



IN THE CIRCLE

with Michele Smith

Indoor Softball Practice Ideas for Winter Months

One of the questions I hear often is “how to train for softball during the winter months?” Here are a couple of ideas to keep you fit, in form and having fun while working on your softball game! Enjoy.

A.) Partner throws or Wall throws: partner up and work on your throwing for accuracy and precision. If you don't have a partner, tape a box on the wall. With or without a partner keep count of how many good throws you make and chart your progress over the winter months. Do 5 sets of 20 throws.

B.) Dry swings: Find a mirror, window or an area of reflection so you can watch yourself as you perform dry swings. This is one of the best ways to learn and understand your swing and the correct movements of a proper swing. Visualize inside, outside and change up pitches to challenge yourself. Do 6 sets of 25 dry swings.

C.) Pitchers should use winter months to hone their mechanics and learn a 'new' pitch. When learning new pitches, I recommend the change up and drop ball first. Pitchers should throw 100 pitches [+/- 50 depending on age] at least 3 days per week.

D.) Fielding ground balls inside a gym is a wonderful time to get comfortable with your skill work, soft hands on receiving the ball, and quick release for a speedy throw. Let's face it; there shouldn't be any 'bad hops' on a gym floor! With or without a partner do 4 sets of 25 balls rolls to each other. If you

don't have a partner, throw against the wall so the ball rolls back and you can field it.

E.) Footwork is one area that players and coaches overlook. Athletes with quick feet will have the tools to take their game to the next level. Here are some 'Ladder' drills to quicken your feet and are bound to be fun as well. Don't have a ladder? Tape one down on the gym floor! Perform each drill 3 times.

Agility Ladder Drills

•Can make a ladder: full length = 10 yards with 18" boxes (forms 18 total squares); short ladder = 5 yards with 18" boxes (forms 9 total squares)

1. Run Through - 1 Foot in Each Box

2. Run Through - 2 Feet in Each Box

3. In-In-Out-Out (Forward): Say the name to yourself to follow the pattern “in-in-out-out” through each box. It means first foot in, other foot in, first foot out, other foot out moving forward with each step.

4. In-In-Out-Out (Lateral): Same as above but face sideways to the ladder. Have your inside foot start the drill. Perform the drill back in the other direction so you train both directions.

5. Hopscotch: Start with your feet straddling the ladder. Jump so both feet land in the ladder then jump out so that both feet straddle the ladder again. Move forward jumping in and out of each box and continue to the end of the ladder.

F.) Pick up games with your friends: Don't be afraid to organize a pick up game and play indoors with a JUGS “Lite Flite” ball. You can use a glove or not, the Lite Flite balls fly well, are easy to pitch but yet you can catch them with or without a glove. With a glove is actually better because you really have to focus on keeping the ball in your glove and not letting it 'pop' out. Taping down the bases is better than throw down bases as the latter have a tendency to slide out from under your feet. Playing games like this will help get you in the competitive spirit and ready for the spring season!

For an even more intense workout and training schedule, check out my website and information on my Dynamic Training DVD and Year Long Dynamic Training Guide-guaranteed to get you in the best shape of your life! www.michelesmith.com

Good Luck and enjoy your winter training!! You'll be 'thankful' you did when spring rolls around!

Michele Smith