

Regular Outfield Drills

Thrown or Machine Ground Balls

Age Appropriate

Grouping 1, all ages

Objective

To learn how to field ground balls properly in a controlled environment

Setup

A bucket of balls, a pitching machine (optional), a coach to feed machine or throw balls

Execution

Like infielders, outfielders should field a ground ball with a wide base, the butt down, and the hands out in front of the body. Get wide by stepping toward home with glove-side leg forward and glove in front of that foot. Players should get comfortable with proper fundamentals before fielding hit balls. It's okay to use a pitching machine for outfield ground balls right from the start. Roll or feed players ground balls one at a time. Have them get to the spot quickly, get under control, field properly, generate momentum toward the coach, and throw. Don't allow players to walk or run through ground balls. They need to slow down and get under control to field properly.



Coaching Keys

Young outfielders have a tendency to "run through" ground balls. That is, they try to get to the spot quickly and then try to field the ball while still running at or near full speed. Remember that their main goal is to field the ball quickly and throw it to the proper cutoff or relay person to prevent baserunners from advancing. Thus, fielding the ball cleanly is the most important responsibility. Players should come to almost a complete stop if they have to so that they can be sure to field the ball cleanly.