

Landing Right: The Prep Step Lab

Indoor	90 min	Tier: 1
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OBJECTIVE

Get the prep step automatic before the ball ever gets involved. The standard is an athletic landing as the pitch reaches the hitting zone, every position, almost every pitch. A gym is the best room for this — no ball to chase, nothing else to look at.

BENCHMARKS THIS PLAN FEEDS

- B9 — Prep step

PREP — BEFORE PLAYERS ARRIVE

Equipment	cones + tennis balls + gloves + batting tee + baseballs
Setup	tape a small diamond on the floor with room to move around each spot

PRACTICE TIMELINE

0:00-0:05	Dynamic warm-up (5 min) Run the routine, all 12 movements, down and back on each. Card's on its own sheet.
0:05-0:15	Throwing ladder (10 min) Partner throwing along the wall, wrist flicks up through a feet-set finish. Accuracy at a target, not distance — the room decides the ceiling today.
0:15-0:55	Attack — Prep step (40 min · 4 × 10 min) Four groups, four stations. — Station 1 — Land together, no ball. A coach mimics a delivery and the whole group lands at the same moment the imaginary ball would arrive. That's dozens of reps in ten minutes, and the cue is land as it gets there, not land when he throws it. — Station 2 — First move off the landing. Land, then break on a called direction — left, right, in, back. A good landing that goes nowhere next doesn't help anybody. — Station 3 — Hitting. Tee work, one cue at a time — see it, then hit it. Every practice keeps a swing in it somewhere. — Station 4 — Short hops and hands. Close-range glove work with a tennis ball so the hands stay sharp while the group's attention is mostly on their feet. — Three ways a kid misses the landing: flat feet, late, or back on his heels. All three cost him the next step, even when nobody's hit a ball yet.
0:55-1:10	Dailies: light ground-ball work (15 min) Infielders take simple grounders at their own spot, one at a time, in place — clean glove, clean transfer, no throw past a bucket a few feet away.
1:10-1:25	Close: Landing Count (15 min) Two teams, coach delivers twenty imaginary pitches, rolling a ball on a handful of them. A point for every pitch where the whole side lands together, a point off for anyone caught flat. It's scored as a team, so one flat-footed kid costs everybody.
1:25-1:30	Wrap-up (5 min) Whoever was still landing late by the end of the close is who needs this again first — outdoors, the ball moves twice as fast and gives him half the time to fix it.

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COACH'S NOTES

This is the least exciting plan in the whole library and one of the most useful. Flat-footed defense is the most common gap at this age, and it's almost never a hands problem — it's feet that never got moving. A gym lets you run hundreds of these reps in one practice without a single fungo swing, which the field never gives you. Bring this one back midseason once the habit starts to slip.