



## The Fundamentals of Playing Catch Properly

1. Start by facing sideways with front shoulder directed at the target or whomever you are playing catch with. Feet parallel...not staggered.
  2. Hands together at chest. Elbows should be down and in close to the body...relaxed.
  3. Head and weight should be over the back leg - read that again.
  4. Weight shift - as hands move down toward belt start to step toward the target leading with the front hip continuing to aggressively move sideways. Resist turning too soon.
  5. Take the ball out of the glove at the belt with fingers on top and thumb underneath. Don't let ball turn in hand after the hand break.
  6. Pendulum swing the arms down and back away from the body while lifting the arm up so that the elbow reaches shoulder height with hand and ball along for the ride (the ball should not get to shoulder height before elbow). Throwing arm should be at 90 degrees. The ball should be over the elbow or slightly closer to the head.
- Make sure the pitcher shortens his arm before he lands. This means he has to flex his throwing elbow to shorten the arm before landing. If the ball is too far away from the head that is a more stressful position and prevents the arm from working properly.
- The glove and lead elbow will reach shoulder height before the throwing arm. For pitching you want the glove and elbow on the same plane when they reach shoulder height (glove not above or below elbow...sometimes gloves are too heavy for kids).
7. After stepping toward your partner, land on a slightly bent front leg while the arm is still back and cocked.
  8. Front foot should be directed at the target and should land on a straight line from the middle of the support foot toward the plate. Front leg knee should be over the foot. Knee pointed at the target. Foot should not be too angled away from target.
  9. At landing use the lead arm to help rotate the trunk so the head and chest are facing the target making sure the throwing elbow stays at shoulder level and does not drop down. Head should be level (the trunk delivers the arm and provides arm speed).
  10. As the trunk turns or rotates the throwing arm will lay back and then once the hips and chest are facing the target the throwing arm will extend out to the side of the body while fully extending the arm into ball release. The amount of trunk lean or tilting toward the glove side should not be much more than about 20 degrees.
  11. Flex the trunk forward out over the landing knee.
  12. Finish with the throwing hand down and behind the opposite hip showing the back of the shoulder to your partner (If this is not emphasized it will not be emphasized while pitching).

Don't let your kids pitch until they can play catch with proper throwing mechanics.

Playing catch should be fun but also should provide learning.

Focus on smoothness. If it looks robotic it cannot be smooth. Smoothness is an indication of proper timing of all the parts.

This is where many coaches go wrong by not paying attention to all players when they are playing catch.