

Fielding Tip #5a - Two-Handed Catches

The important thing about catching a ball is to catch it so that the eyes can follow the ball into the glove. For thrown balls the ball should be caught out in front of the body. Fly balls should be caught over the head.

At the youngest ages, allowing the ball to enter the glove and then putting the barehand in to keep the ball there is ideal for preventing errors and transferring the ball to the throwing hand. Sometimes, however trying to catch a ball with two hands over the head can block a player's vision, so it is important for the player to understand how to do it properly. We like to look at results. If a player catches the ball successfully over and over and all of the mechanics are sound except that he prefers to use one hand, as coaches we should be willing to accept that.

Still, it is best to teach young players how to catch with two hands so that they can see the ball as it enters the glove.

Fielding Tip #10 - Bill's Basic Ground Ball Technique

There are two parts to playing defense in baseball: catching and throwing. When a ball is put into play, we can't throw it and record an out if we don't catch it. With that in mind, there are three important things to consider when catching a groundball:

1. Create a wide base with your feet and legs (how wide is a personal preference, but the feet should be more than shoulder-width apart).
2. Get your butt down (don't bend at the waist).
3. Push your hands out in front of your body as far as possible. Pushing your butt down allows your head to stay up, which means you can see the baseball as it approaches. By pushing your hands out in front you will be able to see the ball as it enters the glove.

By Bill Ripken