



Catch a Hit Fly Ball

Catching a fly ball is one of the most difficult skills for your athletes to master. Hand-eye coordination is needed, along with not being fearful, in order to achieve this task. While all players will have to catch fly balls at some point, it is mainly a skill performed by outfielders. But it is a skill that every athlete needs to learn.

Fly Ball Basics:

- Line your throwing side up with the ball
- Get your glove up in-line with the ball with your fingers pointing to the sky
- Elbows are bent and relaxed (do not extend arms straight to catch ball)
- Position glove close to top of head on throwing shoulder
- Catch the ball in front of your head off the throwing side of your body
- Catch the ball with glove hand and then immediately cover the ball with your bare hand

Skill Progression – Catch a hit fly ball

| Your Athlete Can | Never | Sometimes | Often |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Assume correct fielding position | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Watch ball as it makes contact with bat | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Move to spot where ball will land | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Point fingers of glove downward to make below-the-waist catch; fingers upward to make above-the-waist catch | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Watch the ball into glove, “giving” slightly to bring ball in close to body | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Cover the ball in glove with bare hand | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Totals | | | |

Teaching Points – Catch a hit fly ball

1. Demonstrate the correct catching technique.
2. Emphasize moving the body to get under the ball.
3. Remind athletes to use two hands by covering the ball once caught inside the glove.
4. Repeat “high to the sky” and “down to the ground” to reinforce correct glove position
5. Use softer, larger balls to help eliminate fear of being hurt by ball.
6. Run drills to make athlete practice moving in all directions with glove in above-the-waist position.
7. Demonstrate the different heights/positions at which this type of catch can be made (in a crouch, leaping, running sideways, running backwards, running forward etc.)
8. Practice first using a tennis ball before progressing to a regulation softball.





9. Emphasize the importance of catching the ball with the hands and not the body.
10. Practice positioning the athlete's entire body under the catch.

Faults & Fixes Chart – Catch a hit fly ball

| Error | Correction | Drill Reference |
|---|---|---------------------------------|
| Using one hand without covering ball in glove | Re-emphasize covering the ball in the glove | Fly Ball Drills |
| Closing glove before impact | Re-emphasize tracking the ball all the way into the glove. Close and cover after ball gets into the glove | Fly Ball Drills |
| Arms straight and knees locked | Review ready position and have athlete flex their knees and elbows | Ready position – Fly Ball Drill |

Learn fielding strategy

Skill Progression – Learn fielding strategy

| Your Athlete Can | Never | Sometimes | Often |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Throw to base ahead of runner | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Tag base of forced runner to get runner out | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Tag runner when he is not forced to advance to get him out | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Know where to throw before each batter hits | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Follow the general rule, “get the sure out” | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do not allow the ball to get by one's body, i.e., “keep the ball in front of the body” | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Always throw the ball in order to move it around the field. The ball will travel faster from one place to another if it is thrown rather than carried by a player | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do not throw the ball to a base which is not covered by a teammate | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Totals | | | |

Teaching Points – Learn fielding strategy

1. Read rules of strategy to the athlete.
2. Analyze each throwing and fielding tactic. Discuss the purpose for each tactic.
3. Take athlete to a softball game, and ask athlete to identify various fielding tactics.