

# CATCHERS

## PERFECT PRACTICE PLAN

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# **CATCHERS PERFECT PRACTICE PLAN**

## **WHAT'S INSIDE:**

- 1. KEY PRINCIPLES**
- 2. NOTE TO COACHES**
- 3. PERFECT PRACTICE PLAN**
  - A. STANCES**
  - B. RECEIVING**
  - C. BLOCKING**
  - D. THROWING**
  - E. STRENGTH/MOBILITY**

# CATCHERS PERFECT PRACTICE PLAN

## KEY PRINCIPLES:

- **FOCUS ON WHAT HAPPENS MOST:**

Stances → Receiving → Blocking → Throwing → Specialty Plays

- **CATCHING MADE SIMPLE METHOD:**

Movement → Add in Ball → Increase Variables → Sharpen Decisions → Let it Eat

- **MOVEMENT FIRST. DECISION SECOND.**

Catchers have 2 problems: Movement problems and Decision problems. Solve the movement first. Then test the movement by testing decision making.

- **GO SLOW TO GO FAST**

Spend more time on the basics perfecting the movement. Progressing too quickly will reinforce poor movement patterns and will force you to spend more time unwinding the work.

- **SPEED UP TO SLOW DOWN**

Getting reps off the machine faster/harder than game speed helps slow you down in the game

- **WE UNDER ESTIMATE THE VOLUME OF REPS IT TAKES TO BE GREAT**

- You can get better really quickly with daily practice, the right plan, and the right feedback. But to be great it takes an absurd amount of reps. Be short term urgent, long term patient.
- We underestimate how long it takes to build the right movement patterns. Big leaguers are still working on the same drills a 12u catcher is working on. They just do it better.

- **USE VIDEO AS FEEDBACK**

You as the coach are incredibly valuable. What's even more valuable is the player seeing himself/herself on camera and self-discovering what they need to work on.

- **REWARD WHAT YOU WANT**

Celebrate progress, not perfection. People want to feel like they're winning and making progress. It triggers dopamine (the pursuit/desire chemical). When you see progress, celebrate it like crazy! Even if it's small.

- **ONE THING AT A TIME**

Only give one coaching cue at a time. Giving too many things will overwhelm the player and confuse them. Fixing one thing at a time is the fastest way to get 5 things fixed.

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## NOTE TO COACHES

### 1. WORK UP THE PROGRESSION

The Catching Made Simple Method is a simple process to train movements. Walk up the progression ladder when we get to ~70% right at each level.

### 2. CUSTOMIZATION

Feel free to modify the duration and intensity based on your catchers' age, skill level, and physical condition.

### 3. SPEED AT EACH STAGE

You likely won't be able to get through all the drills in each section with their time limit. I could go through all of this with a group of catcher's I've worked with quite a bit since they'd be up to speed on the drills and performing them well, allowing us to move through the progressions quickly.

### 4. GIVE GREAT FEEDS

One of the worst things you can do is rush your tosses. You have so much control over the catcher's experience by the pace you feed at. Slow is smooth, smooth is fast. Also, give short hops, not in-between hops (so toss the ball closer to the catcher).

### 5. USE VIDEO

If you have a group of catchers, one thing you can do is create a "lag" on video where after they get their reps, they can go watch themselves perform their reps. I've seen college programs do this for hitting and it would work great for catching too.

### 6. WORK FROM THE GROUND UP

Foundational movement programming happens from the ground up. Base movements/big movements first!

# CATCHERS PERFECT PRACTICE PLAN

**DURATION: 45-60 MIN**

**EQUIPMENT: BASEBALLS, MEDICINE BALL, CATCHER'S GEAR, PARTNER**

## 1. STANCES CHECK

**DURATION: 5-10 MIN**

- **Sign Stance:** 'Hang loose' distance apart
- **Primary Stance:** Shaped like an 'M'.
- **Secondary Stance:** Shaped like a "table"
- **Single Knee Stance:** Shaped like the left side of a "N"
- **Modified Kickstand:** Shaped like a trapezoid. Make sure the knee that's down is outside of the torso area.

## 2. RECEIVING DRILLS

**DURATION: 10-20 MIN**

- **2 Knee Movement:**
  - Start on knees to work on your movement.
- **2 Knees Partner Short Hops:**
  - Catch short hops from a partner to practice coming through the ball and staying below the ball. Don't let your hand go up off the ground until you're about to catch it!
- **Med Ball Short Hops:**
  - The medicine ball solidifies the motor pattern. The heavy ball forces correct posture and timing.
- **Glove Short Hops:**
  - Focus on precision with glove-only catches.
- **Underhand Tosses:**
  - Receive underhand tosses to refine hand-eye coordination. Maintain focus on perfect movement.
- **Overhand Throws:**
  - Throw the ball overhand. Focusing at a more relaxed speed to focus in on the movement.
- **Outside/Inside:**
  - Alternate between outside and inside pitches. Then randomize.
- **High/Low:**
  - Alternate between high and low pitches. Dunk the high pitch out front. Then randomize.
- **Machine Work:**
  - Get receiving reps off a machine

## 3. BLOCKING DRILLS

**DURATION: 5-15 MIN**

- **2 Knees Dry Blocks:**
  - Practice getting hips back, hands down, and forming 'home plate' with arms.
- **2 Knees Blocking:**
  - Focus on getting into a perfect blocking position
- **½ Stance Dry Blocks:**
  - Get into a perfect blocking position and sliding well laterally from a half stance (butt higher in the air)
- **½ Stance Blocks:**
  - Now add in a ball. Progressively throw the ball harder as we maintain proper movement.
- **Full Stance Dry Blocks:**
  - Focus on perfect and direct movements from your stance to a perfect blocking position. No wasted movement here.
- **Full Stance Blocks:**
  - Translating
- **Right, Right Right:**
  - Consecutive lateral blocks going each way.
- **Spiked Fastball**
  - Work on bringing your butt up on the spiked fastball. Keep the same chest area.
- **Single Knee Inchworm:**
  - Make the movement smooth. Work on turning the elbow back to the torso when it's right at you and pushing/sliding smoothly to both sides laterally.
- **Single Knee Blocks:**
  - Add in a ball as you block to all 3 spots from a single knee.
- **Block + Recover:**
  - The key to a quick recovery is a close block. Get up quickly and go get the ball with your bare hand or a two handed scoop (not with your glove!)
- **Randomized Block + Recover:**
  - All blocks here, but the block can be from anywhere. Mix up catching stances.

## 4. THROWING DRILLS

**DURATION: 5-10 MIN**

- **Momentum Transfers:**
  - Start on 2 knees and focus on using the momentum of the ball to transfer the ball in one motion. Transfer at midline. Get hands and elbows at shoulder height.
- **½ Stance Dry Footwork:**
  - From a ½ stance, focus on turning your left knee and shoulder in, then putting your right foot in the middle of your body with your toes pointing to the side and your left toes in the center of your right foot (slightly open)
- **½ Stance Footwork w/ Ball:**
  - Get your right foot down as you catch maintaining perfect movement. Don't stride too far forward or to the side with the right foot.
- **½ Stance Pitchers Pose:**
  - Maintain perfect movement and our tight foot getting down as we catch. Come up to a pitcher's pose for balance.
- **Full Stance to Launch Position:**
  - Now go from a full stance and get to a launch position. Check: right foot placement/timing, left foot placement, elbow/hand height, overall athleticism
- **Throws:**
  - Start with 50% speed footwork + throws, then work to 75%, 90%, and 100%
- **Single Knee Throws:**
  - (Movement, With a Ball, On a Thrown Ball) Focus on good extension from the right leg push and the hips finishing so you turn and face the other direction.
- **Back Picks:**
  - Drop the right foot back and turn your left shoulder in to get your head on the 1B side of your body, then perform a single knee throw there.
- **Throws to 3B:**
  - Drop your right foot back to create a lane behind the right handed batter

## 5. DECISION MAKING DRILLS

**DURATION: 5-10 MIN**

- **Block or Catch Decisions:**
  - Alternate between in the air and in the dirt, then randomize.
- **Verbal Calls:**
  - Mix in a “runner” call as you begin to throw to help cue the catcher

## 6. STRENGTH & MOBILITY

**DURATION: 5-10 MIN**

- **Strength + Mobility Exercises:**
  - 90/90 swivels
  - 90/90 bridge
  - 90/90 bridge to lunge
  - 90/90 strength
  - Frogs
  - Deep side lunges
  - Ankle mobility
  - Duck walks
  - Shin hop to knee tuck jump
  - Inchworms