

Softball/Baseball practice

Stretching and calisthenics

(10 minutes)

Make sure all the kids are loosened up by doing some jumping jacks, stretching, and light running. Each practice a different player should be chosen to lead exercises.

Fielding and throwing

(20 minutes)

Break team into groups of six with two lines of three players that are 40 feet apart for ages 6-7, 50 feet apart for ages 8-9, 60 feet apart for ages 10-11, and 75 feet apart for ages 12 and above. Each player throws a grounder to the other line. Other options are to have a player throw a grounder to the other line, receive a line drive, throw back, and then make a line drive throw before going to the end of the line. With the odd-numbered groups, all players get to field ground balls. To include more fitness, do the grounder throw followed by a line drive throw and have the player run to the opposite end of the line.

Batting

(15 minutes)

Some options are (1) Have all the kids on the team spread out at least 10 feet from each other with a bat and take one swing every five seconds for three minutes as a prelude to the soft toss. (2) Do the soft toss with three or four groups going at once. Use golf size wiffle balls that are tossed underhand. It is an ideal method to build sound batting fundamentals. (3) Do the soft toss with real baseballs. (4) A couple times during the season, do the soft toss where all right-handed batters must bat left-handed and vice versa. (5) Color half a ball with a permanent marker and when the batter swings to hit the ball they're also observing the color of the half that contacted the bat. If the batter does not follow the ball to the bat, he/she will not be able to determine the color that was hit.

Bunting

(5 minutes)

Play a game where the object is to bunt the ball at targets, which could be rugs, pieces of cardboard, cones, etc.

Base running

(10 minutes)

Each group take a lead while the pitcher goes through a stretch and then pretends (no ball) that he is throwing to a base or pitching toward home; each group should have a sensible extensive lead. If the ball is thrown to the base, everyone quickly runs back to the place in line with the base; if the ball is "pitched," everyone races to the next base. It is also a good idea to incorporate some sliding into the practice. For beginners, have them take a couple of steps and go down gently to a slide position. After the basic movement is understood and the players can do a reasonable slide, it's time to increase the distance and pick up the speed.

Throwing

