SOFTBALL · AGES 11 TO 13

# Ages 11 to 13: three calm weeks before tryouts.

## Short sessions at home are enough to arrive ready.

3 sessions a week of 15 minutes, from SSTracker's at-home softball plans for 11 to 13 year olds. Two weeks build up, the third eases off, and the day before tryouts is a rest day.[1]

| WEEKS | SESSIONS A WEEK | MINUTES A SESSION[2] |
|---|---|---|
| 3 | 3, at most | 15 |

### Two weeks build up, then the last week eases off.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Week 1** | Learn the sessions, one day at a time. Do sessions 1, 2 and 3, with a rest day between. Write your self-check number in session 1. |
| **Week 2** | The same sessions again, a little smoother. Repeat sessions 1, 2 and 3. Let your child lead the one they like most. |
| **Week 3** | Lighter, so your child arrives fresh. Sessions 1 and 2 early in the week, with the self-check again in session 1. Rest the day before tryouts. |

With two weeks to go, start at week 2. With four weeks, do week 1 twice. Pick days that fit your week, with a rest day between sessions.

This packet online, with links to every drill: sstracker.app/tryout-prep/softball

1. Sessions: SSTracker's at-home softball plans for 11 to 13 year olds. Every drill here is open at ages 11 to 13 in the app.
2. Session limits: SSTracker's own rule for age 11, at most 4 days a week and 45 minutes a session.

## Every area coaches watch at tryouts is something that grows.

Many tryouts look at a few areas like these. SSTracker's own tryout notes use these five, a coach notes only what they saw, and there is no overall grade.[1]

| | |
|---|---|
| **Pace** | Quick first steps grow with practice and with rest. Arriving fresh helps more than one extra hard day. |
| **Technique** | Clean touches grow with many short, calm tries. The sessions here give your child lots of them. |
| **Reading the game** | Looking up and choosing well grow by playing. After a game, ask about one good choice they made. |
| **Physical** | Balance, landing and core strength are part of every warm-up here. Every body grows at its own pace. |
| **Attitude** | Trying again after a mistake, listening and cheering a teammate are things every player can bring. |

Skills these sessions train: Arm Strength, Hitting, Base Running.

## Your child compares only with their own earlier number.

**The test: Long Toss Build-Up: your own number.**

**Week 1, first session** _____

**Week 3, first session** _____

**What feels easier now?** _____

Compare only with your own week 1 number. Any number is fine: it shows where you are today, not who you are.

1. Tryout areas: the five areas in SSTracker's own tryout notes for coaches.

## Every session starts with the same moving warm-up.

Softball Warm-Up, Ages 11 to 13[1]

1. Jog easy for 1 minute, then skip, side shuffle and backpedal for 1 minute.
2. Moving warm-up over 10 to 15 yards and back: high knees, heel flicks, carioca each way, then open-the-gate and close-the-gate walks (lift the knee and turn it out, then in).
3. Leg swings, 10 forward and back and 10 side to side each leg; then walking lunges with a twist toward the front knee, 6 each leg.
4. Plank on your forearms for 20 seconds, then a side plank for 15 seconds each side, body straight like a board.
5. Balance on one leg for 20 seconds each side, reaching the free foot slowly forward, to the side and behind.
6. Jumps: 5 squat jumps with soft landings, then 5 side hops landing on one foot and holding still for 2 seconds, each leg.
7. Build-up runs: three runs of about 15 yards at half speed, three-quarter speed and nearly full speed; walk back each time.
8. Sport moves: easy throwing with a partner from about 10 big steps apart, moving back a few steps at a time and keeping every throw relaxed; then 5 smooth practice swings with everyone well back.

**In these sessions the warm-up is the short version, 4 minutes: steps 1, 6 and 8. The full routine takes 10 minutes.**

A flat, clear space with room to run. Stop if anything hurts: a warm-up should leave you ready, not tired.

## Every session ends with a few minutes of gentle stretches.

Softball Cool-Down Stretches, Ages 11 to 13: each stretch held 15 to 20 seconds, never to pain.

**In these sessions the cool-down is the short version, 3 minutes: steps 1 to 4 only. The full routine takes 6 minutes.**

1. Warm-up and cool-down: SSTracker's routines for this age, with the research at sstracker.app/warm-ups-and-stretches.

## Have these ready before the first session.

FOR THE SESSIONS AT HOME

- Softball
- Ball
- Batting tee
- Net
- Batter's box or chalk
- Cones or bases
- A parent or partner
- Glove
- Bat
- Light resistance band

## Week 1: learn the sessions, one day at a time.

Do sessions 1, 2 and 3, with a rest day between. Write your self-check number in session 1.

### Session 1: Arm: Long Toss Build-Up — 15 min ◯

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Warm-up, short version: steps 1, 6 and 8 | 4 min |
| 2. | Long Toss Build-Up | 4 min |
| 3. | Inside Pitch Turn | 4 min |
| 4. | Cool-down, short version: steps 1 to 4 only | 3 min |

Drills: Long Toss Build-Up, Inside Pitch Turn

### Session 2: Arm Care Band Circuit — 15 min ◯

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Warm-up, short version: steps 1, 6 and 8 | 4 min |
| 2. | Arm Care Band Circuit | 4 min |
| 3. | Slap Footwork Basics | 4 min |
| 4. | Cool-down, short version: steps 1 to 4 only | 3 min |

Drills: Arm Care Band Circuit, Slap Footwork Basics

## Week 1 continues with session 3.

### Session 3: Hitting: Inside Pitch Turn — 15 min

1. Warm-up, short version: steps 1, 6 and 8 — 4 min
2. Inside Pitch Turn — 4 min
3. Base Running Sprints — 4 min
4. Cool-down, short version: steps 1 to 4 only — 3 min

Drills: Inside Pitch Turn, Base Running Sprints

## Week 2: the same sessions again, a little smoother.

Repeat sessions 1, 2 and 3. Let your child lead the one they like most.

| DAY | WHAT | MINUTES | DONE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Day 1 | Session 1 | 15 | ◯ |
| Day 3 | Session 2 | 15 | ◯ |
| Day 5 | Session 3 | 15 | ◯ |

## Week 3: lighter, so your child arrives fresh.

Sessions 1 and 2 early in the week, with the self-check again in session 1. Rest the day before tryouts.

| DAY | WHAT | MINUTES | DONE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Day 1 | Session 1 + self-check | 15 | ◯ |
| Day 3 | Session 2 | 15 | ◯ |
| The day before | Rest. Pack the bag together. | · | ◯ |

## Pack the bag together the day before.

ON TRYOUT DAY

- What the program asks for: read its sign-up together.
- A full water bottle.
- The shoes and gear your child trains in, already worn in.
- Any safety gear the program asks for.
- A snack and a warm layer for after.

## The night before, calm matters more than practice.

- No new drills tonight. The work is already done.
- Pack the bag together, then set it by the door.
- A normal dinner, some water and the usual bedtime.
- Tell your child one thing you saw them grow at in these weeks.
- Nerves are normal. Say so, and that you feel them too sometimes.
- Whatever happens tomorrow, your love and pride stay the same.

AFTER TRYOUTS

- Ask what was fun, and what they want to practice next.
- Talk about their own growth, never about other children.

**When to stop**

- Stop if anything hurts, knees and heels too.
- Stop if landings get noisy or wobbly, or form breaks down. Rest, then try again easier.
- Thunder: go inside. Heat signs (dizzy, headache, feeling sick, confused, unusually tired): stop, rest in the shade and drink water.

**After a knock to the head** [1]

- Stop right away. No more play today. See a doctor before playing again.
- Call 911 for danger signs: throwing up again and again, a seizure, can't stay awake, a headache that gets worse, slurred speech, or one pupil bigger than the other.

## Whatever happens at tryouts, your child is enough.

**Practice makes progress, because there is no such thing as perfect.**

More free drills, warm-ups and weekly plans: sstracker.app/drills. No account needed.

1. After a knock to the head: the CDC's HEADS UP guidance (same words as every SSTracker stop card).