This article we updated an article we published last year with ideas about how to run an effective indoor practice. We couldn't address every drill that can be done indoors in a relatively short article, so we wanted to provide you with a listing of drills we recommend that can be done inside. Of course these drills can be done outside as well.

Some of these drills need to be adapted to the area in which you are working. Remember that you can always substitute softer balls or plastic balls for hard baseballs when working inside.

HITTING DRILLS

FREE HITTING
This is what we call regular batting practice or live hitting. Let players hit and have fun. Resist the urge to coach. Coaching and tinkering are for drill work. As players get older it’s okay to have them work on bunting, hit-and-runs and moving runners over during free hitting or batting practice. Hitting is supposed to be fun, so let the kids have at it. Notice when corrections are needed and work on them during drill sessions. This can be done in an indoor cage using a pitching machine and regular baseballs or dimple balls. It also can be done in an open gym using Jugs Lite Flite Balls with or without a Jugs Lite Flite Pitching Machine or plastic Quickballs.
Age appropriate: All ages.

GOALIE GAME
Set up a hockey or lacrosse goal as a backstop with a home plate in front of the net. Use a Jugs Lite Flite Machine or a tennis ball machine to pitch. Batter must keep balls from going into the goal. Players work on hitting the ball where it’s pitched, bat control and developing a short swing to make contact. Coach can throw harder than normal if machines are not available.
Age appropriate: Ages 4 – 9.

HITTING CONTESTS
Almost any hitting drill can be turned into a contest using a point system. Award a point for a hard ground ball up the middle, two points for a line drive up the middle and five points for a line drive up the middle that reaches the back wall of a cage or the gym. Develop your own point systems for whatever concept you are teaching. Make sure proper hitting mechanics are stressed at all times.
Age appropriate: All ages.

KNOCK OUT THE CATCHER
Coach dresses in full catcher’s gear and sits on a chair 10-15 feet from home plate. He tosses the ball and tells the hitter to knock him off the chair. It is advisable to use Jugs Lite Flite Balls when doing this indoors. Players work on hitting the ball hard up the middle without even knowing it.
Age appropriate: 4 – 9.

LINE DRIVE HOME RUN DERBY
Use Lite Flite Balls and set up in the outfield, hitting toward the back wall of the gym. Pitch overhand or toss balls underhand to players and give points for hard ground balls and line drives. Pick a point on the back wall and designate it as the home run line. Home runs count five points if they are line drives that hit the back wall above the line. Swings and misses, pop-ups and foul balls (balls that hit the side walls) are outs. Give each player three outs and see who can score the most points.
Age appropriate: Ages 4 – 12.

TEE HITTING FOR DISTANCE
Players use proper fundamentals to see how far they can hit a ball off of a tee in an open gym. Use weight shift (“go back to go forward”), winding up almost like a pitcher to take the weight to the back side before exploding
forward. Head should stay on ball and front shoulder and stride should be directly toward the pitcher until contact. Batters who drop the back shoulder and try to hit the ball high intentionally are eliminated. Line drives are best, but hard ground balls count. Set up a point system or designate a home run line on the back wall of the gym.

Age appropriate: All ages.

**SOFT TOSS**
Standard hitting drill that can be done virtually anywhere. Teammates can toss to one another or a coach can toss to a player. Batter takes stance and tosser kneels across from hitter, slightly in front of home plate. Balls tossed underhand so batter can hit out in front of plate. Hitter wants to concentrate on having a loose grip in the fingers with the “door knocking” knuckles lined up. This will allow the wrists to unlock, promoting a quicker swing using the hands, wrists and forearms. Think: “Loose grip, quick bat.” Best if done into a screen with a target using plastic balls, tennis balls or rubber balls.

Age appropriate: All ages.

**TEE WORK**
Players adjust batting tee to height where they need to swing down slightly to get bat to the ball. Hit into screen or net like the Jugs Instant Screen or with a target. Work strictly on weight shift (“go back to go forward”). Take all the weight to the back side before exploding forward. Keep head down, eyes on ball. Take front foot and front shoulder directly toward pitcher. Try to hit ball in target each time. Avoid upper-cut swing. Indoors it’s best to use plastic balls, tennis balls or soft rubber balls.

Age appropriate: All ages.

**SHORT TOSS FROM THE FRONT**
Drill stresses using “the big part of the field.” Coach sits on bucket or chair behind a screen about 10-12 feet out in front of home plate. Tosses pitch underhand but firmly to outside part of plate. Batter tries to keep front shoulder in and rive ball up the middle or the other way. Some batters naturally will pull the pitches, which is okay if that is their natural swing and they hit line drives. Weakly pulled ground balls are what we are trying to avoid. Use soft or plastic balls inside.

Age appropriate: All ages.

**STICKBALL**
Drill uses small plastic Quickballs and a shaved down stickball-type bat (you can make your own or look in various sporting goods stores for a similar product). Have batter take natural stride and stop. This is the starting point. Take the bottom half of the body out of the drill. Tosser flips ball to the hitter just as in regular soft toss. Batter should swing as hard as he can, maintaining balance without striding, and reload quickly. As soon as he reloads, next ball is tossed. Each hitter should take five to 10 swings. Drill is best done into a net like the Jugs Instant Screen. Batters should try to hit every ball into target. Drill stresses balance. If hitter is unable to reload quickly or stumbles, he is not balanced throughout swing.

Age appropriate: Ages 7 – 15+.

**ONE-ARM DRILL**
Can be done by players of all ages once they can make contact consistently with pitched balls. Coach stands or sits about 8-10 feet in front of batter behind screen. Tosser pitches overhand or underhand. Batter hits first five pitches with two hands, then takes the top hand off bat for next five pitches. Use normal game bat. Try not to choke up if possible. Can tuck elbow into side for more leverage if necessary. After hitting five with one hand, hitter finishes up by hitting five more with two hands. One-hand reps should be difficult. Drill should help batter take bat on a more direct path to the ball. Should feel a difference when hitting the final set of five. Use softer or plastic balls.

Age appropriate: Ages 10- 15+.

**LOB TOSS**
A drill that Cal worked on every day. Coach sits or stands behind screen about 20-25 feet in front of home plate, tossing balls with a high arc (like slow pitch softball). Batter lets the ball travel as far as possible (“let it get deep”) before trying to drive the ball. Designed to help hitter be patient and avoid shifting weight to front foot too soon. Use softer or plastic balls inside.
THROWING DRILLS

SHOOT AND SCORE!
After players warm arms up, two goals are set up across from each other. One player stands to the side of each goal. Players take turns trying to throw balls into “opponent’s” goal. One point is awarded for each ball that rolls into goal and two for a ball that enters goal in the air. Another variation is to hang, tape or paint a target on the goal. One point is awarded for scoring a goal and two points for hitting target. Targets also can be taped on walls to allow more people to play at the same time. It is best to use real baseballs or balls such as Jugs Softie that are regulation weight.
Age appropriate: 4 – 12.

TWENTY-ONE
A game played by baseball players of all levels. Players play catch. One point is awarded to the thrower for a ball caught at chest level. Two points are awarded for a ball caught at head level. First player to 21 wins. Coaches should stress proper mechanics while drill is going on. Set up a team competition where winners move on and losers are eliminated. Play to 15 instead of 21 to speed things up.
Age appropriate: All ages.

OTHER THROWING GAMES
Just about any throwing drill can be turned into a contest by adding a target. Players can throw at a painted, taped or drawn target on a wall or screen. Or they can try to knock a ball off of a batting tee. Anything that makes a player concentrate and try to throw accurately works. Don’t forget to stress proper mechanics at all times: four-seam grip; get the ball down out and up; elbow above shoulder; point front shoulder; step toward target; follow of follow through.
Age appropriate: All ages.

OUTFIELD DRILLS

LITE FLITE ELIMINATION
Each player is thrown a fly ball through a Jugs Lite Flite Machine. Younger players can use their gloves. Balls are so light that they have to catch them with two hands over the head. Older players and more advanced younger players can use bare hands. If player catches the ball he stays in, but if he misses it he’s out. This can also be done utilizing the pass pattern drill described below or with real baseballs (when appropriate). When not using gloves, players should attempt to catch the ball with one hand over the head. This makes them focus on proper hand positioning and watching ball into hand.
Age appropriate: All ages.

PASS PATTERNS
A coach or player (this can be long toss for pitchers) serves as quarterback. Player tosses ball to QB and then uses crossover or drop step in appropriate direction before running a “pass pattern.” QB throws the ball high enough so that the player can run under the ball and make a one-handed, over-the-shoulder catch. Have player start over if initial step is not executed correctly. We recommend using Jugs Lite Flite Balls indoors, however regular baseballs may be used if the practice area is long enough.
Age appropriate: All ages.

THROWN FLY BALLS
Players must be comfortable catching fly balls properly – with two hands above heads so that the eyes can follow ball into glove – before fly balls are hit to them. This can avoid injury and embarrassment. The simplest way is to throw fly balls to players and force them to do it correctly. Start with short, easy tosses and adjust height of throws to skill and comfort level of players. Younger players can be started out with soft baseballs or Jugs Lite Flite Balls to avoid injury and build confidence. This can turn into an elimination contest for the younger players. Stress getting to the spot where the ball is coming down and catching with two hands above the head.
Age appropriate: All ages.
THROWN OR MACHINE GROUND BALLS
A little different than infielders, but outfielders still need wide base, butt down and hands out in front of body. Get wide by stepping toward home with glove-side leg forward and glove in front of that foot. Players should get comfortable with proper fundamentals before fielding hit balls. It’s okay to use a pitching machine for outfield ground balls right from the start. Roll or feed players ground balls one at a time. Have them get to the spot quickly, get under control, field properly, generate momentum toward coach and throw. Don’t allow players to walk or run through ground balls. They need to slow down and get under control to field properly. It’s usually okay to use baseballs for this – even indoors.
Age appropriate: All ages.

COMMUNICATION DRILL
Outfielders from two lines at least 20 feet apart. First players in each line step forward. Coach throws fly balls in between the two fielders, who must communicate and make the play. Player fielding ball should yell, “I got it!” at least three times. Other player should back up. A strong, accurate throw should be made to coach or cutoff man (another player who rotates out of the drill) after ball is caught. For younger players you can use soft baseballs, Jugs Lite flite Balls or tennis balls. Jugs Lite Flite Machines can be used to throw higher fly balls for more advanced players, ensuring that the ball will land in same spot each time.
Age appropriate: Ages 7 – 15+.

CROSSOVER STEP DRILL
Crossover step (pivot one foot while crossing the other one over in the direction of the ball or next base) is the most efficient way to move laterally on the baseball field. Very important for outfielders. Outfielders line up. Each has a ball. First one steps forward, tosses ball to coach and assumes ready position. Coach tells player which way to go ahead of time. Player crosses over in that direction, then coach tosses ball so it can be caught with two hands over the head. Player should concentrate on crossing over correctly until comfortable doing so. Coach should tell players which direction they will be going ahead of time until they master the step. Then mix it up as will. Use softer balls for younger players until they build confidence.
Age appropriate: Ages 7 –15+.

DROP STEP DRILL
Much like crossover step drill, but a bit more advanced. Players line up. First one steps forward, tossed ball to coach and assumes ready position. Coach says go and player performs drop step (drop one foot back, turn body and cross the other foot over in the direction of the ball). Coach throws ball directly over player’s head, high and close enough that he can catch with two hands above the head. Have players take time to get footwork correct before tossing. Stop players and have them do it correctly before throwing ball if step not done properly.
Age appropriate: Ages 10 – 15+.

MACHINE FLY BALLS
Jugs Lite Flite Machines can throw fly balls virtually as high as your facility will permit and to almost the same spot every time. Feed Jugs Lite Flite Balls through these machines to practice catching more challenging fly balls indoors.
Age appropriate: Ages 10 – 15+.

INFIELD DRILLS
ROLLED GROUND BALLS
Use baseballs for this drill. Seems simple, but appropriate for all ages. Balls can be rolled as soft or as hard as necessary and type of hop can be controlled. Players assume ground ball position with wide base, butt down and hands out in front (glove-hand wrist relaxed so coach can see inside of glove with fingers pointing down). Use a flat surface to prevent bad hops – and bad habits. At first ball should be rolled directly into glove from about 10 feet away. Have players hold ground ball position for five reps, so they can feel a little burn in their thighs. As players get comfortable fielding ground balls properly coach can move back and roll balls harder. For conditioning older players can be asked to hold positions for more reps. Ball must be caught out in front so eyes can follow it into glove.
Age appropriate: All ages.
THROWING AFTER THE CATCH DRILL
Use baseballs for this drill. Reinforces concept of catching the ground ball first, generating momentum toward the target, throwing the ball and following the throw. Three cones set up about several feet apart, placed in a line toward the target where the throw will be made (easiest to set up as a simulation of the 5-4 force out at second base). Player sets up with right foot next to first cone and assumes ground ball fielding position (wide base, butt down, hands out in front). Ball rolled by coach to player who fields it, or player starts with ball and simulates the fielding position. Player shuffles feet to second cone, releases ball and follows throw past third cone and toward the target (cones should be placed so that the distance is appropriate to accomplish the intended result for a given age group). Emphasize four-seam grip. Ball can be thrown to a coach, another teammate or toward a target on a wall. Player should stay low (and not stand straight up) in athletic position after fielding ball. This can be turned into a contest utilizing a target. Players who hit the target stay alive, while those who miss are eliminated.
Age appropriate: All ages.

BACKHAND DRILLS
Use baseballs for these drills. Just like a regular ground ball, backhand is caught out in front of body so eyes can follow the ball into the glove and so that the wrist and forearm do not get in the way. Players also need to establish wide base, with butt down. There are two types of backhands to practice:

GLOVE-SIDE FOOT BACKHAND DRILL
This backhand provides more reach for players ranging farther to their backhand sides. Player lines up in front of coach, takes left leg and crosses it over the right as if turning to walk. Right knee is dropped to the ground (opposite for lefties) much like a walking lunge. Creates a wide base to help get the butt down and the glove in front of the body. Ball is caught off the front foot instead of in front of it (but still out in front of the body). Coach should be close enough to roll balls directly into glove until player gets hang of catching the ball out in front with one hand, squeezing the glove and bringing it to the center of body. Ball is rolled slightly in front of the lead foot. Glove-hand wrist should be relaxed so coach can see into glove. Have players avoid twisting glove so they don’t close it too soon. After five repetitions have another player try. As players get more advanced they can raise the trail knee off the ground a few inches. Adding repetitions in this manner can help with conditioning as well.
Age appropriate: Ages 7 – 15+.

THROWING-SIDE FOOT BACKHAND DRILL
This backhand is used for hard-hit balls that are slightly to the player’s backhand side. Player lines up in front of coach with right leg extended. Pivots right foot so instep faces coach and drops left knee to ground (opposite for lefties). Creates a wide base to help get the butt down and the glove in front of the right foot toward the coach. Coach should be close enough to roll balls directly into glove until player gets hang of catching the ball out in front with one hand, squeezing the glove and bringing it to the center of body. Ball is rolled directly toward front foot. Glove-hand wrist should be relaxed so coach can see into glove. Have players avoid twisting glove so they don’t close it too soon. After five repetitions have another player try. As players get more advanced they can raise the trail knee off the ground a few inches. Adding repetitions in this manner can help with conditioning as well.
Age appropriate: Ages 7 – 15+.

HIGH FIVE DRILL (UNDERHAND FLIP)
Use baseballs for this drill. The underhand flip is utilized by virtually all infielders at some point, so it should be introduced at a young age and practiced. Players line up opposite coach, 10-15 feet away form him. Assume basic ground ball position (wide base, butt down, hands in front). Ball is rolled to player. Player catches ball first, generates momentum toward target, uses an underhand flip and finishes by following the flip toward the coach with the hand held high at head level. When the player gets to the coach he gives him a high five (hand should not drop below head level until high five is completed). Use body’s momentum to carry toss to the target. Wrist remains stiff and arm does not swing. Also avoid letting ball roll off fingers.
Age appropriate: Ages 7 – 15+.

BOX DRILL – (UNDERHAND FLIP) SHORT TO SECOND
Use baseballs for this drill. Create a box with four players standing up to 25 feet apart from each other (closer for younger players). Fifth player stands behind any player at any corner. First toss comes from corner where there are two players. Don not use gloves – increases concentration. Each player faces corner to his right. Tosser shuffles feet or crosses over, flips the ball to player at corner to his left, leaves hand high and follows flip to that
corner. After arriving at next corner, turn to face corner to the right and have two hands out in front ready to receive toss as it comes around. Catch the ball first, generate momentum, toss and follow to next corner. Stress stiff wrist, no extra arm motion, leaving hand high and following flip. This can be done with players of any age. For youngest players you may want to use gloves and count to see which group of five can catch the most in a row without missing one.
Age appropriate: Ages 7 – 15+.

**BOX DRILL – (UNDERHAND FLIP) SECOND TO SHORT**
Use baseballs for this drill. Create a box with four players standing up to 25 feet apart from each other (closer for younger players). Fifth player stands behind any player at any one of the corners. The first toss comes from corner where there are two players. Do not use gloves – increases concentration. Each player faces corner to his left. Tosser shuffles feet or crosses over, keeps hands with the ball in front of the body, flips the ball to player at corner to his right without turning the body or swinging the arm, leaves hand high and follows flip to that corner. After arriving at the next corner, turn to face corner to the left and have two hands out in front ready to receive toss as it comes around. Catch the ball first, generate momentum, flip and follow to next corner. This is more awkward because the hand stays in front of the body at all times. It is important to keep the wrist stiff and avoid turning body completely toward target so that hand is no longer in front. For youngest players you may want to use gloves and count to see which group of five can catch the most in a row without missing one.
Age appropriate: Ages 7 – 15+.

**4 – 6 / 6 – 4 DRILL**
Use baseballs. For this drill. Putting the double play together. One group lines up at shortstop. Another group lines up at second. Coach says, “Go,” and rolls ground ball to first player in shortstop line. First player in second base line runs to bag, puts left foot on the bag and holds up both hands at chest level as a target. Shortstop fields ball and executes underhand flip to second baseman, who takes right foot to the ball and catches it. Second baseman returns ball to coach and players go to end of opposite lines. After each player goes several times, switch and work on the 4 – 6 double play feed. Drill is reversed. Difference is that shortstop puts right foot on bag and takes left foot toward ball. As players get comfortable they can throw to a coach or teammates at first base to complete the double play. Stress the underhand flip and that the players covering second base should get there early and be stationary targets for their teammates.
Age appropriate: Ages 7 – 15+.

**MACHINE BACKHANDS AND FOREHANDS**
Set up a cone in a specific spot and place a Jugs Pitching Machine so that it rolls hard ground balls right toward the cone. Have players line up to the right of the cone so that if they break when the ball is fed, they will have to backhand or forehand the ball without getting in front of it. Players should break as ball is fed through machine, remembering to catch ball with one hand out in front of their bodies at the cone. Alternate from one side to the other so that players can attempt both plays. This can be turned into an elimination contest.
Age appropriate: Ages 10 – 15+.

**MACHINE SHORT-HOPS**
This drill can be done outdoors or indoors. It can be made even more challenging by having players field Jugs Lite Flite Balls or with their bare hands. Set pitching machine so that players will have to field fast-moving balls on the short hop. Make sure players get into good fielding position (wide base, butt down, hands out in front) and hold it. They will need to relax their wrists and catch the ball out in front if using gloves and real baseballs. Have them try to catch the ball with only one hand to promote proper glove action and softer hands. This is especially important when using the softer balls and no gloves. See who can catch the most out of five or ten.
Age appropriate: Ages 10 – 15+. 