



FUN AT BAT

AT HOME EDITION



INTRODUCTION

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Fun At Bat is a bat-and-ball skills development program for all children. The overarching goal of this program is to promote fun and active lifestyles for children, while teaching them the fundamental skills of bat-and-ball sports. Together, we can ensure children's experiences with bat-and-ball sports are safe, positive and enjoyable!

Fun At Bat At Home was created to bring the components of bat-and-ball activities right to your home!

PROGRAM GOALS - FUN AT BAT AIMS TO:

1. Teach the fundamental skills and rules that are necessary to play bat-and-ball sports.
2. Enable children to learn the health-enhancing benefits that are associated with playing bat-and-ball sports.
3. Create a fun, active, and positive environment in which children can enjoy bat-and-ball sports.
4. Promote high self-esteem and self-confidence by giving all children the opportunity to learn and succeed in bat-and-ball sports.
5. Model and teach the fundamentals of game play, while emphasizing teamwork and good sportsmanship.

CONTENTS

DYNAMIC WARMUP	4
ALTERNATIVE EQUIPMENT	6
ACTIVITIES	7
CHAMPIONSHIP PRINCIPLES BOOK	11
WRAP UP	12
APPENDIX	13
APPENDIX A: ACTIVE START DIAGRAMS	12-17
APPENDIX B: CRITICAL ELEMENTS OF ESSENTIAL SKILLS	18-19
APPENDIX D: TARGET POSTER	20
APPENDIX E: BAT-AND-BALL POSITION STATION CARDS	21-29
COLORING SHEETS	30



DYNAMIC WARMUP

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The dynamic warm-up incorporates activities designed to improve and develop basic function that are the building blocks of higher level sports skills and physical fitness. These are exercises that emphasize postural alignment, mobility, balance and coordination. The objective is to stimulate and prepare the brain and body to behave and work together.

See Appendix A (page 13) for diagrams.

MARCH IN PLACE:

This exercise challenges the eyes and brain to work together regardless of the sight line. This will prepare children to accelerate, decelerate and run whether running to a base or chasing after a live ball. As an extra challenge, you can add in March in Place with arms out to the side, doing arm circles forward/backward, or arms in front with arm circles clockwise/counterclockwise.

SLIDES:

This exercise prepares children to quickly change direction whether accelerating or having to run back to a base or get to a hit ball. Slide to the right, bring right knee to left elbow and then slide to the left, bringing left knee to right elbow.

SINGLE LEG JUMPS:

This movement prepares the body for all of the energy and power required in jumping, running, accepting landing forces and observing differences in right and left side abilities. 3 repetitions each leg, alternating in between. Jump forward off of your left leg and then jump forward off of your right leg consecutively.

DOUBLE LEG JUMP-SQUAT/REACH/TOE RAISE-SQUAT JUMP:

Baseball is a game requiring full body connection whether throwing, pitching, hitting or fielding. This drill links it all together. Standing on both legs, jump forward, land, and go to a full squat position. Raise up from the squat reaching arms to the sky then add the toe raise. Lower heels, then jump straight up.

CROSS CRAWL:

Baseball requires cross body action in hitting, fielding and running as well as full mental alertness. This exercise accomplishes all of these important functions. While standing, bring your right elbow to left knee then alternate, left knee to right elbow.

BRIDGE AND HIP EXTENSION:

The bridge is a hip hinge movement done on the ground that is the same athletic stance a fielder would have in preparation and a batter as they sit into their stance. It works the power muscles of the backside and loosens up the hips. Pulling the knees to the chest assures that we have full range of motion about the hips and knees. Lie down on back and push hips to the sky, hold for 3 seconds. When hips are back on the ground, pull both knees to chest and hold for 5 seconds.

SUPER SLOW MOTION MARCH:

This challenges the ability to balance and stand on one leg while teaching the body how to best handle an unbalanced situation. March in Place, in super slow motion, looking straight ahead.

STAND ON ONE LEG:

While standing on one leg, perform a hip hinge on one leg while the other goes behind, creating a T. This is an excellent single leg balance, stabilizer and strength drill that challenges the ability to bend and balance on one leg. 2 repetitions, alternating right and left leg. Attempt to hold each pose for 5 seconds.

WHIRLY BIRDS:

This exercise simply opens up the hips and trunk allowing freer movement when running, fielding and hitting. 1 set rotating hips clockwise, then 1 set rotating hips counterclockwise. 10 seconds each direction. Standing on both legs with feet close together and hands on the hips, rotating hips in different directions.

ALTERNATIVE EQUIPMENT

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ACTIVITIES

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FUNDAMENTALS OF UNDERHAND THROWING:

Make sure the ball is in the child's dominant hand. Then they will step with their opposite foot; making sure that their hips are facing their desired target. Holding the ball at their waist the child will swing the ball backward behind themselves without twisting their body. As they step with their opposite foot, they will swing the ball forward past their hip release the ball and follow-through so that the ball travels upward toward their target.

Equipment needed:

- Any size ball

Alternative equipment:

- Ball of paper, aluminum foil, or rolled up socks.

FUNDAMENTALS OF OVERHAND THROWING:

Make sure that the ball starts in the child's dominant hand and point at the desired target with their non-dominant hand. Bringing their throwing arm back into an "L" shape (arm bent at the elbow and hand held in the air with the ball), the child will step with their opposite foot as they turn their hips and begin throwing the ball toward their target and following through across their body.

Equipment needed:

- Any size ball

Alternative equipment:

- Ball of paper, aluminum foil, or rolled up socks.

THROWING HOME RUN DERBY:

Children will start on a designated starting line in the activity area. On their own, or on a partner's command ("GO" or "Throw"), the child will throw balls or soft objects at different areas of the activity area, imagining that they are throwing towards different areas/positions of a baseball field. Start with close distances/field locations and then more toward further positions and field locations. After the child finishes throwing, give a second command ("Field") and allow the child that just threw to retrieve their ball and bring it back to the starting line.

Variations

- Use a different locomotor skill (skip, slide, gallop) when retrieving the ball.
- Allow for different sized balls that the child can choose from if they are having trouble throwing to the further locations.
- You can utilize the Bat-and-ball Position Station Cards (Appendix E) if students need a reminder of where the positions are located.

Equipment needed:

- Any size ball

Alternative equipment:

- Ball of paper, aluminum foil, or rolled up socks.
-

TARGETS, TARGETS EVERYWHERE...:

The child will have a ball that is friendly to their surroundings. They will try to locate and throw overhand or underhand at as many targets as possible within the activity area. These targets can be large items like doors or posters, or small items like cracks on the wall, pillows, paper taped on to the wall, etc. If outdoors, targets can be attached to the backstop or other fences with zip ties, or similar fasteners. Targets should be hung at varying levels- low and high.

Variations:

- After the child releases the ball and hits the target, they instantly become the fielder and attempt to catch the ball using the "thumbs out, thumbs together" method, depending on how the ball comes off the target. Students continue throwing at various targets, with the reminder that they can only throw at available targets.
- Have children perform different locomotor skills while traveling to the different targets (slides, crawls) and they can perform an exercise (jumping jacks, squat, etc.) each time they arrive at a new target.

Equipment needed:

- Any size ball

Alternative equipment:

- Ball of paper, aluminum foil, or rolled up socks.
 - Appendix D: Target Poster or any other appropriate targets
-

FUNDAMENTALS OF CATCHING:

As the ball approaches, children should have their eyes on their ball and their arms reached out. If the ball is below the waist, then their thumbs should be out; if the ball is above the waist, then their thumbs should be together. As the ball enters their hands they should grasp it and bring it in toward their body.

Equipment needed:

- Any size ball

Alternative equipment:

- Ball of paper, aluminum foil, or rolled up socks.

PARTNER TOSS:

With a partner, or utilizing a wall, practice throwing overhand/underhand and catching a ball. Partners can start off approximately five feet apart from each other. Partners can count how many continuous, successful catches they make. If throwing against a wall, once the throw is made, get in to a fielding position to field the ball off of the bounce back. Some variations may include: Increase or decrease distance between partners and/or the wall. Participants can travel (skip, slide, jog) with their partner and freeze when the music stops and begin throwing back and forth wherever they end up.

Equipment needed:

- Any size ball

Alternative equipment:

- Ball of paper, aluminum foil, or rolled up socks.
-

FUNDAMENTALS OF FIELDING A GROUND BALL & CATCHING A FLY BALL:

Fielding a ground ball involves sitting in a chair position, knees bent, arms ready, feet shoulder width apart and flat back as if you are sitting in an imaginary chair.

A ground ball indicates that the ball is traveling on the ground (or below the player's waist), which requires the child to adjust their hands so that their fingers are pointing toward the ground in front of them making a triangle with their feet and hands.

A fly ball indicates that the ball is traveling toward them above their head (waist), which requires the child to present both hands with their fingers pointing up.

Equipment needed:

- Any size ball

Alternative equipment:

- Ball of paper, aluminum foil, or rolled up socks.
-

PARTNER FIELDING:

With a partner, children will either underhand toss the ball to their partner or roll the ball to their partner (children can decide how to toss). The receiving partner will present their hands in the proper way to catch the ball.

Variations:

- Partners can work only on underhand fielding first and then proceed to work on above the waist catching.
- Groups of three or four could be used to practice taking turns and attempting to catch from different people.
- Groups can count how many in a row they successfully caught using the correct hand placement.

Equipment needed:

- Any size ball

Alternative equipment:

- Ball of paper, aluminum foil, or rolled up socks.
-

FUNDAMENTALS OF HITTING:

When you are hitting a ball it is important you are ready to hit the ball from the tee or from the pitcher. The ready position allows the child to prepare to hit the ball. In Ready Position, feet are to be shoulder width apart and knees are bent. The child then brings their hands back toward their right ear (if they are right handed) and make sure that their hands are not touching their ear but are close. You can practice making the "V" and bringing the bat up towards their ear a couple of times.

Swinging the bat starts at the ready position and the arms move together in front of the child at chest height, passing the "V" position, finishing toward the opposite ear (Right-handed batter - right ear to left ear, Left-handed batter - left ear to right ear).

Equipment needed:

- Foam/plastic bat

Alternative equipment:

- Cardboard box, tennis racket, umbrella, open hand, etc.
-

HITTING DERBY:

Children will start at a designated area and once music starts or the command is given, "Batters Ready?", the child will be in the ready position waiting to hear, "Swing." When they hear "swing" or at their own pace, the child will hit a ball off of a tee, stool, or other suitable elevated surface.

This activity can also be done with children using their hands as a bat (striking the ball with the both hands).

When retrieving their ball, change the way they move (skip, slide, gallop).

Children can set a goal for ball distance, number of times they successfully hit the ball, and more.

Have fun and celebrate your home runs!

Equipment needed:

- Foam/plastic bat
- Any size ball
- Batting tee, traffic cone, paper towel rolls, upside down trash bin

Alternative equipment:

- • Cardboard box, tennis racket, umbrella, open hand, etc.
 - • Paper towel rolls, upside down trash bin, chair, etc.
-

GET TO THE CHOPPER!:

As available, a partner will roll or bounce a ball in front of a child, simulating a ground ball being hit to a defender. The child will run towards the ball while using their momentum to field the ball cleanly and gently flip back to their partner. Repeat this as many times as you please. Utilize the space around you to roll the ball towards different spots and at different speeds.

Equipment needed:

- Any size ball

Alternative equipment:

- Ball of paper, aluminum foil, or rolled up socks.
-

DEFEND THE HOUSE:

Designate a wall or backstop to act as the "goal". As available, a partner will stand or take a knee 10 feet from the goal. A child will attempt to field, catch, or block any ball that is thrown, rolled, or bounced at the goal. For purposes of this exercise, make sure the child is in a proper fielding position/athletic stance, utilizing the slide technique to move around. Defend your house and enjoy the competition!

Equipment needed:

- Any size ball
- Cones/goal markers

Alternative equipment:

- Ball of paper, aluminum foil, or rolled up socks.

CHAMPIONSHIP PRINCIPLES BOOK

WATCH VIDEO ▶▶

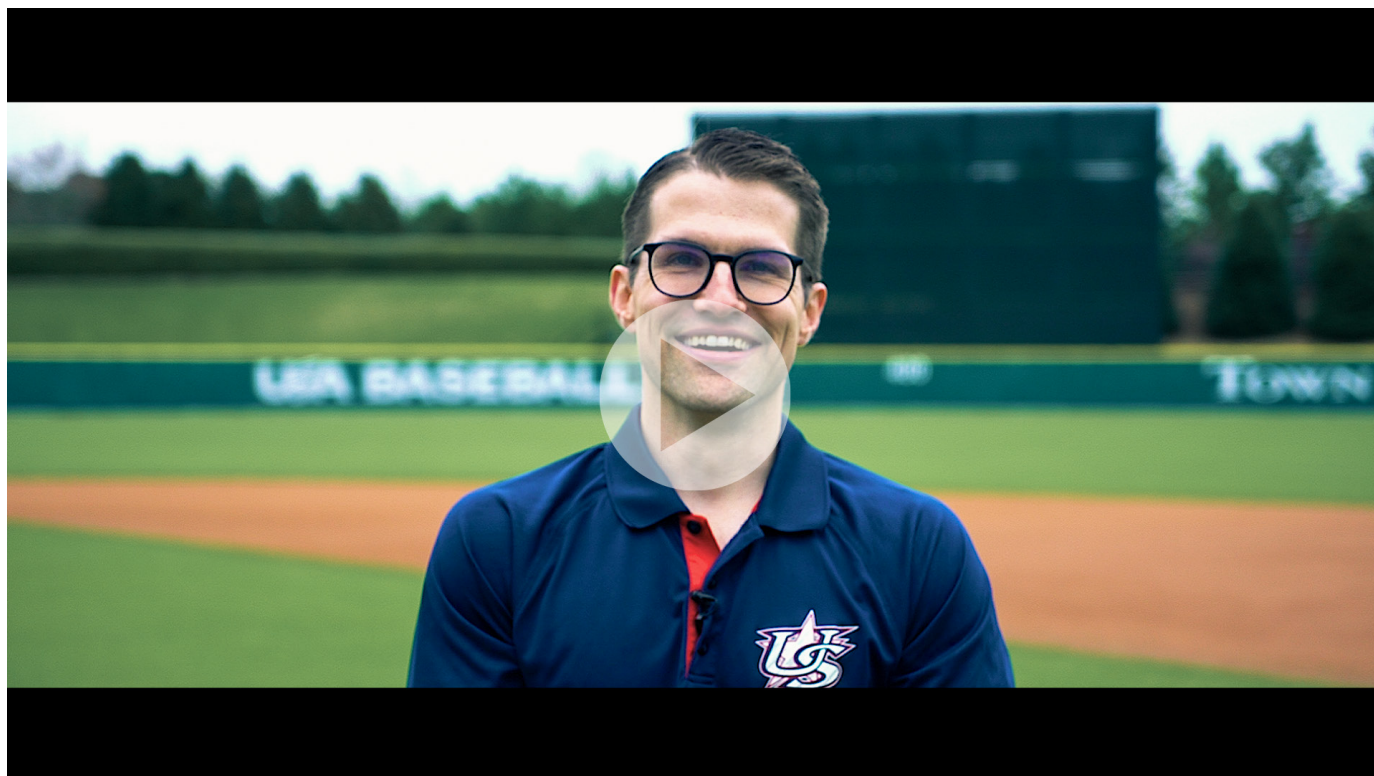
READ ▶▶



Participating in youth sports not only allows for children to develop physically with strong muscles and bones, but it also provides a platform for emotional development. The social interactions that children experience playing sports can build a foundation for good character and positive self-esteem. The Fun at Bat skill development program is committed to assisting in the development of positive character building traits. Throughout the curriculum, USA Baseball has incorporated eight Championship Principles that can positively impact children beyond their time in sports, and throughout their life.

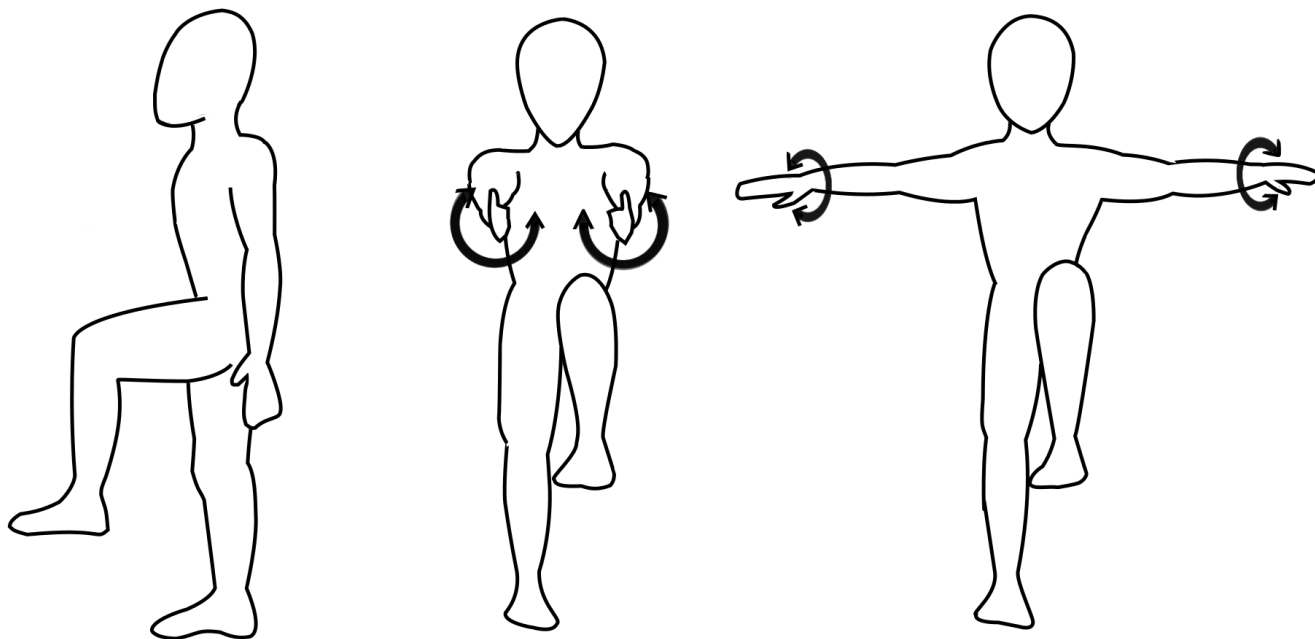
WRAP UP

WATCH VIDEO ▶

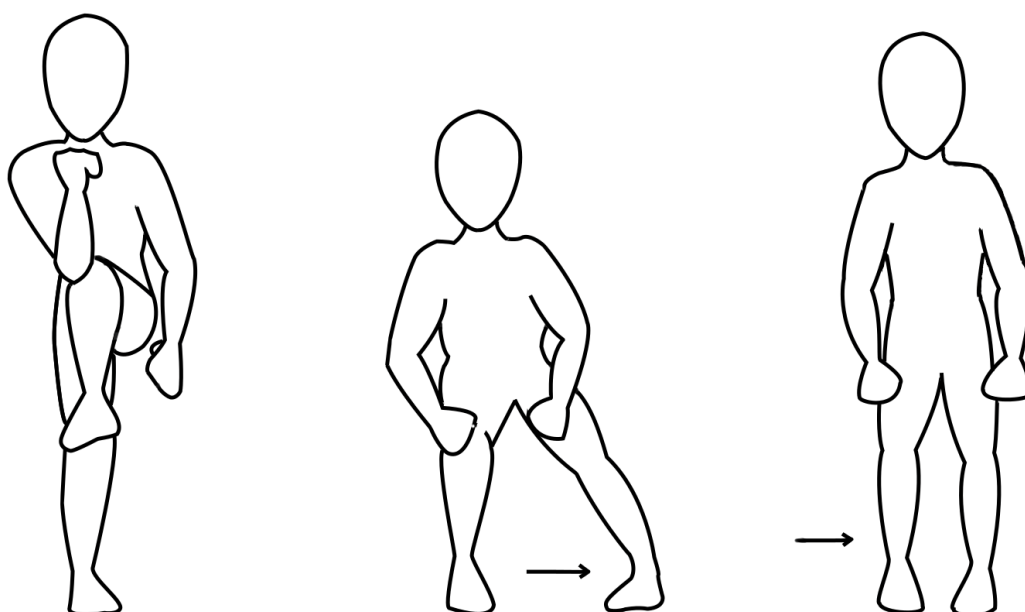


Appendix A: Active Start Diagrams

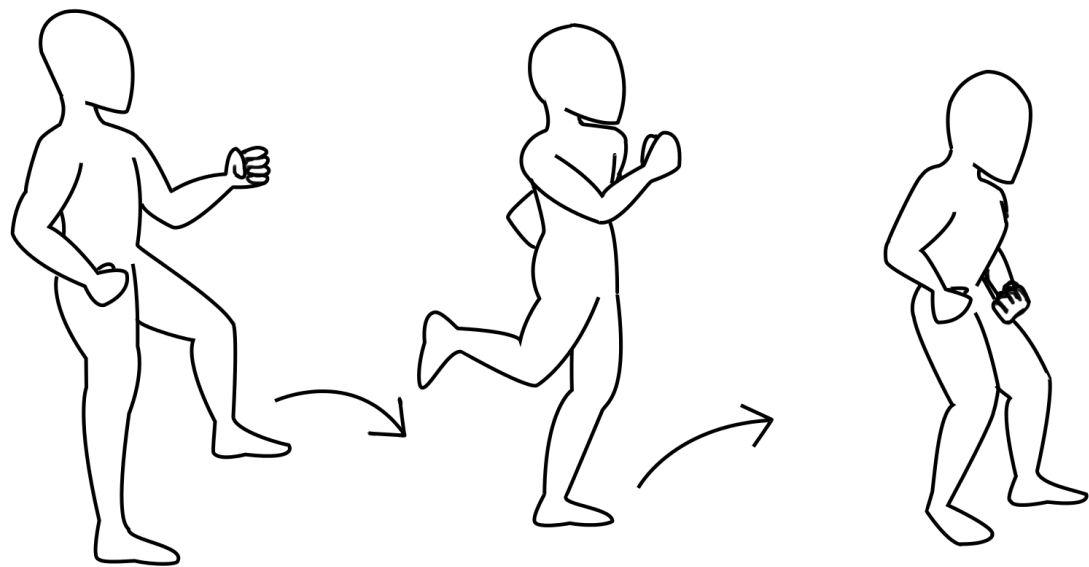
MARCH IN PLACE



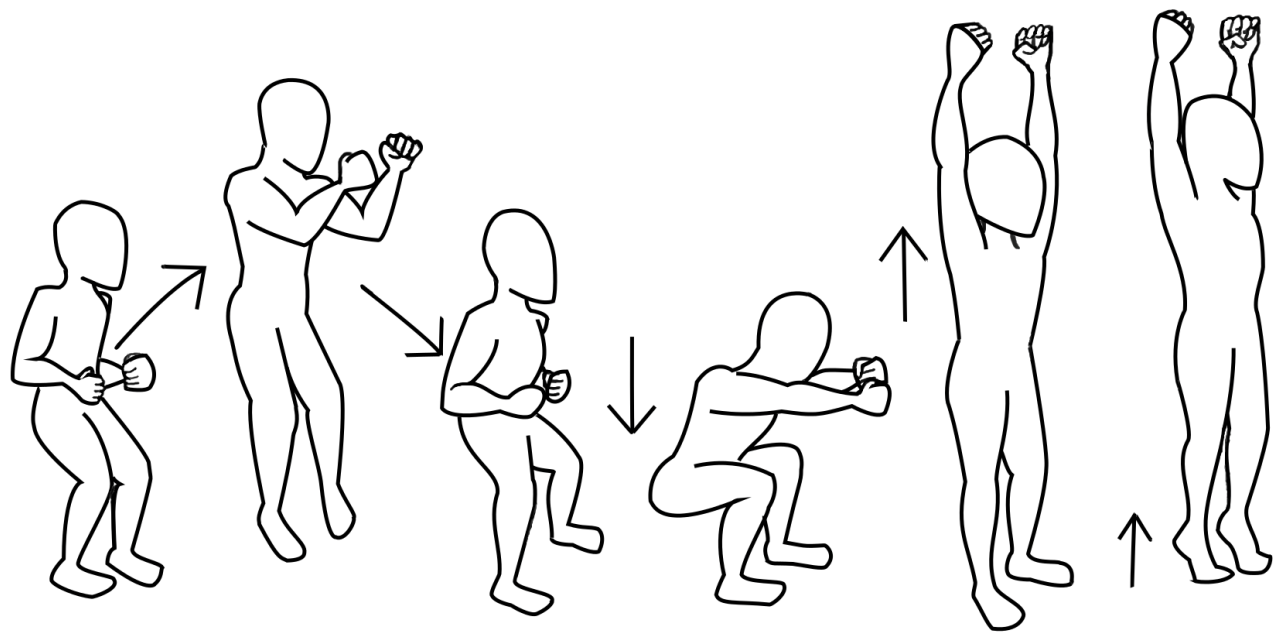
SLIDES



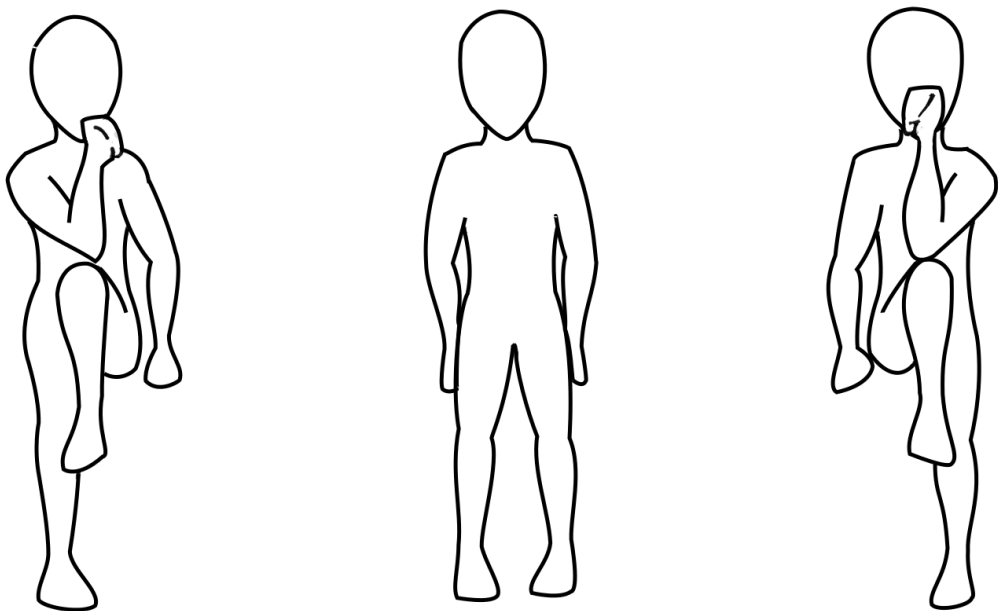
HOP (SINGLE-LEG JUMPS)



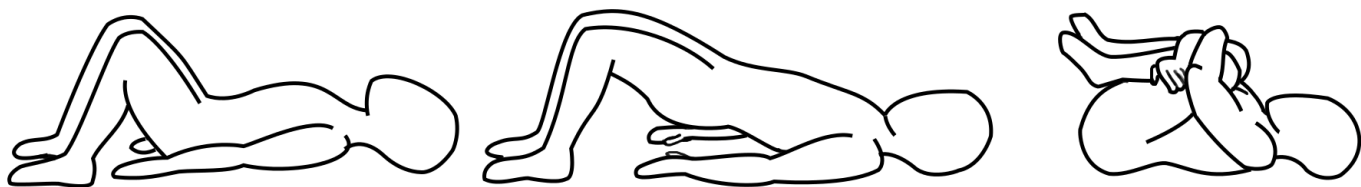
DOUBLE-LEG JUMP



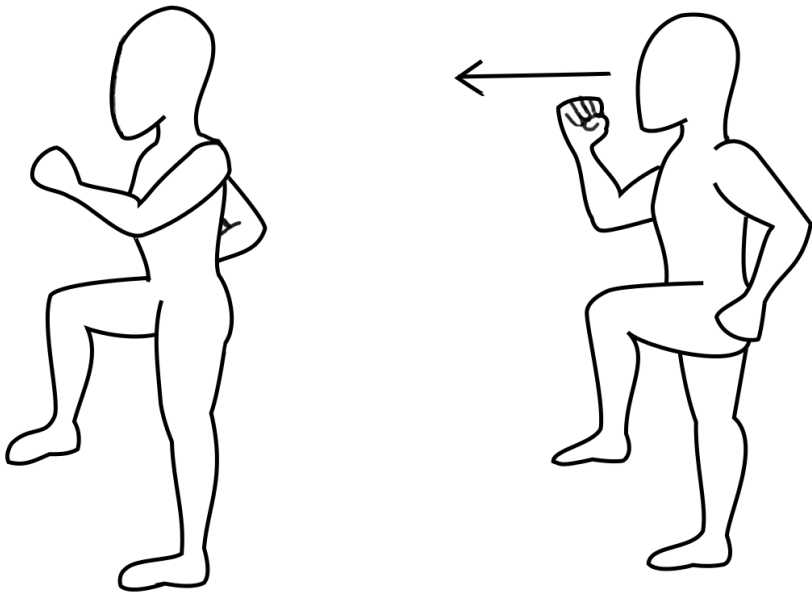
CROSS-CRAWL



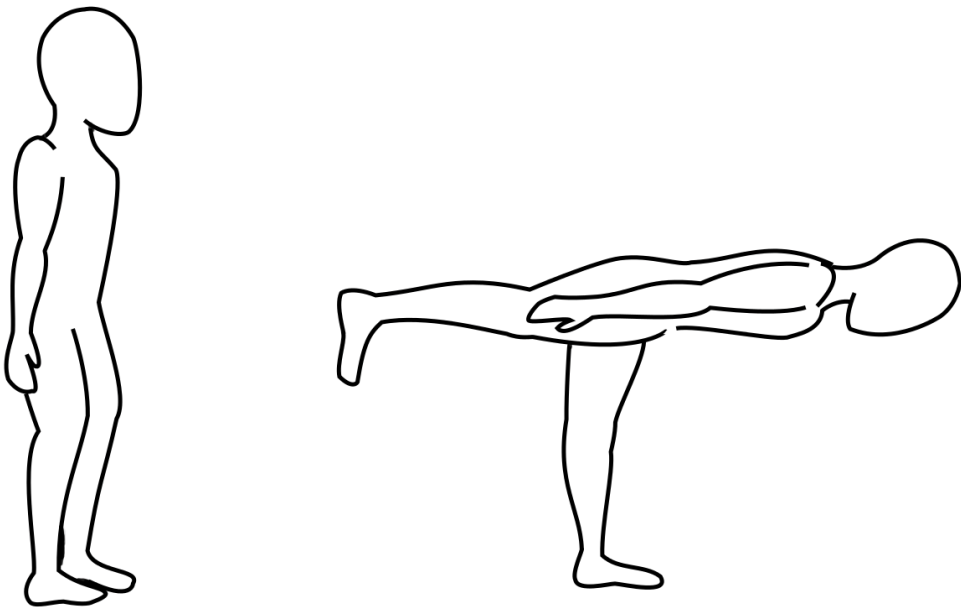
BRIDGE AND HIP EXTENSION



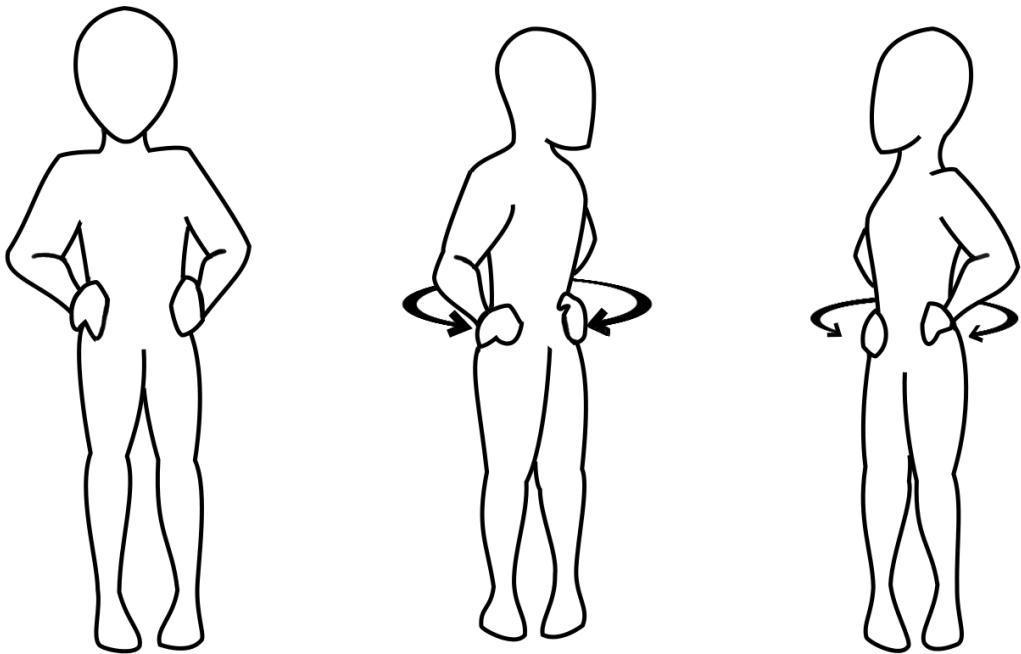
SUPER-SLOW-MOTION MARCH



STAND ON ONE LEG



WHIRLY BIRDS

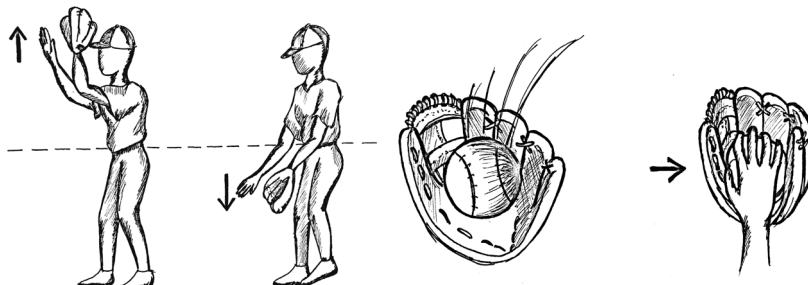


Appendix B: Critical Elements of Essential Skills

MANIPULATIVE SKILLS—CRITICAL ELEMENTS

Catching

- Extend arms outward to reach for the ball.
 - Thumbs in for catch above the waist.
 - Thumbs out for catch at or below the waist.
- Watch the ball all the way into the hands.
- Catch with hands only; no cradling against the body.
- Pull the ball into the body as a catch is made.
- Curl the body slightly around the ball.

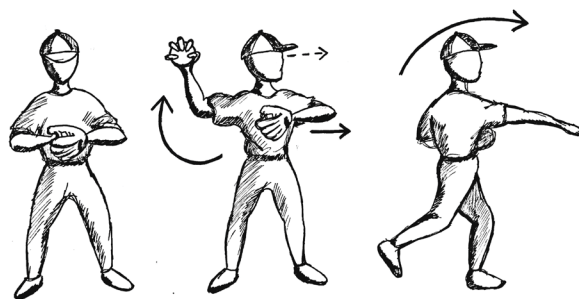


Throwing (Underhand Pattern)

- Face target in preparation for throwing action.
- Arm back in preparation for action.
- Step with opposite foot as throwing arm moves forward.
- Release ball between knee and waist level.
- Follow through to target.

Throwing (Overhand Pattern)*

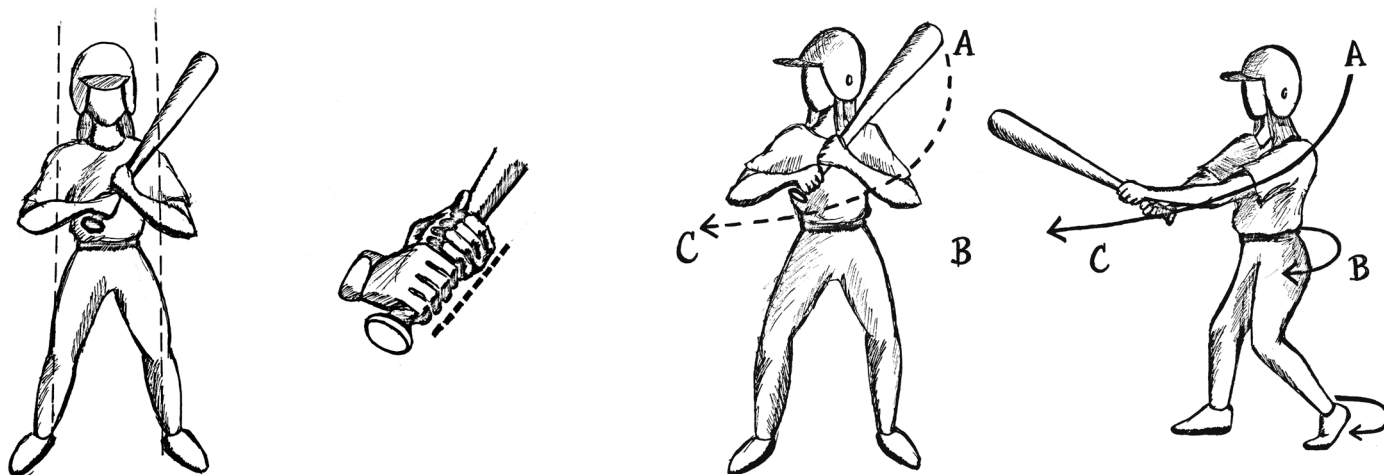
- Side to target in preparation for throwing action.
- Arm back and extended, elbow at shoulder height or slightly above in preparation for action; lead with elbow of non-throwing arm.
- Step with opposite foot as throwing arm moves forward.
- Rotate hip and spine as throwing action is executed.
- Follow through toward target and across body.



* According to SHAPE America's Scope and Sequence for K–12 Physical Education overhand throwing is an emerging skill for Grades K–1. SHAPE America's Grade-Level Outcomes do not address overhand throwing until Grade 2.

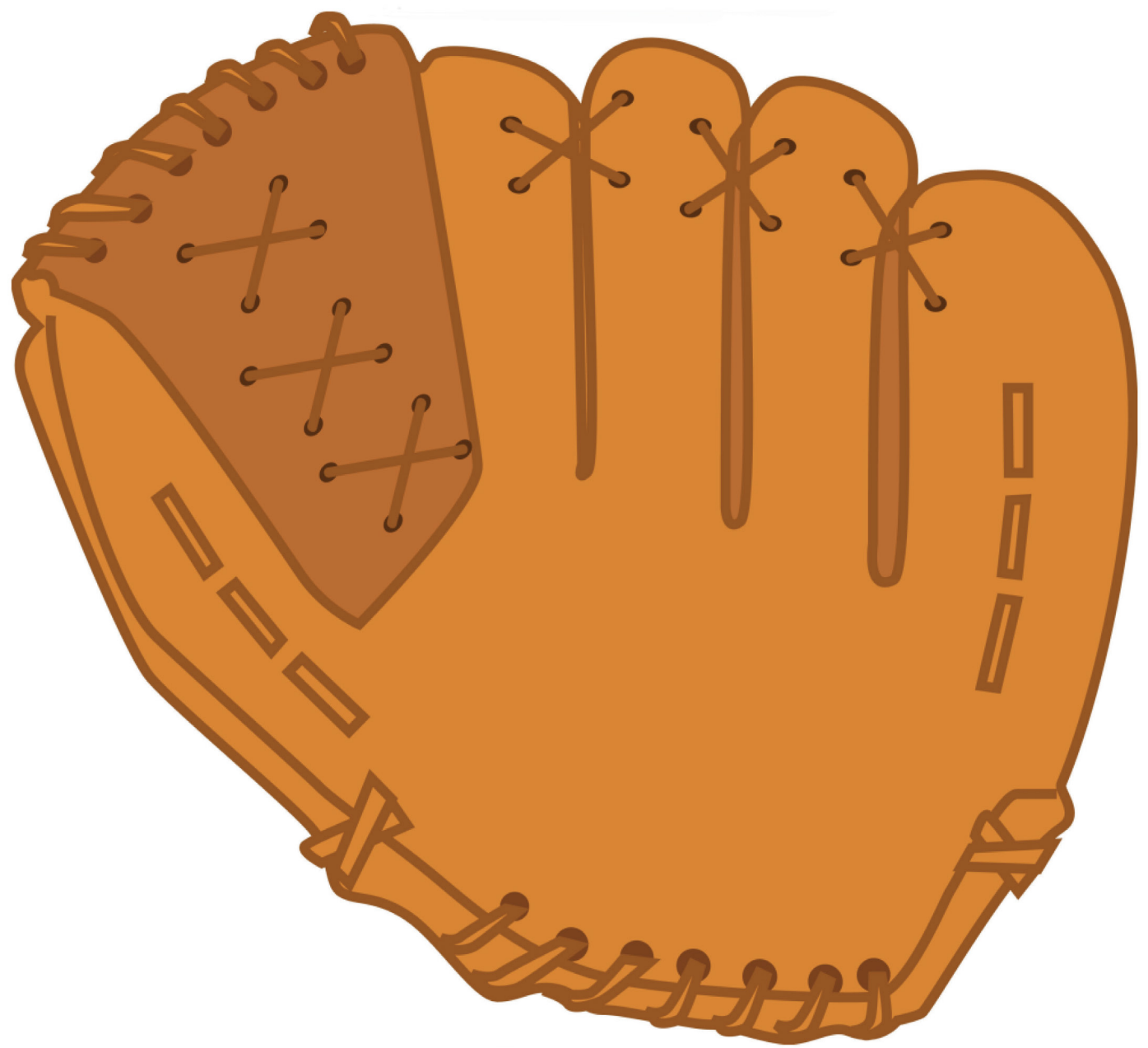
Striking with Long Implement (Side-Arm Pattern)*

- Bat up and back in preparation for the striking action.
- Step forward on opposite foot as contact is made.
- Coil and uncoil the trunk for preparation and execution of the striking action.
- Swing the bat in a horizontal plane.
- Wrist uncocks on follow-through for completion of the striking action.



*Striking with a long implement is a developmentally appropriate grade-level outcome for Grade 2. Kindergarten and Grade 1 outcomes indicate that students should be striking with a short-handled implement, such as a paddle.

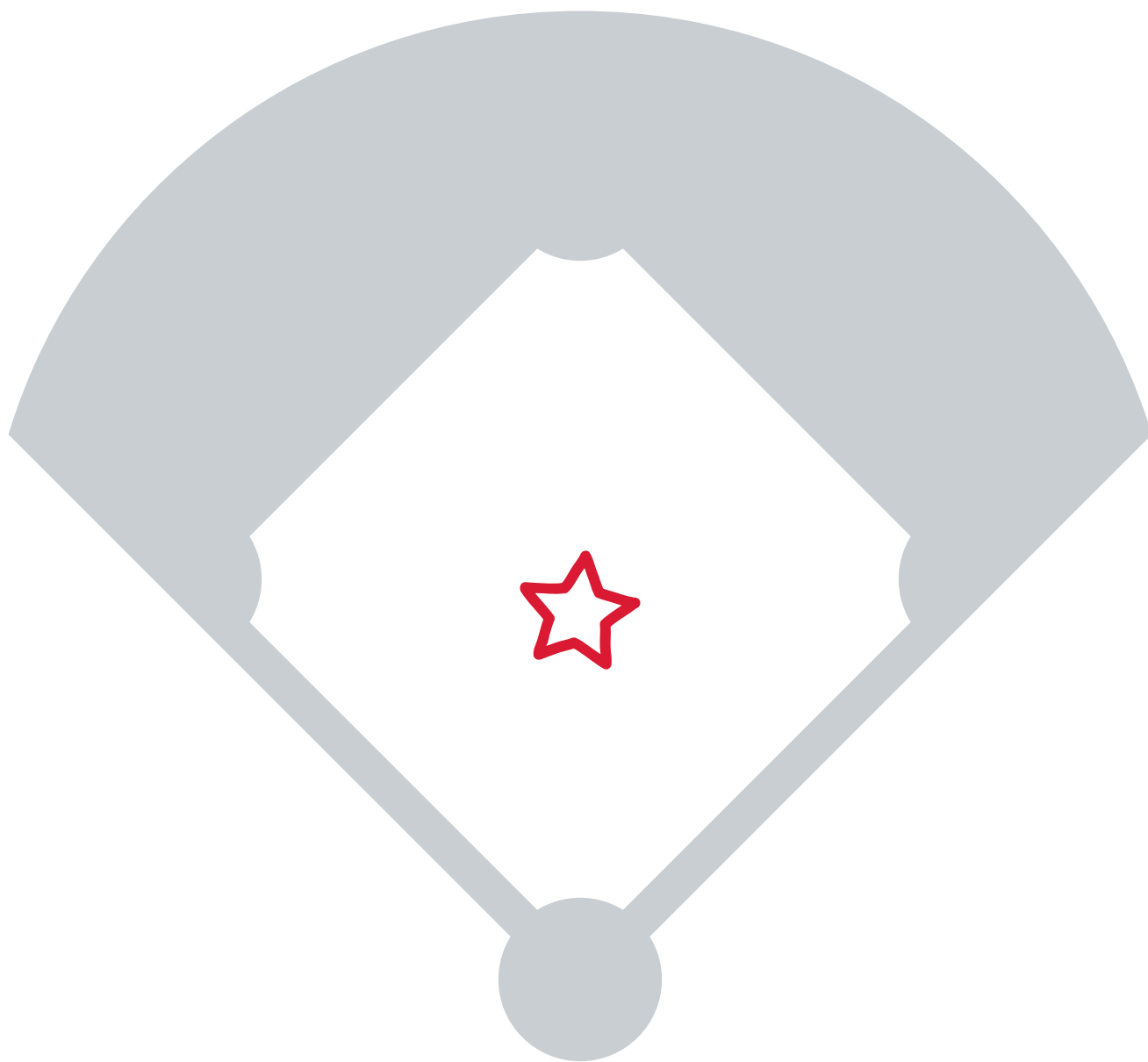
Appendix D: Target Poster



Appendix E: Bat-and-Ball Position Station Cards

INFIELD

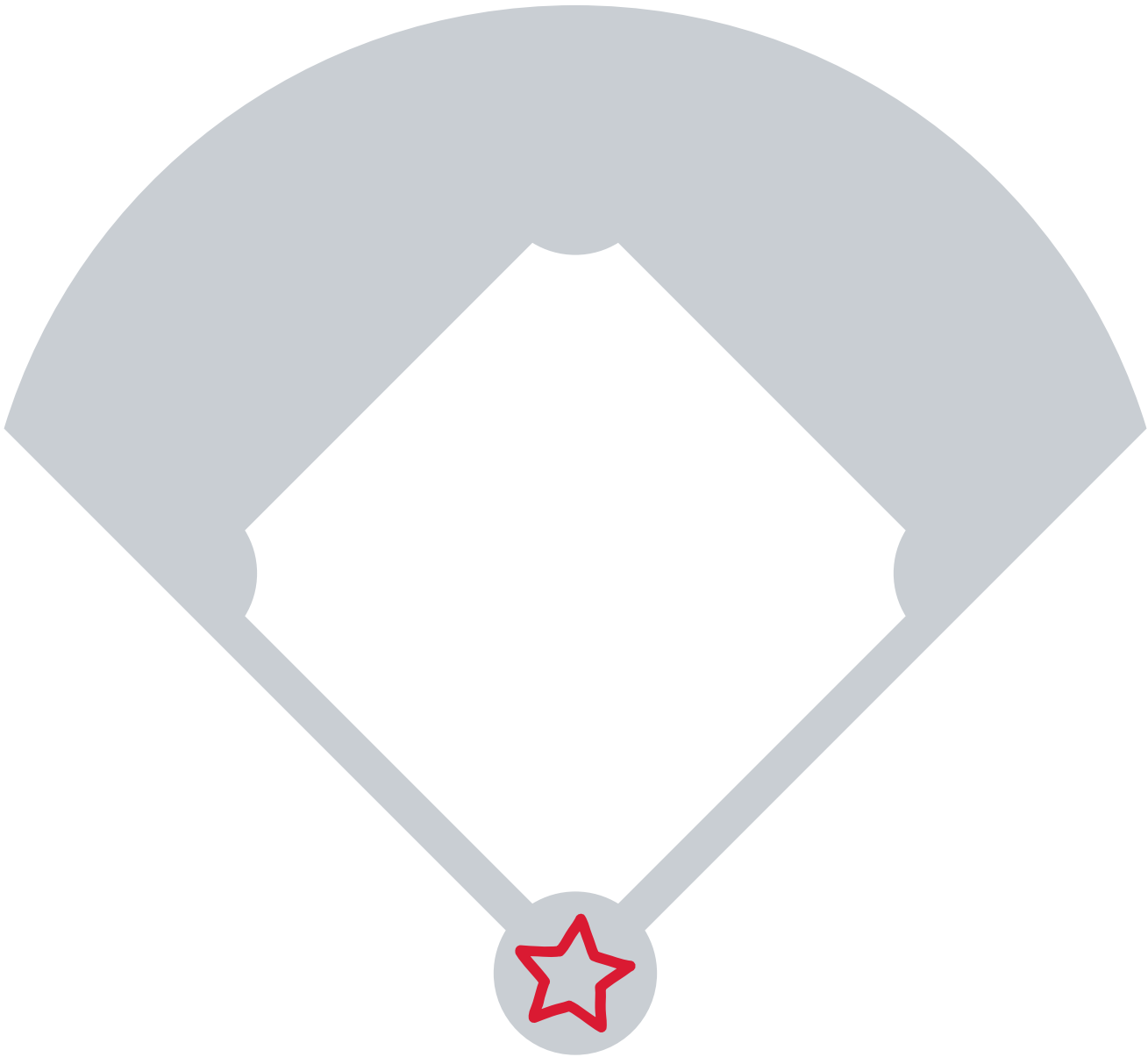
Pitcher



**Imaginary Overhand Throw
10 Times**

INFIELD

Catcher



10 Jumping Jacks

INFIELD

First Base



10 Body Squats

INFIELD

Second Base



10 Forward Arm Circles

INFIELD

Third Base



March in Place 10 Steps

INFIELD

Short Stop



10 Butt Kickers

OUTFIELD

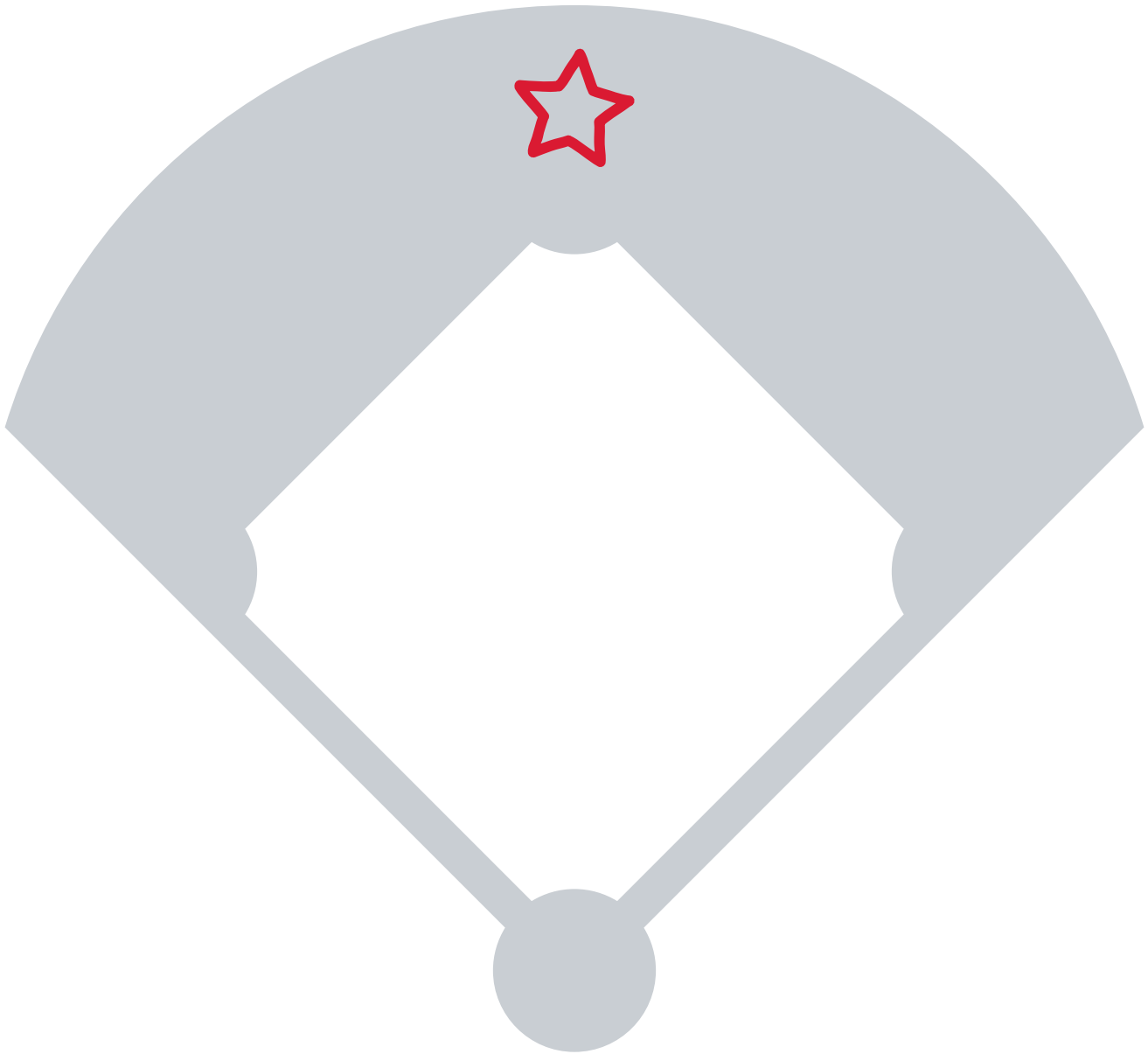
Left Field



10 Push-Ups

OUTFIELD

Center Field



10 Backward Arm Circles

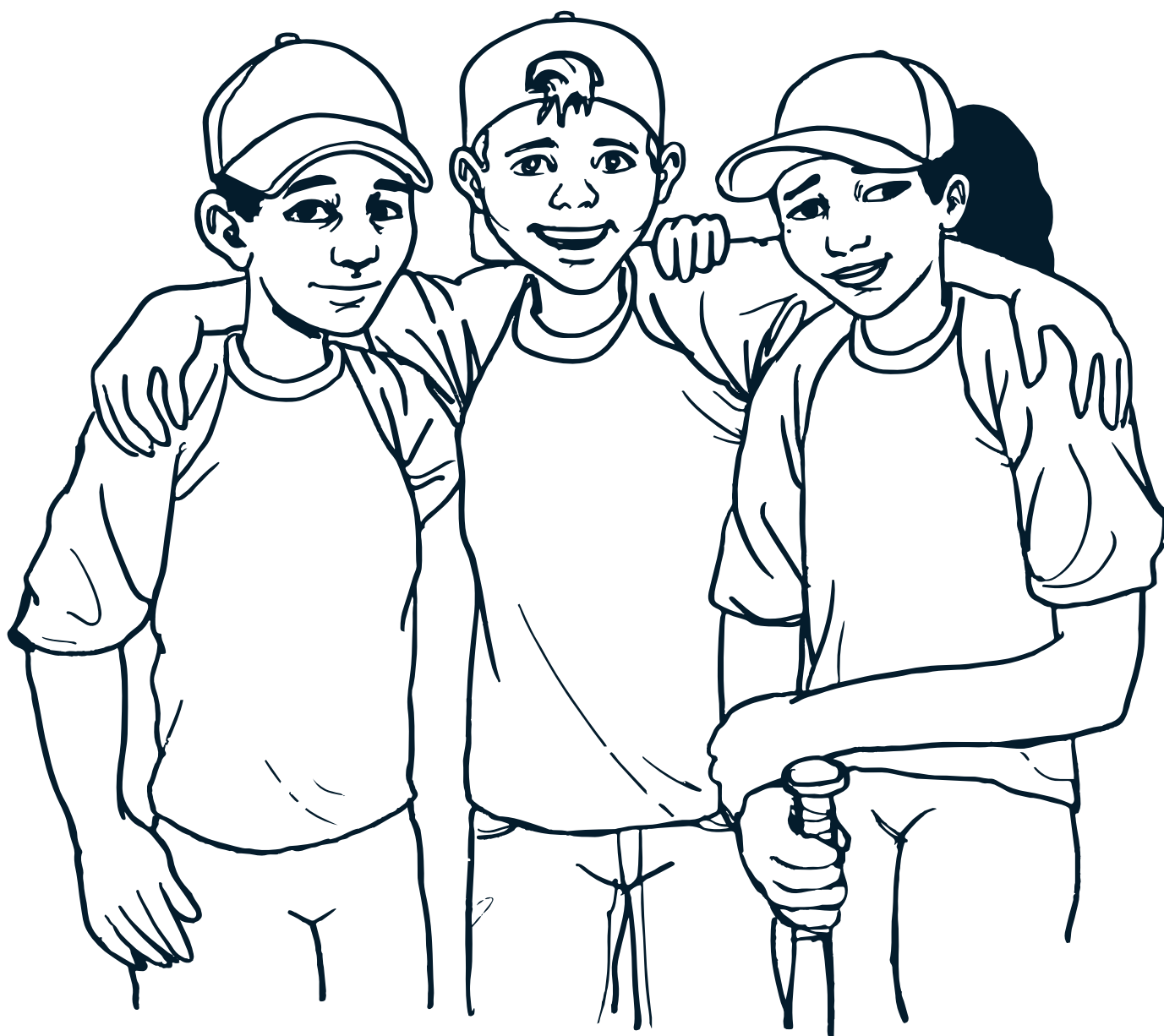
OUTFIELD

Right Field



10 Curl-Ups

FUN AT BAT







J C D I H I D W W C B T N S U Z I
 B N B I G Q A U K S S W P D X B W
 S V T S T V W K N J U E C M J F U
 Y X Q P H J A I P G Y O A H X F C
 S T R O N G A L F I S E W C D A T
 U Q S H O R K U W U W Z F J S B A
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 Q R A Y I D J Z U E E E M L A X R
 I E V J I I G H I Q H E N M E I Z
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WORDS:

BASEBALL
 LEADERSHIP
 TEAMWORK
 HONESTY

SUPPORT
 PRACTICE
 HARDWORK
 HUSTLE

THROW
 CATCH
 HIT
 FUN

STRONG
 EVERYONE
 TOGETHER
 MLB