

COACH'S TIP #3:

How to field ground balls more consistently.

One of the most common mistakes young players make when playing in the infield is not being properly prepared for the ball to be hit to them. You can teach a player everything they need to know about how to correctly field a ground ball but if they're not in a proper ready position, the chances of them fielding the ball successfully are greatly reduced.

Being prepared involves pre-pitch preparation, a prep step and a consistent and athletic ready position.

Pre-pitch preparation is making sure the player understands what to do with the ball if it is hit to them, and what their responsibilities are if the ball is hit to someone else. For example, with a runner on first base with less than two outs, the shortstop must consider their options of throwing/flipping to second if the ball is hit to them, covering second if the ball is hit to someone else while also considering their responsibilities if the ball is hit into the outfield. This is all "run through the players head" prior to the pitcher even throwing the baseball.

A "Prep-Step" is what an infielder does when transitioning into their ready position. They should start in a comfortable, upright position with their feet about hip to shoulder width apart and their hands in front of the chest or stomach. Once the pitcher is about to release the baseball, the player should take one or two small steps forward, spreading their feet out and begin to squat down into their ready position.



Start standing tall in a comfortable position, then transition into a ready position.

When assuming a ready position at the same time as the baseball is crossing the plate and potentially being hit, the player is "loading" their muscles in preparation to explode in any direction to get to the baseball and field it properly.

When performed correctly, the player will prepare themselves to make not only the routine play, but also the spectacular diving play that other players that fail to assume a proper ready position will NOT be able to make. When a player is flat footed (hands on knees, standing tall, arms at sides, etc.) as the ball crosses home plate the chances of them being able to field the baseball cleanly if it is hit to them are very small.



Proper Ready Position (Knees & Hips bent, feet wide, hands in front with palms out)

The player that assumes a proper ready position and has a good understanding of correct fielding position will have a much higher success rate than a player who does not get into ready position prior to the pitch being thrown.

Look for more Tips & Drills in the “Coach’s Corner” of www.gamerbaseball.com!

Thanks –

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