

Clinic Plan: Batting Tune-Up

Time: 1.5 hrs

Participants: up to 30

Equipment:

- 10 cones
- 2 buckets of balls
- As many bats as possible
- 1 batting net
- 1 tee
- Bag of weighted balls (provided)
- Dowels (provided)
- Tennis balls (provided)
- Wiffle balls
- Bases

Goals

- Return to softball movements;
- Calibrate hand-eye coordination;
- Gain confidence with bat skills;
- Refresh tactics and situational responses.

Warm-Up (15 minutes):

1. 3-4 minutes of slow jogging, one lap of the field or to a destination and back
2. 5 minutes of dynamic stretches, including:
 - Shoulder and arm: arm circles, 90 degree shoulder rotations (see pic 1)
 - Legs: walking leg swings (“Frankensteins”), hip openers/closers, walking on toes, walking on heels
 - Lunges with upright twists (see pic 2), trunk rotations while reaching to the ground (see pic 3)
3. 5 minutes of footwork focusing on common movements.
 1. **Shuffle-shuffle-go:** line up on grass facing into field of play. Coach gives verbal cues of “pitch” and “go” to practice taking a base on a ball past the catcher.
 1. On “pitch”, runners take big shuffles to their right
 2. On “go”, runners turn and run as though stealing second base

Teaching points:

- Shuffling keeps the eyes toward the play and lets you see where the ball is - you know best if you can go or not
- Maintain momentum rather than stopping once completing the

initial leadoff

■ Pivoting from moving laterally to forward is very common in softball. The more practice we have at changing directions, the easier it will be to prevent our feet from getting tangled.

Baserunning (15 minutes):

Goals: Refine efficiency, explosiveness, and decision-making on the basepaths.

Coach note: remind participants that they can complete the running drills at any speed, including walking if needed, and they are welcome to stop or take a break at any time!

1. Explosive first step + sprint mechanics, home to first (~3 mins)
 - Players line up at home plate.
 - Coach "GO!" or drops a ball as a cue.
 - Players react explosively, focusing on:
 - Staying low out of the box.
 - Driving knees and pumping arms for acceleration.
 - Hitting the front of the safety base with their right foot
 - 2-3x through the line

2. Rounding first efficiently (~5 mins)
 - Place a cone 3-4 feet into foul territory about 2/3 before first base, and another cone 2-3 feet beyond the baseline between first and second about 1/3 of the way as visual cues
 - Players practice the "banana" route to round first for a double, focusing on:
 - Running with their head up in an arc shape
 - Turning their hips and chest toward second base during the turn
 - Hit the inside corner of the white bag
 - 2-3x through the line

3. Running through first vs. rounding for extra bases decision (~5 mins)
 - Coach stands between first and second with a ball.
 - Players run hard to first and react based on the coach's signal:
 - No signal = sprint through first base
 - Point to second = round first aggressively and advance
(review hitting the corner of the bag if needed)
 - Players must decide quickly based on the coach's visual cue
 - 2-3x through the line

4. First to third reads
 - Coach hits or throws balls into the outfield, another coach acts as third base coach

- Players start at first base, lead off, and react to the ball's location
 - Shallow hit? Stay at second.
 - Deep to the gap? Sprint full speed to third.
 - Hesitation? Quick decision—commit to second or third.
- Players focus on reading outfielder positioning and using their base coach
 - Fielders having to move left or right? Chance to take an extra base.
- 2-3x through

Teaching points:

- The fastest players aren't always the best baserunners, the smartest ones are
- Efficient turns save more time than just running harder
- Decisive baserunning puts pressure the defense

----- **Water break** -----

Batting Skills (50 minutes):

1. Tee station

- Tennis balls and dowel as bat
 - i. Top hand only swings
 - ii. Bottom hand only swings
- Tee on inner half (regular bat and ball for all following drills)
 - i. Keep hands inside the ball
- Tee on outer half
 - i. Stay “over the zone” through the swing to avoid hitting the ball off the end of the bat (i.e., don't pull off/away during swing)
- Tee in mash zone
 - i. Mash it!

Teaching points:

- Goal to have top hand facing up and bottom hand facing down as the bat travels through the strike zone
- Top hand/bottom hand drill forces the batter to keep hands inside the ball and the bat flat through the zone; prevents “rolling over” and expands where in the zone they can make contact
- Flight path of the ball gives immediate feedback, forces the batter not to rush, to watch the ball through contact
- If batter is pulling off the ball, they will “pool cue” on outside pitches

2. Side toss hitting into net

- Thrower aiming for batter's front hip
- Batter aiming to hit line drives (i.e., not up in the air, not into the ground)
- Take the time to reset between tosses

Teaching points:

- Keep eyes on contact point through the swing
- Maintain balance
- Popping up? Try looking at the top of the ball while hitting. (Bottom of the ball if hitting into the ground)
- Finish the swing with a follow-through (no stopping the bat's momentum)

3. Weighted ball front toss

- Thrower tosses weighted balls underhand from front
- Batter swings through the resistance to practice follow-through

4. Wiffle ball front toss

- Thrower tosses wiffle balls underhand from front
- Close-ish distance, flat trajectory, moderate speed

Teaching points:

- Keep eyes on contact point through the swing
- Maintain balance
- Finish the swing with a follow-through (maintain the bat's momentum)

Wrap-Up (5 minutes):

1. Q&A
2. Remind the group that practice plans and teaching points will be available on the Mabel website for them to use.

Picture examples

1.

Shoulder Rotations
With arms out to side and elbows bent to 90 degrees, slowly rotate the hands down then back up while maintaining shoulder position



2.

Lunges with Rotation

Stand up tall with hands straight above head. Lunge forward with right leg. Bend both knees and keep torso in a vertical line. While you are in the down position, rotate your torso towards your right side. Pause then rotate back and stand up tall. Lunge forward with left foot and rotate to the left side. Continue for 20 yards. Now, take a step backwards with left foot and rotate torso to the right. Continue alternating backward lunges until you reach the starting point.



3.

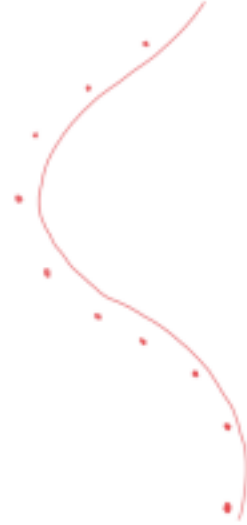
"World's Greatest Stretch"

Step forward into an exaggerated lunge. Place palms on the ground on the inside of the foot in front of you. Drop the hips toward the ground. Rotate the torso toward the side you stepped with and send the same sided arm toward the sky, following it with your eyes. Return the hand to the ground and walk both hands backward, shifting weight toward the back foot and letting the hips rise. Stand up and switch sides.



4.

3.



5.

4. Coming "around" a grounder in the outfield

