coach's signal, the player without the ball will drop down into the ready position, while his partner slowly rolls the ball along the ground in his direction.

The fielder will then roll the ball back to his partner. Throw 10 balls to the middle, 10 to the right and 10 to the left.

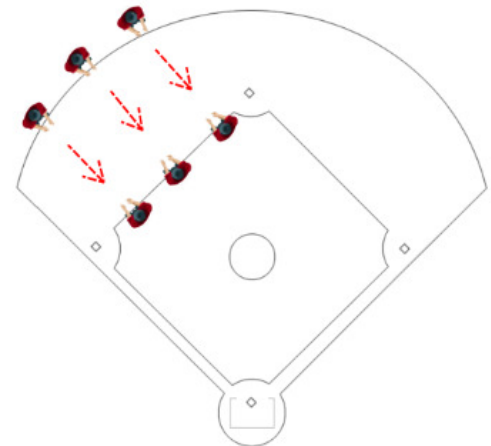
Then, have the thrower throw randomly to different directions, maintaining the slow speed and keeping the ball rolling along the ground like a bowling ball.

### Coaching Tips

- In the ready position, the fielder's feet should be slightly wider than shoulder-width apart, with the knees bent and the weight over the balls of the feet. His head should be facing his partner with his eyes on the ball. The hands should hang low between the legs, with the glove open wide. From this ready position, the player can get a good jump on the ball and move quickly in the direction it is hit.
- To field the ball off the ground, the fielder's knees should be bent and the buttocks lowered to knee level. His back should be almost parallel to the ground, and both arms should be outstretched in front of the body.
- The back of the fielder's glove should be on the ground with the throwing hand either above it or alongside it. The fielder's eyes should be focused on the ball.
- When the ball arrives, the player should watch it into the glove and then trap it with the throwing hand. The player then cushions the ball toward his body with "soft" hands, bringing the hands to the belt area (this is called funneling the ball) as he moves into throwing position.



GLOVE FLAT ON THE GROUND



## Infielders - Short Hop Drill

### Setup

Group your infielders into pairs and set them up, facing each other, around 10-15 feet apart. Both players are wearing their gloves, and standing in an athletic ready position. One player in each pair has the ball.

### Execution

On the coach's signal, the players without the ball will drop down into ready position as described above. The player with the ball will throw a soft "short-hop" to his partner, aiming to bounce the ball around 2 feet in front of the fielder's toes.

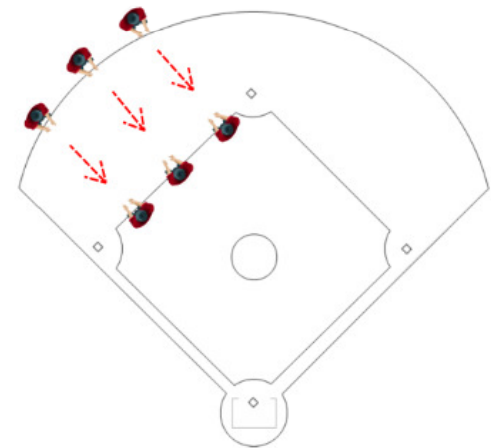
The player will field the short hop, secure the ball, then throw a short hop back to his partner.

### Coaching Tips

- When fielding the short hop, the glove position is extremely important. The glove should be extended out directly in front of the body, reaching out toward the ball with the palm up.
- The fielder should attempt to catch the ball immediately after it hits the ground, which will reduce the unpredictability of a bad hop.
- When the ball arrives, the player should watch it into the glove and then trap it with the throwing hand. The player then cushions the ball toward his body with "soft" hands, bringing the hands to the belt area (this is called funneling the ball) as he moves into throwing position.
- Make sure the glove is low enough to the ground, to avoid the ball passing underneath it and through the fielder's legs



FIELD THE SHORT HOP DIRECTLY  
OFF THE GROUND



# Outfielders- Ground Ball Drill Progression

## Setup

The outfielders will line up single file in the outfield facing home plate. A coach stands at home plate with a fungo bat and balls. An additional coach or players stands to the side of home plate to receive throws from the fielders.

## Execution

The coach will hit a ground ball to the first player in the outfielders line. The outfielder will charge hard at the ball, breakdown, field the ball using the Knee Method, Semi-Knee Method or Pro Method, then make an accurate throw back to home plate. The coach will then hit a ground ball to the next player, as the first player rotates to the back of the line.

## Coaching Tips

- The **Knee Method** is typically taught to young players as the safest and most reliable way to field a ground ball in the outfield. You can also use this technique when there are no runners on base, when the ground is very bumpy, or when there is no chance of throwing a runner out.
- The outfielder should charge the ball hard for the first 4 or 5 steps, then decrease his speed, get under control, and break down to field the ball.
- To field the ball, drop to the throwing side knee (the right knee for right handed players) and put the back of the glove flat on the ground between the legs. Watch the ball into the glove, trap it with the throwing hand, then rise up and step into the throw.
- The outfielder should center his body in front of the ball, so he can block it with his torso if it takes a bad hop.
- The **Semi-Knee Method** is a faster, but slightly riskier way to field a outfield grounder. The technique is the same as the Knee Method, except the outfielder will only drop the throwing-side knee halfway to the ground while fielding the ball. This will allow him to move into his throwing motion more quickly, and have a better chance at throwing out a runner.
- The **Pro Method** (or Scoop Method) is the riskiest way to field an outfield grounder and should be used only in situations where the game will be lost if the fielder doesn't get the ball in quickly. This technique is for a do-or-die situation in which the tying or winning run is attempting to score and the outfielder must make a quick throw to the infield. The outfielder runs at the ball and scoops it up while on the move, placing the glove to the outside of the glove-side leg (instead of between the legs). If the ball is missed, it can run all the way to the fence, so use this technique with caution!





## Outfielders - Fly Ball Footwork Drill

### Setup

The outfielders will line up single file in the outfield facing home plate. A coach stands at home plate with a fungo bat and balls. An additional coach or players stands to the side of home plate to receive throws from the fielders.

### Execution

The coach will hit a soft fly ball to the first player in the outfielders line. The player will approach the fly ball under control then, using the proper footwork, catch the ball and immediately move into this throwing motion, delivering the ball back to home plate.

### Coaching Tips

The proper footwork requires three steps in total to catch, grip, and throw the ball.

**Step 1: CATCH:** Catch the ball with the glove side foot forward

**Step 2: GRIP:** While you gather the ball into your throwing hand, take a second step with the throwing side foot.

**Step 3: THROW:** As you go into your throwing motion, take a final step with the glove side foot and release the ball with your momentum going forward.

- For a right-handed fielder, the step sequence would go left-right-left
- Keep the feet moving with short choppy steps as the ball is in the air, which will make it easier to step with the correct foot as you catch.



# Outfield Agility Drill

## Setup

Place your fielders in the outfield with around 8-10 feet of space between them, facing the coach.

## Execution

The coach will go through a series of signals one a time, which the players will respond to with a specific movement.

- Point right: crossover step with the left foot, then sprint to the right for 3 steps
- Point left: crossover step with the right foot, then sprint to the left for 3 steps
- Point back right: drop step with the right foot, then sprint back and to the right for 3 steps
- Point back left: drop step with the left foot, then sprint back and to the left for 3 steps
- Point to the ground: drop straight down into a pushup position, then pop back up

## Coaching Tips

- Make sure your players aren't taking small "false steps" before making the crossover or drop step (this is common, especially with younger kids).
- To make the drill more physically challenging, have the players "chop" their feet up and down continuously between each signal
- The players eyes should remain on the coach at all times
- For younger kids, try playing this game as a variation of "Simon Says." If you precede your instruction with "Coach Says" - then the players should complete the movement. If you do not say "Coach Says" - the players should stand still in place or "chop" their feet up and down. This will improve their focus and concentration.





## Outfielders - Isolated Feet Throwing Drill

### Setup

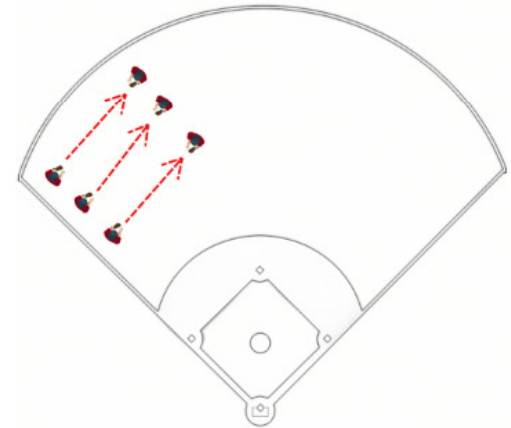
Group your outfielders into pairs and set them up, facing each other, around 60 feet apart. Both players are wearing their gloves, and standing in an athletic ready position. The feet should be slightly wider than shoulder width apart with the toes pointed toward your partner. One player in each pair has the ball.

### Execution

In this throwing drill, the players will play catch while keeping their feet fixed in an isolated position. Removing the stride will help your fielders generate more power through their hips and torso, gain more arm extension on the release and follow through, and improve their throwing mechanics.

### Coaching Tips

- The thrower should try to "feel" the ball releasing from his throwing hand, just as it passes below the glove side eye. (i.e. the left eye for a right handed player)
- Aim to hit your partner high in the chest with each throw



## Outfielders - One Hop Throwing Drill

### Setup

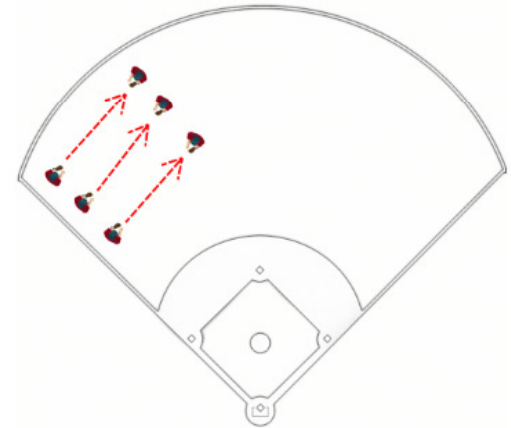
Group your outfielders into pairs and set them up, facing each other, around 60 feet apart. Both players are wearing their gloves, and standing in an athletic ready position. The feet should be slightly wider than shoulder width apart with the toes pointed toward your partner. One player in each pair has the ball.

### Execution

Each pair will play catch, using one-hop throws instead of regular throws. Try to aim the one-hopper around one third of the distance between thrower and catcher. After a few successful one-hoppers, have the pairs alternate between one-hoppers and regular throws. The goal of this drill is not only to help your fielders practice fielding one-hop hits in the outfield, but also to improve your fielders throwing mechanics by helping them get "on top of the ball" through the release and follow through.

### Coaching Tips

- Outfielders should always use a four-seam fastball grip when throwing the ball. The backspin generated will help the ball fly straight and true, and will also help one-hopped throws bounce harder off the ground and stay on target
- Get on top of the ball on the release to get a better one-hop angle



## Pitchers - Pivot Foot Balance Drill

### Setup

Line the pitchers up with about 4-6 feet between them, facing the coach. Each pitcher has a glove and ball.

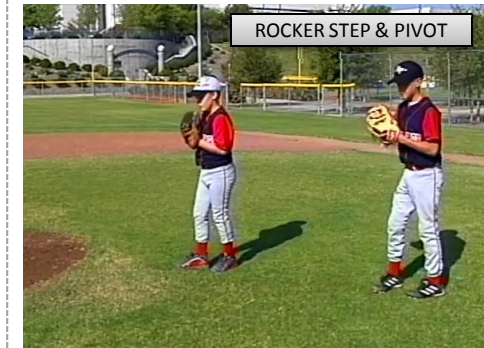
### Execution

The drill begins with the pitcher in his stance. On the coach's command, the pitcher will go into the Pivot stage of his delivery, taking a rocker step with the stride foot, and squaring off the pivot foot so it's parallel to the rubber.

Following the rocker step, the pitcher will bring his stride leg up in a controlled motion, transferring his weight from the stride leg to the pivot leg. The pitcher will then hold this position for a count of five, then lower the stride foot back down.

### Coaching Tips

- The pitcher's weight should remain on the inside part of the pivot foot during the balance hold.
- Make sure the pivot foot stays still and planted. Don't allow it to shuffle around or move
- The stride foot toe should be loose and hanging down, slightly below the height of the stride foot heel
- The height of the stride knee is up to the pitcher. Experiment with different heights and see what feels most comfortable



HOLD BALANCE ON THE PIVOT FOOT

## Pitchers - Stride Foot Balance Drill

### Setup

Line the pitchers up with about 4-6 feet between them, facing the coach. Each pitcher has a glove and ball.

### Execution

The drill begins with the pitcher in his stance. On the coach's command, the pitcher will go into the Pivot stage of his delivery, taking a rocker step with the stride foot, and squaring off the pivot foot so it's parallel to the rubber.

Following the rocker step, the pitcher will bring his stride leg up in a controlled motion, transferring his weight from the stride leg to the pivot leg. The pitcher will hold this position briefly, then separate his hands and stride toward home plate. Upon foot strike of the stride leg, the arms and body should form a "T" position, the glove hand forward and the throwing hand cocked back.

Simulate the release and follow through, bringing the pivot foot up off the ground and balancing on the stride foot only. Hold that position for a count of five.



HOLD BALANCE ON THE STRIDE FOOT

## Pitchers - Pivot Foot Hop Drill

### Setup

Line the pitchers up with about 4-6 feet between them, facing the coach. Each pitcher has a glove and ball.

### Execution

The drill begins with the pitcher in his stance. On the coach's command, the pitcher will go into the Pivot stage of his delivery, taking a rocker step with the stride foot, and squaring off the pivot foot so it's parallel to the rubber.

Following the rocker step, the pitcher will bring his stride leg up in a controlled motion, transferring his weight from the stride leg to the pivot leg. He will then hop three times on the pivot foot only. After the three hops, he will freeze in the balance position, with the stride leg still up.

### Coaching Tips

Each hop should be around 4-6 inches in length. Keep the weight on the inside of the pivot foot throughout for better balance.



HOP ON THE PIVOT FOOT

## Pitchers - Stride Foot Hop Drill

### Setup

Line the pitchers up with about 4-6 feet between them, facing the coach. Each pitcher has a glove and ball.

### Execution

The drill begins with the pitcher in his stance. On the coach's command, the pitcher will go into the Pivot stage of his delivery, taking a rocker step with the stride foot, and squaring off the pivot foot so it's parallel to the rubber.

Following the rocker step, the pitcher will bring his stride leg up in a controlled motion, transferring his weight from the stride leg to the pivot leg. The pitcher will hold this position briefly, then separate his hands and stride toward home plate. Upon foot strike of the stride leg, the arms and body should form a "T" position, the glove hand forward and the throwing hand cocked back.

Simulate the release and follow through, bringing the pivot foot up off the ground and balancing on the stride foot only, then hop three times in a row. Finally, hold that position for a count of five.

### Coaching Tips

Once your pitchers get the hang of this, combine the Pivot Foot Hop and Stride Foot Hop together into one drill. Go through the stance and pivot, raise the stride leg, then hop three times on the pivot foot. Continue into the stride, separation, release and follow through, then hop three more times on the stride foot.



HOP ON THE STRIDE FOOT

## Pitchers - Eyes Closed Balance Drills

### Setup

Line the pitchers up with about 4-6 feet between them, facing the coach. Each pitcher has a glove and ball.

### Execution

This drill gives you a more challenging way to practice all the above balance drills once your pitchers master the basics. Complete each of the following drills with the eyes closed the entire time:

1. Pivot Foot Balance Drill
2. Stride Foot Balance Drill
3. Pivot Foot Hop Balance Drill
4. Stride Foot Hop Balance Drill

### Coaching Tips

- To increase the difficulty of these balance drills even more, have the player balance on an uneven surface, like a folded towel, blanket, or pad

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