



## Rapid Fire Pitches

### Objective

To help catchers develop hands that are relaxed and quick enough to handle a variety of pitches

### Setup

Catcher in full gear, several players lined up about 20 feet in front of home plate each with at least six balls

### Execution

Starting from the catcher's left and moving to the right, catcher receives a throw from each player. Last player on the right throws two balls and then the drill proceeds back to the left, with one player throwing right after the other. Catcher must receive the pitch with soft hands and let the ball drop quickly so that the next throw can be caught. Don't let everyone throw at once.

### Another Dimension

You can use soft baseballs, sponge balls, or tennis balls and have each player throw pitches in the dirt to allow the catcher to practice blocking. As the catcher gets older and becomes more comfortable with blocking, real baseballs can be used.

### Make It Fun

Catchers can compete to see who can catch or block the most balls successfully. Cones can be set up in front of home plate to direct catchers where to try to direct blocked balls.





## Pop-Up Drill

### Objective

To learn how to catch pop-ups properly

### Setup

Pitching machine, bucket of balls, clear home plate area or other open area

### Execution

Pitching machine is set up so it is throwing pop-ups straight up in the area of home plate. Catchers want to work on finding the ball, discarding the mask, turning their back to the infield, and catching the ball above their heads with two hands. The catcher squats behind home plate wearing full gear. The ball is shot through the machine, and the catcher stands up and turns away from the infield, removing the mask and throwing it away from where the ball will land. It is important to keep the feet moving and to not stand flat-footed in case the ball does not come down exactly where you expect it to or it drifts in the wind. Catchers should be in an athletic position with knees slightly bent and their bodies square to where the ball is coming down. The key is to get to the spot where the ball is going to come down as quickly as possible so you can camp under it and catch it properly without having to move.

### Make It Fun

Turn this into an elimination game. Those who catch the ball successfully stay alive and those who miss are eliminated. After several rounds, allow only those who catch the ball using the proper fundamental approach to stay alive.



Adapted, by permission, from Ripken, 2007, *Coaching Youth Baseball the Ripken Way* (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics).