



OUTFIELD



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INTRODUCTION

It is a common misconception among young players that the weaker players are put in the outfield. In reality, some of the greatest players EVER have played in the outfield and many of the highest paid players are in the outfield.

While most of the plays do occur in the infield, bigger mistakes occur in the outfield. A mistake in the outfield can result in a two or three base error versus the infield where it is only a one base error. Therefore, proper practice of outfield-specific drills is important.

In this eBook, we'll go through 7 fun and effective outfield drills that you can perform as part of a team practice, for individual or small group workouts, or in the back yard at home.

If you'd like to see all these drills performed live with step by step video instructions, you can upgrade to include the Ultimate Fielding Drills Online Video Clinic by going here:

<http://baseball-practice-plans.com/p/upgrade-fielding>

OUTFIELD DRILLS

Drills are an excellent way to break down the basic fundamentals of fielding. They help build game skills and hone a player's technique. Drills also help set a good tempo for the rest of practice or an upcoming game.

Drill #1: Ground Ball Technique Drill

Complete 5 repetitions of each variation

Purpose: Proper ground ball technique will help a player deal with the inconsistencies of different outfield conditions. This drill covers three different game situations and four different fielding techniques.

Setup: This drill can be performed anywhere on the field. The coach will be standing nearby to roll balls to the player. This drill can be run through rotations with multiple players. Balls and gloves are required.

Execution:

Situation 1 – Ground ball, base hit into the outfield with no one on base. If the player must move forward for the ball, use an infielder technique or drop to the knee technique.

Infielder Technique:

1. *The coach rolls the ball to the player.*
2. *The player charges the ball.*
3. *He breaks down to field the ball with both hands.*
4. *He stands and simulates a throw.*



Infielder Technique

-OR-

Drop to Knee:

1. *The coach rolls the ball to the player.*
2. *The player charges the ball.*
3. *He drops down to the glove side knee.*
 - Dropping to the glove side knee gives you freedom of movement in case of a bad hop. Dropping to the throwing side knee obstructs your range of motion and your ability to field the ball.
4. *He fields the ball with both hands.*
5. *He stands and simulates a throw.*



Drop to Glove Side Knee

Situation 2 – Ground ball, base hit into the outfield with a runner on first or second. In this situation you must keep your forward momentum up, but stay in control to deliver a strong throw.

1. *The coach rolls the ball to the player.*
2. *The player charges the ball.*
3. *He runs through and fields the ball outside of the left foot.*
 - This allows you to continue to run without losing momentum. There is a greater chance of losing the ball (accidentally kicking it) if it is fielded in front of the body.
4. *He stands and simulates a throw using a Crow Hop.*

Situation 3 – Ground ball, base hit into the outfield with a man on second in scoring position. This is a “Do or Die” situation. There is no margin for error and the outfielder must move as fast as he possibly can.

1. *The coach rolls the ball to the player.*
2. *The player charges the ball as fast as he can.*
3. *He runs through and fields the ball outside of the left foot.*
4. *He stands and simulates a throw using a crow hop.*

Coaching Tips:

- Have your outfielders work these four ground ball fielding techniques on a daily basis. This will create muscle memory which is vital in high stress game situations.
- Remind players to back up the bases on all sacrifice plays, pick-off plays, overthrows, steal attempts and pitchouts.

Drill #2: Stance and Steps Drill

Complete 5 repetitions of each variation

Purpose: This drill teaches an outfielder how to move his feet and set up properly when going after a fly ball. It is important that an outfielder master these techniques to eliminate extra

steps. A baserunner gains two steps for every unnecessary step taken by the outfielder. This means that the baserunner gains six feet if the outfielder makes a footwork mistake.

Setup: This drill can be performed anywhere on the field. The coach will be standing nearby to direct the player. This drill can be run through rotations with multiple players. There are no live balls in this drill, only gloves are required.

Execution:

Crossover Step – Left or Right

1. *The coach calls “Creep” and the player creeps forward a few steps.*
2. *The coach points to the player’s left or right and the player uses a crossover step to move in the indicated direction.*
3. *The player calls for the ball (“Mine, mine, mine!”) and gets his body turned and set to catch and release the ball quickly.*
 - Always catch the ball with two hands.
4. *He simulates a throw.*

Angled Drop Step – Left or Right

Be sure to take the first drop step in the same direction that the ball is moving.

1. *The coach calls “Creep” and the player creeps forward a few steps.*
2. *The coach points behind the player to the left or right and the player uses an angled drop step to move either back and to the right or back and to the left.*
 - Make sure you move far enough behind the ball so that you can run through it when catching.
 - It is usually easier for a right handed outfielder to move to the right and a left handed player to the left.
3. *He calls for the ball (“Mine, mine, mine!”) and gets his body turned and set to catch and release the ball quickly.*
 - Always catch the ball with two hands.

4. *He simulates a throw.*

Drop Step – Straight Back

1. *The coach calls “Creep” and the player creeps forward a few steps.*
2. *The coach points directly behind the player and the player drop steps straight back with his body angled to his throwing hand side.*
 - Be sure to drop back in a straight line.
3. *He calls for the ball (“Mine, mine, mine!”) and gets his body turned and set to catch and release the ball quickly.*
 - Always catch the ball with two hands.
4. *He simulates a throw.*



Stance and Steps Drill: Drop Step Straight Back

Coaching Tips:

- Repetition is the key to perfecting step techniques.
- The center fielder should check the dugout before every hitter to receive any positioning instructions.

Drill #3: Over the Shoulder Drill

Complete 10 repetitions to each side

Purpose: This drill teaches players how to move lightly on their feet and watch the ball go into their hands. This is an excellent drill for working on conditioning, catching technique and running technique.

Setup: This drill can be performed anywhere on the field. The coach will be standing nearby to throw balls to the player. This drill can be run through rotations with multiple players. Balls are required. Do not use a glove with this drill. This will force the players to catch the ball with both hands.

Execution:

1. *The coach calls "Go" and the player runs into the field quickly on the balls of his feet.*
 - Running on the balls of the feet will increase running speed.
 - Run light on your feet so you don't bounce. When the body bounces, the eyes bounce and increase the likelihood of a dropped ball.



Over the Shoulder Drill

2. *The coach throws the ball.*
3. *The player calls for the ball ("Mine, mine, mine!") and catches the ball over his shoulder.*
4. *Practice catching over both shoulders.*

Coaching Tips:

- Once players have mastered this drill barehanded, run the drill with gloves. Players must continue to catch the ball with both hands.
- Remind players to call for the ball ("Mine, mine, mine!"). Outfielders must be able to communicate who is taking the ball. This will prevent injuries.
- Challenge players with each throw.

Drill #4: Quick Feet Drill

Complete 10 repetitions

Purpose: This drill works on changing directions quickly and comfortably. It also forces players to keep their eyes on the ball at all times.

Setup: This drill can be performed anywhere on the field. The coach will be standing nearby to throw balls to the player. This drill can be run through rotations with multiple players and with or without a glove. Balls are required.

Execution:

1. *The coach calls "Creep" and the player creeps forward a few steps.*
2. *The coach points to the player's left and the player uses a crossover step to move to the left.*
 - Run light on the feet.
3. *The coach points to the player's right and the player quickly changes direction and moves to the right.*
4. *The coach throws the ball.*
5. *The player calls for the ball ("Mine, mine, mine!") and catches the ball.*
 - Track the ball all the way into the glove.

Coaching Tips:

- Start players running in one direction, then switch to another direction.
- Remind players to maintain eye contact with the ball. DO NOT turn your back on the ball.

Drill #5: Bent Leg Slide Drill

Complete 15 repetitions

Purpose: This drill practices the mechanics of a bent leg slide. Using the proper technique decreases the chance of injury and increases the chances of catching the ball. The slide is used when fielding short hops or a ball that may be out of reach.

Setup: This drill should be run on a soft surface (tall grass or infield dirt) to prevent injury. The coach will be standing nearby to throw balls to the player. This drill can be run through rotations with multiple players. Balls and gloves are required.

Execution:

1. *The coach calls "Go" and the player runs toward the coach.*

2. The coach tosses the ball and the player slides to the ground to make the catch.

- Keep the bottom leg bent underneath the body.
- Extend hands to catch the ball.



Bent Leg Slide Drill

Coaching Tips:

- The same technique is used when sliding into a base, only the hand is extended.
- This is a fun drill to end practice with.

Drill #6: Fly Ball Inside-Outside Routes Drill

Complete 10 repetitions of each variation

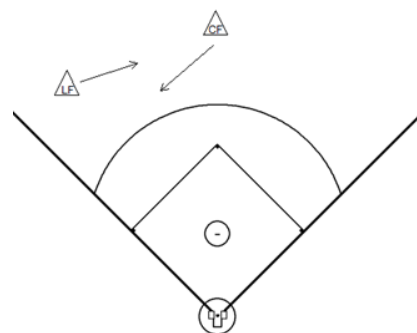
Purpose: This drill covers inside and outside routes so players know who is responsible for a ball that is hit between outfielders. Practicing outfield routes lets players know where they are supposed to position themselves. One outfielder must catch the ball while the other must back up the play.

Setup: The left fielder and center fielder should be in position. The coach will be hitting balls to the players. Balls and gloves are required.

Execution:

Situation 1 – Right handed hitter hits to left center field.

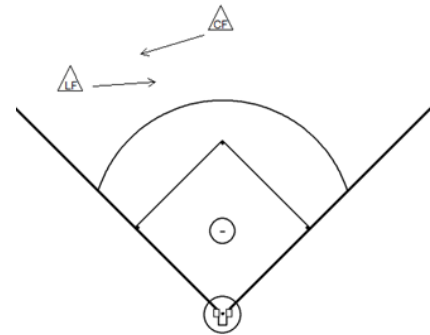
1. The center takes the inside or “high” route and keeps his glove in the air to signal his intent to catch the ball.
2. The left fielder will take the outside or “low” route 15-20 feet behind the center in case of a dropped ball.
 - This allows enough distance between the players to avoid collision and injury.



Right Handed Hitter to Left Center

Situation 2 – Left handed hitter hits to left center field.

1. The left fielder takes the inside or “high” route and keeps his glove in the air to signal his intent to catch the ball.
2. The center fielder will take the outside or “low” route 15-20 feet behind in case of a dropped ball.



Left Handed Hitter to Left Center

Coaching Tips:

- The left and right fielders should shift with the center fielder as he positions himself for respective hitters.

Drill #7: Working the Fence Drill

Complete 10 repetitions of each variation

Purpose: This drill practices the techniques necessary to field a ball at the fence. It is important to get to the ball quickly and safely.

Setup: The player and coach will be standing near the fence. Balls and gloves are required.

Execution:

Before any away game, an outfielder should inspect the opposing team’s fence. Every park or facility is going to have a slightly different fence or wall.

- A wood or concrete wall will cause a ball to ricochet so the outfielder will need to play further back. A chain link fence with a wind screen will cause a ball to drop directly down when it is hit.
- Always know what kind of bounce the ball will take off the fence. Throw a few balls against the wall or fence before the game.

Stationary Ball – The ball has hit the fence and stopped moving. Lay a ball a few feet from the fence.

1. The outfielder is standing in the Ready Position, facing the diamond.

2. *The coach calls "Dead Ball."*
3. *The player turns, runs to the ball and squares his body with the ball.*
4. *He picks up the ball with his bare hand, brings both hands together in front of his chest and uses a small Crow Hop before throwing to the cutoff man.*



Working the Fence Drill – Stationary Ball

Rolling Ball – The ball has hit the fence and is still rolling toward the outfielder.

1. *The outfielder is standing in the Ready Position, facing the diamond.*
2. *The coach calls "Ball" and throws a ball against the fence.*
3. *The player turns, runs to the rolling ball, gets his body around the ball and picks it up on his throwing side.*
4. *He scoops the ball up with both hands and uses a small Crow Hop before throwing to the cutoff man.*

Run to the Fence – When a ball is hit hard enough to go out of the park or to hit the wall, an outfielder can turn and run for the ball without watching it.

1. *The coach calls "Go" and the player turns and sprints to the fence.*
2. *He touches the fence and turns toward the field to locate the falling ball.*
3. *The coach throws a high ball.*

- Force players to move forward and side to side.
4. *The player readjusts to the right or left to catch the ball.*
 5. *He takes a Crow Hop and simulates a throw to the cutoff man.*



Working the Fence Drill – Run to Fence

Coaching Tips:

- Players can develop an instinct that allows them to move to where they THINK the ball will land and then turn around and make adjustments before the catch.

An outfielder must have fast legs, a strong arm, quick lateral movements and the ability to judge fly balls. These warm-ups and drills will help improve all of the skills required to be a successful outfielder.

Take pride in your performance!

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