



Drills: Outfielder's Toolbox

Goal:

To improve each day at basic fielding techniques for ground balls and fly balls

Description:

Outfielders assemble in one line in an open outfield area or assemble according to the instruction for stage 8. In stages in which balls are hit from a longer distance, a second shagger should be midway between you and the fielder.

Stage 1: The player assumes the ready position. You stand approximately 15 feet from the player and point over the player's left or right shoulder. The player executes a drop step and you loft a simulated fly ball to him. The player repeats the action four or five times with emphasis on performing a drop step in the direction of the ball and catching the ball above eye level with two hands.

Stage 2: Same as stage 1 except that when the player begins running in the direction to which you pointed, you throw the ball over the opposite shoulder, forcing the player to reverse directions to make the catch.

Stage 3: The player assumes the ready position. You stand with a shagger approximately 150 feet from the player and hit a ground ball toward the player. The player must advance toward the ball and then assume the blocking position when fielding. The player repeats the action four or five times with emphasis on dropping to the throwing-side knee when blocking the ball.

Stage 4: Same as stage 3 except that the player must field the ball by executing a do-or-die scoop and then throwing quickly to the shagger. The player repeats the action four or five times with emphasis on fielding the ball outside the glove-side leg as the foot lands, performing the crow hop and using the overhand throwing motion.

Stage 5: The player assumes the ready position. You stand with a shagger approximately 150 feet from the player. You toss simulated line drives (or, if adept at fungo hitting, hit line drives) to the player, who must move from the ready position and sprint toward you, forcing the player to react to catch balls at his shoe tops or over his head. The player repeats the action four or five times with emphasis on keeping the fingers up for balls above the waist or down for those below.

Stage 6: The player moves out of the line to the area near the warning track and fence. You stand approximately 15 feet from the player and toss balls over the fielder's head so that he may have to jump to stop the ball from carrying over the fence or find the fence with the throwing hand before making the catch. The next player in line acts as the off outfielder and communicates to the fielder making the catch. The players repeat the action four or five times with emphasis on communication by the off outfielder.





- Stage 7:** The player assumes the ready position. You stand approximately 15 feet from the player. As in stage 5, the player sprints toward you, and you toss balls just outside the player's range so that he must attempt a diving or sliding catch. The player repeats the action four or five times with emphasis on the bent-leg sliding technique.
- Stage 8:** Players split into two even lines approximately 30 yards apart. For drill purposes, players in one line are designated as center fielders. The first player in each line assumes the ready position. You hit fly balls or line drives between the two lines and the players attempt to make the catch. The players repeat the action four or five times with emphasis on calling for the ball. After each ball is fielded, players go to the end of the line in the direction in which they were running.

