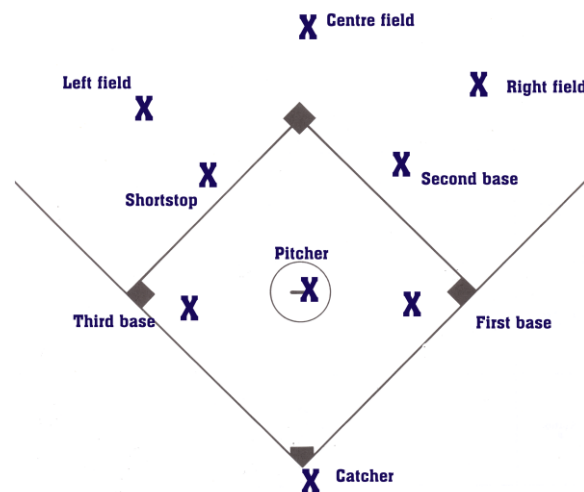


Fielding FUNDamentals

1 Field positioning

The diagram overleaf represents where players should stand for each fielding position. However as players' skill and confidence progress, they will become more aware of the cues available to them during the game which may impact on where they stand.



Infield

The infield is the first line of defense behind the pitcher and will generally make more defensive plays than the outfield. Key positions that make up the infield include the:

- Pitcher
- Catcher
- 1st Base
- 2nd Base
- Third base; and
- Shortstop

Infield players are responsible for fielding ground balls, catching fly balls, throwing to various bases, covering bases, backing up and tagging runners. Whilst it is important for all players to develop the basic fundamentals in any position to be successful, there are usually four common qualities that characterise a good infielder. These include the ability to be alert on every pitch thrown and make the right play, an eagerness or aggressiveness to go after the ball rather than waiting for it to come to them, good reflexes and the ability to move quickly in all directions and no fear of hard hit balls or oncoming baserunners.

Outfield

The outfield is sometimes considered less demanding than the infield, however a strong defensive outfield will execute important outs, and like the infield, will make a valuable contribution to the game. Key positions in the outfield include:

- Left Field
- Centre Field; and
- Right Field

Outfield players are responsible for catching fly balls, fielding ground balls, throwing to infielders at various bases including home plate, covering bases from time to time and backing up. Whilst it is important for all players to develop the basic fundamentals in any position to be successful, there are usually three common qualities that characterise a good outfielder.

These include the ability to position themselves properly for different batters and different situations, react to the batted ball quickly and possess a strong accurate throw.

Selecting a fielding glove

Selecting a fielding glove

There is a tremendous range of gloves available for players to choose from. They vary in size and style to suit players needs and positions played. When making a selection it is important that the player can control the glove, so the weight and size of it are important criteria to consider.

Fielding mitt

(can only be used at 1st Base and catching positions)



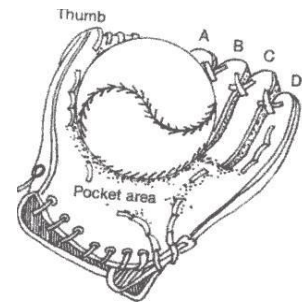
Fielding glove

(can be used for any position)



Getting familiar with a fielding glove

- For a right handed thrower the glove is placed on the left hand (see the gloves pictured)
- For a left handed thrower the glove is placed on the right hand
- Place the thumb in the section marked Thumb
- Place the index and middle fingers in the section marked C
- Place the pinkie and ring fingers in the section marked D
- Catch the ball in the pocket of the glove
- On impact squeeze the thumb and fingers in D together to close the glove around the ball



Note: Using the fielding glove is explained in terms of the glove pictured which is a glove for a right handed thrower.

Catching a thrown ball

Catching sequence

- Hold the glove open in front of the chest with the palm facing the thrower
- After the ball is released, move the body in line with the thrown ball
- Adjust the glove position depending on the location of the throw:
- If the ball is above the waist, fingers of the glove point up
- If the ball is below the waist, fingers of the glove point down
- Watch the ball into the glove
- Catch the ball in the pocket of the glove, not the fingers
- Squeeze the glove closed and cover the glove with the throwing hand

- As the ball enters the glove 'give' with the hands and arms to cushion its impact and draw the ball and glove towards the body
- Take the glove and ball to the throwing shoulder as the throwing hand reaches into the glove to grip the ball ready to throw

Ready position

Body position

- Face the thrower
- Feet are shoulder width apart and parallel
- Bend the knees slightly with weight evenly distributed
- Hold both hands chest high with the glove open to the ball, fingers up and thumbs together

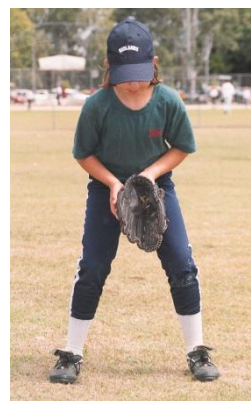
Body movement

- Move the body behind the ball using a shuffle step or cross over step depending on the accuracy of the throw

Catching technique

- Catch the ball in the pocket of the glove
- Draw the hands slightly back towards the body to 'soften' the impact of the ball into the glove
- Catching below the waist – the fingers are pointing down with the little fingers together
- Catching above the waist – the fingers are pointing up with the thumbs together
- Watch the ball into the glove
- Secure the ball by squeezing the glove around the ball after impact and covering the glove with the throwing hand

Catching below the waist



Catching above the waist



Fielding a ground ball

Fielding sequence

- Move behind the path of the ball and set feet slightly wider than shoulder width apart
- Bend the knees and lean from the waist with the weight on the inside part of the balls of the feet
- Lean forward from the waist so that the glove touches the ground in front of the body. (Players should be able to see their elbows)
- Hold the glove wide open facing the ball with the fingers of the glove pointing down
- The throwing hand is close to and beside the glove
- Watch the middle of the ball into the glove
- Close the glove and cover it with the throwing hand to secure the ball firmly
- In one continuous motion grip the ball and transfer the glove and ball to the throwing shoulder ready to throw

Ready position

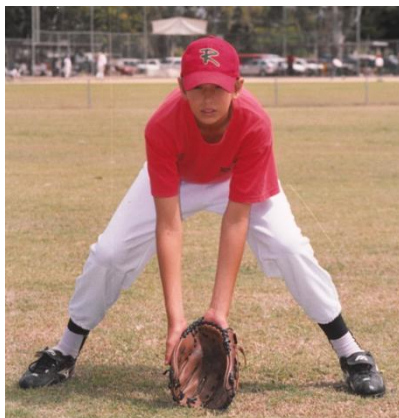
Body position

- Have the feet slightly wider than shoulder width apart
- Weight is forward, but spread along the inside part of the balls of the feet
- Bend the knees with the bottom low to the ground (like sitting on a milk crate)
- Keep the head up with eyes focused on the batter
- Keep the upper body relaxed



Hand position

- Keep the hands low
- Glove touching the ground
- Have the elbows out in front of the knees and not locked in



Fielding technique

Body position

- Get into the path of the ball
- The body must stay low, with knees well bent and bottom low
- Feet should be at least shoulder width apart
- The striding foot should be slightly ahead of the pivot foot
- Move the head only to enable you to watch the ball into the glove
- Body should be directly facing the oncoming ball

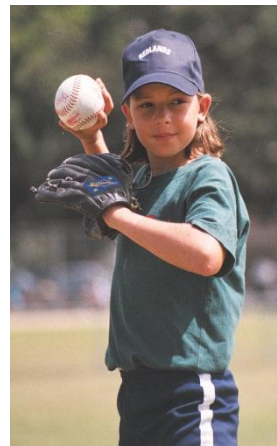


Hand position

- Keep hands well out in front of the body
- Glove should touch the ground
- Field the ball from the ground up
- Hold the glove wide open facing the ball
- As the ball hits the glove elbows 'give' with the ball
- Once secured, use the throwing hand to grip the ball inside the glove
- In one continuous motion take the glove and ball over the throwing shoulder ready to throw

Preparing to throw

- Bring the ball in the glove straight up from the ground to the belly button/stomach. This is sometimes coined 'up the funnel'.
- Turn the body side-on to the target using either a crow hop or crossover step
- Take the ball and glove directly to the overhand throwing position (no windup)
- Point the glove side elbow to the target
- Commence throwing progression



Fielding a fly ball

Fielding sequence

- Move feet and body under the ball
- Hands are above the head and in front of the line of the body
- Hold the glove wide open facing the ball with the fingers of the glove pointing up
- The throwing hand is close to and beside the glove to secure the ball
- Watch the middle of the ball into the glove
- On impact close the glove and cover it with the throwing hand to secure the ball
- Let hands and arms **give** to soften the impact as the catch is made
- Bring the glove to the throwing shoulder ready to throw

Ready position

Body position

- Have the feet shoulder width apart
- The body is more upright for outfielders than for infielders:
- knees are bent less
- hands are further from the ground
- Keep the head up with eyes focused on the batter
- Keep the upper body relaxed

Body movement

- Run to get under the ball as quickly as possible
- If the ball is hit beyond the fielder avoid running backwards to get to the ball
- If the ball is hit to the left turn to the left to get to the ball
- If the ball is hit to the right turn to the right to get to the ball

Catching technique

- Watch the ball all the way into the glove
- Catch the ball as close as possible to the throwing shoulder
- Catch the ball with the fingers of the glove pointing up
- On impact close the glove and cover it with the throwing hand to secure the ball
- Let hands and arms **give** to 'soften' the impact as the catch is made
- Once the ball is secured prepare to throw using either a crow hop or cross over step

