

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL

FIELDING TIPS

THE BASICS

John Ottavino on our DVD uses the mental cue of “beat the ball with your knee” – which is his unique way of saying “get in front of the ball” or “line it up with your belly button”. Use whatever cue works.



Start in the Ready Position.

Then move to catch the ball between the legs. (Slightly towards the leg of the throwing arm is better, so you can make the weight transfer more quickly.) Place the non-mitt hand so that if the ball takes a bad hop, the hand will be there to protect the face. Some coaches call the position the “alligator jaws” or “the jaws of death”. The ball is not really caught in the mitt, but is stopped by it so the throwing hand can pin it to the mitt, and quickly pull it out. Then assume the proper throwing position – turned sideways when the mitt hand pointing toward the target and the throwing arm extended back.





Tips:

When moving laterally to field a ground ball, do not cross over – side step. Practice this when using the ground ball drill. Always end the drill coming up into a proper throwing position.





Mitt Position When Catching a Line drive:

The main things to remember are: 1/ keep the elbows in - no chicken wings; 2/ reach out for the ball, but not too far -- and bring it to you, welcome it; 3/ when the ball is above the belt, keep the fingertips of the mitt hand up, and 4/ when it is below the belt, point the finger tips down.



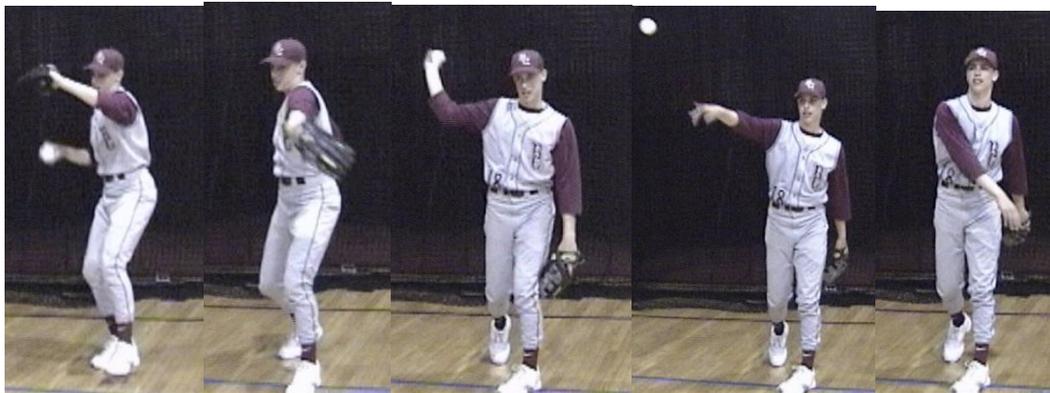
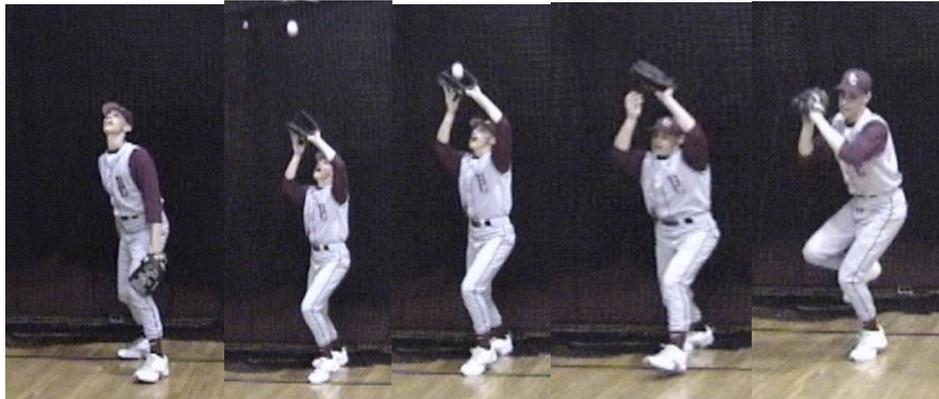
GROUND BALL DRILL - QUICK ROLL & TOSS

Have someone roll a wiffle ball to each side. Quickly field it and toss it back underhand. Repeat 12 times. Keep the butt down and stay behind and beneath the ball with your mitt. Always sidestep, do not cross one foot over the other.



FLY BALL DRILL

Have someone toss wiffle balls (and eventually regular game balls) in the air. Get behind the ball so that you are catching the ball as you are moving toward your throwing target. Then throw the ball back to the person who is tossing it to you. Repeat 12 times.



Variation: Alternate the throws, tossing some to the side. When the ball is thrown to the side, turn your body sideways and use a cross over step.



Many thanks to the Berkeley Carroll Varsity Baseball Team and their coach, Walter Paller, for providing these instructional tips.