

Wall Ball Guide

STARTING OUT:

Make sure players choose an appropriate wall. Tell them to check with their parents first. Lacrosse balls do break glass (trust us on this), so keep an eye out for brick or concrete walls with few windows. We recommend parking garages, hand-ball courts, racquetball courts, churches, rec centers, alleys, parking lots, and chimneys for a start.

We suggest all your players wear goggles/helmet, mouthguard and gloves when practicing wall ball--nobody wants a broken nose or chipped teeth. This also helps your players get familiar with playing with their equipment on, which will help them at practice and during games.

THE BASICS:

Some coaches recommend hitting the wall 15-20 minutes every day, while others recommend hitting the wall for 30 minutes 4-5 times a week. No matter what you tell your players, emphasize the following basic points with your players:

- Throw the ball hard and straight:** Choose a very specific spot or brick on the wall and hit it every time.
- Practice every exercise with both sides equally:** If anything, practice the weak side twice as much!
- Vary your distance from the wall:** 10 steps for most passes and quick sticks; 10-20 steps for medium-distance passes; 20-30 for long-distance, long-poles, shots and ground balls.
- Keep moving your feet:** Stay light on the front of your feet so you are light and quick.
- Hold the stick with hands hip-width apart:** Practice with hands at the bottom, at the middle, and at the top of the stick.
- Hold the stick with a relaxed grip:** use the finger beds or tips, not heavy in the palms.
- Don't swat or snatch at the ball:** Receive the ball back to the shoulder with soft hands, like catching an egg.
- "One cradle and out":** Roll the fingers on the top hand closed to seat the ball in the pocket of the stick, then get the ball out quickly.
- Snap the wrist to move the ball out of the pocket:** The wrist snap determines the release point for where the ball goes.

[Lacrosse All Stars](#) and [The Lacrosse Network](#) both have some pretty good videos of what proper Wall Ball practice routines should look like.

BEGINNER:

Try 25 or 50 repetitions of each technique below. Pick five (5) different exercises for a 15-20 minute workout. We've only listed one side in the examples below, but be sure to run drills with both hands.

- Throw right, catch right:** Try to focus on cradling only once and getting the ball out quickly.
- Throw right, catch left:** Change hands while the ball is in the air.
- Scoop it and move it:** Throw, catch, put the ball down on the ground. Scoop it, cradle once, and throw it again.
- Ground balls:** Move back 20-30 steps away from the wall. Throw the ball hard at the wall, pick it up on the run when it bounces back to you. Always charge to the ball; don't stand still and wait for it to come to you.
- Throw and catch on-the-run:** Sprint up to the wall and throw and catch while moving. "Attack the pass in the air."
- Pass or shot fake:** Catch, then throw a pass/shot fake with the head and shoulders, and get the ball out quickly.
- Quick stick:** Receive the ball back to the shoulder, then pass again *without* a cradle. Repeat as many times as possible before a drop.
- One-Handed:** Take the bottom hand off and throw and catch with one-hand at the middle or near the top of the stick.
- Across the body:** Stand with your left foot in front, parallel to the wall, so you are standing sideways to it. Throw the ball with the right hand on top, so you are throwing your passes across the body. Catch right handed.
- Switch Hands:** Throw right handed, switch hands and catch with the left. Then throw left handed, switch hands and catch with the right.

INTERMEDIATE:

- Over-the-Shoulder:** Throw right-handed so the ball comes back to your left side. Step across your body with the right leg so your back is turned to the wall. Position yourself so that the ball comes back "over your shoulder" and into the head of your stick with the right hand still on top. Switch hands, one cradle, and throw with the opposite hand. Now catch over-the-shoulder with the left hand on top.
- Sidearm:** Bring the stick around parallel with the ground to pass or shoot. Snap the wrists to move the ball out of the pocket. Accuracy is crucial here.
- Underhand:** Bring the stick down and back by the knees or shins and pass or shoot the ball with a low-to-high motion. Snap the wrists to move the ball out of the pocket.
- Shovel Pass:** Start right-handed. Step to the left with your right leg so your right shoulder or back is to the wall. Throw an under-hand pass with the right hand on top, like you would use a shovel. Step back and catch. [Watch a video of this drill here.](#)
- Split Dodge:** Throw right-handed, catch right-handed, then make a move to the right side. Cut back to the left side while bringing the stick across the body with the pocket facing you so the ball doesn't pop out. [Check out some tips from Paul Rabil on this dodge here.](#)
- Face Dodge:** Throw right-handed, catch right-handed. Immediately bring the stick across your face, with the head ending up down by your left hip to shield it from Defenders. Bring it back over to the right shoulder to throw. Or, from the left hip, throw a Shovel Pass. [Here's a great video for more instruction.](#)
- Roll Dodge or "Hockey Stop":** Throw right-handed, catch right-handed. With the ball in your stick, step across with your left leg so that your back is to the wall and your stick protected between your shoulders. Plant on your left leg, like a hockey stop, push off and change direction back towards your right shoulder. Turn outside, away from the wall (aka the Defender) so the stick is protected in front of your chest. Run a few steps the other direction, switch hands and throw left-handed. Try to run through this drill, changing directions, as many times as possible. Work on getting your head around quickly to see the wall (aka the field) when you roll away. [Maverik Lacrosse has a great tutorial on this dodge.](#)
- Cross-handed (i.e. "Canadian"):** Catch right-handed, then bring the stick over to the left shoulder but with the right hand still on top so that your stick is "crossed" over your body. Throw from this position and catch as you would regularly.

EXPERT:

- The Lax Shuffle:** Face the wall and side shuffle to your right. Catch and throw right-handed as you shuffle sideways along the wall. Practice leading yourself with your passes.
- The Lax Shuffle 2.0:** The same as "The Lax Shuffle" except you will change hands each time you catch the ball.
- Running Man:** Run along the wall with the wall on your left side. Catch and throw right-handed, with your stick out in front of you as you run down the wall. Practice leading yourself with your passes.
- Backwards Running Man:** Run backwards along the wall, with the wall on your left side. Catch and throw right-handed with your stick out in front of you as you back-pedal down the wall.
- Behind the Back:** With the ball in your right hand, turn from the hips. Throw the ball with the stick up and behind you. Snap the wrists to release the ball out of the pocket. [Here's some tips for shooting behind-the-back from our good friends at Lacrosse Allstars.](#)
- Shooting on the Run:** Take a few steps to the right to simulate running. Plant on your left leg and bring the right leg "around and down" in front. Use the torque of your hips, shoulders, and arms to take a shot at the goal. [The Lacrosse Network has a great video on body positioning.](#)
- Jump shot:** Begin as you would with "Shooting on the Run," but this time take a jump shot by pushing off with the left leg. Use the torque of your hips, shoulders, and arms to give your shot some heat.
- Juggling:** Keep two balls going at once. Throw one ball at the wall with your arm, then throw the second ball with your stick. Keep both balls going off the wall back to you. See if you can do this with your weak hand!