

## Session #10 ▶ Focus: Pitching

~ Warm Up ~

### DEFEND

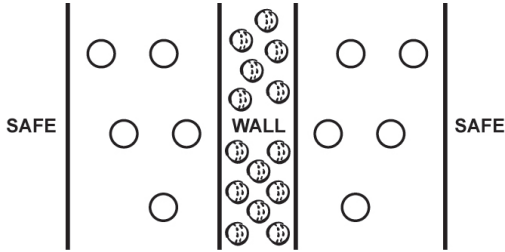
**Learning Objective:** Agility, quickness, running, teamwork

**Time:** 5 minutes

**Equipment:** Balls, pylons or markers

### How to:

- Mark out a “safe” area at both ends of the playing area and an area to be defended in between them



- Place balls in the area to be defended (wall). Select 3-4 players to defend the “wall”. Rest of the players are scattered in the playing area.
- “Defenders” try to keep the others from grabbing a ball and getting it back to a “safe” area without being tagged
- If caught, they become a defender
- Game ends when all balls are in safe area OR all players are caught and are defenders



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~ Main Activities ~

**GOTCHA**

**Learning Objective:** Base running, determination

**Time:** 5 minutes

**Equipment:** 4 bases

**How to:**

- Form groups of 3 with 3 players at each base.
- Set up bases in diamond formation 20' – 30' apart
- On “GO”, one player from each group starts running around the bases
- Objective is to run past the person ahead of you
- Score 1 point for your team for every player passed
- Run for a set period (15-30 seconds)

**KNEE CLAPS**

**Learning Objective:** Bringing the knees together at the end of a pitch

**Time:** 5 minutes

**Equipment:** N/A

**How to:**

- Line players up in a line with at least two BIG steps distance in between them facing the instructor
- Have players start facing the instructor with their hands clasped behind their backs standing on one foot on the line
- Taking a big step sideways, have players step and slide their knees together finishing standing on their other leg
- Once players have mastered the lower body step-slide motion, add the upper body by having the pitcher clap as their legs come together. Say step-clap, step-clap as they go through the movement 10 times

**WHIP IT**

**Learning Objective:** Whipping the ball from the top of the arm circle to the bottom to release it

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Equipment:** Softballs in tube socks (6 for each player), hula hoop targets hung at strike zone height

**How to:**

- Start by showing players where to grip their “whip-it”. Hands should be placed 6-8 inches from the ball up the sock so the pitcher feels there is some control over the ball but can still appreciate a whipping motion with the sock
- Start the players facing sideways to their hula hoop target grasping the sock in their pitching hand and their glove on the other
- Instruct the player to step to the target while making an arm circle with their “whip-it”
- Use the key words of whipping the ball from the top of their arm circle to the bottom, letting it go at the bottom to go straight for the hula hoop
- Have them repeat these 6 times before all players collect their “whip-its” at the same time
- CAUTION: most inexperienced kids will throw the first couple behind them because they hang on to the sock too long. Encourage them to let go sooner and avoid standing directly behind them during the drill

**LEAD ME**

**Learning Objective:** Catching and throwing while moving

**Time:** 5 minutes

**Equipment:** 1 ball for every 2 players

**How to:**

- Partners stand, parallel, facing same direction approximately 20ft apart.
- Next set of partners is ready to go as soon as 1st set is out of the way. 2 lines can be going at once
- Partners lead each other with a throw so they both must be moving while throwing and catching

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~ Modified Game ~

**MODIFIED SOFTBALL GAME**

**Learning Objective:** All softball skills

**Time:** 45 minutes

**Equipment:** Ball, bat, bases

**How to:**

- Coach will pitch to their team
- 7 pitches are thrown to each batter to allow them to hit a fair ball. If the player does not hit a fair ball, they go to first base if a swing was taken on at least four pitches
- All players will play defense
- All players will bat each inning
- There will be no advances on overthrows

**Tips/Modifications:**

See U7 Introduction for more information.