

CATCHING DRILLS

1. Dry Frames

- a. No Glove → work on hand position and movement along the strike zone
- b. With Glove → teaches 'memory' of catching ball with proper hand position

2. Live Frames

- ⇒ partner will throw ball to different spots; first time through focus on called spot only
- ⇒ after catcher has successfully caught pitches at prescribed locations, mix up pitches

3. Rapid Fire Drill

- ⇒ drill needs 2 partners throwing to catcher; each thrower should be located outside of plate on both corners approximately 20-30 feet away
- ⇒ throwers will take turns throwing pitches to build rapid response to pitches
- ⇒ when catcher catches the pitch, just drop it and be ready for next pitch

4. Dry Blocks with Four Point Stance

- ⇒ work to move body to ball
- ⇒ first stage is done without pitch being thrown
- ⇒ focus on getting outside knee and shoulder outside the ball
- ⇒ drill stresses proper body and chest positioning

5. 3 Ball Triangle Drill

- ⇒ a dry drill with 3 baseballs; set up one on right, left, and middle parts of plate
- ⇒ partner will point to ball and catcher will quickly get to spot to dry block the ball and return to starting stance as quick as possible
- ⇒ great to incorporate drill; have catcher first get spots and freeze with partner/coach checking for proper position

6. Dry Throws

- ⇒ emphasis is getting to proper throwing position
closed front side, balanced, 'skateboard', thumb always underneath ball
- ⇒ use both the pivot and jump shift techniques for footwork
- ⇒ do 3-5 warm-ups; then perform 4-8 sets with 8 reps per set

7. Live Throws to 2B

- ⇒ to save the arm, shorten the distance (behind pitcher's mound)
- ⇒ emphasize footwork, elbow position, thumb position on ball, and closed front side
- ⇒ using a net or screen is a great way to set up a target

8. Dry Knee Picks to 1B

- ⇒ drive the left knee down and get full shoulder turn to throw ball to 1B
- ⇒ many times high school catchers are not physical enough for this throw, so we will add a called pitchout and throw off of pitch
- ⇒ remember, this drill is a dry drill and a great way to see if catcher is mechanically safe for skill

9. Live Knee Picks to 1B

- ⇒ same as previous drill, now add a ball
- ⇒ use both knee pick and pitchout for throw

10. Dry 3B Picks

- ⇒ stress the importance of the different footwork skills needed for drill
 - inside/middle pitch → left foot is replaced with right foot and throw behind batter
 - outside pitch → step up and throw from front; shoulder turn happens w/step

11. Live 3B Picks

- ⇒ same as drill 10, now add baseballs
- ⇒ shagger should be only 20 feet away
- ⇒ add a batter or blocking dummy to simulate a batter and game situation

12. Backhand Pick Drill

- ⇒ pitch is picked with a high elbow and the ball is received in the dirt
- ⇒ glove hand must be a high elbow
- ⇒ this situation happens when catcher has no time to block and move body, is very effective and must be practiced daily

13. Drop, Block, Fetch, and Throw Drill

- ⇒ this is a blocked ball that may have gotten away from the catcher; follow name of drill
- ⇒ catcher will retrieve ball and look for throw to base
- ⇒ great drill to simulate game situations
 - great drill to use baserunners reading pitch in dirt and catcher making play

14. Wild Pitch, Fetch, Throw Drill

- ⇒ add pitchers to drill to cover home
- ⇒ first stage of drill should have catcher retrieve ball and throw to catcher/coach standing on home to stress proper arm angle and slide to ball

15. Dry Plate Blocks for Tags

- ⇒ work on both types of tags; sweep tag and punch tag
- ⇒ always come up looking for another play after tag has been made
 - shagger/coach can call out base and after tag, catcher must make throw
- ⇒ after tag has been made catcher needs to be able to sell tag; show ball and be ready to throw
- ⇒ proper toe alignment and body position is vital to success of drill

16. Live Plate Tags

- ⇒ hard drill to add runners; injury may happen
- ⇒ add baseballs and have shaggers throwing from different locations

17. Force Plays

- ⇒ use sweep footwork and work on throws to 1B and 3B with drill
- ⇒ catcher must clear baseline for throw and use 'skateboard' mechanics

18. Bunts

- ⇒ place bunts on right, left, middle, fake throw areas
- ⇒ catchers must use proper body positioning when fielding bunts
- ⇒ all bunts fielded must use a glove touch

19. Lateral Right/Left

- ⇒ start on right side of home plate (edge of dirt in catcher's box behind home)
- ⇒ to object of drill is to start on right and go to the left; go back for next phase of drill
- ⇒ the catcher is to block each ball moving to the left and doing only 5-7 blocks in a row
- ⇒ the drill is very intense and fast moving; after each block the catcher must quickly return to his starting stance and be ready for another immediate block to happen

20. Easter Eggs

- ⇒ blocking drill where the catcher is moving forward
- ⇒ objective is to have body soften ball back to the plate
- ⇒ block and immediately return to starting stance for another block
- ⇒ the drill is very intense and fast-paced
- ⇒ balance is vital for drill to be successful

21. Live Throwing

- No Feet** → start 90 feet apart
receive the ball and immediately get body into proper throwing position
straddle baseline (foul line)
monitor ball spin and arm angle
 - With Feet** → use for arm strengthening
go as far back as 150 feet
pay attention to proper ball spin, arm action, elbow angle, and footwork
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Drills 1-21 make up the Kaizan Series. The drills are designed to incorporate all the fundamental skills essential to the catching position. The next drills are great drills to focus on one area only and to add variety to practice sessions.

Circle Drill (Hula Hoop)

Place a large hula hoop or make circles in dirt in front of home. The objective of the drill is for the catcher to block balls to designated spots. Add points for spots and keep score. This drill is great for teaching the proper skills of blocking.

4 Corner Drill

Same drill as one used for infielders. Use catchers and stress the proper mechanics of throwing. This drill is great and gives the catchers maximum reps throwing and simulating the proper mechanics needed for games.

4 Corner Bunt Drill

Setting four corners, have ball start at one spot and on command drop ball and field bunt. Prior to fielding bunt, coach calls out base and catcher simulates fielding bunt in game and making proper throw. Once the ball is received, the catcher that threw the ball, or a coach, must call out the base and then the catcher will drop ball like a bunt and make play. The drill goes continuous. Go for 2-3 minutes and make corrections and do drill again. This is a great warm-up drill.

Quick Hands

Using a pitching machine or 2 shaggers, the objective of the drill is to quickly move hands to ball and make the pitch a strike. Once ball is caught, drop it and be ready for the next pitch. Drill simulates Kaizan 3, but add variety and speed of pitches.

Move Ups

Start at a distance and shorten the distance with receiving the ball. This is a great drill for the catcher to work on hand speed, sticking pitches, and seeing a ball that is much faster than what we normally see from our team.

Wall Drill

Start the catcher facing a wall. Have the catcher take his stance. Throw a pitch and have the catcher react. When you are good with this drill the thrower can get more creative with the pitch. Early on have the thrower call out, strike, block, in, out, high, low. Fun drill.