



Drills: Catcher's Toolbox

Goal:

To improve each day in key catcher skills and techniques

Description:

Catchers pair up with a stock of softie balls, Wiffle balls and baseballs. Each catcher has a home plate. One feeds, the other receives, and they switch positions after each stage of drills. They need not perform each stage in a session. As the season progresses, add more stages as required, such as pickoff throws to bases.

- Stage 1:** The catcher assumes the sign-giving stance, gives a sign and switches into the receiving stance. He repeats the action five times with emphasis on balance, foot position and getting a wide base.
- Stage 2:** The feeder tosses Wiffle or softie balls to all areas of the strike zone. The receiver is in the receiving stance and catches the balls with no glove. He repeats the action 10 times with emphasis on giving with the pitch, having the fingers in the correct position in relation to the strike zone and swaying the body to keep his nose in line with the ball.
- Stage 3:** The feeder tosses one Wiffle ball per second to all areas of the strike zone. The receiver catches the ball, drops it and reacts to next toss. He repeats the action 10 times with emphasis on quick hands.
- Stage 4:** The receiver performs stage 2, now using a glove. He repeats the action 10 times with emphasis on ankle sway.
- Stage 5:** The receiver assumes the receiving stance. Three balls are placed in front of the plate—one at the middle, another one foot right of the plate and another one foot left. The feeder points to one of the balls, and the receiver drops into a blocking position behind the ball, pretending to block a pitch in that location. The receiver immediately resumes the receiving stance behind the plate to await the next direction. He repeats the action five times.
- Stage 6:** The receiver assumes the receiving stance. The feeder, positioned 15 feet away, throws the ball in the dirt. The receiver drops into blocking position, blows hard audibly to release all air in the lungs (forcing the chest into a soft position), blocks the ball, quickly pounces on it and pops up into throwing position. He repeats the action five times with emphasis on not catching the ball, hands going first, knees going next and keeping his nose in front of the ball.
- Stage 7:** Catchers are 20 feet apart on the foul line, kneeling only on the throwing-arm knee with the front foot pointing to the partner. Partners play catch from this position for 30 to 60 seconds with emphasis on breaking the ball from the glove at the midpoint of the chest, getting the arm into power position quickly and following through.





- Stage 8:** Catchers are 45 feet apart on the foul line with the feet shoulder-width apart. Without using their feet, partners play catch from this position for 30 to 60 seconds with emphasis on upper-body rotation, pointing the glove shoulder at the target and following through.
- Stage 9:** The receiver assumes the receiving stance. The feeder is behind the receiver and tosses balls to various areas in front of the plate to simulate bunted balls. The receiver scoops the ball and freezes in throwing position. The receiver then resumes the receiving stance for the next ball. He repeats the action five or six times.

