

JOE WILKINS

Catching



Stances & Balance Positions

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Primary Stance

The most common mis-used term we hear in teaching stances is get to a comfortable position. To receive the ball correctly and give our pitcher the best opportunity to get a strike called, we have to get in a stance that is uncomfortable to learn and get used to. The butt has to be up enough for the 'glove-hand' elbow to be in front of the knee. This will allow the catcher to catch the low ball properly. Notice, the elbows are not inside the knee. This allows for the catcher to receive the 'glove-hand-side' pitch correctly. The elbow is loose and free and is bent, at the very minimum, a 90 degree angle. See the receiving section for further detail on receiving.

Drill:



One of the best drills I have come up with to make it easy for young catchers to feel the correct primary stance without too much explanation is the TIRE DRILL. By putting the arch of the foot on the hard part of the tire where the tread meets the side wall, the catcher, must then squat down and retain a balanced position. To do so, the catcher must have a slight lift in the butt and flatness to his back. See above for the angle of the back in a balanced primary stance.

Secondary Stance



There are many differences in the secondary stance (runners on base or two strikes on the batter). The butt raises slightly because it is more of a flexed position. The back flattens a little and the throwing arm comes in front of the knee. The throwing arm is still in a relaxed, bent position, ready to frame, block and throw. Don't get the this position and get stiff. Stay loose and ready to react.

Drill:

Get your catchers up in their secondary stance, making sure the positioning is correct, make them hold the stance for certain periods of time. You might start day one with 3 sets of 45 seconds. On day two or three you might increase this to 3 or 4 sets at 1 minute. Times and sets are all variable. Have a set number of sets and times for each practice, increasing as the season approaches.

You can incorporate the tennis ball and shadow drills into stance training at any time:

See the Receiving page for the tennis ball and shadow drills