

Catch & Throw Guidelines to the Complete Catcher



“The Tools of Intelligence”

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CATCH & THROW MISSION AND VALUES

Catch & Throw was formed to provide the highest quality information and professional catching instruction in all aspects of the position. The Catch and Throw staff mentor catchers on and off the field while maximizing their health and performance from little league to the major leagues. The catcher must be the most dedicated, educated, and prepared athlete on the baseball field. The leadership qualities, vision, and confidence that catchers possess help them not only on the baseball field, but in the classroom and in life.

It is not an easy task to be a successful catcher. It takes hard work, commitment, dedication, time, experience, and a lot of sweat to maximize the ceiling of the level of play one can achieve. The Catch and Throw instructors will help guide each individual to achieve his highest potential.

The Catch & Throw Values Are Simple

Fun – Without having fun, the game will eat you up. Failure is a large part of the game of baseball so having fun should be first on your list!

Honesty – The truth is a lot easier to remember than a lie. We always are honest in our assessments and opinions.

Trust – Trust is a two-way street. Catch and Throw staff gives trust to earn trust.

Preparation – The accolades come from the games, but the athlete is made in Preparation.

Work Hard – There is no substitute for hard work.

Compete – Learning how to compete is not easy. Competing at higher levels is even harder.

Confront Adversity – Fighting through adversity and looking it straight in the eyes will help you succeed in this game of failure.

Success – Watching athletes who come through our programs have Success as people, students, and as athletes, allow us to help others.

Walk the Walk - A catcher is a leader on and off the field. In order to lead while playing, you must be a leader in the game of life. False hustle will show itself very quickly.

Catch & Throw Firmly Believes Each Athlete Has:

Potential – Unlocking and nurturing the athlete's Potential will help the athlete become a great athlete.

Desire – Athletes Desire to succeed or they would not be playing the game.

Athleticism – Athleticism is in all of us. Skill training + Physical Training = Athlete

Mental Toughness – Making the right choices to do the right thing even when it is not the “cool thing to do” and not allowing adversity to stand in the way allows athletes to become Mentally Tough.

Confidence – Trusting one's ability builds Confidence

Focus and Concentration - Getting into the “Zone” or getting “Dialed In” happens to everyone at one time or another. Proper preparation with skill training, physical training, mental training, and metabolic management will get you there more often.

With our beliefs and values intact, Catch and Throw's staff is dedicated to help catchers of all ages learn and grow throughout the entire process and achieve their goals.

CATCH & THROW GOALS

Catch & Throw's Goals:

- To become a trusted and respected source for the development and mentoring of catchers.
- Help generate more interest in the catching position by educating players, parents, and coaches with information and drills.
- To act as positive role models for any athlete that interacts with us.
- Mentor young athletes into great leaders and people through the game of baseball and the catching position.
- Produce quality well rounded catchers making competition within the position better.
- To develop catching specific pre-habilitation workouts to ensure the health and safety of the catcher's body before they can be hurt.
- Teach catchers of all ages to learn how to use proper hydration and food as fuel to help them succeed.
- To help young catchers make good choices in their life to become effective leaders on and off the field.
- Train catchers through camps, clinics, and private lessons.
- To build an ultimate catchers training facility with dedicated coaches for all aspects of the catching position.

CATCHING MECHANICS

The Mechanics of Catching consist of many different movements from many different positions. Catch and Throw has studied and worked with catchers of all ages and all skill levels and have found that there are 5 physical categories that have the biggest impact on the success of a catcher.

1. Stance

a. Primary

b. Secondary

2. Target

3. Receiving

4. Blocking

5. Throwing

STANCE

The stance of a catcher will determine the ability to balance within all the movements required to receive, block, throw, and field his position. The stance will be determined by the strength and flexibility of the catcher along with the ability to counterbalance his body to cover the area behind home plate.

Primary Stance

- Head over Chest over Knees
- Glove elbow in front of knees
- Feet shoulder width or wider apart
- Always keeping in mind that the catchers first job is to catch the ball



Secondary Stance

- Same Set Up as Primary Stance
- Difference is that Butt is up slightly to help get body going for throwing

Notes

TARGET

When giving a target for the pitcher there are some things to think about:

- **Fingers Up** - Make Sure to keep the fingers up when giving the target. Some people want to have the thumb parallel to the ground when giving a target. This can cause the chance of jamming the thumb on the glove hand side by sliding the glove to the receiving position instead of turning the glove to receive the ball
- **Least Amount of Movement as Possible** – Try not to give away the target or the pitch by moving the body too much while setting up. The moves are slight, soft, and quiet. Hitters can hear and feel where you are going if you are loud and big with the movements
- **Glove Position in Relation to Body** – Try to keep the target in the middle of the body. It makes the whole target look bigger to the pitcher because he can hard focus on the glove, but the catcher's body is right behind the glove. If there is nothing behind the target, it makes it look smaller and harder to hit.
- **Bottom of the Strike Zone** – Unless you are trying to elevate the pitch, try to keep the ball down. The standard deviation for a pitcher at 60' 6" or around 54' where they let the ball go is about 8" from the target on each side. So a 16" diameter if you give a target that is above the knees or mid-thigh and the pitcher misses 8" that will be almost to the belt or belt high. Not too many pitches reach the catcher at any age if the ball is belt high
- **Glove Timing** – Some pitchers will like the target early and some will like it late for their target. Make sure that the catcher knows what each pitcher's preference is.
- **Body Placement on Plate** – Know where the pitcher is capable of throwing the pitches. If he can hit the target with no problem, you are more apt to go to the thirds, or corners. If it is a pitcher who has great movement, but not always sure where the ball is going, set up in the middle of the plate and give the pitcher some margin of error on both sides of the target. Let the natural movement get the hitters out, not the exact location. This will help many pitchers who cannot throw tons of strikes. Let them be wild, but in the strike zone
- **Body Placements**
 - Middle – Split the catcher's body with the point of the plate
 - Thirds – Divide the plate into Three Pieces
 - Corners - Split the plate with the body on the corners of the plate
 - Off – When trying to get the ball in off of the plate or away from the hitter.

RECEIVING

Rule # 1 in being a good catcher is to catch the ball. Receiving the ball is what a catcher does most and learning how to present the ball for the umpire to make a decision on a ball or strike is the job that a catcher must do best.

- Catch the ball every time that it is thrown to you
- Pre pitch glove movement can be a slight turn, back, or down. Never Up
- Beat the Ball to the spot where it is going to go using your Eyes, Legs, Reach, and Hand.
- Try to catch the ball “Clean” meaning catch it in the same spot in the glove every time
- Limit the Head Movement so that you do not create more movement on the ball
- Catch the ball in front of you so you can see it
- Use your ankles, knees, and hips to counterbalance your body into a strong receiving position
- Receive the ball. DO NOT Frame it.
- Arm, wrist, and hand position when catching the ball will help present strikes to the umpire
- Fingers Up at the start
- Good LARGE LOW Target



BLOCKING

Blocking the ball is a skill that takes proper technique and time to learn. Understanding that one is a catcher first will help put the body into position to block the ball. While rule #1 is to catch the ball, when the ball hits the ground or the catcher knows that it is going to be out of reach, the body needs to get into a position that is not only able to block the pitch, but is ready to get up and retrieve the ball or throw the ball to a base as a secondary play.



Coaching Tips

- Wear properly sized equipment and it fits snug
- Gain ground on the ball to cut the distance, angle, and time that the ball has to travel
- Think catch the ball first and block second to help get the body into blocking position
- Lead with the left leg to block the ball to the right
- Lead with the right leg to block the ball to the left
- Watch the ball hit the body. This will keep the chin down to protect the throat while blocking
- Block the ball between the belly button and the bottom of the sternum
Use the equipment, not the glove or arms, to block the ball
- Protect the throwing hand by putting it into a fist behind the glove
- The sooner the ball hits the body, the sooner the ball will hit the ground and stop
- Try to block every ball during bullpens, warm ups, and in games to condition yourself to block everything
- Keep the arms on the side of the body and the glove down between the legs to maximize the blocking area on the body
- Take Pride in not letting any ball get by you

THROWING

Throwing the ball to cut down potential base runners is the thing that you do least as a catcher, but has become one of the most important skills that college recruiters and professional scouts look for. At this point, a catcher must be just as good of a thrower as he is a receiver and blocker. Catch & Throw has simplified throwing to help everyone become an above thrower regardless of one's arm strength. There are two segments each with three different pieces that make up the fundamentals of throwing for a catcher to any base. If performed properly and in the correct sequence, the timing of the throw from the catcher should be perfect.

Segment #1 (Receiving Phase)

1. CATCH THE BALL

Rule # 1 is still to catch the ball. Just because a runner is trying to advance to a different base, it still doesn't change that one is a catcher first. Rule # 1 rings true in the throwing phases of the game because without the ball, one cannot throw it. If the ball is not caught and dropped, there is no way to throw out a runner.



2. TURN THE LEFT SHOULDER & GLOVE TOWARD THE FACE

The second piece to throwing is to turn the Left shoulder & glove toward the face. Once the ball is caught depending on the location of the pitch bring the ball back toward the middle of the body or the spine and turn the left shoulder and glove toward the face to set up the next piece of the equation taking the ball from the glove and separating the hands to get ready to throw. This is going to accomplish a couple of things. First, it is going to help set the timing of the throw because there will not be any sweeping of the glove back toward the throwing arm ear and second it will help the put the fielder back into the catcher and allow him to get his hand on the ball as soon as he can. As the catchers get more advanced, catching the ball and turning the glove toward the face becomes much quicker.



Notes

3. TAKE THE BALL FROM THE GLOVE

Many opportunities to potentially throw out base runners are lost because the catcher does not get the ball into the throwing hand either in time or not at all. The second piece of turning the glove toward the face allows the catcher to see the ball. We are going to secure the baseball by getting the hands together. The easiest place to get your hands together is where you comfortably clap. Wherever you clap will be in a comfortable place near the center of the body at an appropriate height for you. Do not give the ball to the throwing hand, this causes energy going in the wrong direction and increases the chances of ball being dropped in the exchange ruining the opportunity to throw out a base runner. Ideally, the catcher would like to get a 4 seam grip on the ball, but that doesn't always happen. Whatever the grip, learn how to throw with it. Especially in practice, don't redo a throw because of a bad grip. Learn how to throw with every grip possible because in the game, there are no redo's. Also, by taking the ball from the glove, the body will start its forward momentum and direction toward the intended target. Now the body is going toward the target instead of the hands coming back to the body. Try to keep your glove hand on the left side of the spine. That will help keep your body in an appropriate position.



Notes

Segment # 2 (Throwing Phase)

4. RIGHT FOOT GAINING GROUND TOWARD THE TARGET

The amount of ground that is gained toward the target is going to be a function of:

1. The pitch location
2. The Quickness of the previous three pieces (Catch, Turn, and Take)
3. The Quickness of the feet of the catcher

This is where many catchers run into problems and make the throwing harder than it is. Many people try to get the feet into position before the ball is in the throwing hand and by the time the ball is ready to start the throwing motion, the movement, momentum, and direction by the lower is finished and the timing and sequencing of the throw is ruined. As soon as the throwing hand has taken the ball from the glove start the right foot going toward the target. The size of the step will vary do to the ability, quickness, and confidence that a catcher has. When learning the skill, take as big of a step as needed to get the body going toward the target and get the momentum going like one is an outfielder or infielder coming through the ball.



5. LEFT FOOT GETTING DOWN ONLINE WITH THE INTENDED TARGET

This is the easiest of the pieces in the throwing process. As long as there is momentum created by the body in the previous step, all that has to happen is that the catcher should try to put his left butt cheek on the target. The left foot will get down and a proper weight shift will take place. How a catcher lands with the front foot is unique to him and should not be altered much in the same way that if the catcher throws slightly closed, open, or straight should not be changed. The timing and sequencing with separation and the timing of the release of that throw is unique to each individual catcher.



6. THROW THE BALL

IF the previous 5 steps are done correctly, throwing the ball should be just as easy as an infielder throwing the ball across the diamond or an outfielder throwing the ball to the cutoff. There are certain bio-mechanical variables that need to take place during a throw, but if the hands and feet do the right movements, the throw should not be too much of a problem. A couple of keys to throwing are to keep that momentum going as long as possible to help aid the proper throwing mechanics AND the proper deceleration of the throwing arm in the follow through and to keep the posture the same while maintaining balance throughout the whole throw. If a catcher can keep the head, belly button, and chest upright throughout the whole throw, the body will be able to properly rotate and deliver the throwing arm to a strong release point.

THROWING DISTANCES FROM HOME TO 2ND BASE

50' Bases – 70' 8"

60' Bases – 84' 10"

70' Bases – 99' 0"

80' Bases – 113' 0"

90' Bases – 127' 3 3/8"

DRILLS

RECEIVING

- Dry Positioning
- No Glove
- With Glove
- Small Ball Tosses
- Dyna Disc Receiving

BLOCKING

- 3-Ball Positioning Blocking
- Rolling Blocking
- Soft Toss Blocking
- Full Speed Blocking

THROWING

- Throwing progression Drills
- Pitchers Leg Lift Drill
- Knee Drill
- Exchange with Towel Drill
- Donut Glove Exchanges
- Side to Front Drill
- Pickoff Throws
- Pitcher Throws

OTHER DRILLS

- Wild Pitch Drill
- Pop Ups
- Catch, Block, Throw Drill
- 20 Bunts

All Drills are explained on our website www.catchandthrow.com

FIELD MANAGEMENT AND AWARENESS

Part of the field management portion of being a catcher is to make sure that you know where everyone should be on the field at all times. It is part of the job and is definitely much easier said than done.

When the ball goes up, where do your eyes go?

The catcher has the unique advantage over all other people on the field because he is facing the whole fair territory. Because of this, there are many responsibilities that the catcher needs to perform especially when there is a ball that goes up in the air. As long as you know that you are not involved immediately in the play, your eyes should go to the field and see if:

- There is going to be a potential play at home plate
- Clearing away bat
- Checking Runner
- Getting Cut Off Man in Position
- Getting into position to receive the ball
- You can help an infielder determine if the ball is in play or out of play
- There is going to be a potential play with an advancing runner
- Any runners are in motion (Potential double play)
- Any bases not covered by fielders
- The pitcher is backing up the proper base

The natural reaction for a catcher not involved in the play is to watch the ball and see who is going to catch it or not catch it. Being the traffic director entails much more work than that. You have to be the eyes for the collective defensive group.

Your mouth can be a vital part of this direction. You will be the first to see or hear if the batter hit the ball well, poorly, deep, or shallow. You need to communicate both verbally and physically to the other fielders on the status of the ball. For example: Many fields have bad shadows or poor lighting. Sometime around dusk, it is very hard for the infield and outfielders to see a ball that is either hit to the outfield or hit above the lights. If you have a good judgment on what the ball is going to do, you need to communicate and point out where the ball is. Many outfielders will have trouble finding the ball off of the bat and can use the direction from you or any other player.

In other instances, you are responsible to be the director on a ball in the gap whether it is a hit or an out especially when the outfielders have to turn their backs to the infield. The half second that it may save when you help them set up where they are going to throw the ball may be the difference between an out or safe call at a base.

Below are things that every catcher should be prepared to do and tell the other fielders on the field:

- Number of Outs
- Bunt Coverage's
- 1st and 3rd Coverage's
- Where to throw on Bunts
- Where to throw on Cut Offs/Relays
- Where to back up (Pitchers)
- If there is room in Foul Territory on Pop Ups
- Positioning for Certain Hitters
- Throwing to First Base on a Ground Ball with a 3-2 2 Out Count
- Telling the Pitcher to "Get Over" or cover first base on a ground ball to the right side when a left-handed hitter comes to the plate.
- To go to an uncovered base if needed (One base further than the runner)
- Work the Umpire
- Speed Up or Slow Down the Tempo of the Game
- Protect the Pitcher

All of these things require a knowledge base from the catcher of basic game activities along with playing out all possible situations before the play. The other 8 fielders are looking right at the catcher and if the catcher looks lost, the rest of the team will break down as well. The most prepared field has to be the catcher.

PREGAME RESPONSIBILITIES

Preparing for TODAY'S Game

Everyone knows that preparation is a large part of the game. At Catch and Throw we tend to look at it as a way to set one's self up for success or for failure. Part of the maturation process of a catcher is knowing what one has to do each day to be the most prepared athlete on the field. What does that mean?

The physical and mental rigors of catching can take a toll on the catcher. Being prepared for the game TODAY should be the most important thing. Over a Major League Baseball Season, a starting catcher will have to be ready to receive in between 18,000 and 20,000 pitches. That doesn't include any in the bullpen or in between innings. The preparation starts right now!

Here is a daily pregame checklist for a catcher:

FIELD

1. Check the Wind
2. Check the area from Home Plate to the Backstop
3. Check the Sun/Lights
4. Check the Area between the dugouts for holes, weird angles, anything that you would need to know how the ball is going react behind you.
5. Throw Balls Against the Backstop to see how ball bounce
6. Look to Dugouts to see where openings are (to know where to run to for backing up throws)
7. Look at area in front of home plate – is it hard or soft

OPPOSITION

1. Get Line Up and Stats if possible
2. Know who runs
3. Who is the best hitter?
4. Who is the worst hitter?
5. Where in the box do the hitters stand?
6. Where are the hitter's feet?
7. How does the hitter stand?
8. Who is hot?
9. Who is not?
10. Who is the best contact hitter?
11. Who has the biggest strikeout potential?
12. Who hits in the clutch?
13. Who takes certain pitches?
14. Who Swings at the first pitch?
15. Who will take a walk?
16. Who will take a hit by pitch late in the game?

PITCHERS ON OWN STAFF (Both Starter and Relievers)

1. Go over opposition line up hitter by hitter.
2. Know all signs with no men on base and with men on base.
3. Come up with a game plan each day – Some hitters will get hot or cold during a series
4. Understand each pitchers strengths and weaknesses.

5. Know what each pitcher likes to do in certain situations (ex. First pitch after a home run, with two strikes and no one on base etc.)
6. Know how much time the starting pitcher needs to get ready and at what time he wants to start getting ready.
7. What is the pitcher's command pitch?
8. What is the pitcher's go to pitch?
9. What is the pitcher's ranking of his pitches?
10. What is the pitcher's out pitch?
11. Can the pitcher pitch inside?
12. Where is his Command side of the plate?
13. What pitch does the pitcher go to when ahead in the count?
14. What pitch does the pitcher go to when behind in the count?
15. What pitch does the pitcher go to when even in the count?
16. Can the pitcher hold runners on with a pickoff move?
17. What is his time to Home Plate?
18. How does the pitcher handle pressure?
19. How does each hitter match up to the pitcher?
20. Where does the pitcher tend to miss with each pitch?
21. Can the pitcher field his position?
22. Can you use complex signs with particular pitchers?
23. Can the pitcher see the signs?

UMPIRE

1. Know all the umpires names
2. If you have worked with an umpire before, know the strike zone that he/she features.

PERSONAL PREPARATION TO PLAY

1. Know when to get loose and how much you need to get loose to be ready to play
 2. Know how much to throw before getting the pitcher in the bullpen
 3. Know how much you need to catch in the bullpen before being ready for the game
 4. When to do drills or extra hitting
 5. Know workload limitations for hitting, throwing, drills etc.
 6. Make sure that you manage the available time to get all of the above events completed
- The checklist is long, but a catcher is like an offensive lineman, overworked and overlooked while horribly underappreciated. It is just part of the job.

THE NEXT GAME

1. The preparation for the next game starts as soon as the last out of the present game is made.
2. What did the game today teach you about how you will prepare tomorrow?
3. Did a specific player on the opposition do something that you did not expect?
4. Did you get injured?
5. Will you need added time tomorrow to get prepared?

IMPORTANT COUNTS FOR CATCHERS

Although every pitch is very important, learning what counts are the most important will not only make you a smart catcher, but it will help keep pitchers in the ballgame longer and translate into more wins for the team.

Here are counts of a ballgame listed in order of urgency.

0 Balls 0 Strikes First pitch strikes are essential to a successful battery. If a 1st pitch strike is thrown, you have an opportunity to not only have the batter put the ball in play, but to be ahead of the hitter for the entire at bat.

1 Ball 1 Strike This count is called a swing count. The pitcher has an opportunity to either get ahead or fall behind the batter. The 1-1 count will dictate many things. In a 1-2 count situation you have a lot of options as a signal caller, but in a 2-1 count you are challenged more.

2 Balls 1 Strike This is called an action count. Many times you will see movement with runners in a 2-1 count. The reason being that 2-1 is a fastball count, because the pitcher needs to throw a strike making it a perfect time for a hit and run or a chance to score easily from first on a double because the runner can get a running start. A pitcher and catcher do not want to fall further behind (3-1) so the count dictates the pitcher's command pitch which, in most cases, is a fastball. A pitcher that can command a changeup can have some success in a 2-1 count because of the aggressiveness towards fastball swings.

0 Balls 2 Strikes Once the pitcher gets into a 0-2 count, the hitter is really on the ropes. He must expand his strike zone slightly to protect from striking out. The options in this count are endless. In baseball lead off walks and 0-2 hits are deadly to pitchers so one must look at a 0-2 count as an opportunity to put a hitter away. 0-2 counts are a great time to 1. Bounce breaking balls 2. Elevate fastballs 3. Paint a corner or 4. Move a batter's feet to set up another pitch. A pitch above head high or way off of the plate is wasteful and do not set up anything else. Let the pitcher know to 1. Miss down if trying to bounce a breaking ball 2. Miss up at shoulder high if trying to elevate 3. Miss away if trying to paint an outside corner and 4. Miss in-off if trying to move the feet inside. All of these scenarios are basically saying keep the ball from the middle of the plate in this count and if you follow these guideline the worst that can happen is a 1-2 count in which you still have many options.

1 Ball 2 Strikes 1-2 is an action count even though the pitcher is still ahead in the count because he doesn't want to get the count back to even (2-2). Another reason 1-2 is an action count is being the 4th pitch of the at bat the pitcher is on the verge of throwing too many pitches to the hitter. If a starting pitcher average 3 to 4 pitches per at bat, he will be able to pitch longer into games not only qualifying for wins, but saving the bullpen from having to be over worked. Most of the best hitters in the game average over 4 pitches per at bat. At the All-Star break of 2009, Jason Werth leads the Major Leagues with 4.5 pitches per at bat, Kevin

WHERE THE HITTER STANDS IN THE BATTERS BOX

How a hitter stands in the box often dictates the kind of hitter he is and where he likes the ball.

These are just general guidelines. This is not going to perfectly blanket all hitters, but the hitters who fall into these categories will usually follow these generalizations.

Up in the Box

Usually, the hitters who stand in the front of the box have trouble with the breaking ball or are looking for something soft. What they are trying to do is get to the breaking ball before it can break all the way. It allows them to “cut it off” sooner. Also, many contact guys or guys who bunt will stand up in the box because they are just trying to put the ball into play, or they are trying to give themselves a margin of error by making contact further in front of the plate. By doing that with a bunt, it allows them a better angle to keep the ball either fair/foul or on the line. By putting themselves behind the plate or right on the plate, the angle that the ball can come off of the bat has to be more at the fielder instead of away from the fielder.

Back in the Box

Hitters who stay in the back of the box are trying to get the best and longest look at a fastball OR they are having trouble with the fastball and want to get the most time available to see the pitch.

On Top of the Plate

Hitters on top of the plate try to make every inside pitch. They want the ball to be close to them and usually are trying to pull the ball. Their weakness is balls that are away. That is why they stand on the plate. When they stand on top, the outside corner is now middle and everything else is middle in.

Away from the Plate

Hitters who stand far away from the plate usually are dive hitters. Dive hitters like to extend. What they are essentially doing is making all pitches, even the pitches that are on the inside corner, away from them. They usually have no trouble going the opposite way because they are diving into the ball.

Standing Tall

When a player stands very tall at the plate, it usually means that he is going to be a low ball hitter. Frank Thomas is a classic example. He stands very tall when he is in the box and really can get to the ball when he extends his hands down. Where he gets into trouble and where pitchers try to get him out up around the waist, is in the strike zone. If you try to pitch him up out over the plate, he is going to be able to reach in the same way that he does down, and that is not where you would like him to be.

Crouched Down

A perfect example of a crouched down hitter is the recently retired Jeff Bagwell. When guys are crouched way down, they are trying to make the ball look up at all times. We would classify these types of hitters as high ball hitters.

Moving Feet Away from the Plate

Sometimes right before a pitch, hitters will move their feet based on what they think the pitch will be. Usually, if you see a hitter start to pull away before the pitch, he is thinking he should pull, and something away or a breaking ball would be in order.

Moving Feet Toward the Plate

When a catcher sees a hitter start to move toward the plate before the ball is coming, he is generally looking to dive out over the plate, looking for a breaking ball, or cheating to pull an outside pitch. Many hitters will do this in breaking ball counts or in times when they are looking to drive a fastball away. A good pitch selection in this instance would be something hard in or hard in off the plate. A well placed change up would also be in order.

Remember that the catcher has the best view of the pitcher. He knows what the umpire will call along with how the hitter is standing and reacting to each pitch. Subtle movements are tells that can help the catcher and pitcher get the hitter out.

CATCHERS CONDITIONING

CATCHER WARM UP

The catcher's warm up should be done before every practice and game, in full gear, and done quick enough to bring the catcher to a sweat. This warm up is done after a proper warm up and loosen up with stretching and flexing. Many of our clients have done this in the outfield or on the warning track for a distance of 70-90 feet for each drill

Leg Swings –Up against a wall or fence, the catcher swings both legs forward and back facing the right and the left and then facing the fence, each leg side to side.

Walking Lunges - (6-10 reps per leg) Lunges forward with each leg to loosen legs, hips, and groin

Lunge Chest Downs (6-10 reps per leg) – Lunge position reach through on the inside of the leg with the leg forward arm and work on pushing the chest downward keeping the back knee off of the ground

Side Lunges – (6-10 reps per leg) Keeping the chest up, lunge directly to the side

Prayer Rotations – Hip and groin flexibility are essential to being a catcher that can move effectively behind the plate. Prayer Rotations are a great way to work on that flexibility along with balance and counterbalancing in the receiving position. Prayer rotations are set up with the catcher starting in his receiving position. Elbows inside the knees, hands in a prayer position pushed together with the fingertips on the chin. Keeping the chest up, the catcher pushes outward with the elbows on the inside of the knees. Rotating and counterbalancing with the knees, rotating as far down and in toward the middle with the knees while keeping the head completely still. This is done back and forth for either a set time or a specific amount of repetitions. *For added difficulty use balance discs.*

Angled lunges to Receiving Position – The catcher starts in his receiving position, stands up about half way, and angle lunges far to the right keeping the posture that he catches in. Next the catcher squats down to the receiving position giving a good low target. This movement will then be repeated to the left. If done properly, the legs should be warm enough and loose enough to catch during the game.

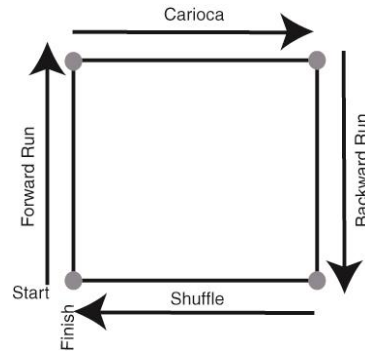
Blocking Left, Right, and Center – Splitting the distance of 90 feet into thirds, the catcher simulates blocking balls to the left, right, and center working on keeping the butt down, driving from the lower legs and keeping the original posture that he receives in to ensure that the ball will take a good angle down and kill close to the body.

Footwork to throw to all bases – This drill can be done with or without a partner. Starting with a ball in the glove, the catcher works on the basic skills outlined in the catching section of the Catch and Throw website. TURN the left shoulder in and the ball toward the face, TAKE and RIP the ball from the glove separating around the midline of the body (Spine) and start a shoulder turn, Right foot gaining ground toward target and getting underneath the body, Left foot down and throw the ball hard through the target. OR if done without a partner, do all of the segments of the drill but stop at Left foot down in a good throwing position. This drill should be done and as fast and quick as the catcher can move while staying in total control of his body.

Agility Drills

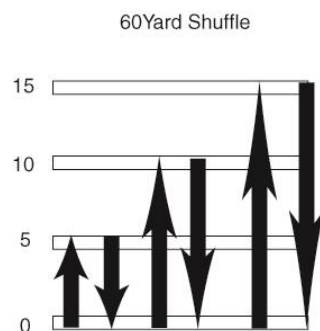
4 Cone Drill - To perform this drill you need a course that is 10 yards square with a pylon at each of the corners

1. Start of the right side of the square and run forward
2. At the first pylon make a reverse pivot by throwing your right shoulder clockwise
3. Carioca to the next pylon
4. Reverse pivot and run backward to the next pylon
5. Reverse pivot and shuffle to the finish

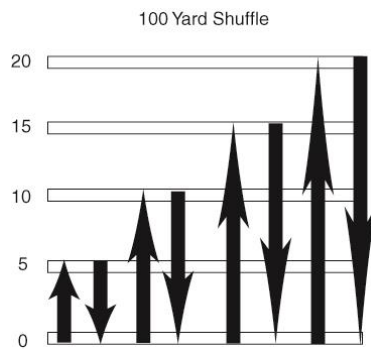


60 Yard Shuttle – To perform this drill you need a course with lines five yards apart for fifteen yards

1. Start in a three-point stance on the finish line
2. Sprint to the first line (five yards) touch the line with your hand and backpedal to the start line
3. Sprint to the second line (ten yards) and return
4. Follow the same procedures for the last line (15 yards) and finish by crossing the start line

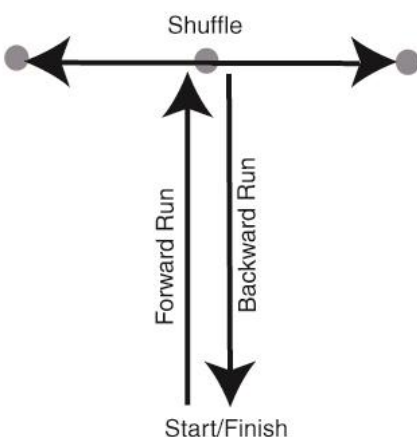


100 Yard Shuttle – Same as 60 yard shuttle except add in one more distance (20 yards)



5 – 10 – 5 Drill – To perform this drill you need a course with three lines that are five yards apart

1. From a two-point stance straddle the middle line (see drawing)
2. Point to either the right or left
3. Sprint to the line toward the specified direction and touch it with your hand
4. Push off forcefully and sprint back across the middle line to the far line and touch that line with your opposite foot
5. Sprint back, finishing at the middle line



BODYWORK

- Prone Holds
- Prone Hold Push Ups
- Table Tops
- Table Top Up/Downs
- Table Top Alternate Leg
- Side Holds R/L
- Side Hold Up/Downs
- Side Hold Alternate Leg
- 3 Position Push Ups
- Superman Holds
- Superman Alternate Arm/Leg
- Pointers Alternate Arm/Leg

LIGHT DUMBBELL WORK

- Slow Motion Throwing Forward & Back
- Punch Twist
- Shoulder Presses (3 Positions)
- Bicep/Triceps Cross Curls
- Frontal Dumbbell Raises (3 Positions)
- Over Head Triceps Extensions (3 Positions)
- Cross Torso Dumbbell Raises (3 Positions)
- Hitch Hikers
- Flex T Pulses (3 Positions)
- 90-90 (3 Positions)
- Standing Dumbbell Flyers
- Windmills (3 Positions)
- Bent Over Bow & Arrows (3 Positions)
- Bent Over Fly's (3 Positions)

ELASTIC TUBING

(ELBOWS SHOULDER HEIGHT)

Pinches

Shoulder Circles

Swims

Thumb Down to Thumb Up

Thumb Up to Thumb Down

(ELBOWS ON SIDE OF BODY)

Internal & External Rotation

Elbow Pulls

Elbow Pull/Extension

Reverse Rotations

Reverse Rotation with Extension

“X” Extensions
Reverse Fly Away
Triceps Extensions
Slow Motion Throwing

RICE CIRCUIT

Finger Straight and Locked Out (Bend at Wrists)

- Forward and Backward
- Left to Right
- Rotating
- Circles
- Grips and Releases
- 30 Second Fast Movements

Open Fingers (Bend at Wrists)

- Clockwise/Counter Clockwise Turns
- Forward and Backward Full Extension
- Grips and Releases
- 30 Second Fast Movements