

WALL BALL WORKOUTS

Right Hand, Left Hand: 50 reps each Start off standing 10-15 feet from the wall, with your feet spread in throwing position, perpendicular to the wall. Having the step already in place allows you to concentrate on the upper body mechanics of throwing -- keeping your biceps by your ear, your hips and shoulders creating a torque motion, snapping the wrist of your top hand and fashioning a full follow-through. Do 25 reps on each hand. They should be rapid (an optimal wall ball workout lasts about 30 minutes). Then move to within 5 feet of the wall, choke up on your stick handle, and repeat reps of 25 on your right and left hands.

Throw Right, Catch Left and Vice Versa: 50 Reps Move back to within 10-15 feet and square off to the wall. Only this time, catch with the opposite hand with which you throw. Your upper body mechanics should remain tight, but your aim should be for an off-center spot on the wall that will make the ball return to your opposite side. Do this 50 times per session, and you'll be much more comfortable making offside catches and transferring hands.

In Close: 20 reps right, 20 reps left Staying within 5 feet of the wall, square off to it, this time taking the hips and shoulders out of the equation and allowing you to focus solely on the wrist action of throwing. Maintaining a wide base with your arms out in front of you, throw 10 times right and 10 times left, emphasizing the wrist snap and utilizing a quick cradle and release. For those interested in ulterior motives, this also builds muscle in your forearms. Then, alternate hands, transferring in between each throw. Do this 10 more times on each hand without cradling, and your stick speed will benefit. Choke up on the stick if need be. For your own purposes, try some variety. Start out in the perpendicular stance for five reps, and then open up square to wall for five reps, and repeat. Alternating stances creates cardiovascular work. Also, if you're comfortable enough, don't cradle -- try quick sticking while you're close to the wall. Finally, if you're really comfortable in tight, try doing it one handed.

Add the Step: 25 reps right, 25 reps left Drop back about 20 feet. Maintaining the upper body mechanics, add the step to the throwing motion, targeting a spot on the wall.

Sprint Laterally, Catch Backhand: 25 reps right, 25 reps left

Since you've implemented footwork, move up to within 15 feet of the wall, and work laterally while practicing backhanded catches. Starting with your right hand, throw across your body, run left, and catch the ball backhanded like an outlet pass over your right shoulder. Then switch to your left hand, throw across your body, run right and make the same backhanded catch over your left shoulder. Laterally, this should act more like a shuttle run, sprinting about 5 feet in between throws. Do this 25 times on each hand.

For more advanced wall-ballers, repeat as desired while getting in close to simulate forced feeds in the crease and around the cage. Or square off for a set of backhanded quick-sticks.

Split Dodge: 25 reps right, 25 reps left A wall ball fallacy is that the exercise is one only of throwing and catching. Really, the wall is an ideal place to perfect your split and face dodges, too. You're already moving laterally -- why not work the split in? Again, fundamentals are key. When using a split dodge, there should always be at least one hand on the stick -- you're not just tossing the stick from one hand to the other. Throw right, catch right, dip over to your left; throw left, catch left, dip over to your right. Do this 25 times on each hand, using the same shuttle-type movement as mentioned above, practicing the transfer of hands so that it happens tight across your face.

Face Dodge: 25 reps right, 25 reps left Make sure that when you whip the ball across your face, you're doing so from ear-to-ear, and not exposing your stick outside of that tight semicircle. This also means having the right throwing mechanics to receive the ball in this position.

Behind the Back: 25 reps right, 25 reps left These days, behind-the-back passes and shooting are considered fundamental. While you can square off to the wall, the perpendicular stance is probably more appropriate since you're seldom facing the target when throwing behind the back. Regardless, for this to be an effective drill, you must continue releasing from behind your ear for the return to be catchable.