

## Lacrosse Throwing, Catching, Cradling 101: For Kids AND PARENTS!!

- Lacrosse throwing and catching 101 (this is where we explain to mom and dad how to throw and catch so they don't use the excuse "I don't know how to play" to avoid having a catch with their child:
  - PARENTS- Buy a stick for YOURSELF! This does two things. Can serve as a back-up to your child's stick in the event it breaks. It also allows you to experience just how "easy" it is to throw, catch, and even scoop the ball. Parents who have tried to throw, catch, and pick up the ball themselves, and experience how "easy" it is, in general, are not nearly as vocal on the sidelines yelling, "Johnny come on, PICK UP THE BALL!" They have a certain "appreciation" for the sport!
    - If you are "chicken," you can use your old baseball or softball mitt . . . either way though, get out there and help them!
  - The ball is an egg. Treat it with care. When catching, your top hand should be on the bottom of the plastic up by the side of your head. When the ball comes, give as it arrives (remember- it is an egg!)
    - That's the "easy" part!
  - Throwing. A lacrosse stick is NOT a catapult! Do not treat it like one. Think of the throwing motion of a football or baseball. Close your eyes . . . think . . . of Eli Manning throwing a football (not some stinky Eagle QB!! Eli . . .)
    - He rotates his shoulders
    - He steps with the opposite foot
    - He follows through.
    - Believe it or not, once you get good at throwing, you can mimic the exact same motion with one hand on the stick . . . but we digress!
  - Throwing steps- for the right handed thrower (if you throw a football, baseball, etc. righty)
    1. Drop your top hand (right) to about half stick. Leave the bottom hand on the butt (k-3<sup>rd</sup> graders love when we say that teaching throwing!)
    2. Point your LEFT shoulder at your target.
    3. Step with your LEFT foot.
    4. Get your hands AWAY from your body (NOT all the way, just don't have them sitting on your sides/chest . . . think back to Eli throwing . . .) A way to do this can be to try to point your butt end at the target.
    5. Using a football/baseball throwing motion, throw the ball at your target (do not catapult- come to abrupt stop in motion . . . "throw" the ball including a nice follow through pointing at your target. Target- should be right on top of the right shoulder of whoever you are throwing to- we call this the box (area on top of shoulder, beside ear.)
      - a. Ball go into ground?
        - i. Where did you finish? Did you throw and your shoulders, head of stick etc. all wind up facing toward the ground or low? That's NOT

how Eli throws!! You need more rotation on top, but don't rotate DOWN, just around . . .

- b. Ball fly high?
    - i. Where did you finish? Head of stick facing the sky? Looking up?  
Grabbed too low on stick?
  - c. Adjustments
    - i. Try with top hand a little higher/lower.
- Picking up the ball: Yes, once in a blue moon while learning to throw and catch, it WILL hit the ground! Tips for picking up a ball on the ground (which is NOT as easy as parents scream from the sidelines!)
  - Top hand at base of plastic
  - Bottom hand on butt end
  - BOTH hands get low. We call this "bloody knuckles" because we want to be manly men like our defenseman! THE key to picking up a ground ball is the back hand! Get it low!
  - Approach the ball so it is near the front foot. For most righty's this means right hand at base of plastic, right foot beside ball.
  - Bend at knees to get LOW!
  - Scoop through the ball- same motion as if shoveling snow! Scoop through the ball!
    - In the back yard, kids (and moms/dads) will relax on this and try to scoop it one handed- Avoid this! The WORST habit in lacrosse! Ball spends a lot of time on the ground and the kid that is great at scooping becomes a KEY player!
- Cradling: Oi Vay! Very hard to explain in a document. Get with a coach/experienced player to demonstrate! Some thoughts:
  - We cradle to use the centripetal (who said lax players couldn't use cool words!) or is it centrifugal (wow, another one!!) to keep the ball in the stick while we run with it in our stick. The bottom line, the cradling motion keeps the ball pressed into the mesh of the stick to prevent it from falling out . . .
    - Think of the stick head as a mirror. To learn to cradle initially, the stick should go shoulder to shoulder with the mirror of the head always facing the players head.
    - Finger tips, elbow and a little shoulder should all be used in combination to make this happen (most new players hold the stick too tightly in their fingertips.)
    - The bottom hand should remain STILL and allow the stick to rotate in it, while the top hand, elbow and shoulder does the work. Place the bottom hand on your belt buckle, while it loosely holds the butt of the stick.
    - Once the player gets this motion down, they can drop the cradle down so it is more of a diagonal motion across the front of their body.
- On-Line:
  - There are a million on-line videos to help with sticks, throwing, catching, cradling, ground balls, tricks, etc. Spend 10 minutes on-line to get an idea, and 1000 minutes outside DOING IT (however did those Indians learn to play without youtube??!!)

- Throwing: <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=2232ghFXH48>
- Cradling: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gjYczl9wwc8>
- Scooping: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PIGxCchHU\\_I](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PIGxCchHU_I)
- Cool Trick: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=06cBoEdP-ek> (even with a bad hair cut!)
- NOW GET OUT THERE AND DO IT!!!!

*The absolute best thing your child can do to be a great lacrosse player, and even more importantly, to enjoy the game . . . is to ALWAYS have a stick in their hand! If they have a stick in their hand doing something (learning a trick, throwing and catching against the basketball backboard, nagging you to have a catch with him, beating their brother, chasing their sister, cradling in front of aunt Millie's favorite china in the living room . . .) whatever you can tolerate- allow them/encourage them to do it! Throwing, catching and ground balls to lacrosse are as important as skating is to ice hockey! If your child comes to practice with a basic set of skills, he will have a much more fun experience!*