



Tips from the Pros

MIKE REDMOND CATCHER

A catcher has to learn how to develop a quick throw to both second and third base to keep runners from stealing. Can you offer some tips on how younger catchers can improve their throws to the bases?

For me, the most important part of throwing, other than having a good arm, is footwork. If your feet are aligned towards the base, usually that's the direction the ball is going to go. I did my footwork every day for 14 years, to where it became second nature. I'd have a coach flip me some balls underhand, simulating a throw, and I'd catch the ball and practice making my turn like I'm going to throw to second, but stop without throwing, just to generate the footwork. It's the same footwork I would use with a throw, but you don't throw it, because if you throw too much you can hurt your arm. So this is the best way to generate reps without having to throw a ton.

A catcher has to learn how to catch and block pitches in the dirt to keep runners from advancing bases. Can you offer some tips on how younger catchers can work on their catching and blocking skills?

You want to try to get in front of the ball, which is not always easy to do. You just kind of fall forward—you don't want to hop, just fall forward to your knees and create that little angle. Practice falling forward to the left and falling forward to the right. If you keep that in mind, and not go backwards, you should be alright. The key when practicing this is to use tennis balls, or softer balls, a luxury that I did not have when I was growing up. Then it was 'get in front of that pitching machine, and you'd wear them off your forearms, and this also caused you to flinch. So get tennis balls, and don't beat up your catchers.

