

Base Running

DRILL #1 – LEARN THE BASES

DRILL #2 – BASE RELAY

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DRILL #23 – BASERUNNING RELAY

DRILL #1 – LEARN THE BASES

Purpose:

When players first start playing, it is always a good idea to educate them about the different bases that are used. This drill will help ensure your young players don't run to a base other than the one they are supposed to.

Setup:

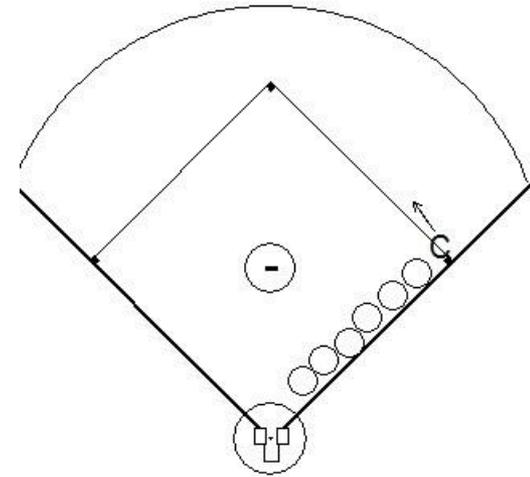
All you need for this drill is the attention of the players you are coaching.

Execution:

1. Have the players follow you from base to base, starting with first base, and then in order (second, third, home). Explain to the youngsters what happens after you hit the ball, and then where you go after first base, where to go after second, etc.

Coaching Tips:

- It would be a good idea to go through this drill a couple of times per practice, and then at least once during midseason practices and beyond. This will imbed that information in the players and hopefully prevent any embarrassing moments of running to the wrong base.



Players follow the coach around the bases.

DRILL #2 – BASE RELAY

Purpose:

This is a competition between the players on the team to see who can run the bases in the proper order.

Setup:

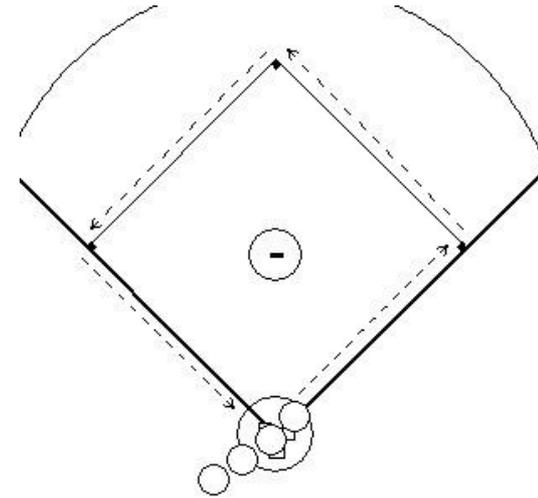
All of the bases should be securely fastened and ready for baserunners. Divide your squad into two teams of relatively equal speed.

Execution:

1. Have all of the players of one team line up at home plate. Then when the coach says go (and clicks a stopwatch), the first person has to run all of the bases in the proper order and then tag the next person in their line. Once all of the players have crossed home plate, you note the time on the stopwatch. Then the next team goes. The fastest team gets a reward.

Coaching Tips:

- Encourage the players as they run and make sure they are keeping their heads up and looking ahead of them instead of down at their feet.



Players learn to run the bases in the proper order as they compete against their teammates in this baserunning drill.

DRILL #3 – SLIDE TO THE BAG DRILL

Purpose:

Players learn to slide into the bag to beat a tag out play.

Setup:

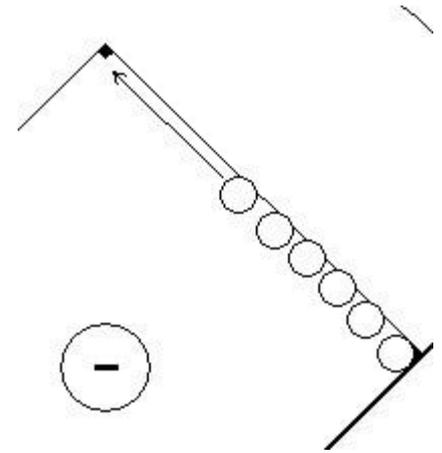
You can set up a couple stations for this drill, each with a line of players and a bag that they are going to slide into.

Execution:

1. Before running this drill, instruct players on proper sliding technique, which is: the player should create a triangle with the legs, and then slide using the leg underneath, with the top foot free to touch the bag.
2. Teach players not to go directly on their bottom (it will hurt a bit), but to focus on sliding in with the backside of their thigh.
3. In this drill players take turns running and sliding into the bag.

Coaching Tips:

- Once players can master the sliding technique, you can take it one step further and show them what situations they should slide in.
- Later on, you can add players trying to tag the runner out if you like.
- If you have players that are first learning this drill, you might want to try it out in the outfield to work on technique, before you move to the infield.



Players work on proper sliding technique.

DRILL #4 – HEAD FIRST SLIDE

Purpose:

Players learn to slide head first into the bag.

Setup:

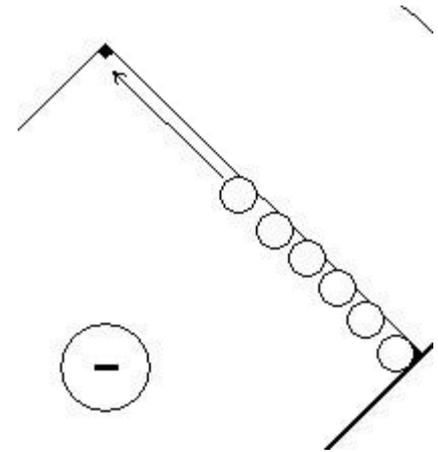
You can set up a couple stations for this drill, each with a line of players and a bag that they are going to slide into.

Execution:

1. You can run it the same as DRILL #1, except of course, the players will be going head first to the bag, instead of foot first.
2. There is one major advantage to sliding head first, and that is reaching for the back corner of the bag. This should be one of the major elements taught to the player. This move will allow the baserunner to try and avoid the tag from the defender, who will normally guard the front of the bag.
3. Players should also be taught to slide properly: ease into the slide (don't jump up and land on the chest, this will knock the wind out of them), make the slide an extension of their running to the bag, not a completely separate motion and they should begin a head first slide about 2 strides away from the bag (6 to 8 feet).

Coaching Tips:

- Players may have a hard time nailing down the proper technique for sliding, and this can cause unnecessary pain to the ankle, knee and the behind, so learning good technique on the grass is probably the best way to go to start. Once a player becomes more confident with their slide, then you can move to the shale infield.



Set up like the previous drill only players now slide head first into the bag instead of feet first.

DRILL #5 – CRACK THE BAT

Purpose:

Players learn to get the right lead off and then take off to the next base when the ball is hit.

Setup:

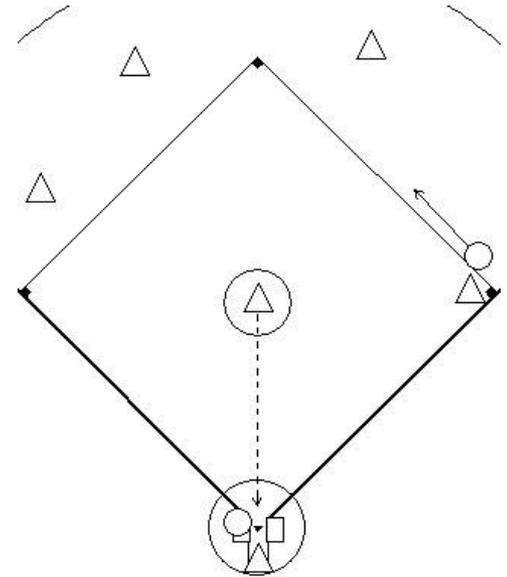
A runner on first base, a pitcher, batter and a full infield.

Execution:

1. The runner should lead off, and be ready to spring into action when the ball is hit.
2. The runner will get one point for leaving right at the crack of the bat, zero points for leaving early and the hitter making contact, minus one point if they are caught leaving too late after the ball is struck, and minus two points if they leave too early and the batter misses the ball, and they are left running to second, which should be an easy out for the defense.

Coaching Tips:

- Although not stealing, the player on first wants to get a good jump, without it seeming like a hit and run. Look for explosiveness, anticipation and good reaction time from the baserunner.



The runner looks to get a good jump and be off and running with the crack of the bat in this drill.

DRILL #6 – WATCH THE BASE COACHES

Purpose:

Develops good communication between base coaches and players, which in turn will reduce the number of outs that occur because of bad baserunning.

Setup:

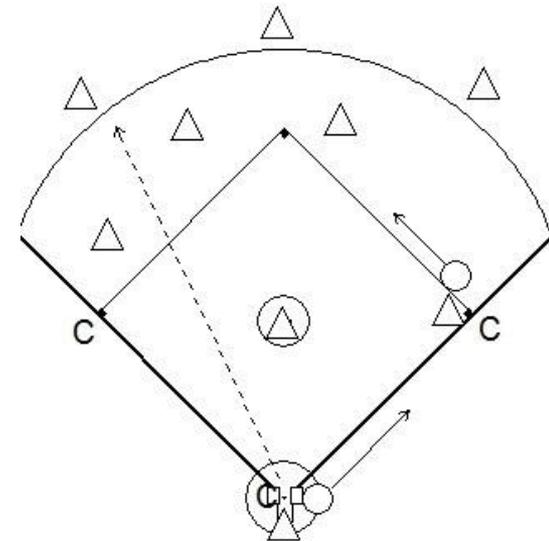
A full infield and outfield, a couple of runners, and a first and third base coach.

Execution:

1. Have the coach hit the ball to certain areas of the field and the players need to make the plays.
2. Once runners reach base, the coaches need to instruct them on what to do. For example, if the coach hits a shallow fly ball to right field, he will instruct the runner to take a slight lead and just as the ball is caught, tag up at first and wait to see if they should run.
3. The coach will go through many different scenarios in this drill to make sure that the runners and the base coaches are on the same page.

Coaching Tips:

- Make sure players are watching the base coaches and following their instructions.



Baserunners must pick up their base coaches in order to know whether to advance or not in this communication-building drill.

DRILL #7 – SQUEEZE PLAY

Purpose:

Players learn to execute the squeeze play – a valuable play to be able to execute, especially when a team expects you to try to score a run on a sacrifice fly ball.

Setup:

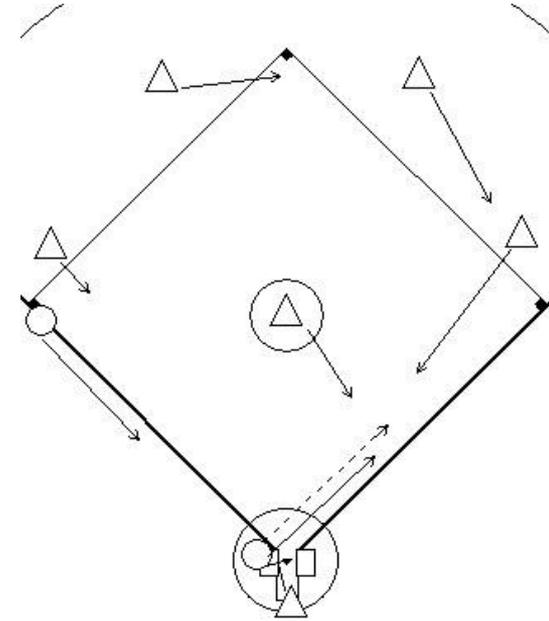
Full infield including pitcher and catcher, batter and a runner on third.

Execution:

1. The bunter tries to put the ball into play at least 10 to 12 feet from the catcher.
2. By the time anyone reacts, the player at third base should be well on his way home.

Coaching Tips:

- The runner on third has to get a good jump on the pitcher as the batter squares around to bunt the ball.
- The bunt is probably the most important thing in this drill, because in order for the runner not to easily get tagged out at home, the batter must make contact with the ball and get it into play.



Batter attempts to bunt the runner home from third.

DRILL #9 – DOUBLE STEAL

Purpose:

Runners on two different bases both try to advance.

Setup:

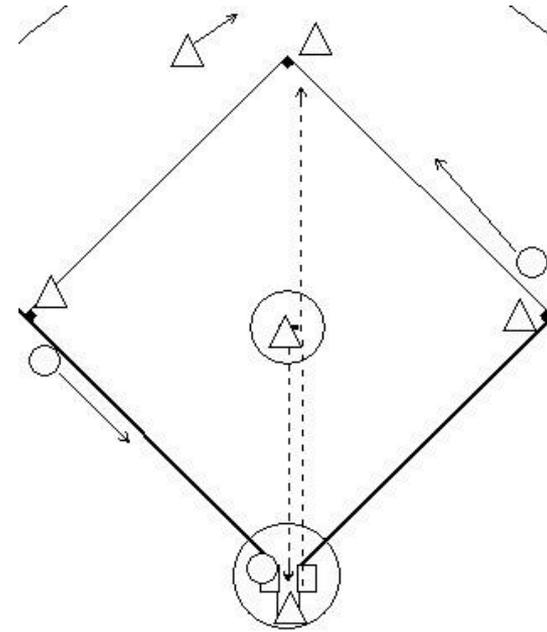
A full infield, a batter, a runner on first, and a runner on second or third.

Execution:

1. The pitcher will go through his normal delivery and the batter will just swing at the ball and not hit it.
2. The runners will attempt to steal two bases.
3. From first and third, the runner on first will advance to second in hopes the throw goes there and the third base runner can advance home.
4. From first and second, the hope is that both runners can advance at the same time.
5. The offense competes against the defense in this one – if the defense gets the lead runner, it's two points, the second runner, one point.
6. If the offense executes the double steal, they get two points.

Coaching Tips:

- The coach can alter the timing of the double steal, having both players leave at the same time or staggering them.



Offense executes a double steal with runners on first and third.

DRILL #10 – FEET FIRST, HEAD FIRST

Purpose:

Reinforces good sliding technique.

Setup:

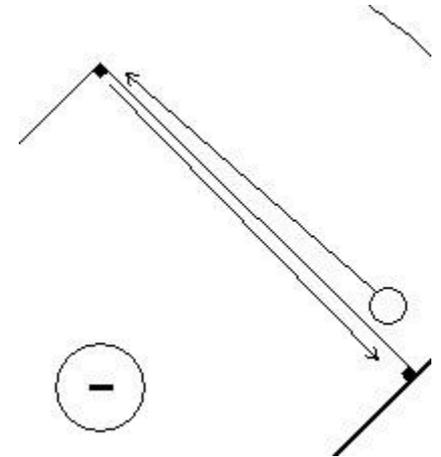
You can either set this drill up in the infield with the regular bags, or, if you just want to work on technique with this drill, then you can set up any number of bases in the outfield. Set up a station that has two bases, and divide the players among the stations.

Execution:

1. Each player in the station will do the drill, and they will first run to the base ahead of them and slide into it feet first with the proper technique (lead leg extended and trailing leg folded at a right angle at the lead leg knee).
2. Then, they will get up and they will turn around and sprint to the base prior and they will execute a head first slide (lead arm reaching for the outside corner of the base).

Coaching Tips:

- You can run this drill in the infield as the player goes around the bases. To make it slightly more complex, you can have the catcher trying to throw the player out at each base.



Above, runner slides feet first into second and then gets up and returns to first where he slides head first back into the bag.

DRILL #11 – DIRT BALL

Purpose:

This drill teaches players to react to a bad pitch when they are on base.

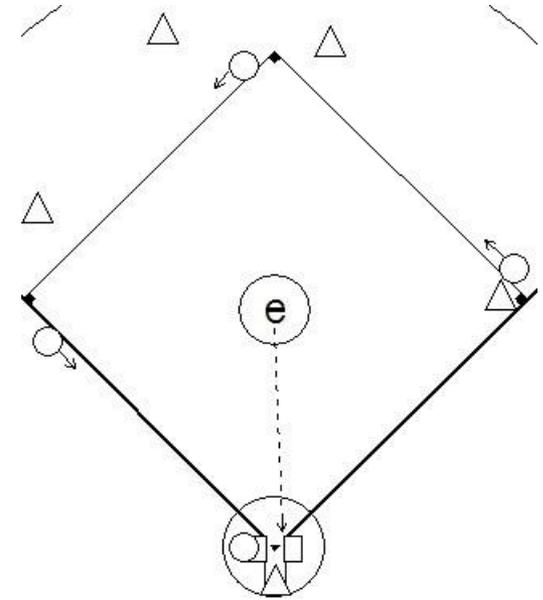
Setup:

Put runners on all three bases. The coach will be on the pitching mound.

Execution:

1. Each base runner reacts differently when the pitcher throws the ball to home plate. The runners need to read the way the ball is approaching the plate in order to get the best jump on a possible passed ball.
2. At first base, the runner should go if the ball is in the dirt.
3. On second base, the runner needs to take a good lead, and then decide if they can make it to third. If the ball gets past the catcher, then they should be on their way.
4. On third, the only way the runner should go is if the ball gets past the catcher.

Coaching Tips: When the ball is pitched in the dirt, the entire team should shout out “DIRT”.



Baserunners learn when to advance on balls in the dirt.

DRILL #12 – TENNIS BALL DROP

Purpose:

Baserunner works on reaction time and getting a good jump when stealing.

Setup:

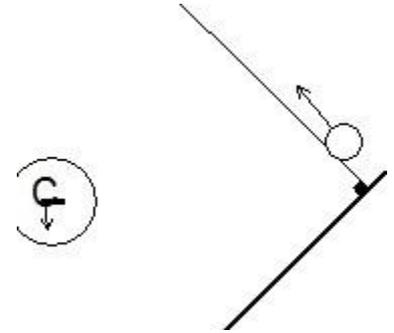
You need a runner at first and a player or coach on the pitcher's mound with a tennis ball.

Execution:

1. Baserunner takes his lead.
2. Player or coach on mound gets set and then drops the tennis ball.
3. Upon seeing the drop of the ball, the baserunner immediately breaks for second.
4. Baserunner can go 10 feet, halfway or all the way to second depending on what the coach wants in this drill.

Coaching Tips:

- Player or coach on the mound should vary their release time so that the baserunner can't "time the pitch."



Baserunner works on getting a good jump for a steal attempt.

DRILL #15 – RUNNERS AT THE CORNERS

Purpose:

This drill allows your players to work on a multitude of baserunning skills, including: running through first base and coming to a controlled stop; leading off from first and going to third on a hit; and tagging up at third and advancing home.

Setup:

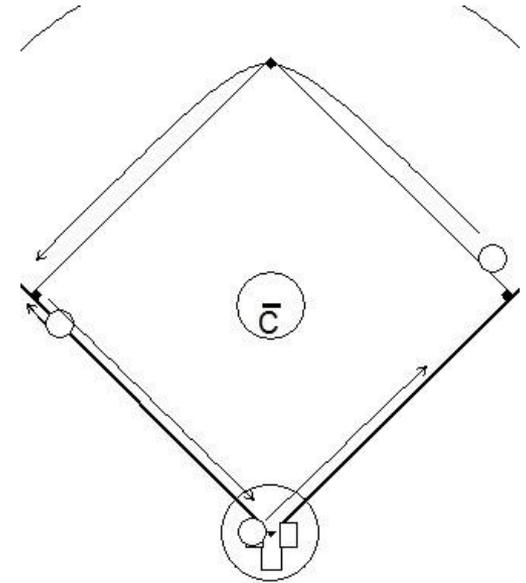
Put small groups of players at home, first and third. A coach or player stands on the mound.

Execution:

1. Coach or player on the mound comes set.
2. Players at first and third take their leads. Player at home steps into batter's box.
3. Coach or player on mound simulates a throw to the plate.
4. Runner at first takes off and goes to third using proper angles.
5. Runner at third, tags up and goes home.
6. Runner at home, runs to first, making the turn and proceeding back to the bag.
7. Players then go to the back of the lines at their new location.

Coaching Tips:

- Make sure players are getting good leads on first and third.
- Make sure player going first to third takes a good turn at second, not going out too wide. You can set up a cone if necessary to show runners where to go.



Players practice leads, tag ups and turns in this drill.

DRILL #16 – LEAD OFF DRILL

Purpose:

Players practice their lead offs.

Setup:

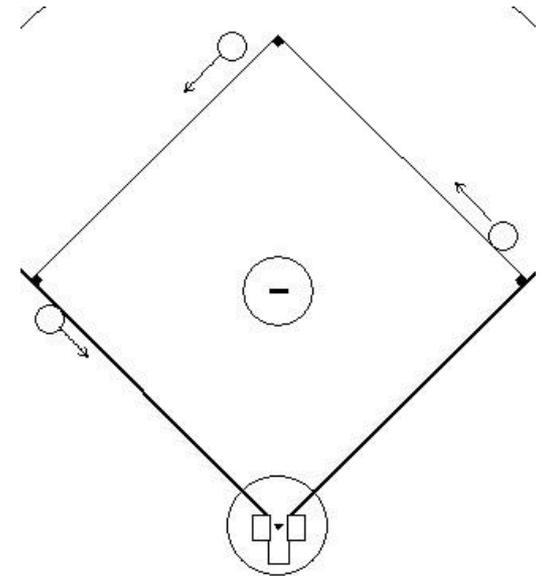
Put small groups of players at first, second and third. A coach or player stands on the mound.

Execution:

1. Coach or player on the mound comes set.
2. Players at each base take their leads.
3. Coach or player on mound either simulates a throw to the plate or actually makes the pitch.
4. Player runs to next base as if it were a hit or passed ball.
5. Drill proceeds with runner going home, going to the end of the line at first and other runners getting in line at the base they run to.

Coaching Tips:

- Make sure players are taking leads that are not too short or too long, that they are remaining balanced and that they are squaring up to the plate – except at third where they should square up to the pitcher. Also, watch their timing and make sure they are leaving when they should be.



Players practice taking a good lead.

DRILL #17 – RACE AROUND THE BASES

Purpose:

Players learn to cut tight corners when rounding bases and make it to the next base as fast as possible.

Setup:

You need a full infield. The first runner stands at home plate.

Execution:

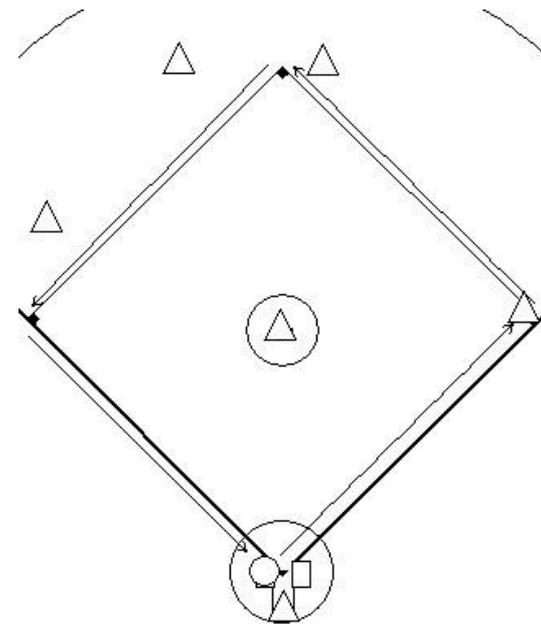
1. Player at home tosses the ball to himself and hits it.
2. He then runs around the bases.
3. The infielders field the ball and try to throw it around the horn to home before the runner gets there.

Coaching Tips:

- If you have older players, make them throw the ball to first each time (that means, field it, go to first, second, go to first, third, go to first, home) to make the race more competitive.

DRILL #18 – STAR WITH TWO

Purpose:



Players try to beat the ball back to home plate by running fast and taking a tight path around the bases.

Players learn to run the bases properly with good speed and following a tight path so no time is wasted covering extra ground.

Setup:

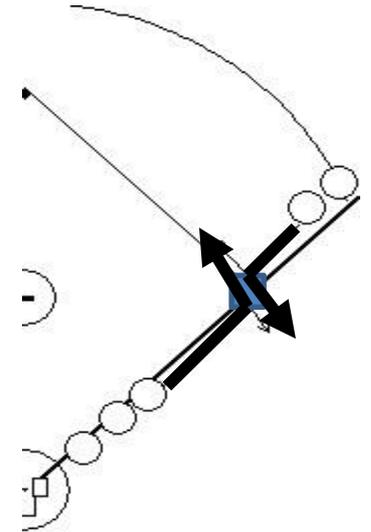
You will divide your team into two groups and they will be on opposite sides of the first base bag. They should be about 40 feet from the bag. The base should be secured.

Execution:

1. From both sides of the base, the runners run toward the base and then turn as though they were going to second base.
2. The key to this drill is for the players to take the best path to second base, and hit the bag with the proper foot.

Coaching Tips:

- The first couple of times you do this drill, it should be at a jog, so there are no injuries if players collide. As the players get more accustomed to the drill, they can increase the speed in which they round the bases.
- If you want to get a little more daring, you can have four lines going to each of the inside corners. Make sure you start at a jog to begin, otherwise you will most certainly have collisions.



In this drill, players learn to take a better angle to the next base, and they develop proper technique for running the bases quicker and more effectively.

DRILL #19 – TAG UP

Purpose: Players often leave a bag too early or they don't even stay on the bag at all. This drill teaches players how to properly tag up on fly balls.

Setup:

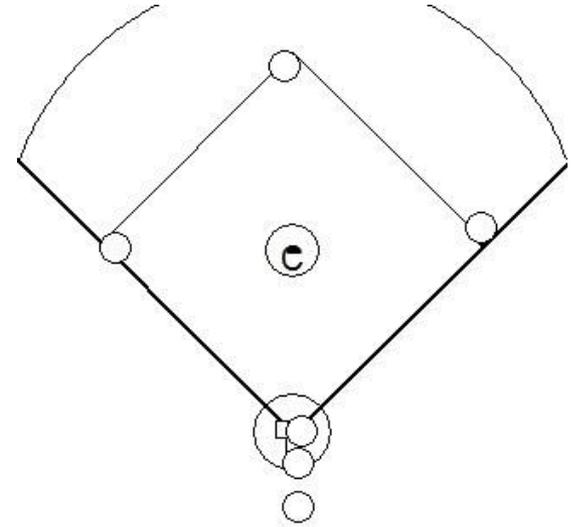
You will need runners on all three bases, with the rest of the players lining up at home plate waiting for their turn to run the drill. The coach will stand in the middle of the infield, on the mound.

Execution:

1. With all of the runners at their bases, they taking a leadoff to simulate when the ball leaves the pitchers hand. The coach will toss himself a high fly ball and while the players are waiting for the ball to come down, they plan their tag up for when the coach catches the ball.
2. Once the coach catches the ball, the players are prepared to advance to the next base.

Coaching Tips:

- Other coaches or players can sit and be the judge to see if players leave bases too early, or if they are not tagged up when the ball is caught.



Players learn to anticipate the ball being caught and tag up properly.

DRILL #20 – DOUBLE PLAY BREAK UP

Purpose:

Players learn to run toward the player instead of the base to break up a double play.

Setup:

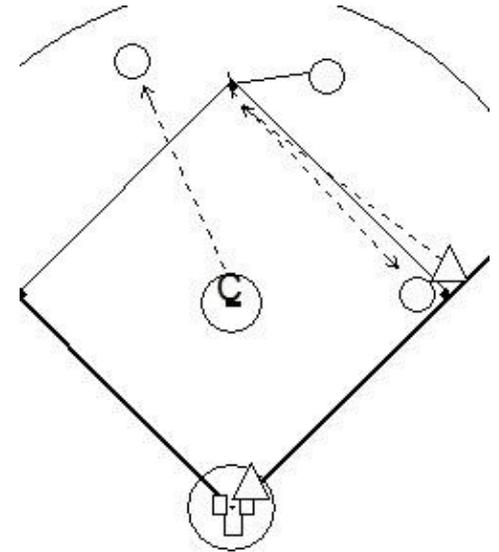
You need a shortstop, second baseman, a runner on first and second base secured in the infield. A player running from home plate to first is also needed. The coach will stand in the middle of the infield and roll grounders to the second baseman and shortstop.

Execution:

1. The runner at first must understand that they need to try to disrupt the flow of the double play at second base. To do this, they must anticipate which side the infielder will execute their throw to first at. Therefore, they must choose the left side or the right side of second base.
2. The coach will roll the grounders to the infielders and the runner must then decide which side to break the play up on. The infielders try to make the double play on the runners.

Coaching Tips:

- Usually, if the second baseman is throwing to first, the runner should slide to the left of the bag as the infielder goes over the bag as they run to it. If the shortstop is throwing, his momentum is usually taking them to the right side of the bag, so that's where the break up should occur.



Players learn to anticipate the side of the throw to first, and slide accordingly to break up the double play.

- Make sure the runners don't stray too far from the bag, and don't go into their teammates too hard, as it can cause injuries.

DRILL #21 – QUICK JUMP

Purpose:

Players practice getting the good jump they need to safely steal a base.

Setup:

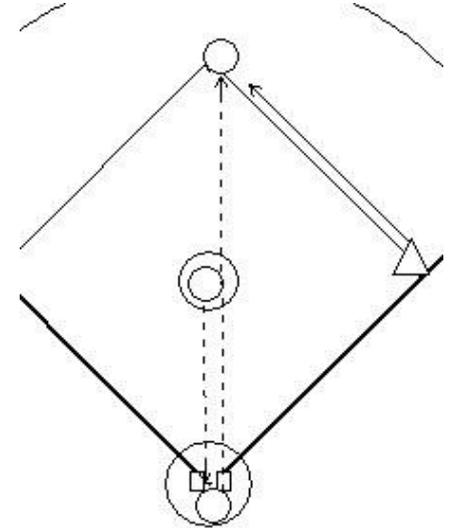
Pitcher, catcher, second baseman, runner.

Execution:

1. In this drill, the pitcher will go into their windup, and throw the ball to home plate.
2. The runner will have taken off and run towards second at some point during the wind up. The coach will help the players identify that 'move' towards home plate that signifies the delivery of a pitch, and the time to run to second.

Coaching Tips:

- If the runner gets a good jump they should make it to second every time. Safe runners score one point, runners tagged out – score one for the defense.



Your team's stealing percentage should rise by doing this drill as your players will learn the best time to get a jump on the pitcher.

DRILL #22 – RUN THROUGH FIRST

Purpose:

This drill teaches players to explode from the batter's box and then run through first. Many players slow their run to first early and as a result are out.

Setup:

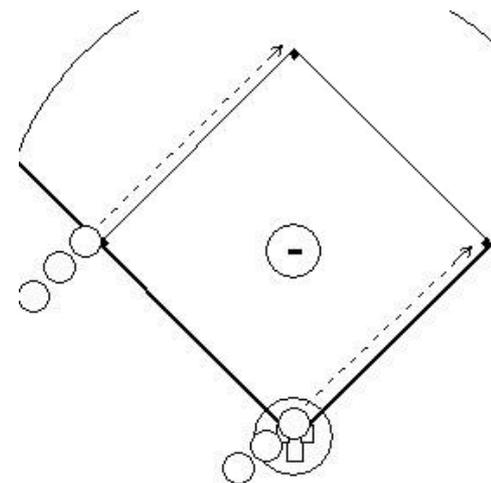
Runners at home plate and at third base. Two lines will form at these bases – one facing first base, and one facing second base.

Execution:

1. The player will stand at 'home plate', and take an imaginary swing. They need to explode from the batter's box and run towards first base (second base for the group using third base as home plate).
2. As they are running toward first, the players need to be aware of the following:
 - Picking a spot 5 yards past first base to run hard to
 - Upon reaching the bag a quick look down to make sure they touch the bag
 - Upon reaching the bag a quick look right to see if there was an overthrow and they can run to second base.

Coaching Tips:

- Make sure players are running through the bag instead of pulling up as they draw near.



Players get better at running to first base, and taking advantage of opportunities to take second on overthrows.

DRILL #23 – BASERUNNING RELAY

Purpose:

Running hard around the bases is important for the players to learn. This drill will keep them on their toes and have them compete against their teammates to stay ahead.

Setup:

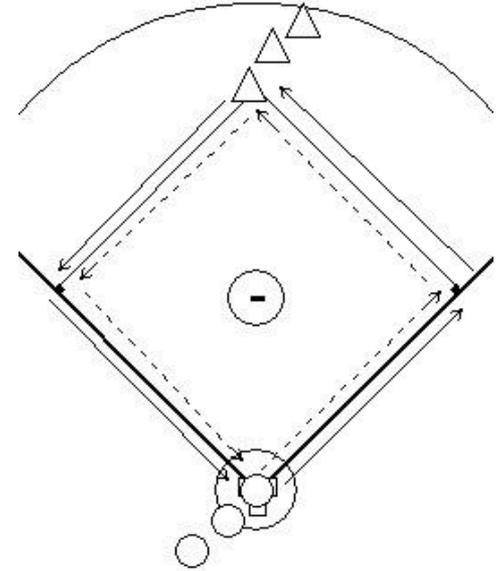
Two lines – one at home plate, the other at second base.

Execution:

1. On the coaches' signal for players to take off, the players on second sprint towards third, and then home, first, and back to second to tag their next teammate.
2. The runners from home do the same thing, only they round the bases in the correct order. The teams will continue to do this, tagging the next player in line when they reach their team bag, until one team overtakes the other rounding the bases.

Coaching Tips:

- Make sure players are running hard, following tight paths and keeping their heads up so they can see in front of them.



This drill is both a great conditioning drill and a great way for players to learn the value of running the bases as fast as they can.