

## Advanced Infield Drills

### Machine Short Hops

#### Age Appropriate

Grouping 5, ages 10 to 15+

#### Objective

To develop soft hands and a proper glove angle; to work on catching the ball out in front of the body

#### Setup

A bucket of balls (soft or sponge balls or real baseballs) and a pitching machine

#### Execution

This drill can be done outdoors or indoors. You can make the drill even more challenging by having players field soft or sponge rubber balls with their bare hands. Set pitching machines so that players must field fast-moving balls on short hops. Make sure players assume and maintain a good fielding position (wide base, butt down, hands out in front). If using gloves and real baseballs, they'll need to relax their wrists and catch the ball out in front. Have them try to catch the ball with only one hand to promote proper glove angle and softer hands. (This is especially important when using softer balls and no gloves.) See who can catch the most short hops out of 5 or 10 attempts.



#### Coaching Keys

Players who have trouble fielding these balls cleanly are probably not getting their gloves or hands far enough out in front, and their wrists might not be relaxed. Have them assume the proper hand and wrist position before the balls are fed to force them to watch the ball travel all the way into their hands. The relaxed wrist makes their hands "softer" and allows them to field the balls more cleanly.

