

## FURY Softball Practice Drills

Each of the drills below will advise equipment needed, the amount of time it should take and the optimal setup and group sizes to keep the activity running smoothly.

### Hitting

The drills in this section are designed to work all aspects of a player's swing. Proper swing technique will help to optimize power and promote good contact on the ball. A player will also be working on hitting pitches all over the strike zone, adapting to different pitches and hitting for power no matter where they make contact.

The time estimates indicated on each station are based on all players working through the station on the team. You will be dividing up the team in smaller groups to run through multiple stations at the same time so you can have more than one activity like a tee station in one time slot.

**Ready Position** of a player in the batter's box consists of knees bent slightly, weight on the balls of their feet, feet slightly wider than shoulder width apart and front foot halfway up the plate. Then the player's knocking knuckles are lined up, hands are together, their arms are away from the body about chin height, and the bat is off the shoulder. Helmet, batting gloves and bat required at all times.

#### Tee Drills

- **High, Low, Middle** – Tee Required, 8 regular balls, a Net and 3-4 per group

This drill is designed to train the player how to adjust to hit balls at different heights of the strike zone.

The player will stand in their ready position in the batter's box and the coach or parent will set the tee height to either their knees, belt or chest. Give each player 5 swings at that height and then adjust or repeat as desired.

Ensure proper mechanics, small trigger step, correct weight transfer and good swing mechanics, correct where required.

10 Minutes

- **Inside Pitch** – Tee Required, 8 regular balls, a Net and 3-4 per group

This drill is designed to help the player adjust to hitting an inside pitch.

The player will stand in their ready position in the batter's box and the coach or parent will set the tee to belt height. Move the tee so the ball position would be on the inside edge of the plate. Give the player 5 swings, alternatively, raise and lower the tee to offer more challenge.

Ensure proper mechanics, small trigger **step out** to adjust to pitch, correct weight transfer and good swing mechanics, correct where required.

10 Minutes

- **Outside Pitch** - Tee Required, 8 regular balls, a Net and 3-4 per group

This drill is designed to help the player adjust to hitting an outside pitch.

The player will stand in their ready position in the batter's box and the coach or parent will set the tee to belt height. Move the tee so the ball position would be on the outside edge of the plate. Give the player 5 swings, alternatively, raise and lower the tee to offer more challenge.

Ensure proper mechanics, small trigger **step in** to adjust to pitch, correct weight transfer and good swing mechanics, correct where required.

10 Minutes

- **Keep Bat in the Zone** - Tee Required, 8 regular balls, a Net and 3-4 per group

This drill is designed to keep the player's eye on the ball and their bat in the hitting zone to ensure quality hits.

The player will stand in their ready position in the batter's box and the coach or parent will set the tee to belt height. This drill can be done in three phases or it can just be a full hitting station.

The player, when swinging at the ball, needs to keep their eye on the tee straight through the swing, thus keeping their eyes and their bat in the hitting zone for as long as possible.

This can be done in three parts as well:

- Freeze at contact

Player swings and freezes just after hitting the ball, ensure their head stays down and watches the ball and remains fixed on the tee.

- Freeze at extension

Player swings and freezes at full extension, same thing as above, ensure their head stays down and watching the ball and eyes remain fixed on the tee.

- Full follow through

Player swings at full speed straight through, same thing as above, ensure their head stays down and watching the ball and eyes remain fixed on the tee.

15 minutes

- **One Arm Drills** - Tee Required, 8 regular balls, a Net, small bat and 3-4 per group

These drills are designed to keep a player's hands in the correct position and the correct arm position at contact. It will also help players who drop their shoulder and "dip" at contact.

The player will position themselves in the batter's box on one knee, their forward leg up. The ball will be slightly forward of their raised knee on the lowered tee. Using just their forehand or their back hand to swing the small bat.

Forehand swings, have the player stop the bat just after contact. You are looking to see if their palm is facing upwards when they hit the ball, this ensures good hand position.

Backhand swings, have the player stop at full extension after they hit the ball, their palm should be face down.

In addition, on the backhand, if the player is not making good contact, break down the backhand and have the players run through this process:

- Elbow pointing at the ball
- Knob of the bat at the ball
- Swing

These drills will enable the coach to really break down a player's swing and help to ensure good contact and good technique for hitting.

15 minutes

### **Whiffle Ball Toss Drills**

- Multi Coloured Balls – whiffle balls and a net 3-4 players

This drill will help the players to really focus on the ball when it is being pitched to them. This will increase the chance of good contact based on the player's focus.

Set a net up and have 5 to 10 of the multi coloured balls, have the player setup in their ready position about 8 feet away from the net, they will hit into the net.

The coach will kneel at 45 degrees from the player at the corner of the net, depending on the side the player hits from. The coach will then toss the balls one at a time for the player to hit. The player must call out the colour they see hit their bat at contact. Do this for each pitch.

10 minutes

- Multiple Balls, different colours and sizes of whiffle balls, a net 3-4 players

This drill will help the players to really focus on the ball when it is being pitched to them. This will increase the chance of good contact based on the player's focus.

Set a net up and have 10 to 20 whiffle balls in different colours, have the player setup in their ready position about 8 feet away from the net, they will hit into the net.

The coach will kneel at 45 degrees from the player at the corner of the net, depending on the side the player hits from. The coach will then toss 2 different coloured balls and call out one of the colours. The player must hit the chosen colour, ignoring the other ball. Coaches can use balls of different sizes as well to increase the challenge. 5-10 pitches each.

10 minutes

### **Soft Toss Drill** – Net and 10 regular balls 3-4 players

This drill will help the player to adapt to various pitch locations as well as hand eye coordination. This is an excellent station to have setup before games as part of a pre-game warmup. This should also be a station used at every batting practice.

Set a net up and have 10 regular balls, have the player setup in their ready position about 8 feet away from the net, they will hit into the net. This drill can also just be done using the whole field, have the other players out catching fly balls and throwing them back in to the pitcher as they get them.

The coach will kneel at 45 degrees from the player at the corner of the net, depending on the side the player hits from. The coach will then toss balls for the player to hit. Try to throw the ball to the same spot each time if possible. To challenge hitters, the coach can vary the location of the pitch. 10 pitches each rapid fire.

Ensure the player resets their ready position each time and correct swing issues as required.

10 minutes

### **Bunting Drill** – Pitcher or pitching machine, regular balls, a net, plate 3-4 players

This drill is designed to work on a player's bunting.

Setup a net or pick a section of fence to backstop the player. Have the player setup in ready position, try and use a plate or a glove to simulate a plate so the player sets up properly in the batter's box. Pitch from about 20-30 feet away from the hitter and have them bunt the ball. Call out bunt locations (1<sup>st</sup> base, 3<sup>rd</sup> base) to help challenge the player. Work on the player not revealing the bunt too early to increase the muscle memory of adapting from ready position to bunt position quickly.

Look for the player to have a good balanced stance when they move into bunt position, it may require that a new player be setup in their bunt position to receive pitches at first. Work to have the player then change from ready position to bunt position as the pitch is coming. The player should not be moving the bat to hit a ball at different heights, the player should be adjusting using their legs.

15 minutes

### **Live Pitch** – pitcher, regular balls 11+ players

This is just a standard game formation drill where the whole team participates. Often it is beneficial if you have a consistent pitcher who can pitch strikes regularly, to have them pitch in a game style hitting practice. The objective here is to incorporate hitting with infield and outfield plays as well, having base runners trying to make things happen on base.

20 -25 minutes