

WATER POLO DRILLS

VERSION 4.1

Contents

WARM-UP	head up freestyle // 3 kick 1 pull breaststroke // reverse eggbeater // eggbeater with kickboard // turn-spin-seel // passing laps w/ a partner, 1 or 2 balls // eggbeater 7-to-the-7 ball on head
ENDURANCE TRAINING	10 min eggbeater // gauntlet // game time // water polo im // SPRINTS WITH A BALL: self-pass-tipping // eggbeater ball on head // zigzag dribble // stop & go // follow the ball // counter-strike eggbeater // backstroke partner passing // finger-tip dribble // backstroke self passing // backstroke partner passing // dribble w/ wet shot // submerge & flip // toe pickup // ball crawl // up & outs SPRINTS WITHOUT A BALL: eggbeater fingers interlocked // 6 & 3 // partner kick // partner tow // sculling // defending the drive // bear // big-right, big-left // different strokes
PASSING	shoot/pass heavy // 4 corners // 10-dry move away // zipper passing // long and short passing // fish pond // dribble & pass across // continuous passing // PRESSURE PASSING: 5-man keep away // pass under pressure // around the world // trap & pass off // PASSING RELAYS: 2-3 man passing laps // triangle passing // 4-square passing // 2 man backstroke passing
SHOOTING	mobility // quick 5 // north-south // defending the drive // direct the attack // man drill // 9 man drill // shot after the foul
2-M	heavy ball training // animal drill // 5 quick shots // create space // greanie // defense hold and release // piggy back ride
COUNTER ATTACK	counter dry // 3-man keep away // the revolver // 3 on 2 counter // continuous counter
GOALIE	goalie laps // hit the spot // head shot // kill the goalie // block the lob // bombardment // red light green light // balls up // 2-m walk // water jug // 2 meter steals // ladders aka drowning chipmunk // follow the ball lunges // cage roll
SCRIMMAGE SITUATIONS	4-man scrum // shooter trails // tug of war // continuous 6-on-5 // round robin
GAMES	water polo relays // survival // 5-alive // racked // horse // keep-away // pickle

BEGINNER DRILLS **EGGBEATER:** wall push-off eggbeater // eggbeater on chair // reverse noodle eggbeater // duck walk
BALL HANDLING: bounce ball // faking // dunking // ball control
DRIBBLE: pinball dribble // frogger dribble // dribble tag // zigzag dribble // 180° turn spin // spin like a ninja
PASSING: sandlot drill // two feeding one //
Circle PASSING: hot potatoe // whirl pool // keep away circle // bull in the ring
SHOOTING: ring the bell // 1-minute man

DEFENSE step-over // 4-5 trap // ladder // 2-4 drop // m (gap) // 4-1 (man down)

OFFENSE set // umbrella // double set // gap // square drives // rotating set

Endurance Training

10 min eggbeater // gauntlet // game time // water polo IM // sprints

10 MIN EGGBEATER

For 30 seconds eggbeater elbows & chin out of the water as high as possible. Rest for the next 30 seconds. **Vary:** 45s. Eggbeater elbows out & 15s. rest.

GAUNTLET

Set of four different eggbeater drills used for strength training the legs. These can be done in any order, for a varying length of time, and can be used in conjunction with many other drills to add eggbeater conditioning. Drills: Face to Face (With a Partner): hips up, hands on partner's biceps, hand fighting to have your arm inside of your partner's arm so that you can control him. // Back to Back: both partners go back to back & interlock arms, trying to eggbeater their partners out of position. // Jump Claps: all players start with hips up, knees close to chest, while sculling. On the whistle all players jump as high as they can out of the water and clap while counting out loud how many claps they have done. // Dunking: all players try to dunk all of the other players. This one is by far the most fun to watch, the players get to practice being competitive under duress. No rules, just dunking. **Vary:** Make sure no one drowns.

GAME TIME

Game time is a 28 minute drill used to simulate the maximum amount of effort that should be given for a 28 minute water polo game with 7 minute quarters. The goal of the drill is to make the players work as hard as possible for 28 minutes while working at both sprinting and intensive eggbeater drills.

Players start on the 2 meters ready to sprint across the pool to the adjacent 2 meters and back, swimming heads up freestyle, using hip overs to change direction. When the players get back they immediately get elbows out of the water.

Once the whole team has elbows out of the water use an eggbeater drill to keep players at 100% intensity. Eggbeater sets: elbows out of water for 30 seconds // gauntlet drills: eggbeater claps: dunk the other players, etc.

Vary: Get the players to work harder by offering a reward: the first two players who finish each sprint can rest for the remainder of the drill. Instead of running the drill for 28 minutes, run the drill excusing 2 players at a time until the last two players finish.

WATER POLO I.M.

4 strokes in I.M. order but replaced with water polo variations. **Butterfly:** Eggbeater body as high as possible while keeping knees close to chest. Explosive breaststroke kick to get as high out of the water as possible. Lunge forward with Butterfly arms smoothly into water while shooting hips up out of the water. **Backstroke:** Eggbeater on your back high out of the water with your head looking past your feet. One arm is by your side while the other is streamlined until you take a stroke, rotating arms. Swimming at 45 degree angles, when taking a stroke also change directions. **Breaststroke:** Same as butterfly but finishing with breaststroke arms forward. **Freestyle:** Same as backstroke but on stomach.

SPRINTS WITH A BALL

self-pass-tipping // eggbeater ball on head // zigzag dribble // stop & go // follow the ball // counter-strike eggbeater // backstroke partner passing // fingertip dribble // backstroke self passing // backstroke partner passing // dribble w/ wet shot // submerge & flip // toe pickup // ball crawl // up & outs

SELF-PASS-TIPPING

Facing forward, tip ball rapidly using only fingertips while raising the ball until arms are straight and then back down in front of face.

EGGBEATER BALL ON HEAD

Ball on middle of the head, not forehead, weaker kids just touch ball with two hands, stronger kids interlock fingers on top of ball.

ZIGZAG DRIBBLE

Dribble Changing directions 45° every 2-3 strokes. **Vary:** When changing directions pick-up ball to fake pass // put ball on water and keep going // change pick-up hand // bounce ball when changing directions // reel with the ball // spin with the ball.

STOP & GO

Stop and go on whistle. **Vary:** change directions on whistle // change backstroke to freestyle and back again on whistle // stop and eggbeater on whistle // stop and pick up ball in shooting position on whistle.

FOLLOW THE BALL

Players watch the coach who has a ball and follow the direction the coach puts the ball. Coach puts ball overhead, and players jump as if to intercept a pass. **Vary:** give players a ball. // players dribble with eggbeater // players verticle eggbeatering while pump faking.

COUNTER--STRIKE EGGBEATER

1st whistle means dribble. 2 whistles mean pick ball up. 3 whistles means shot to water. 4th whistles means pass to someone. Teaches triple threat. Players must look left, right, behind to develop awareness.

BACKSTROKE PARTNER PASSING

Dribble towards partner who is backstroking. Pass to backstroker and continue swimming. Backstroker catches dry and passes back dry or wet. **Vary:** after passing to backstroker revert to backstroke in opposite direction. Backstroker then reverts to crawling and then pass.

FINGER-TIP DRIBBLE

Regular dribble drive across the pool except that the players continually push the ball forward with the tips of their fingertips.

BACKSTROKE SELF PASSING

Swim backstroke while eggbeatering for more control. Between strokes flip ball into the air, continue full stroke, and catch ball on the way down quickly releasing to repeat motion for length of the pool. **Vary:** Freestyle kick // take two full rotations before catching.

DRIBBLE W/WET SHOT

Regular dribble drive except that every 3-4 strokes players practice different wet shots during the course fo the lap.

SUBMERGE & FLIP

Regular dribble drive except that in the course of his natural stroke the player, using the pressure of the ball to maintain control, pushes the ball underwater and behind him, finally using a wrist pass to flip the ball back in front of him to finish his stroke and repeat the process.

TOE PICKUP Player swims backstroke while eggbeating, starting off by letting the ball float a little ways behind. The player uses flips the ball up with his foot to catch a dry self pass, placing the ball back in the water continuously until the lap is completed.

BALL CRAWL Regular dribble drive except that the player maintains control of the ball in one hand the entire lap without letting the ball go. Players practice controlling the ball by pushing the ball into the water and bouncing the ball off of the water to push it forward as opposed to grabbing or hooking the ball.

UP & OUTS A variation of laps ending in getting out of the pool & getting back in, usually with an exercise done while out of the water. **Vary Laps:** use a combination of sprints without a ball during the laps to make this seem less dull. **Vary Exercise:** pushups // dips // sit ups // jumping jacks // single leg squat // stretch cord exercises

SPRINTS WITHOUT A BALL

eggbeater fingers interlocked // 6 & 3 // partner kick // partner tow // sculling // defending the drive // bear // big-right, big-left // different strokes

EGGBEATER FINGERS INTERLOCKED

Facing forwards both hands on head with fingers interlocked. Keep elbows up high and head out of water. Challenge kids to eggbeater up as high as they can go, past chest if possible.

6 & 3

Sprint 6 strokes forward, reverse, 3 strokes back. **Vary:** 6 strokes backstroke 3 strokes freestyle and reverse.

PARTNER KICK

Partners start opposite sides of narrow end. On whistle kick to meet partners in middle. With hands on partners' shoulders, force partner to the opposite wall. **Vary: Use scissor kick, frog kick, flutter kick, and eggbeater**

PARTNER TOW

Swim while dragging partner who is holding the other partners legs. **Vary:** The partner holding on can kick or eggbeater to help out.

SCULLING

On back with feet first and toes out of water, hands underneath. **Vary:** On back head first // On Stomach with head first & heel braking water // on stomach with feet first while freestyle kicking to create resistance.

DEFENDING THE DRIVE

Eggbeater backwards, on your side, in reverse, while sculling. Learn to pull water with your feet. Face forward not backward to pretend you are watching the driver. Practice on both sides.

BEAR

Eggbeater drill with hands quickly rotating in front. Hands in a quick circular scooping motion in front of head. Hands should never pass shoulders.

BIG-RIGHT, BIG-LEFT

After 3-4 strokes eggbeater hips up high with knees close to chest, explosive eggbeater kick to jump out of the water. First jump is to the right with the right hand, straight up and then down to the right. Second jump is the same to the left with the left hand. Third jump is straight up with both hands.

DIFFERENT STROKES

Variety of swimming strokes to challenge endurance & add variety: head up // butterfly kick on back // backstroke // underwater // freestyle while eggbeating

Passing

shoot/pass heavy // 4 corners // 10-dry move away // zipper passing // long and short passing // fish pond // dribble & pass across // continuous passing // **PRESSURE PASSING:** 5-man keep away // pass under pressure // around the world // trap & pass off // **PASSING RELAYS:** 2-3 man passing laps // triangle passing // 4-square passing // 2 man backstroke passing

SHOOT/PASS HEAVY

Eggbeater for 30 seconds ball on head to tire legs, immediately receive a pass and quick release shot or pass to the next person. Practice shooting under duress similar to game situations. **Vary:** Use a Waited Ball: After legs are tired, eggbeater chest out of the water and drop the ball to shoot or pass // Sprint: Sprint a short distance, then work legs, then shoot or pass to the next person.

4 CORNERS

6 players or more. Begin with 4 players in a square (2 players on the posts and the 3m, 2 players on the posts and 5m) an additional player at center cage and the 7 meter line to pass, and a goalie. The player at the 7 meter line starts with the ball and passes to whomever they wish in the square. This player catches the ball dry and passes to another player in the square, who passes to another who passes to the final player.

After all four players have received a pass the last player in the square passes back to the original player at the 7m. This player in turn passes to the goalie signaling everyone to rotate. While rotating the goalie passes to the next player in line at the 7m. The ball should never stop moving in this drill, players must think ahead and rotate early while watching for the ball.

Vary: shoot the ball instead of passing to the goalie.

10 DRY MOVE AWAY

Players line up with one ball, 4 meters apart. When the partners complete 10 dry passes they each move 2 meters further from each other, or one partner moves 4 meters back

Vary: Partners pass on the whistle // change number of passes // change distances moving back // change the time they have to complete each set of passes // if they do not keep up with the whistle they have to do butterfly or push ups // if either partner drops the ball at any time, both partners have to swim butterfly or do pushups.

ZIPPER PASSING

Two rows lined up outside posts lengthwise. Ball starts closest to the cage, players pass to the opposite line 1 at a time. The last man to receive ball dribbles toward the cage to start the drill over. This is a continuous drill and works best with multiple balls in at once. **Vary:** Types of passes // Have players spin or reel before passing // last player to receive the ball dribbles toward the cage to shoot before returning to the opposite line, goalie starts the drill with the first pass.

LONG & SHORT

3 players: two players 8m apart and one in the middle. Ball starts off with the outside player who passes to the inside player who passes back to the outside player. The outside player passes all the way to the other outside player while the middle player turns around to receive a pass from this player. The middle player passes back again to the new outside player who again passes all the way across to the other outside player.

FISH POND

All players spread out in the pool, every 2nd or 3rd player has a ball. Players practice constant movement while passing and catching dry. **Vary:** types of passes // offense and defense // everyone swims backstroke // wet passes

DRIBBLE & PASS ACROSS

2 man drill, partners spread across the length of the pool. One partner starts off by passing all the way across dry and sprints toward his partner. Once the partner catches the ball he gives a timing pass to the sprinter. Repeat process until the sprinter crosses pool. **Vary:** have the sprinter dribble for three strokes before passing // have the sprinter eggbeater in shooting position before passing.

CONTINUOUS PASSING

3 players, two on one side one on the other, the groups are about 8m apart, ball with the person in the back on the side with two players. The person in front sprints forward head up, rolling over midway to the other player to receive a timing pass. Once he dribbles all the way to the third player, the third player sprints to the other side to repeat the process.

PRESSURE PASSING

5 man keep away // pass under pressure // around the world // trap & pass off

5-MAN KEEP AWAY

Drill starts with 3 players on offense, in a triangle, 2 meters apart, and 2 players on defense in the middle. Offense practices passing the ball without throwing it high and can only hold onto the ball for 1-3 seconds before passing. Offense practices creating space to get open to receive pass. Defense works on changing body positions to lunge block passes, also work on head over hips to change direction and pushing off of offensive players to move between players quickly.

Offense must make sure to remain within 2-3 meters of the other offensive players to allow defense to make steals. Work on getting back to original spot after creating space and separating to receive a pass.

PASS UNDER PRESSURE

Coming Soon...

AROUND THE WORLD

Players start in Umbrella offense, ball at the 5 spot, defense in the passing lanes. Drill starts with the 5 defender fouling, the player at the 5 position moves the ball one player at a time (from the 5 to the 4 to the 3 to the 2 to the 1) to get the ball into set. All players on offense must time a V-out, creating space from their defender to get an open pass and pass on to the next person. Practice passing a wet pass to the next players' outside hand. Practice switching from right hand to left hand to make a pass. **Vary:** Have the ball start on the 1 spot going to the 5 into set, or from the 1 to the 5 back to the 1 into set.

TRAP & PASS OFF

Offensive player is trapped at 8-m. between wall and defender. Driver Comes from middle, receives pass, shoots and becomes defender. Passer becomes driver.

PASSING RELAYS

2-3 man passing laps // triangle passing // 4-square passing // 2 man backstroke passing

2-3 MAN COUNTER PASSING

2 or 3 players with one ball line up on the 2 meter line ready to sprint to opposite end of the pool, after 3-4 strokes the player with the ball rolls onto his side with his upper torso out of water while picking ball up from underneath. Pass wet to partner who takes 3-4 strokes and repeats the process, either passing back or passing to the 3rd player. Always pass with the outside hand.

Vary: Players have to keep the ball dry the entire time. When catching dry always catch with the inside/ballside hand.

TRIANGLE PASSING

3 players line up in a triangle. Start off swimming, the player with the ball dribbles to begin. When ready player with the ball stops and passes to the next player who stops to catch and pass to the next player. After passing all players immediately swim while watching the ball, prepared to stop and catch at any time. **Vary:** change directions // change hands.

4-SQUARE PASSING

4 players: 2 players in front 4 meters apart, 2 players behind also 4meters apart. One of the players in front starts with the ball while eggbeating in vertical position. This player passes to the person in front of the other line on the whistle. Once the pass is made, the player behind the passer swims in front of the passer, switches body position to eggbeater with hips underneath, and calls to receive the ball. While he is receiving the ball, the player behind the second passer follows this same process. Continue this process all the way down the pool. Make sure to get hips underneath and square up before catching the ball.

2 MAN BACKSTROKE PASSING

2 men, one in front swimming backstroke, man in back dribbling with ball. Man in back times gives timing pass to backstroker who immediately catches and passes back. After passing to the backstroker immediately take 2-3 quick strokes while watching for the return pass.

Shooting

mobility // quick 5 // north-south // defending the drive // direct the attack // man drill // 9 man drill // shot after the foul

MOBILITY

1 player is the shooter and has to stay inbetween the posts of the cage, as well as saying in between the 2 meter and 5 meter lines. 3-5 other players line up in an umbrella around the shooter, each with a ball. The shooter must catch a ball while moving and take a quick release shot, immediately start swimming again to get a pass from a remaining player with the ball. The shooter must communicate with the passers and the passers must work on timing passes.

QUICK 5

5 consecutive shots, work on quick release. Mimic game situations: 5 outside wet passes to a shooter at the 2 position who draws the foul and shoots immediately // Cross pass from the 5 position to the 2 position, quick release shot // Players receive ball from behind them, practice catching dry, turning, sliding forward, then getting up to shoot.

NORTH SOUTH

Players line up in two line, the first players starting at the 5 meter line with other players lining up behind. The player with the ball passes to the first player in the other line who locks the goalie with a fake and passes back for a quick shot. The shooter goes to the end of the opposite line and the drill continues with the other line starting off with the ball.

DEFENDING THE DRIVE

Two players line up at 7 meters. Player in front is on offense starts out with the ball, the other player defends and starts off at the waist of the offensive player on either side. Offensive player tries to cut off defense working on road-hog and creating space to get a high percentage shot off. Defense works on getting around offensive player without drawing the ejection to foul or flip the ball out and stop the shot.

DIRECT THE ATTACK

Set up umbrella having perimeter players put the ball into the hole and passed back out quickly. 2 meter player then directs the play telling the offensive player whether to shoot, pass back, or swing it down line. **Vary:** Hole Set communicates non-verbally. // Run a double set.

MAN DRILL

Shooter on the post and 5 meters away from cage. Partner eggbeaters shooter down, shooter has to fight to keep head up, after 10 seconds partner tries to completely submerge shooter. Once the shooter has been completely submerged he has to eggbeater up high for 5 quick passes to catch and shoot quickly.

9 MAN DRILL

Shooters at 2, 3, 4 positions. Make two lines of defense, each with 3 players. The first line pesters shooters (splashing and taunting), the 2nd line field blocks the shots. Shooters must learn to shoot under stress and around blockers.

SHOT AFTER THE FOUL

Two players at the 7 meter line, one defender and one offender with a ball. The player on offense must eggbeat the player on defense to the 5 meter line and either use a quarter turn to draw the foul or ste-out to the side without drawing a foul to shoot. **Vary:** Have a passer start the drill, the player on offense either drives up to receive a pass or pretends to drive and rears back to receive a pass to immediately shoot or draw the foul and then shoot.

2-Meter

heavy ball training // animal drill // 5 quick shots // create space // greenie //
defense hold and release // piggy back ride

HEAVY BALL TRAINING

Eggbeater with ball extended in front for shoulder work. Keep elbows in water to ease rotator cuff tension. Bear hug ball, letting the ball stay level in the water, rotate forward/back/sides. Push the ball from lower chest, Legs are the key, pass to partner, or go for distance.

ANIMAL DRILL

2 meter offender vs. 2 meter defender, no fouls. Defender starts off fronting, 2 meter offender must get the front and practice sealing, creating space, stepping out, turning, drawing the ejection, etc.

Vary: Offensive player must score 5 shots on a goalie before rotating.

5 QUICK SHOTS

Players line up in two line, the first players starting at the 5 meter line with other players lining up behind. The player with the ball passes to the first player in the other line who locks the goalie with a fake and passes back for a quick shot. The shooter goes to the end of the opposite line and the drill continues with the other line starting off with the ball.

CREATE SPACE

Two players line up at 7 meters. Player in front is on offense starts out with the ball, the other player defends and starts off at the waist of the offensive player on either side. Offensive player tries to cut off defense working on road-hog and creating space to get a high percentage shot off. Defense works on getting around offensive player without drawing the ejection to foul or flip the ball out and stop the shot.

GREENIE

Set up in an umbrella having perimeter players put the ball into the hole and passed back out quickly by the 2 meter player. The 2 meter player then directs the play telling the offensive player whether to shoot, pass back into set, or swing it down line so that the wing can put the ball into set.

After the 2 meter player draws the foul have him practice breaststroke kick back into his defender to create space and immediately stepping out or swimming out towards the perimeter player with the ball to receive a dry pass and take a quick shot.

Vary: Hole Set communicates non-verbally. // Run a double set.

DEFENSE HOLD AND RELEASE

Defender starts off fronting, practices hold and release, pulling the offender's arms down, hand fighting to control the inside. Defender practices holding no longer than 3 seconds before immediately showing a hand to deny passing lane and let ref know they are not holding. Make your presence known on defense. You control the water.

Vary: After releasing the hold, practice pushing away from offender, keeping hips on top of the water, regaining the front, and then hold and release again.

PIGGY BACK RIDE

Offensive player must complete a set of turns with defender holding onto back, practicing turning while keeping his head above water. After a offensive player completes a set of turns work on either taking shots (while legs are tired) or receiving the ball and turning the defender to draw an ejection.

Vary: Further tire out legs by defender trying to submerge offender while the offender resists as long as possible.

Counter Attack

counter dry // 3-man keep away // the revolver // 3 on 2 counter // continuous counter

COUNTER DRY

Offense counters across pool and passes 6 dry passes before shooting. Once the ball is shot the players counter immediately and shooter wings out. Goalie passes to the shooter and the shooter passes to the next person and the drill continues going the other direction. If ball is ever wet players must drop the ball and counter to the opposite direction while goalie retrieves the ball.

Players work on catching, immediately passing down line, while continuing to move forward. Players also focus on sprinting heads up with their heads on a swivel so that they know where the ball is, who they can pass to once they receive the ball, and when the ball is shot so they can quickly counter to the opposite direction.

3 MAN KEEP AWAY

3 players, 1 player starts off with the ball and gives a neutral pass between the other two players. Whichever player gets the ball becomes offense and counters to the other side of the pool, road hogging the defender so that he cannot get the ball. While countering, the player must pass the ball back to the original passer to work on creating space and getting the ball back again. Complete as many passes in a row as possible before shooting. If the defender steals the ball he becomes the passer starting the drill again giving a neutral throw to the other two players. Change the direction of the counter attack every time the ball is stolen or a shot is taken.

THE REVOLVER

Offense swims in a counter clockwise circle on one half of the pool. The goalie starts off with a ball and passes continuously to the closest player on offense coming from the goalies left. Passes are wet or dry. The player who receives the ball passes back immediately to the goalie and continues swimming counter clockwise, the defense presses out hard trying to steal the ball. When goalie yells break the open offender wings out while every one else counters. Either shot is taken or the defense gets ball and becomes offense on the other side.

3 ON 2 COUNTER

2 defenders on the 4-m. 3 offense on half. Vary: amount of movements that can be made ex: 6 moves to shoot. Vary: 4 on 3 etc. Vary: add trailer line to go on second whistle.

CONTINUOUS COUNTER

3 sets of teams. First team of 3 players wearing white caps start at half with the ball. 2 players on blue team defend the cage on one side, 2 players on the red team defend the cage on the other side, extra players for all teams line up on the wall at half tank. White begins by attacking blue, once the ball crosses the half court line a blue defender from the side of the pool swims straight across the pool at half until he reaches the center of the cage and then turns to help his other 2 defenders. Once white shoots or loses the ball blue counters on red. White remains on defense where they shot, whichever white player shot or lost the ball returns to the wall at half and waits to be the trailing defender when red counters next.

Goalie

goalie laps // hit the spot // head shot // kill the goalie // block the lob // bombardment // red light green light // balls up // 2-m walk // water jug // 2 meter steals // ladders aka drowning chipmunk // follow the ball lunges // cage roll

GOALIE LAPS

Immediately after warm-up goalies start off with some more leg intensive laps to get ready for heavy leg workout.

Double jumps: Being by sculling facing forwards, jump as high as possible with both hands shooting straight up. While keeping the torso high out of the water, the goalie brings the arms down to splash the water. and immediately bring one arm back up to lunge block either left or right, turning their heads as if to watch a ball. Regain hips by sculling forwards, then repeat this process lunging to the opposite side next time.

Lunges: Goalie starts laps sculling sideways with hips in front of them. Work on using the forward leg to pull water, use hands to push toward the direction you are lunging, turn head to keep your nose on the imaginary ball while keeping chest from turning.

HIT THE SPOT

Goalie practices long distance passes to a floating bicycle intertube or swimming noodle formed into a circle with pvc pipe. You can have two goalies practice this across the pool. **Vary:** make it a game by awarding the goalie one point for hitting the spot, if the goalie misses the other goalie gets to shoot a cross cage shot, if the goalie scores on the shot he gets 2 points.

HEAD SHOT

Goalie practices taking halo shots from a shooter, blocking the ball only with his head or torso. If the shooter is at the 4 meter work on continuous quick wrist shots. **Vary:** Have the shooter be at either wing, goalie make sure eggbeaters up with both hands out to stop all shots with torso.

KILL THE GOALIE

Players line up in 3 lines, on both posts and at center cage, on the 5 meter line. The first player in the middle line shoots a halo shot, the goalie works on blocking the shot down into the water and quickly swimming the ball beyond outside of the cage posts. As soon as the middle player shoots the first two people in both of the outside lines charges the goalie to rebound the shot and score. The goalie must swim clear of the defenders and be able to pass to the first player in the middle line without losing the ball or going beyond the goal line.

BLOCK THE LOB

Two lines of players at both wings, have one wing drive in towards the cage and pick up the ball to fake a near side shot. If the goalie overplays the near bar the shooter takes a cross cage lob. Goalie works on never allowing a near side shot to go in and falling back and sweeping the lob out. After the wing on one side shoots the first player in the opposite line immediately goes. The goalie must quickly get into position to block the new shooter.

BOMBARTMENT

Players line up in an umbrella, each player has a ball. One player takes a shot on the whistle starting from a wing. Goalie works on blocking a shot and quickly getting in position to stop the next one. Shooters work on high corner cross cage shots. **Vary:** On the whistle shooters drive in for wet shot instead of perimeter shot. **Vary:** line of shot blockers in front of perimeter shooters.

RED LIGHT GREEN LIGHT

Players line up on the 2 meter line, each with a ball ready to sprint across the pool. Coach blows one whistle to signify the players should stop, pick up the ball, and lock the goalie. Coach blows the whistle a second time to signify the players should continue their dribble drive. Coach blows two quick whistles to signify all players have the green light to shoot. Goalie blocks as many as he can. Goalie stays alive longer if the shots are from outside of 7 meters.

BALLS UP

Conditioning drill used ideally with 3 balls of varying weight (1 regular ball, 1 lightly weighted ball, 1 weighted ball). Player or coach stands on the pool deck and starts with the regular ball, goalie eggbeaters immediately in front with both hands out. Drill begins by throwing the ball down to the goalie who catches it with both hands and without dropping lower into the water eggbeaters the ball back up to the coaches extended hands. The goalie must place the ball into the coaches hands while touching the ball with both of his own hands, he cannot push the ball up with one hand or toss the ball up.

After three passes with the regular ball coach immediately switches to the medium ball for three passes, the heavy ball for three passes, back to medium, back to light. Goalie should work legs to exhaustion every time with a 3-5 minute break before starting again.

Vary: It is the coaches job to make the goalie work as hard as possible through encouragement. The drill is harder the higher the coach holds his hands or the amount of passes the goalie has to eggbeater up.

2 METER WALK

The goalie starts on the 2 meter line, both hands extended, body facing the coach on the pool deck. The coach begins by passing the goalie a ball, the goalie catches the ball with both hands, turns his body to eggbeater forward for 2 meters remaining as high as possible out of the water. Once the goalie has traveled 2 meters the coach calls for the ball, the goalie turns, gets up even higher to pass, drops for a second until the coach passes the ball again to go another 2 meters forward.

The goalie must work on staying up as high as possible for the whole 2 meters and then working hard to breast stroke kick up one more level. While eggbeating the 2 meter walk, the goalie tries to stabilize his upper body so that it is not titling or waving.

Vary: Use a weighted ball // Have goalies wear a weighted belt.

WATER JUG

Goalies fill up a water jug with as much water as they can eggbeat above their head, keeping their head and shoulders out of the water. Goalies start by tipping the water jug over to let water out while extending the jug above their head and continue to eggbeater higher until all of the water is out.

2 METER STEALS

2 meter offense and defense at set, 1 or more perimeter passers from different positions work on putting the ball into set. Goalie works on sweeping the ball away without committing a foul.

**LADDERS AKA
DROWNING
CHIPMUNK**

Drill can be run with one or two goalies on a cage at a time. Best if coach is present. Goalie Eggbeaters torso high out of the water and reaches with one hand to touch the cage while the other hand stays low. Once the goalie touches the cage he immediately brings his hand down to splash the water while bringing his opposite hand up to the cage bar. Continuing this motion for a set period of time or a set number of touches. This drill should look like the goalie is climbing a ladder but often looks like he is a drowning chipmunk in the beginning.

**FOLLOW THE BALL
LUNGES**

Drill can be run with one or two goalies on a cage at a time. Goalie starts mid-cage sculling with tightly coiled knees ready to lunge. Coach signals which way goalie lunges by holding a ball either left, right, or up. Goalie must lunge all the way to the corners when directed, splash the water on the way down and get back to the middle of the cage with hips set ready to go again immediately.

CAGE ROLL

Goalies roll the ball along the length of the cage bar, work on having the ball be flat against the front of the bar, not on the bottom or corner of the bar, work on staying up at the same height the entire time. Rest between going one direction and coming back. In-between 1 set of cage rolls, have the goalies practice passing to themselves by bouncing the ball off of the top bar and catching it to keep them focused and lightly using their legs.

Scrimmage Situations

4-man scrum // shooter trails // tug of war // continuous 6-on-5 // round robin

4-MAN SCRUM

Scrum - a place or situation of confusion and racket; hubbub; short for scrummage, a variation of scrimmage. Start playing ½ court scrimmage (4 on 4). If defense steals the ball offense gets it back as a corner throw. If offense scores they take it up top. If goalie stops offensive shot both teams counter to the opposite side of the pool.

SHOOTER TRAILS

Normal scrimmage except that whoever shoots the ball or loses the ball has to touch the cage of the opposing team before countering to defense.

TUG OF WAR

Normal scrimmage except that every goal scored against you takes away one of your points. So if you are playing first team to reach 5 points wins and your team scores 4 points but the other team scores 2 points, you still need 3 points to win.

CONTINUOUS 6 ON 5

Setup regular 6 on 5 offense and defense, except that one player on offense wears a goalie cap and is all time offense. When the ball changes directions the player with the goalie cap will still be on offense and there will always be a 6 on 5 advantage.

ROUND ROBIN

3 different teams of players, 2 teams play at once, winners keep playing while losers have to do up and outs or a different endurance exercises.

Games

water polo relays // survival // 5-alive // racked // horse // keep-away // pickle

WATER POLO RELAYS

To promote spirit and competition within practice sessions while improving conditioning. Divide squad into multiple groups with half of the players on each side of the pool. Work on any number of sprint laps (see endurance section).

SURVIVAL

All players start on one side of the pool. On the coaches signal all players sprint to the other side of the pool and attempt to keep their head above water while dunking others. If a player gets dunked he is out. **Vary:** Add a time limit, if there is more than one player remaining above water within 2 minutes, there is no winner.

5-ALIVE

All players line up center cage behind 5 meter line, each player has 5 lives to begin with. One player starts as goalie in the cage, this player may get an additional life. The first player in line has the ball and takes a 5-meter shot (one continuous motion) if the player makes the shot the goalie loses a life and remains in the cage. If the player misses the shot he becomes the goalie. Also if the player misses the shot the next player in line may shoot immediately without waiting for the new goalie to set up in the cage. At all other times the shooter must make sure the goalie is ready before taking their shot. Once players lose all of their lives they are out. The last player to score on a goalie who is out becomes the new goalie. **Vary:** Have goalies who are out stay in as goalie until they block a shot.

RACKED

2-player game, ½ of the goal gets used if players aren't goalies. Shooter has to make 5 of 10 shots or the player must hang backwards on the cage with head down and feet up while other player takes a shot at them from half court.

HORSE

Players take shots on the goalie, if they make the shot the player after them must make the same shot or else get a letter added to his score. Keep playing until one player has enough letters to spell horse.

KEEP AWAY

All players spread out, begin with a neutral throw. Both teams try to retain possession of the ball and steal from their opponents. **Vary:** The player who loses the ball for his team must do pushups or sprints. // players can only hold the ball for 1-3 seconds before passing or they turn the ball over and must do pushups or sprints. // Continually narrow the field of play to make the players work on creating space and movement more efficiently. // Players must make every pass dry or the ball is turned over.

PICKLE

All players line up in two teams, each team branching off from the same corner of the pool, both teams number off. Coach begins the drill with a neutral throw and calls out a number signaling players from each team who must sprint to get the ball and bring it back to the corner of the pool. **Vary:** Call multiple numbers to send in more players to fight for the ball at once. // Have a water bottle at the corner between the hand rails that the players must knock over to score a point. // Have goalies in both cages and players must fight to score.