

The Practice Plan sample is part of our series: **Youth Softball Practice Plan: Ages 6-10.**

[Learn More](#) or [Buy Now](#)

Practice 8: Pitchers and Catchers



OK, Coach, if you haven't done it yet, it's time to continue developing catchers and pitchers – if your league isn't T-ball or coach pitch. If your league allows the kids to pitch themselves, hopefully you'll have a couple girls who are taking lessons and can pitch. If not, you'll have to find some. Good luck.

First 15-20 Minutes (Warm-up)

Use the standard warm-up routine: stretching, moderate jog to a finishing sprint. Then, catching, throwing and ground-ball lines. Always stress mechanics. If the kids struggled with the “rapid fire” drill used in a previous practice, don't give up, keep working at it. As always, make sure you leave plenty of room between each girl during warm-ups. Remember, you can always go back to the two or three lines with coaches tossing the ball to get an effective warm-up.

Some stretches:

1. Jumping jacks.
2. Stand straight, bend a leg behind the body, grab the ankle and pull the heel toward the backside. Hold for a 10 count. Mimic with the other leg. This stretches the quad muscles.
3. Stand straight and extend the right arm behind the body. Grab the right wrist with the left hand and pull back and over toward the left side. Hold for a 10 count. Mimic with the other arm. This will stretch the front of the shoulder.

Next 2 Minutes (Water Break)

Keep your players hydrated with a water break. But have them hustle back on the field

Next 10 Minutes (Review Baserunning)

Review the baserunning lesson, specifically the turn at first base, cutting the corner of the bag and how/when to take a lead.

Next 2 Minutes (Water Break)

Keep your players hydrated with a water break. But have them hustle back on the field.

Next 15 Minutes (Catchers)

Not every player will want to catch. At the youngest ages, it's important to encourage the girls to try every position. If not, find out who wants to catch and take them aside. Have your coaches take the rest of the girls and run them through situations.

You take the girls who want to catch and show them the following (they'll need to be in catcher's equipment):

- How to set up in relation to the hitter and how to receive the ball: Make sure your catcher keeps her throwing hand behind her to protect the hand.
- How to set up when there's a runner on base: A little higher in the stance, with the throwing-side foot slightly behind.
- How to get in position to throw: Use the "T" drill. Draw a large T behind what would be the plate. The toes should be in line with the top line of the T. If a runner goes, teach them how to pop up out of their stance, landing on the long line of the T pointing toward second base, in position to throw.
- You also can put them in gear and take a tennis ball and work on blocking balls in the dirt (put them in position, have them drop to their knees with their glove, palm out, between their legs. Have the body bent forward at the waist. Stress the point that the object is to block the ball in front of them, not to catch it).
- Finally, you want vocal catchers. They are the only ones on the field who see everything in front of them. Catchers and shortstops are the captains of your infield.

Coaching Point

- *The set-up and footwork are keys to catching. Protect the throwing hand.*

Remaining Time

If you have to find pitchers, here's what you do: Line the kids up in front of a wall, or their parents if you don't have a large block wall available. Give each a ball and have them throw against the wall or to their parents. The girls who consistently throw it near the strike zone are now pitchers and you'll be able to work with them. For those who may be interested in pitching, get them information about lessons. Pitching coaches are important if youngsters want to become serious about the position.

Gather the girls together and congratulate them for a job well done. Give them the next practice time (or game time) and follow up with an e-mail to the parents.