

FITNESS EDITION



**HEALTHY CHOICES,
HEALTHY CHILDREN**



CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
About the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation	
About <i>Healthy Choices, Healthy Children</i>	
The Ripken Way	
Keep It Simple	
Explain Why	
Celebrate the Individual	
Make It Fun	
Keeping Kids Engaged	
GETTING STARTED	7
About <i>HCHC: Fitness Edition</i>	
Avoid, Limit, Emphasize	
Planning a Good Warm-up	
10 in 10	
5 Key Points to Remember	
ACTIVITIES	
Icebreaker Games	21
Movement Name Game	
Find Somebody Who	
Speed Ball/Team Juggling	
Sprout Tag	
I'm a Star Relay Race	
Crab Crawl Relay Race	
Over the Shoulder Relay	
Follow the Leader	
Fitness Games	27
Going Deep	
Pickups	
First to Third	
Fast Catch	
Four Ground Ball	
Two Step	
Box Drill	
The Circuit – Infield/Outfield	
WRAP UP	43
Reinforcing the Lessons	
Resources	
Connect with Us	

INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THE CAL RIPKEN, SR. FOUNDATION

During his 37-year career with the Baltimore Orioles organization, Cal Ripken, Sr. taught the basics of the game and life to players big and small. After he passed away, his sons Cal and Bill recognized that not every child is lucky enough to have such a great mentor and role model. In this spirit, they and their family started the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, in 2001.

By teaching kids how to make positive choices no matter what life throws at them, the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation strives to help underserved youth fulfill their promise and become healthy, self-sufficient, and successful adults.

ABOUT *HEALTHY CHOICES, HEALTHY CHILDREN*

The Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation provides programs, resources, training, and support to community-based organizations across the country that directly impact the lives of at-risk youth. A primary component of this support is the *Healthy Choices, Healthy Children (HCHC)* program – a comprehensive character and life skills curriculum that provides youth development professionals and mentors with a vehicle to begin meaningful conversations with kids who need it the most.

Through discussions about choices today and the consequences to which they lead tomorrow, combined with activities demonstrating these lessons, youth learn to make productive decisions for their futures.

INTRODUCTION

THE RIPKEN WAY

Cal Ripken, Sr. was a player, coach, and manager in the Baltimore Orioles organization for nearly four decades. He developed great players and, more importantly, great people through his style of coaching—which we call “The Ripken Way.” No matter what you are teaching, you can use these four key tenets as your guide:

Keep it simple

Lessons on the field and in life are best learned when presented in a simple manner. Teach the basics and keep standards high.

Explain why

By helping kids understand the connections between everyday decisions and real life outcomes, we can help them make smarter choices for brighter futures.

Celebrate the individual

When kids are encouraged to be themselves, respected for their opinion, and are encouraged to share it, they are more likely to have a higher self-esteem and feelings of self-worth.

Make it fun

If kids aren't paying attention or participating, how much are they learning? Whether it's using a game to teach a concept or motivating kids with a little friendly competition, keeping kids engaged is essential.

Want to hear Bill Ripken explain “The Ripken Way”? Go to CRSFPortal.org and sign up for a free account today!

INTRODUCTION

KEEPING KIDS ENGAGED

Here are some tips to help you structure activities that keep kids engaged, excited, and coming back:

- Have a plan
- Keep activities structured
- Use visual tools (diagrams, cones, props, etc.)
- Provide feedback
- Encourage, encourage, encourage
- Set parameters and stick to them
- Assign groups/teams
- If you use captains, be sure to rotate them often
- Set achievable goals
- Let kids be silly – they're kids!
- Use short time increments
- Rotate activities frequently
- Let kids have input in the activities they like best
- Stay consistent and create routine
- Affirm kids when they do well
- Group kids by age and gender when possible



NOTES

GETTING STARTED

ABOUT HCHC: FITNESS EDITION

HCHC has, and always will be, a vehicle to help young people make smart decisions on their path toward a productive adulthood. Included in those decisions is the choice to live an active, healthy lifestyle.

The HCHC Fitness Edition is intended to begin to provide resources to assist in continuing a dialogue with youth about the importance of physical fitness. This component is meant to be a quick-reference guide to help get kids active. While understanding the science of the human body is important – you won't find detailed scientific explanations here – this is about getting kids active and keeping them engaged.

The goal of this tool is to give youth development professionals useful activities to engage kids in healthy, well-structured, fun activities that promote physical fitness.

NOTE: The views expressed in this publication are those of the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation and are intended strictly as a teaching tool, and not as medical advice.



What do I do when...

Throughout the book, you'll notice these quick tips at the bottom of the page to help address situations that frequently occur.

GETTING STARTED

FITNESS “THE RIPKEN WAY”

Let’s take a look at what it means to be physically fit through the prism of “The Ripken Way.”

Keep It Simple

Young kids (under 15 years old) don’t need a lot of instruction; all they need is an opportunity to play. Once you have an activity kids enjoy, give them a few rules and let them play.

Create simple ways for kids to compete against others and against themselves to achieve fitness goals. Keep in mind: goals are more often achieved when they are written.

Challenge kids to write down goals but, remember, it’s about keeping it simple!

Here are a few examples of fitness goals for kids:

- Play tag twice a week
- Play basketball every Monday
- Discover my personal best 90 foot sprint
- Beat my personal best 90 foot sprint

Whatever their age, help your kids write down goals. They can be challenging, but they don’t have to be complicated. When your kids achieve their goals, reward them and let them know you are proud of them!



GETTING STARTED

FITNESS “THE RIPKEN WAY”

Explain Why

The best way to explain why an activity is important is to model it. When possible, coaches, parents, teachers, and mentors should model behaviors, especially those related to fitness goals.

At the beginning of a season or program, take time to define “fitness.” As with most topics, kids often learn more when they discover the answer themselves. Undoubtedly, they have heard the term and what it means but if we can help them to understand what it means to them – their personal definition – it will mean more.

Without getting too technical, remind the kids you work with that “fitness” can mean a lot of things but, most importantly, it means being active.

At a minimum, encourage kids:

- To get outside and play at least once a day
- To dedicate one hour a day to being electronic free (TV, computer, phone, etc.)
- To be active for 60 minutes per day
- To try one new organized activity every school year

It’s important for kids to understand why they are doing something, but don’t get too complicated.

Plain and simple – kids need to play!

What do I do when...

**kids are moving slow
and not giving it all they have?**

Stimulate their competitive spirit: get out a stop watch and time the kids in a race.

GETTING STARTED

FITNESS “THE RIPKEN WAY”

Celebrate the Individual

Perhaps more than anything else, fitness is a personal matter. Every kid and adult reacts differently to exercise.

Remember, it's not just outward appearance that dictates how a person reacts to exercise. Every person faces challenges and celebrates triumphs on their road to fitness.

As coaches and mentors, it is important to create a fitness program that encourages all kids to be involved but also understands that every kid has different strengths and weaknesses.

Running is a great example. Every person runs differently, at a different pace, and with varying stamina. Create games that emphasize personal strengths:

- Conduct a distance run scavenger hunt
- Hold a race from first base to third base
- Have kids create races with obstacles
- Have kids run from one point to the other doing a group problem solving activity in between.

There are hundreds of games like this. The key is to find games that create competition (either with others or within oneself) yet still allow kids to be themselves and to be comfortable being physically active.

Lastly, a very important tip...to gain the most out of activities and celebrate individual abilities, skills, and accomplishments, consider separating age groups and genders when possible.

What do I do when...

the team masters a new skill?

First congratulate them and let them celebrate. Then motivate them to set a new goal and challenge themselves to push further.

GETTING STARTED

FITNESS “THE RIPKEN WAY”

Make it Fun

The consequences of a sedentary life can be disastrous – but that doesn’t mean the topic has to be scary or boring. Fitness should be fun. After all, 95% of what you do with kids has to be fun or they won’t come back!

Identify the two most important things you want to convey to the group of kids. Now, what are they? Write down your goals. Keep those simple goals at the forefront and everything else should be fun!

When encouraging groups of kids to be fit, whether they are athletes or not, think outside of the box on everyday activities and games. **How can a simple activity or game become an aerobic activity?**

It is important to focus on keeping the atmosphere light and engaging: challenge yourself as a coach to use only positive affirmation rather than negative reinforcement.

For example, avoid using running as a punishment. Instead, try using running as a tool to get kids excited by making it a team competition that emphasizes teamwork.



NOTES

GETTING STARTED

AVOID, LIMIT, EMPHASIZE

Fitness and developing good habits often comes down to creating a routine. The more kids play, the more likely they grow into fit adults that make exercise part of their daily routine.

In the following pages, you'll notice a few core concepts repeated. These concepts are meant to provide you with parameters and reminders when working with kids to become more physically active.

Note that some may be useful to share with kids while others are meant for you as the instructor.

You will find the following terms in many of the activities in this book.

AVOID

These are the things that can become barriers to kids staying physically fit. These can be styles of coaching, types of games or competitions, or anything that can create a negative atmosphere.

LIMIT

These activities should be used in moderation – they are useful – but only when used in the right circumstance and manner.

EMPHASIZE

These techniques should be stressed, repeated, and incorporated into all aspects of your routine. The most important tenet to emphasize is having fun!

GETTING STARTED

QUICK TIPS

Remember, every kid is different and we want to celebrate each of them. It is especially important to remember this when it comes to the age level you are working with.

Here are some age specific fitness tips:

10-12 year old kids should:

- Play as many sports as possible
- Go outside and play
- Focus on free-play (fun, simple activities)
- Try low-intensity training that emphasizes fun
- Begin to learn about muscles and how they move
- Be exposed to basic levels of competition
- Avoid lifting maximal (very heavy) weights

13-15 year old kids should:

- Play as many sports as possible
- Focus training on movement fundamentals
- Be introduced to warm-up and stretching concepts
- Be introduced to a fun agility program
- Be allowed to compete as individuals
- Try a low-intensity strength program
- Avoid lifting maximal (very heavy) weights

What do I do when...

one kid is struggling to keep up?

Adjust the activity and give them an alternative (i.e. walk instead of run).

Or encourage them by making them a team captain.

GETTING STARTED

PLANNING A GOOD WARM-UP

By Tim Bishop, former Baltimore Orioles Strength and Conditioning Coach

www.performfit.com

While stretching can – and should – be one component of a pre-activity, it is not the most important. In fact, it may be the least important. The ultimate goal of a warm-up is to raise the temperature of the body.

Much like other activities with kids – we have to keep them engaged – make it fun! Warm-up isn't something extra; it should be part of your overall activity time. During warm-up, a well-organized plan is as important as ever. Warm-up activities set the tone and should move quickly.

Try these tips to keep warm-ups organized:

- Have kids line up by number or in teams
- Select 3-4 warm-up leaders to help you lead the group
- Assign groups to begin to foster a team atmosphere
- Keep the warm-up short, with plenty of movement, and the more structure – the better!
- Remember to use visual tools such as cones or lines on the field (especially if you are rotating through stations)

Quick tips to remember:

AVOID

Avoid starting activity time with stretching – always get kids moving first.

LIMIT

Limit standing in place. Stretching is an important part of warm-up, but kids need to move.

EMPHASIZE

Emphasize raising kids' body temperatures – even a game of tag or a scavenger hunt can be used as a warm-up. But remember, a warm-up needs to have some structure.

GETTING STARTED

QUICK TIPS

There are three stages of a proper warm-up:

1. Get Movin'

This can include a very light jog, a group activity (tag), jumping rope, jumping jacks, a short relay race, or timed scavenger hunt. Any activity that increases blood flow to the muscles will work. Keep the segments short and simple.

2. Stations and Stretches

After getting the body temperature up, the second phase of a proper warm-up is to stretch. Try using stations that kids rotate through as small groups to keep things moving. Use visual signs to show kids different stretches. Some examples of warm-up stretches might include body-weight squatting, lunging, low hurdles, arm circles, high-knee drills, shuffles, agility drills, etc.

3. Get Loose

This is where you actually use movements from your specific sport or activity, performing them at a lesser intensity to “get loose.”

Examples of these types of drills would be fundamental batting and fielding practice, long toss, and running the bases. A team warm-up is also a good way to create good habits youth can fall back on for any activity they will participate in throughout their lives.

It also promotes interaction between kids and adults, and can inspire a leader among your players. Assign a “warm-up captain” and have them develop the plan (7-10 minutes). Warming up and stretching are good lifelong habits that kids should start when they are young. All people, young and old, need to get their blood flowing!

Check out the tips and photos on the next few pages for some warm-up ideas!

What do I do when...

a few kids are better athletes than others?

Help those kids become leaders by asking them to be your assistant coach for the day.

GETTING STARTED

10 IN 10

Try these 10 quick drills in 10 minutes to get your kids moving.

Hurdles

Set up hurdles or improvise and use whatever equipment you have, with about one foot in between each hurdle. Kids should jump through the hurdles with feet together or with high knees, one foot at a time.

Box Drill

Set up cones in a square, about 10 feet by 10 feet. Kids can run, shuffle, karaoke, skip, or backpedal around the square.

Ladders

Set up agility ladders (or you can use cones) and show kids different ways to run through them, focusing on fast feet and high knees.



GETTING STARTED

10 IN 10

Toe Touches

Have kids do 3 sets of 10 second stretches to reach for their toes. This stretch should be done slow and easy so the kids do not bounce up and down.

Superman Squat (Star Jumps)

Have kids squat for 8-10 seconds, followed by an explosive jump with their hands pointed to the sky. Try sets of 10 or 15.

Reach Back

Kids reach behind their back to try to interlock their fingers and hold for 8-10 seconds. Then switch arms – start with the right arm overhead then move to the left.

Jumping Jacks

Have kids do 5 sets of 10 or 3 sets of 20. Then challenge them to build to higher numbers.

Up and Backs

Use the lines on your field or in your gym or parking lot. Have the kids run out and back touching the line each time. Build up to longer sprints and more repetitions.

Push-ups and Sit-ups

Just like the jumping jacks, challenge the kids to do sets of 10 or 20. Remember to focus on the correct form – not just speed.

Fast Feet

Have the kids in an athletic position – feet about shoulder width apart, knees slightly bent. Then start the clock for 10 or 20 seconds and have the kids move their feet up and down as fast as they can. Try 5 sets at 20 seconds each giving the kids 20 seconds rest in between each set.

What do I do when...

kids are tired?

Circle games are great – see www.playworks.org for a variety of alternatives.

GETTING STARTED

5 KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

1. For kids, fitness is all about movement – find what they love and find a way to make them move.
2. Free-play is basic movement, doesn't require equipment and doesn't have rules – just let them run!
3. Kids should play as many sports as possible – don't restrict them to one activity. Variety keeps fitness fun.
4. For kids, flexibility and stretching is all about range of motion – introduce concepts, let them try it, and move on to something fun!
5. Fitness is all about routine and patterns, so set aside time every day to let kids play. Remember, a kid who plays often turns into an adult who exercises. Work to build good habits at a young age.



NOTES

ACTIVITIES

ICEBREAKER GAMES

Movement Name Game

Have the whole group stand in a circle. The first person begins the circle rotation by loudly saying his/her name while doing a movement (jump, spin, reach, etc.). The whole group repeats back the name and movement. The next player says her/his name and does a different movement. The whole group repeats back their name and movement. Continue around the circle until everyone has gotten a turn. Then challenge the teams to go around repeating each name and movement quickly. Use a stop watch and make it a race. Or one player or the coach can stand in the middle of the circle and point to kids quickly; when they point, every player must yell that kid's name and repeat the movement. This can also be done with other items like trivia questions.



ACTIVITIES

ICEBREAKER GAMES

Speed Ball/Team Juggling

The team stands in a circle with their coach. Everyone has a soft/foam ball in their hand while the coach has two balls to start. The coach will take one ball and throw it to one of his or her teammates.

Before they catch the ball, they must throw the ball to another person on the team. There should be a ball in the air at all times. Count to see how many times you can do it in a row without having a ball hit the ground.

Find Somebody Who

Gather the group in a contained area. Instructor begins by saying, “Find somebody who...” (filling in the blank – options include “has the same number of siblings as you”, “shares the same favorite color as you,” etc.)

Each participant must find a partner. Once they find a partner, the pair must race to a specified location. After each person finds a partner and races, begin again with another target for the pairs to race to once they find their partner.

What do I do when...

kids want to do the same activity/game over and over?

Encourage them to come up with ways to modify the game or research historical insights about the activity (e.g. researching historical ballparks to go along with field set-up or researching Olympic medalists in a relay).

ACTIVITIES

ICEBREAKER GAMES

Sprout Tag

Designate a play space (large open space). In this version of tag, everyone is it. Players run and try to tag someone. Once you are tagged you must squat down like a catcher. Pay attention to the player who tagged you, because you are free to “sprout up” once that player is tagged.

For example, if player A tags player B, player B must squat like a catcher until someone tags player A. Once player A is tagged, player B sprouts up to continue play.

I’m a Star Relay Race

There are many varieties of relay races, but this one is sure to get your kids moving quickly. Split the group into teams of no more than 6 players. Set up cones for the start line and another set of cones about 15 yards out.

The first player in line sprints out to the next cone and does five star jumps (players start in a squat touching the ground and then release all their energy jumping up with arms and legs extended – like a star). While jumping, players must yell “I’m a star!” Then sprint back and tag the next player’s hand. Relay race continues until one team finishes.



ACTIVITIES

ICEBREAKER GAMES

Crab Crawl Relay Race

Split the group into teams (no more than five players on a team). Set up cones for the starting line and another set of cones or a line about 10-15 yards out. Players must crab crawl (hands and feet on the ground, bellies facing the sky, butts off the ground) out to the cone or line. Then players drop down on the ground and do five sit-ups, and crab crawl back to tag their teammate's hand.

Race continues until one team finishes. Add different challenges and modify the race as teams master the crab crawl. Remind them to focus on using their core muscles to help hold their bodies up.



ACTIVITIES

ICEBREAKER GAMES

Over the Shoulder Relay

Designate a start and finish line. Have students line up behind each other in groups of 8-10, spreading out one arm's length distance apart. Demonstrate how to pass the ball over your head/shoulder to the teammate behind you. Give the person in front of the line a ball.

The object of the game is for the group to pass back the ball over their head/shoulder. When the last person in line gets the ball, he or she runs/skips/jumps/etc. to the front of the line and starts passing the ball back again.

Play until the person who started at the beginning of the line is back at the front of the line.

Follow the Leader

This is a great game to play around a soccer field or basketball court. Have your team line up and the first person in line begins with a movement (i.e. walking, running, skipping, cross over steps, dance moves, animal movements). The rest of the line must follow their movement. When the leader reaches a turn (i.e. a corner of the field), the person at the back of the line sprints to the front and begins a new movement.

This continues until the original line leader reaches the front of the line again. Encourage your kids to be creative! If the team has more than 10 players, split the group into multiple teams so lines are not too long.

What do I do when...

warm-ups feel stale?

Empower some of your players to set up the plan or schedule for the next practice.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

GETTING STARTED

ACTIVITIES

WRAP UP

FITNESS GAMES

Going Deep

The Basics:

This drill combines catching long fly balls with catching passes in football.

Divide your team into two or four equal groups. Place a group of players on each sideline beyond first and third base.

One coach will be with each group of players. When he/she yells “go!” the player begins sprinting toward centerfield and the coach makes the player run a considerable distance before throwing him/her a fly ball. Alternate throws so your players don’t run into each other. After a player catches the ball, he/she should join the group on the opposite sideline.

Some things to remember:

- Know the age and ability of your players
- Fully explain the technique for proper form
- Do not let your players get sloppy

Some things to consider:

- Use the infield to shorten the run
- Try ground balls as well as fly balls
- Have groups compete against each other

Competition:

- See how many passes in a row each player/team can catch
- Ask players to catch and throw to a given spot, earning points for hitting the target
- Give points for length – the farther they run, the more points they get (only award points if they catch the ball)

ACTIVITIES

FITNESS GAMES

Going Deep

AVOID

Avoid doing the same drill too many times – use footballs, baseballs, tennis balls. Variety is good!

LIMIT

Limit the time between throws and discourage jogging back to the line.

EMPHASIZE

Emphasize the form in which your kids run: encourage them to run with their head up.



FITNESS GAMES

Pickups

The Basics:

This is an aerobic exercise, pure and simple.

Place two players opposite each other, but no more than three feet apart. One player serves and the other receives. When the coach says “go,” the receiver shuffle steps along a line and receives the rolled ball from the server. Upon picking it up, he flips it back to the server and shuffles the other way to receive the next rolled ball. Set a stop watch, then have players switch roles.

Some things to remember:

- Be sure to roll the ball so it can be caught
- Roll it to challenge them to move quickly
- Make sure each player moves their feet and bends at the knees to put their butt down and eyes out in front

Some things to consider:

- Increase the distance for more advanced players
- The receiver can become a server after receiving the ball. This would mean the players would both be shuffling back and forth to receive the ball.

Competition:

- See which group does the most pickups in 30 seconds, one minute, etc. Tell them that they have to field the ball cleanly for it to count.

ACTIVITIES

FITNESS GAMES

Pickups

AVOID

Avoid letting kids pick their own partners – kids will pick their friends every time. Challenge them to make others around them better.

LIMIT

Limit activities that require too much explanation – explain the basic concept and let them play.

EMPHASIZE

Emphasize games that incorporate competition – when kids compete, they play more!



ACTIVITIES

FITNESS GAMES

First to Third

The Basics:

In this exercise all kids start at first base and sprint to third base when instructed.

This can also be done starting at home to run a double, or starting at second and finishing at home.

Some things to remember:

- Make sure your players are using proper technique before takeoff.
- Stress the cross over step required to make this run.
- Stress the proper turn at second base, hitting the bag with the inside foot to get maximum leverage.

Some things to consider:

- Time your players from first to third and challenge them to improve their time.
- You can have a coach in centerfield actually throwing the ball to a fielder at third to see who is safe and who is out.

Competition:

- You can make this a relay race and have half the team at third going back in the other direction. See which team takes less total time on the drill.

What do I do when...

one kid is stronger and faster than the rest of the team?

Challenge them to push harder – do twice as many jumping jacks, run twice as many laps.

Challenge them to help a teammate by running alongside them.

ACTIVITIES

FITNESS GAMES

First to Third

AVOID

Avoid speaking negatively about running. Kids don't mind running—in fact, they want to! Frame it as a positive activity every time.

LIMIT

Limit racing kids against one another. Remember that it's about the individual and their goals. Instead, time kids and have them race against their personal best or make it a team competition.

EMPHASIZE

Emphasize running both long distances and short sprints – both are healthy for kids!



FITNESS GAMES

Fast Catch

The Basics:

Every practice starts with catch. Players are geared to get warmed up by throwing and catching with another player.

In this drill, you encourage the players to throw the ball back and forth quickly in order to make the catch an aerobic exercise.

Some things to remember:

- Make sure that your players can control the ball by playing basic catch first.
- Speed will decrease accuracy, so be cognizant of what they can and can't do.
- For younger players, you may want to substitute tennis balls or rubber balls to prevent injuries.
- Require proper technique! Don't let either the thrower or receiver get sloppy just to increase repetitions.

Some things to consider:

- Have players practice with no gloves.
- Players can do the same drill with ground balls or fly balls.

Competition:

- Time the players and challenge them to count how many are caught during the time period. Put them into teams with one player facing the rest of the team. Have them move down the line throwing and catching with each player on their team. See who finishes first.

What do I do when...

kids want to do something different?

Encourage them to create their own practice/activity plan and review it with them as the final activity for the day.

ACTIVITIES

FITNESS GAMES

Fast to Catch

AVOID

Avoid allowing kids to be sloppy when doing activities. If the activity involves a special skill, master that first, then find time for fitness fun.

LIMIT

Limit doing too many of the same types of activities in a row – throw, run, hit, play – change it up!

EMPHASIZE

Emphasize proper throwing technique – always a 4 seam grip on the ball. Find the horseshoe of the laces and put your fingers across.



FITNESS GAMES

Four Ground Ball

The Basics:

Start with your entire team in a line at the third base infield position. Place a cone at each infield position.

Starting at third, each player must field a ground ball at each cone, all the way to first base. After fielding the ball at third, they run to shortstop, second, and finally first.

Once they field it, have them throw the ball to a stationary target (bucket or coach). All players must do this as quickly as possible.

Some things to remember:

- Judge the ability of your players and make sure not to get too far away from them so they will be successful both in fielding the ball and in throwing it.

Some things to consider:

- Reverse the order and start from first base.
- Have players run to the outfield fence and back prior to joining the end of the line.
- Try the drill with fly balls and line drives in the outfield.

Competition:

- Count how many players successfully receive the ball or time the entire team to see how quickly they can do it.

ACTIVITIES

FITNESS GAMES

Four Ground Ball

AVOID

Avoid activities that single out one person's deficiency or weakness. Instead, create a team atmosphere that allows all kids to contribute in some way.

LIMIT

Limit activities where groups of kids wait their turn. If waiting is necessary, give points for other items they can do while waiting (e.g. push-ups, up-downs, running to the outfield wall and back).

EMPHASIZE

Emphasize using time to create competition. Almost every fitness activity can be timed: practice, a run, a hitting drill. When done right, timing creates a sense of urgency and competition.



ACTIVITIES

FITNESS GAMES

Two Step

The Basics:

Split the team in half. Line up half the group on the first base line and the other half on the third base line.

Each child gets a number – teams must have the same number of players. For example, there are ten kids on each team (numbers 1-10) on the first base line and ten kids (numbers 1-10) on the third base line. If there is an odd number, one player can be assigned two numbers.

Place a ball on second base. Coach calls out a number, and the player with that number must run to grab the ball and get back to their line before being tagged by their counterpart on the other team. The coach can call up to three numbers at a time. Players can pass the ball, working together to get back to the line before being tagged.

Each time a player successfully makes it back to their line, the team gets a point. The first team to earn a set number of points (five is a good starting point) wins.

Some things to remember:

- Keep the players active. While they wait on the line for their numbers to be called, players can do jumping jacks or other movement activities.

What do I do when...

the kids get into an argument or dispute the score?

A quick game of “rock, paper, scissors” always helps solve conflict. Teach the kids to play and make it a habit for any “tie breakers.”

ACTIVITIES

FITNESS GAMES

Two Step

AVOID

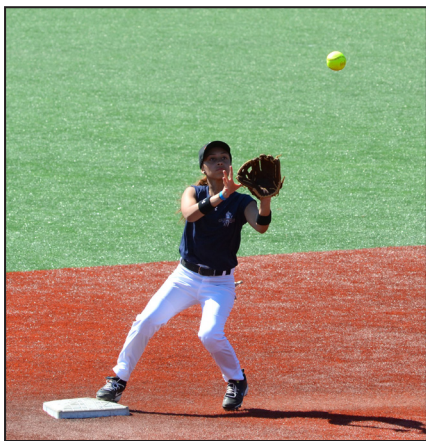
Avoid injuries. Use a soft or safety ball. Teach your players how to tag safely – light tags on the shoulder or upper back are best.

LIMIT

Limit the time for this game (no more than 10 minutes) to encourage players to work faster and as a team to reach the number of points quickly.

EMPHASIZE

Emphasize teamwork and positive encouragement. Some players are faster than others, so encourage your players to work together by passing the ball rather than relying on sheer speed.



FITNESS GAMES

Box Drill

The Basics:

Set up the cones or dots approximately 10 feet apart to form a square. Have the players split up around the box with at least one player at each cone.

Player one underhand flips the ball to the player at the next cone, focusing on using momentum and follow through. The player follows their throw to fill in the spot at the next cone. Play continues clockwise around the box, with players catching, flipping, and running to fill the next spot. You can use any type of ball in this drill and it can be done with or without gloves. For example, start out using a playground ball or soccer ball for beginners, then progress to a baseball as players get more comfortable with the underhand flip.

Some things to remember:

- Remind players to focus on using their momentum to pass the ball to their teammate.
- Focus on the catching and throwing. Each player receiving a pass should give their teammate a good target.

Some things to consider:

- Set up a competition – have two or three boxes racing to see which group can get to a goal fastest.

ACTIVITIES

FITNESS GAMES

Box Drill

AVOID

Avoid letting players get sloppy in a race. Be sure to focus on good flips and catches.

LIMIT

Limit the number of dropped passes. Have your team set a goal for number of consecutive catches. Try and increase concentration.

EMPHASIZE

Emphasize having players use their momentum to increase speed and efficiency.



FITNESS GAMES

The Circuit - Outfield/Infield

The Basics:

This drill will get your team moving while practicing the proper form to field both fly balls and ground balls. Set up a cone in deep center field and another cone in position for a second baseman. You will need 2 coaches, one to throw fly balls in center field and one to roll ground balls to second base.

The team lines up behind the cone in centerfield. Coach throws a fly ball to the first player, who catches the ball, then underhand flips it back to coach. That player then sprints to second base – gets in the proper fielding stance, and the other coach rolls a ground ball. The player then underhand flips the ball back to the coach in the infield.

For the final part of the drill, the player proceeds around the bases – sprinting from second to third to home. After sprinting through home plate, the player jogs back out to center field to rejoin the line.

Some things to remember:

- Teach the fundamentals first. Make sure your players know the proper form for both outfield and infield positions – athletic stance, feet shoulder width apart, knees slightly bent, on the balls of your feet, hands out in front.

Some things to consider:

- If you have enough coaches (four) and more than 10 players, consider starting two lines in right and left field. Players should switch lines each rotation (i.e. after fielding a ball in left field, a ground ball at short stop, and running third to home, the player jogs to right field for the next rotation).
- Keep it simple – always move counterclockwise around the field.

ACTIVITIES

FITNESS GAMES

The Circuit - Outfield/Infield

AVOID

Avoid having your players develop bad habits – focus on good positioning first and speed second.

LIMIT

Limit the time any player is standing still. Once the drill gets moving all players will be running and moving.

EMPHASIZE

Emphasize using multiple repetitions will really help get your team in shape while practicing good fielding fundamentals.



WRAP UP

REINFORCING THE LESSONS

“Perfect practice makes perfect.” – Cal Ripken, Sr.

Much like anything in life, fitness and the amount of physical activity a young person participates in revolves around their ability to choose.

While every person has the choice to be physically active, it is up to us as adults, coaches, mentors, and teachers to lead the way.

Remember, not every child is going to be an athlete or a sports star and that is alright. But every person, every child, can be active and can have a basic understanding that including physical activity in their daily routine is a healthy, productive choice. It starts with you, so set the tone and make it fun!

Finally, there is no magic wand or perfect answer to questions of fitness but there is something we all can do: lead by example. Kids will always follow the lead of a positive, productive adult, and now is your time to get out, get active, and get kids moving “The Ripken Way” on the path toward an active lifestyle!

“THE RIPKEN WAY”

Keep it simple

Explain why

Celebrate the individual

Make it fun

WRAP UP

RESOURCES

In addition to [CRSFPortal.org](https://www.crsfportal.org), here are some resources that might be helpful in your work with youth.

Fitness Resources

thebbr.com
performfit.com
presidentschallenge.org

Fun Games

playworks.org/games
gameskidsplay.net
kidshealth.org
letsplay.com
familyfun.go.com/playtime
ripenquickball.com

Special Thanks

These materials were printed through the generous support of the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation.

American Legion
Child Welfare Foundation



CONNECT WITH US

You are on the front lines, empowering kids in your community each and every day. You're there through life's challenges, just as Cal Ripken, Sr. was for his kids and his players: teaching them how to make the best of every situation, leading by example, and encouraging them to swing for the fences.

At the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation, we see our role as supporting you in this shared mission.

Join our training portal for free resources:

CRSFPortal.org

Visit our main website to learn more:

RipkenFoundation.org

Join the conversation:

CRSFPortal.org/forum



@CalRipkenSrFdn



CalRipkenSrFdn



CalRipkenSrFdn

The Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation helps build character and teach critical life lessons to disadvantaged young people living in America's most distressed communities through baseball- and softball-themed programs.



RipkenFoundation.org | CRSFPortal.org