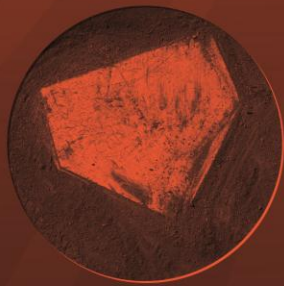




CATCHER



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INTRODUCTION

The catcher is one of the most important positions on the field. The player you select to fill the catcher position must be enthusiastic, energetic and tough. He has to WANT that position and must give one hundred percent of himself, one hundred percent of the time.

If you don't have a natural fit for the position, develop one! Skill and enthusiasm can be developed in a player who is willing to work hard.

In this eBook, we'll go through 7 fun and effective catcher drills that you can perform as part of a team practice, for individual or small group workouts, or in the back yard at home.

If you'd like to see all these drills performed live with step by step video instructions, you can upgrade to include the Ultimate Fielding Drills Online Video Clinic by going here:

<http://baseball-practice-plans.com/p/upgrade-fielding>

THROWING AND CATCHING TECHNIQUES

Always warm-up properly before beginning any baseball drills. Taking the time to go through a comprehensive stretching program will go a long way in preventing serious, even permanent, injuries.

Always use correct throwing and catching techniques even when you are warming up.

Throwing

Catchers must be able to make a throw quickly in order to beat a baserunner. In a high school setting the ball must reach second base in two seconds or less.

- Always keep your elbows raised when throwing. Do not allow your arm to drop below your waist. This will slow your throw.



Proper Throwing Form

- Split your hands and tuck your glove back into your chest.
- Point your shoulder, hip and knee at your target and whip your arm to make the throw.

Receiving

- Always show your partner a “Target Box.” Arms at 90 degree angles with hands to each side of the head. This gives your partner a target to aim for during a drill.
- Spread your feet slightly wider than shoulder width apart and keep your knees flexed.
- If the ball comes right at your target box, always use TWO HANDS to trap the ball in the glove.
- If the ball goes outside of your target box, you must move your body so that your target box is always in front of the ball. Move to meet the ball.
- If the ball arrives above the waist, bring the thumbs together to make the catch. If the ball arrives below the waist, bring the pinkies together.
- Catchers should ALWAYS try to catch with two hands, either by dropping down into a crouched position or moving their body from side to side.

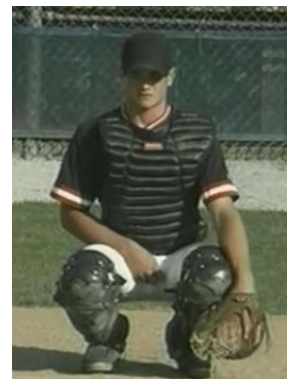


Target Box

BASIC CATCHING STANCES

Sign Technique:

- Place the glove below the outside of the left knee to block the third base coach's view.
- Lay the throwing arm along the crease of your leg so that your wrist is about mid-thigh level. Your thigh should block the view of the first base coach.
- Your knees must be close together, but open enough for the pitcher to see the sign.



Sign Technique

Receiving with No Runners on Base:

- This is a relaxed and comfortable position because you are not worried about moving quickly to throw an out.
- You can be sitting back on your haunches with your toes turned out.
- Relax the glove after the pitcher finds his target for better arm movement.
- Keep your elbow on the outside of the knee and the non-glove hand should remain behind your body for protection.



Receiving with No Runners

Receiving with a Man on Base:

- This is sometimes called a “jockey position” or a “ready position.”
- This position makes it easier to stand and throw when a runner tries to steal a base.
- Stay up on your haunches with your toes facing straight forward.
- Keep your hamstrings parallel to the ground.
- Your weight should be on the balls of your feet.
- Do not rise too early and take strikes away from your pitcher.
- You can use this position for all situations if you prefer.



Receiving with a Man on Base

CATCHING TECHNIQUES

Drill #1: Framing Pitches Drill

Complete 15 repetitions

Purpose: This drill focuses on framing pitches correctly. The position of the catcher's glove can go a long way in gaining strikes for your pitcher.



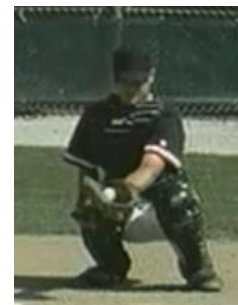
Inside to
Right-Hander



Outside to
Right-Hander



High in Strike
Box



Low in Strike Box

Always catch the outside of the ball. Catching the outside of the ball lets the glove stay in the strike zone. The more your glove is hanging out of the strike zone, the more it will look like a ball instead of a strike. Catch the top of the ball for pitches that are high in the strike zone, and catch the bottom of the ball for low pitches.

Setup: The catcher should be in his position behind home plate. The coach will be throwing balls to the player. Balls and gloves are required.

Execution:

1. The catcher holds a relaxed or jockey position behind home plate.
2. The coach makes throws to each location in the strike zone (inside, outside, low and high).
3. The player frames the catches depending on their locations.
4. The player throws the ball back to the coach.

Rapid Fire Drill

1. *The catcher holds a relaxed or jockey position behind home plate.*
2. *The coach makes throws to each location in the strike zone (inside, outside, low and high).*
3. *The player frames the catches depending on their locations and immediately drops the ball from his glove.*



Framing Pitches Drill

4. *The coach quickly fires the next ball and the player drops it after the catch.*
 - Correct framing will allow the ball to drop directly in front of the catcher.
 - Focus on the framing technique rather than catching and holding the ball.

Coaching Tips:

- Start with slow pitches when learning the framing technique.
- Remind players not to attempt to frame pitches that are way outside of the strike zone.
- Challenge players with difficult pitches after they learn the proper technique.

Drill #2: Blocking Pitches Drill

Complete 15 repetitions

Purpose: This drill is intended to practice different blocking situations. Incorrect blocking techniques will take pitches away from your pitcher and give up runs.

Setup: The catcher should be in his position behind home plate. The coach will be throwing balls to the players. Two bats should be set out near the back line of the batter's box in order to show the catcher the angle his legs should be facing. Balls and gloves are required.

Execution:

Pitch directly at catcher:

- Kick feet out from underneath body to drop down.
- Protect the throwing hand by placing it behind the glove and cover the whole between your legs with your glove.

- Round the shoulders and tuck the chin to chest for protection.

Pitch to catcher's left:

- Kick out the left leg and then slide the body. Older or more experienced players can “hop” into position instead of sliding. This may be a little faster.
- Make sure legs and body are angled toward the plate so the ball bounces off of the chest and back to the center of the plate.

Pitch to catcher's right:

- Kick out the right leg and then slide the body. Older or more experienced players can “hop” into position instead of sliding. This may be a little faster.



Blocking Right



Blocking Straight



Blocking Left

- Make sure legs and body are angled toward the plate so the ball bounces off of the chest and back to the center of the plate.

1. *The catcher holds a relaxed or jockey position behind home plate.*
2. *The coach calls “Right, Left or Straight” and throws to that location.*
3. *The catcher assumes the correct blocking position and blocks the ball.*
4. *The catcher resumes the relaxed or jockey position and waits for the next throw.*

Coaching Tips:

- Do not catch the ball when blocking pitches. Focus on stopping the ball from getting by.
- Remind the catcher to angle his body toward the plate, not parallel with the batter's box. If his body is not in the proper position, the ball will roll away from the catcher.

SPECIFIC THROWING TECHNIQUES

Drill #3: Steal Situations Drill

Complete 15 repetitions

Purpose: This drill is intended to simulate a game situation where the catcher has to catch the ball and then quickly throw it to second base (steal situation).

Option 1: The 3-2-2

- Three steps to the left of the plate for a ball thrown to the inside for a right hand hitter.
 - Do not slide the right foot behind the left on the second step; this will force his momentum towards third base.
- Two steps down the center of the plate for a ball coming down the middle.
- Two steps to the right of the plate for a ball thrown to the outside for a right hand hitter.

Option 2: Slide Step

- Lay a bat down the center of the plate as a guide for the catcher to avoid stepping on the plate.
- Make a quick “jump turn” or slide step with your feet. Drag the glove across your body and square up with a jump turn.

Setup: The catcher should be in his position behind home plate. The coach will be throwing balls to the player. Balls and gloves are required.

Execution:

1. *The catcher holds a jockey position behind home plate.*
2. *The coach calls “Right, Left or Straight” and throws to that location.*
3. *The catcher catches the ball and steps or jump turns either to the right, left or center and simulates throwing to second.*
4. *The catcher resumes the jockey position and waits for the next throw.*

Coaching Tips:

- Option 1 gives younger or less skilled players extra momentum by taking quick steps to get the ball to his target. Option 2 is for older, more advanced players.

Drill #4: Wrist Flicks Drill

Complete 25 repetitions

Purpose: This drill is intended to develop a stronger throwing movement by utilizing a wrist snap.

Setup: One partner should be kneeling on one knee directly behind the batter's box and the other partner will mirror him in front of the box. Balls and gloves are required.

Execution:

1. The player places his elbow in his glove and grips the ball with a 4-seam grip.
2. The player flips the ball to his partner by only moving his wrist, no arm movement.
 - Try to flip the ball directly at your partner's chest.
3. Continue flipping the ball back and forth.



Wrist Flip Drill

Coaching Tips:

- This drill should be practiced on a daily basis.
- An strong wrist flip can gain 1-2 miles per hour on a throw.

Drill #5: One-Knee Throwing Drill

Complete 20 repetitions

Purpose: This drill isolates specific parts of the throwing technique by taking the lower half of the body out of the equation and focusing on the upper half.

Setup: One partner should be kneeling on one knee directly behind the batter's box and the other partner will mirror him approximately 20 feet away. Balls and gloves are required.

Execution:

1. Both partners should be kneeling with one knee up.
2. They will throw the ball back and forth while kneeling.
 - The body should be squared toward the target.
 - The elbows should be up and the front elbow points at the target.



One-Knee Throwing Drill



Elbows Held Up

Coaching Tips:

- The catcher does not have time to swing his arm in a circle when throwing so proper technique is vital.
- Watch for the glove tuck and a strong follow through.

Drill #6: Soft Hands Drill

Complete 15 repetitions

Purpose: This drill practices catching soft throws with a bare hand. A catcher must have soft and sure hands. This drill is excellent for building correct framing techniques as well.

Setup: The catcher should be in his position behind home plate. The coach will be throwing balls to the player. Balls are required.



Soft Hands Drill

Execution:

1. *The catcher holds a relaxed or jockey position behind home plate.*
2. *The coach makes throws to each location in the strike zone (inside, outside, low and high).*
3. *The player extends a straight arm and uses the framing technique with every pitch. He is bare-handed and "freezes the ball" right where it is caught.*
 - Do not let the hand carry out of the strike zone after catching a pitch.
4. *The player throws the ball back to the coach.*

Coaching Tips:

- This is an important technique to use when catching breaking balls thrown low. Catch the ball as far in front of you as possible and block it in the strike zone.
- Challenge players by throwing faster pitches.

Drill #7: Bunt Responsibility and Technique Drill

Complete 15 repetitions or 5 full rotations

Purpose: This drill replicates a game time situation in which the catcher calls for the ball after a bunt, fields it and then throws to first base for the out.

Setup: The catcher should be in his position behind home plate. The coach will be standing near the catcher to call a direction. Place three balls approximately 20 feet away from the catcher; one ball near the first base line, one down the center and one near the third base line. This drill can be run through rotations with multiple catchers. Balls are required.

Execution:

1. *The catcher holds a relaxed or jockey position behind home plate.*
2. *The coach will call either "First, Middle or Third."*
3. *The catcher runs to the ball indicated by the coach calling, "Mine, Mine, Mine!" and scoops up the ball.*
 - Always field a bunt by scooping the ball with both hands.

- Use a “round off” approach to the ball when it is down the center so that your momentum is headed toward first base.
 - Step over the ball when fielding near the third base line so that the body is facing first base.
4. *The player makes sure he is clear of the runner and simulates a throw to first base.*
 - Take a drop step away from the runner before throwing.
 5. *The player drops the ball back in position and returns to home plate or the end of the line.*



Bunt Technique Drill

Coaching Tips:

- Remind the catcher to call for the ball immediately so the pitcher knows that it is covered.

The catcher occupies the most important defensive position on the team. He must be mentally and physically strong to overcome the challenges of this position. Follow the recommended repetitions for each drill for a 45-60 minute catcher's workout that is sure to improve his skills.

Make sure your catcher is a leader and isn't afraid to take charge!

Thanks for reading this report! If you'd like to see my complete collection of drills and online clinics, please visit: <http://www.coachkennybuford.com/>

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