



## Machine Pitch Drills

### Warm Up

It is important to take the players through a dynamic warm up before practice drills begin. Players at this age can get away with not warming up, but it is important to build a good habit or warming up and making sure the body is loose before practice begins.

### Throwing and Catching

**DRILL 1:** Players will partner up and start 10 ft. from each other, throwing the baseball and progressively working their way back until they reach around 90 ft. They will then throw until they feel loose and work their way back into their partner.

**DRILL 2:** Players will play a game with their partner while playing catch. Each player will aim to throw the ball at their partner's chest, which would result in 2 points. If the ball is at the face, it is 1 point. The first player to reach 10 points wins the game.

**DRILL 3:** Partners will team up with each other to see how many times they can successfully throw and catch the ball. The winning duo at the end of catch wins the game.

### Fielding

**DRILL 1:** Players are partnered up, standing 10 feet apart. They will roll groundballs to each other. Players will practice staying down on the ball and fielding it correctly. Coaches should emphasize bending the knees and keeping your glove on the ground while the ball is coming.

**DRILL 2:** Players will line up at an infield position while a coach stands on first base. The players will be rolled ground balls and attempting to field the ball and throw it to first base.

**DRILL 3:** Players will partner up, standing 5-10 feet away from each other. They will take turns throwing pop ups to each other, while the other tries to catch the ball. Coaches should make

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sure players are using both hands to catch the ball, with their throwing hand closing the mitt tight.

**DRILL 4:** Roll baseballs into the outfield and have the players field the ball and throw it to the cutoff man. Coaches can be used as the cutoff in this drill.

**DRILL 5:** Have the players gather at the bases and have them throw a baseball around the diamond, rotating each throw. This will help them practice their throwing accuracy as well as their arm strength.

## Hitting

**DRILL 1:** Players will hit off of a tee into the fence behind home plate. While this is not tee ball, this drill is important to build hand-eye coordination and keeping your eye on the ball through the swing. This can be done with a coach or through partners.

**DRILL 2:** Coaches will throw soft toss to the players from behind a screen. Players will hit the ball into one of the fences. This will help the players develop their hand-eye coordination and being able to hit a moving target.

**DRILL 3:** Live batting practice is important for the players to get used to the pitching they will see in the games. Set the machine to throw to the hitters on the field like they do during games. Coaches can also have other players in the field, making plays as the ball come their way.

**DRILL 4:** Use miniature wiffle balls to soft toss to the players. This will increase their hand-eye coordination and help them when trying to hit an actual sized baseball.

## Base Running

**DRILL 1:** Have the players start at home plate, taking a dry swing without a ball, and running through first base, breaking down as they pass the bag.

**DRILL 2:** Players will practice sliding into a base while running from first to second. Coaches should make sure their form is correct so they don't get hurt in the future.

**DRILL 3:** Players will play a game of tag where the baseline and the bases are the only places you can go. The person who is "it" can go throughout the entire infield. The bases are safe and players must run the correct way around the diamond.

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## **Tips**

1. Make sure the players are having fun and enjoying the game. It is important for them to have a good experience, especially at a young age.
  2. At this age, their attention may be hard to keep at times, make sure you have a game or two built into each practice to keep them engaged.
  3. Make sure they understand that this is a game where mistakes are going to happen a lot. Failure is a part of the game and nobody should be upset when they happen to fail.
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