

BASEBALL 101

Learn how to improve your game with a few simple steps brought to you by the Texas Rangers Youth Academy. Dash Johnson, manager of Youth Academy baseball and softball programming, uses his extensive knowledge of baseball as a former collegiate player and long-time coach to simplify key elements of the game.

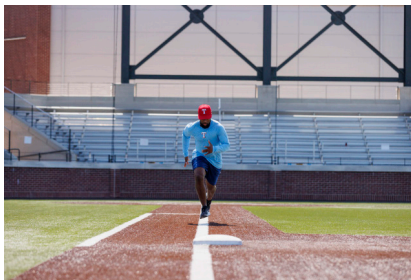
In this lesson, Johnson explains base running in a few simple steps anyone can try.

To learn more about the Texas Rangers Youth Academy, follow @RangersYA on Twitter and Instagram. To register your child for free baseball and softball programming, visit texasrangers.com/academy.



BASE RUNNING

HARD 90s



Run

As soon as you hit the ball, exit the batter's box at full speed and head toward first base. Run on or alongside the first base foul line for the most direct route.

To reach top speed while you are in stride, raise your opposite hand and leg simultaneously. For example, if your left hand is up, your right leg should be raised. When pumping your arms to gain momentum, your hands should move from your ear to your pocket.



Contact Point

Run through the base with your foot hitting the front of the bag, securing your safety at the earliest possible moment.



Break Down and Look

Once you run through first base, slow your momentum with a quick stutter step and look over your right shoulder to confirm the throw to first was not a passed ball. If the throw was a passed ball, consider advancing to second base.

OUTFIELD HIT



Run

As soon as you hit the ball, exit the batter's box at full speed and head toward first base. Run outside the first base line into foul territory to prep for your turn to second.

To reach top speed while you are in stride, raise your opposite hand and leg simultaneously. For example, if your left hand is up, your right leg should be raised. When pumping your arms to gain momentum, your hands should move from your ear to your pocket.



Banana Route/Turn

Run outside the first base line into foul territory, setting yourself up to take a wide turn and become better aligned as you advance to second base. This wide turn increases efficiency and is commonly referred to as a banana route due to the curved angle. Utilize the banana route as you round first, second, and third base.



Contact Point

Without interrupting your stride, step on the inside corner of the base with your right foot and continue running at top speed to second base. Hitting the inside corner will increase efficiency and help you reach the next base quickly.

BASEBALL 101

BASE RUNNING (CONT.)

PROPER LEADOFF



Prep

Position yourself on the bag as you wait for the pitcher to step on the rubber, signaling that you may take your lead.



Leadoff

Take a proper lead off the bag by stepping first with your right foot, followed by a step with your left foot and two shuffle steps.

Be sure to never cross over your legs over one another when taking your lead; a good pitcher will identify that as a signal to pick you off. Remain close enough to the base to take one step and a dive back should the pitcher attempt to pick you off.



Secondary Lead

As the pitch is delivered, take an additional two shuffle steps toward your next base to help you gain ground and momentum as you prepare for your teammate to hit the pitch. Remain in an athletic stance with your knees bent and eyes up to react to the pitch. If the ball is hit, advance to the next base, if the ball is not put into play, return to your prep position.

STEALING A BASE



Prep

Position yourself on the bag as you wait for the pitcher to step on the rubber, signaling that you may take your lead.



Leadoff

Take a proper lead off the bag by stepping first with your right foot, followed by a step with your left foot and two shuffle steps.

Be sure to never cross over your legs over one another when taking your lead; a good pitcher will identify that as a signal to pick you off. Remain close enough to the base to take one step and a dive back should the pitcher attempt to pick you off.



Run

As the pitcher prepares to throw, take off running as soon as their front leg lifts to deliver the pitch. Push off your left foot while turning your hips toward your next base. Run in a straight line and slide into the bag.

If you know you are planning to steal and would like a better start, angle your feet and hips slightly toward the next base to minimize wasted time.