

JOE WILKINS

# Catching



## Transfer and Throwing

Before we get into the transfer and throwing discussion, we must first realize that there are many situations we need to transfer and throw the ball as fast and efficient as we can (When runners steal; when we pick runners off; when we turn double plays from the infield to home to first...and a few more).

## Hands



The first thing we must consider in the transfer and throw is the way we want to enter the glove with the bare hand. We want to have both the glove and the bare hand facing upright if possible. The only exception to this is when the ball is thrown to the lower-right of our transfer area. When this happens, the hands will meet with the web of the glove and the finger tips of the bare

hand either pointing sideways or face down. You might have to stop right now and make sense of this.

## Ready Stance



The ready stance is the position we want to be in with runner(s) on base. The butt should be equal height with the knees. The feet should be wider than the knees. Some catchers have to pinch the knees at first and develop the necessary flexibility. It might be something that you have to work to develop comfort.

This is not easy, especially for a young catcher. You might have to work through the initial burning sensation in your legs but if you want to develop, you will pay the price. Now, moving up to the upper-body, the bare hand should be either resting on the thigh (as pictured) or directly behind the glove for protection (but either way, it is in front of the right knee - this will allow the transfer to take place where we want it to (right in front of the right shoulder as we turn the front side to load to throw).

## Transfer in Front



To transfer in front of the shoulder, let the ball travel as much as you can, especially if it is thrown to an area within your body. Try not to reach. Slightly turn your glove counter-clockwise as you receive the ball to get the transfer process started. Turn the glove and meet it with the bare hand in front of the shoulder, grab the ball out of the glove with the most similar grip

to how you are going to throw the ball so that you don't have to adjust your grip too much. Then separate your hands but lead this separation with the elbows.

## Separation



Again, lead the separation with the elbows. Turn the ball as you start the short circular path around the ear. The glove-hand will extend out in front of your elbow, past 90 degrees and the throwing arm will stay inside 90 degrees. This is commonly described as a bow and arrow position. Line your shoulders up to Try to keep your glove hand stable throughout your throw for

balance. The glove elbow should start with separation from the left side of the body and end up hugging that left side of the body as the catcher throws and rotates. This should cause the glove to face upward through the finish of the throw.

## Throw and Finish



As the elbow begins the forward motion from a position of parallel height with the throwing hand, the throwing hand begins to find its index finger and middle finger on top of the ball. This leads up to the finish, where the wrist will snap forward and down, while extending the fingers toward the target. The hand will finish out in front of the left knee, which should be directly

above the foot at this point. We should see a significant ability to balance here with slight bend in the front knee. The back leg and foot should raise up as the arm extends out in front. The leg will eventually come around and down to finish, but you shouldn't find yourself having to support yourself from falling right away by getting that back leg on the ground. If this is the case, you must be out of control a little with your body.

## Throwing to Third



The footwork to throw to third depends on where the pitch is thrown. If our catchers can reach the ball without reaching across their body to the right without shifting their weight to the right foot, we want them to go behind the right handed hitter to throw to third. We must clear the right-handed hitter



enough to make our throw without hitting the batter in the helmet or back. If the pitch is off the plate to the right and we have to shift our weight to the right foot, we let that shift happen and use it to start the movement to get in front of the hitter, redirect our left foot toward third base and make our throw.

### *\*\*\*Transfer and Throwing Drills\*\*\**

## Transfer and Separate



The transfer and separate drill is only for your hands. We build our transfer one step at a time. We start by simplifying things and only using our hands. Start with the ball in the glove. Reach in and grab the ball with a grip similar to the one you will throw with. To be able to get a feel, start this drill in slow motion. So, grab the ball and

pull it out of the glove just like in the *Separation Section*. Then put the ball back in the glove in exact reverse of how you got it out and separate your hands with out taking the ball out (leave it in your glove). Repeat this action and create muscle memory by doing it over and over. Build up the speed as you go...when you mishandle the ball, start slow again and gradually get faster again.



## From the knees



Focusing on the hands only and adding the throwing element to the Transfer and Separate brings us to the Transfer and Throw from the knees. Working with a partner about 30 feet away, start slow and build the speed up as you go. Going back and forth with your partner creates a



natural challenge to see who muffs/fumbles the transfer first.

This drill helps to train the core muscles to be active and stable during the transfer and throw. This is crucial to your ability to improve or maintain accuracy.

## Transfer and Step



This drill is to train the timing between the hands and feet. Receive the ball from your partner. Transfer first and step with the right foot. As the right foot steps forward about 4-5 inches, the angle changes from pointing towards where the 2<sup>nd</sup> baseman plays (in the stance) to an angle more towards first base.

Practice these one foot step drills before you add the second step, creating a shuffle. When you do add the second foot into the sequence, make sure the left foot gets to a position lined up toward your target. Sometimes the foot won't get all the way to the line we will draw in the "T-Drill."



## T-Drill

First, draw a line from the back corner of the plate to a point where your feet are in your stance. Draw another line perpendicular to that line to form the letter T. The right foot can be slightly behind the line if your left foot is on the line. This will make it a little easier to get the feet lined up, especially on the throw to second base. Catch, transfer, separate and shuffle. Use the line that connects to the back corner of the plate to make sure our left foot is getting as close to that line as the right foot. If the

ball is off target, the right foot might shift a little right or left. The left foot should shuffle to a point as far away or near the line as the right foot.



## Ball in Glove

Start with the ball in your glove. Transfer, shuffle, separate and throw. Balance on the front leg on the finish for an additional training element.

## Throw from Goal Post or Bow and Arrow position



Start with the ball already separated from your glove. Start with your weight 50/50. You should feel out how long you want your stride to be and place your feet there. It should be a powerful position to throw from. Feel a strong connection to the ground with your feet. Rock back to shift about 70% of your weight to your back leg but keep your back knee inside your back foot. Some catchers will shift their weight back but let their knee shift too much (over the back foot). Keep the knee inside the foot to keep constant pressure pushing toward the direction you are throwing. Make your throw and balance on the front leg so we are not falling forward. We must create a brake for our hips to turn quickly so your weight should be restrained by your

front foot so you should be able to control your weight enough to balance in the finish.

## Fast Hands Drills



Work on speeding up your hands as you compete with a partner or teammate. You can play this game from your knees to focus on the hands only or you can go from a slight-knee-bend position (not squatting but not standing upright). Challenge each other, going back and forth with a partner, focusing

on the transfer, separate and throw techniques discussed earlier.



The front arm might not have time to get out past 90 degrees but everything else will be game like (at least with the upper body).

## Small Glove



If you are not anticipating the catch and transfer by moving your right hand towards the glove as you catch the ball, use a small, flat glove to make the hands have to work together more. Your right hand cannot be dormant as the ball is being caught. It must move toward



the transfer position as you prepare to catch the ball. Using the small, flat glove will reinforce this technique and get your hands working together.

## Pitching Machine



When using a pitching machine, we can pinpoint the area we want to work on from a distance more realistic to where the pitcher will be throwing from. So that we can work on different locations, have the catcher move around instead of moving the pitching machine. Move around to work on different pitches (in and out, up and down).