

Catcher Drills – Receiving, Blocking & Throwing

Acknowledgement: Tom Griffin, Carson Newman College

2016 ABCA Conference Presentation - *Be A Complete Catcher*

One of A Catcher's Key Roles – Catch Ball, Block Ball, Throw Ball

1. Receiving

Warm-up Drills: Key Points - hand coordination and feel

Crosses

- Start with a ball in each hand, hand on top of ball, at shoulder height
- Release balls at same time
- As balls drop straight down, squat and cross arms/hands to catch falling balls with opposite hands (e.g. ball dropped with left hand is caught by right hand)
- Try catch ball between thumb and index & middle fingers



Drops

- Partner/coach has ball in each hand at shoulder height; other player has hands on top of partner's/coach's hands
- Partner/coach releases one ball at random
- As balls drop straight down, squat and catch falling ball; vary catch hand, using hand above ball that was dropped or glove hand only



Tosses

- Player and partner/coach in receiving position, each with a ball in glove hand
- One player leads drill saying "1, 2, 3, Toss"; on "Toss" both players toss ball at the same time to each other
- Ball should be received out in front, using thumb and index & middle fingers to catch
- Variation – use one ball and both players hop side to side, exchanging tosses as they hop



Ball Receiving Drills: Key Points - body movement and positioning, glove movement, concentration

Bounce - Catch

- Catcher in receiving position
- Coach short or long hops a ball for catcher to receive
- After receiving, catcher lets ball fall out of glove; coach immediately follows up with a throw (in or out of the strike zone) that catcher must quickly react to



Ball Speed & Movement

- Coach uses a tennis racket to hit tennis or wiffle balls at catcher; tennis or wiffle balls will tend to have more movement and be more difficult to squeeze/catch
- Catcher needs to focus on movement of ball and receive ball cleanly



Side to Side Hops

- Catcher in receiving position
- Hop to the side, remaining in receiving position; coach throws pitch, in or out of strike zone, that catcher has to react to
- Once ball caught – catcher receives and freezes, feeling the body and glove position
- Ball can also be short or long hopped for catcher to react to



Distraction

- Catcher in receiving position; coach holds bat with towel on end in front of catcher's face
- Player/coach pitches ball; coach pulls towel away from catcher's face; catcher finds ball and moves body/glove as required to receive



2. Blocking

Key Points: anticipation, chin/hands/knees go down, keep ball in 6 foot circle in front

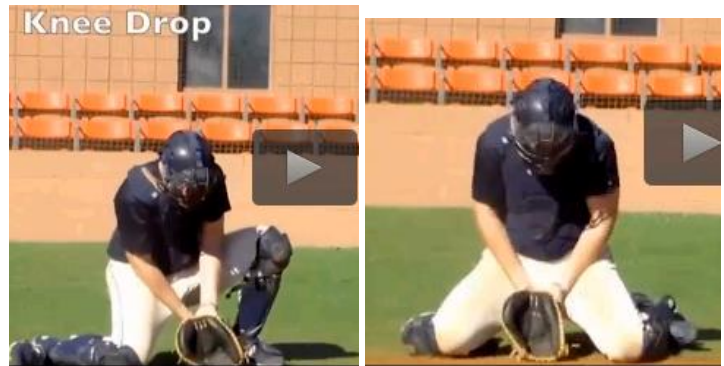
Glove Flip

- Catcher starts in knees down, hinged at hips slightly forward, glove in receiving position in front of body & throwing hand behind glove
- Coach points center, right or left
- Catcher reacts with chin going down and glove flip so that fingers/top of glove get down to dirt as quickly as possible, keeping throwing hand in behind glove
- Advance to feeding short hops live to center, right and left



Knee Drops

- Catcher starts in receiving position
- Coach points right or left; catcher reacts with chin/glove flip/inside knee drive down; return to receiving position and repeat
- Progress to full block by bringing body over glove and dropping outside knee
- Progress to a live ball block
- Coach provides feedback on body positioning



Side to Side Hops

- Catcher starts and remains in receiving position while hopping to the side
- Coach throws ball with the proper lead so catcher works chin/glove flip/inside knee drive down, body over glove, outer knee drop
- Emphasize freeze and hold after block so catcher can feel body position for block
- Coach provides feedback on body positioning



3. Throwing

Key Points: glove to hand transfer, foot work

Feed The Hand

- Catcher works on motion of feeding the hand to transfer ball from caught position in front of body to throwing position
- Focus on turning glove side shoulder and bringing up glove to feed the hand with throwing hand finger tips on top of the ball; avoid reaching under to grab the ball
- Progress to focus on separation of glove and throwing sides, with the take away to get throwing hand into position; takeaway can be elbow driven or hand driven
- Focus on throwing hand not getting outside/behind the elbow



Footwork with Tic-Tac-Toe Board

- Draw out tic-tac-toe board behind home plate to use as a guide for footwork positioning on throws to 2nd base
- For balls received inside the body - right foot moves to middle back square, left foot moves up to left front square so that glove side of body is slightly open
- For balls received with glove going across/closing off the body - right foot should stay and pivot in right back square, left foot moves up to middle front square so that glove side of body is slightly open
- For balls received with glove going outside of body on glove side - bring glove back to body; right foot moves to middle back square, left foot moves up to left front square so that glove side of body is slightly open
- Work up to bringing together ball transfer, footwork and throws

Ball received inside the body:



Glove going across the body:



Glove outside of body on glove side:

