

# Fundamentals of Infield

Patriot Athletic League

Source: [www.usabaseball.education](http://www.usabaseball.education)

# Pre-Pitch Preparedness

- Your infielders should always be alert and aware of what is going on around them. If the ball is hit to them, they need to have been in a ready position so they are better able to react to the ball.
- Three Key Teaching points
  - Anticipating the Play
  - Pre-Pitch Movement
  - Ready Stance

# Pre-Pitch Movement

(Pre- Pitch Preparedness)

- Infielders should use a pre-pitch movement to get into **an athletic stance**. There is no one way for pre-pitch movement. Some examples are:
  - Walking into a split step.
  - Walking into having one foot forward.
  - Standing into a split step.
- This movement makes for quicker reactions to a batted ball, and the pitch-by-pitch attention maximizes your infielder's focus during the game.

# Anticipating the Play

(Pre- Pitch Preparedness)

- One of the keys to playing good defense is anticipating plays before they happen. Infielders should think about the situation before the ball arrives to them.
- Some things to consider are:
  - The inning and the score.
  - The baserunners, where they are, and understanding their speed.
  - The number of outs.
  - Where the play will be if the ball is hit to them.

# Ready Stance

(Pre- Pitch Preparedness)

- Infielders should be in an athletic stance and should not be flat-footed.
- Your infielder's glove should be out as if about to field a ground ball.
  - Third and first basemen may want to be lower, with their glove on the ground, as their reaction time needs to be quicker.
- The key is to make the transition from waiting for the ball to fielding the ball as smooth as possible.

# General Fielding Fundamentals

- **Consistency** is very important to being a great infielder. **Getting to a proper fielding stance on each and every ground ball** allows for greater consistency.
- A few key points are:
  - Your infielders should be in a good, athletic ready stance.
  - When fielding a ground ball, your infielders' eyes should be tracking the ball into the glove.
  - The glove should be out in front of the body with the **fingertips pointed toward the ground.**



# Ground Ball Footwork

- When a ball is hit directly to your infielder, their first move should be a shuffle or jab step to the right. This is called getting “outside the ball.”
  - With this tactic, the infielder can read the ground ball correctly and then field the ball on a long hop or a short hop.
  - In addition, your infielder will maintain their flow to and through the ball, allowing for a smooth throw to first base.
- After the initial jab step, your infielder should move into the proper fielding position.
- Using short, quick, choppy steps, the fielder should move forward to the ball.
  - The final steps will bring them to an athletic fielding position with the glove down and eyes on the ball.
- Make sure your infielder is always trying to keep their feet moving and catch the ball on the gloveside of their body to maintain rhythm through the ball.

# Reading the Hop

- Proper footwork assures that your infielders will rarely get a bad hop.
- Even on a field in poor condition, your infielders can limit the number of bad hops they receive.
  - Infielders should field every ground ball on either a long hop or a short hop.
  - To do this, the approach to the ball is very important. Avoiding the in-between hop will limit the number of errors an infielder makes.
  - Your infielders must read the trajectory of the ball off of the bat, and either charge or wait on the ball to catch the short or long hop.



# Forehand Fundamentals

- Forehanded fielding is fielding the ball off of the glove side of the body.
- For right-handed players, this means the ball is hit to their left. For left-handed players, this means the ball is hit to their right.
  - On a ball that is hit to the forehand side and short, infielders can get in front of the ball and catch with two hands.
  - On a ball hit to the forehand side that is deep, infielders should try to catch the ball with one hand.
  - Infielders should field the ball out away from the body to create a good rhythm going into the throw.
  - Once fielded, infielders should move their feet and take their body to the throw



# Backhand Fundamentals

- Backhanded fielding occurs when the ball is hit to your player's throwing side, and they are unable to move and get in front of/around the ball.
  - **Field off of the back foot:** Your infielder should plant their throwing side leg and shift their weight from back to front, bringing the glove through on the ground.
    - Once they field the ball, they should shuffle toward first base and throw.
  - **Crossover step:** Cross-over with the glove side foot, fielding the ball in front of that leg.
    - Once your infielder fields the ball, they should plant the back leg and throw.
- Note: Third and first basemen may not have a choice of which method to use if the ball is hit hard enough. Middle infielders may have more of a choice between the two methods based on the speed of the ball. The objective is to get rid of the ball as quickly as possible with an accurate throw to the base.

