

# ***DRILLS***

## **What is a drill?**

- skill development opportunity
- repetitions of a skill
- teaching opportunity
- practice session

## **Goals of a drill**

- understanding of players (KISS principle)
- teaching a skill or situation
- upbeat activity (not boring)
- active session (not passive)

## **Other goals**

- conditioning
- mental training (concentration - relaxation)
- fun! fun! fun!
- team building / team work

## **What makes a good drill?**

- proper use of resources (people, facilities, equipment)
- proper activity level
- efficient use of time (maximize interest level, reduce fatigue level)
- safety (weather, age, space, ability levels)
- challenging but possible (success factor important)
- geared to age & ability levels

## **When do you use drills?**

- indoors (preseason, inclement weather, chalk talk,...)
- outdoors
- pregame

## **How do drills change?**

- preseason      beginning      middle      end
- expectation levels change
- situations arise from games
- game-like situations need to be created

# ***DRILLS***

## **WRITING OUT DRILLS:**

- use the computer to store and file
- use a card system
- People placement (coaches, players, ...)
- equipment needs and location
- indexes or codes for drawings
- player rotation

## **Evaluation of drills**

- success rating
- where are the problems?
- alterations for improvement?
- throw it away?

## **SOME EXAMPLES**

### **THROWING & CATCHING:**

1) Pairs Throwing - accuracy, speed, using two hands, proper footwork, release time

- \* change distances
- \* timed drill
- \* bare hands / board gloves

2) Triples Throwing - same as for #1

- \* add submarine / sidearm throws

3) Star Throwing - same as for #1

- more concentration needed
- \* add second ball

4) Shoelace Drill - same as for #1

- stress body position receiving the ball

### **BASE RUNNING:**

1) Bat Placement Drill - batting stance, swing mechanics

- bat placement zone ( hula-hoop, ...)

2) Home to First Drill - swing bat run to first in foul territory

- run "through base", stop mechanics
- \* 2 team race ( 2 baselines )

3) Rounding First - same as for #2

- accent low balanced stop three steps beyond 1st
- signal a retreat slide or go ( with slide option )
- \* 2 team race ( 2 baselines ) - flags for options

# ***DRILLS***

## **HITTING:**

- 1) Dry Swings - proper mechanics
  - \* tubes in fence
  - \* close to fence swings
- 2) Batting Tees - proper mechanics
  - \* vary tee heights
  - \* vary position of ball (inside, low, ...)
  - \* two tees for reaction
- 3) Soft Toss - proper mechanics
  - work one-on-one for analysis
- 4) Pepper - reaction and bat control
- 5) Ball-on-a-String

## **CATCHING FLY BALLS:**

- 1) Shoulder Drill - ready position, catch to throwing shoulder,
  - accent footwork in throwing motion
  - \* vary distance
  - \* cover up added
- 2) Football Pass - same as # one
  - Backhand catch added
  - \* vary distance
  - \* add coverage by second fielder
- 3) Drop Step & Chase Drill - same as # one
  - footwork accented
  - \* vary distances
  - \* vary cues
  - \* Vary kinds of hitting (throws, fungo hitting, pitching machine)

## **FIELDING GROUND BALLS:**

- 1) Straight On Drill - ready position, glove in dirt, head up.
  - ball fielded to chest
- 2) Mime Coverage Drill - same as # one
  - lateral movement - shuffle step
- 3) Chicken Drill - same as # one
  - no foot movement permitted
  - \* bare hands
- 4) Shuffle Chicken Drill - same as # one
  - shuffle step added (1 step or 2 steps)
  - \* vary distances

# **PITCHING - FOR UMPIRE'S**

## **1) TWO FEET IN CONTACT WITH RUBBER**

- Heel of pivot foot touching the front or on top of the rubber.
- Toe of non-pivot foot touching back or on top of the rubber.  
( If a hole is formed by the back foot, it is still okay unless the toe is clearly not touching the rubber. Do not be concerned about how deep the hole is or whether or not you can actually see the foot touching the rubber.)
- The ball must be held in one hand (either bare hand or in the glove) and the hands must be separated.
- The pitch should be called, "Illegal", if the starting position is not as described above.

## **2) THE PAUSE**

- Hips (not shoulders) are parallel with the line from 1st to 3rd.
- Pitcher's upper body may be turned and the ball hidden.
- The body must come to a complete stop.
- The ball may be rotated in the glove during the pause.
- The pitch should be called, "Illegal", if there is not a proper pause.

## **3) FOOT MOVEMENT AFTER THE PAUSE**

- There are 2 ways for the pivot foot to move forward.
  1. Turned over so the toe is pointing down and toe is dragged.
  2. Turned sideways and instep is dragged.
- The pitch should be called, "Illegal", if :
  1. The pitcher steps back after the pause and then delivers the pitch.
  2. The pitcher steps ahead off the rubber with the pivot foot (does not push and drag.)
  3. The pivot foot rises above the plane of the ground (a leap).

#### **4) RELEASE OF THE BALL**

- **The ball must be released while the pivot foot is still in motion or simultaneously with the pivot foot stopping.**
- **The non-pivot foot must land within the 24” chute.**
- **The pitch should be called, “Illegal”, if :**
  1. **The pivot foot has clearly stopped and a replant has occurred.**
  2. **The non-pivot foot lands outside the chute.**
- **NOTE: If the pitcher’s forward motion is fluid and continuous, no replant has occurred.)**

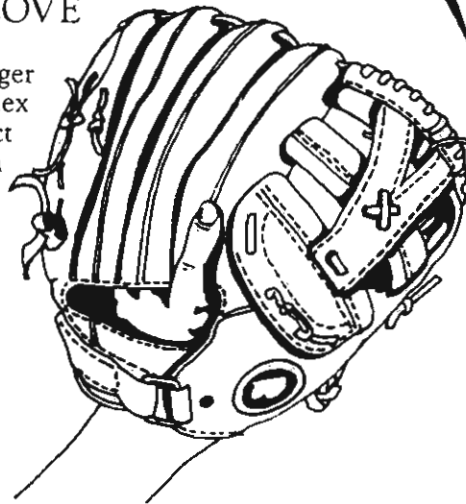
#### **5) HOLES AT THE RUBBER**

- **Do not be concerned about the depth.**
- **Assume the foot is touching unless there you are absolutely certain that it is not.**
- **Allow the pitchers to groom their space. They are allowed one minute to prepare either by warm-up pitches or by grooming.**
- **Do not allow piles of dirt around the rubber. Keep the plane of the ground visible.**
- **To make a legal pitch, the pitcher does not need to drag the toe on the bottom of the hole, only remain below the plane of the ground.**

# CATCHING THE BALL

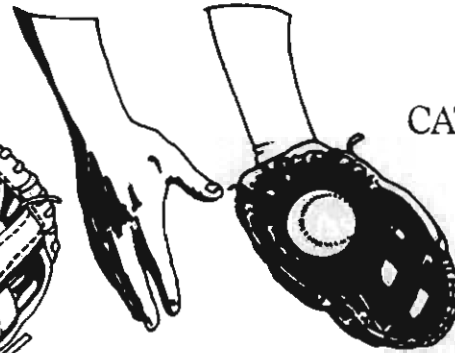
## WEARING THE GLOVE

Put a finger in each of the finger holes. You can leave your index finger out to lessen the impact of the ball when it's caught in the palm.

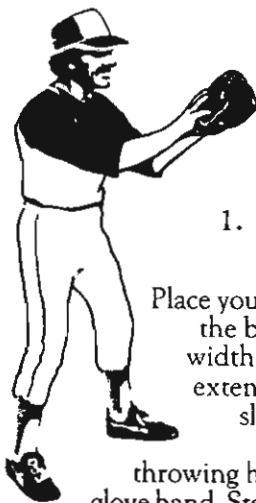


## CATCH THE BALL IN THE PALM

Always try to catch the ball in the palm of your glove. If you catch the ball in the webbing, it will be more difficult to throw quickly.



## LEARN THESE THREE BASIC ELEMENTS OF A GOOD CATCH



### 1. MOVE YOUR BODY

Place your body in front of the ball, legs shoulder width apart, both arms extended forward and slightly bent at the elbows with your throwing hand next to your glove hand. Step with your glove foot toward the incoming ball.



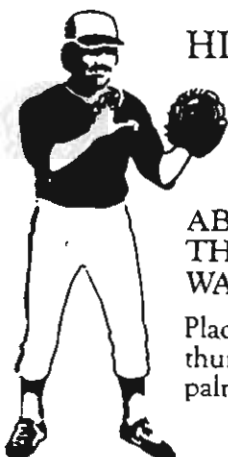
### 2. CUSHION THE BALL

As you catch the ball—always with two hands—bend your elbows and bring your hands toward your body. That way, the force of the throw will be absorbed. Catch the ball in the palm of the glove, not the webbing.



### 3. PREPARE TO THROW

Watch the ball into the palm of your glove. Grip and throw the ball as described in "THROWING". (page 3)



## HIGH CATCH?

### ABOVE THE WAIST

Place your hands in a thumbs-together/palms-down position.

## LOW CATCH?

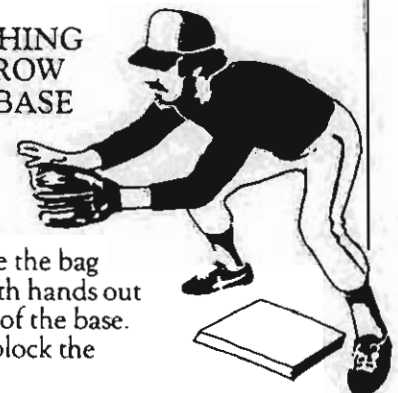
### BELOW THE WAIST

Hands should be in a little-fingers-together/palms-up position.

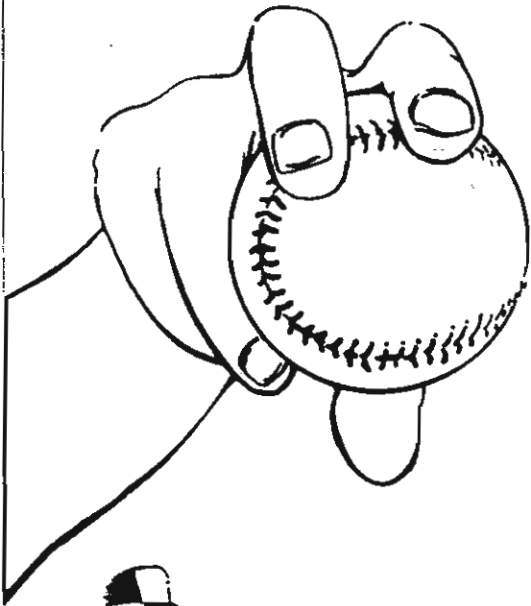


## CATCHING A THROW AT A BASE

Straddle the bag with both hands out in front of the base. Do not block the runner.



# THROWING THE BALL

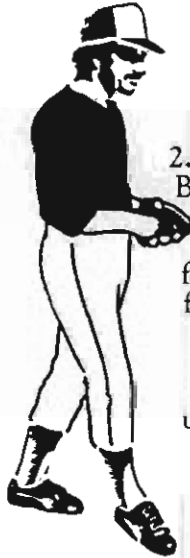


## THE GRIP

Place the pads of your first and second fingers across any seam. Fingers should be about one finger width apart with your thumb directly underneath the ball. Leave a small gap between the ball and the curve formed by your thumb and index finger. This will give you more wrist snap and result in a more powerful throw. Grip the ball firmly using the first knuckles of the fingers. Now you're ready to throw.



**1. FIND THE GRIP**  
Catch the ball in the palm, not the webbing, of the glove and grip it as above.



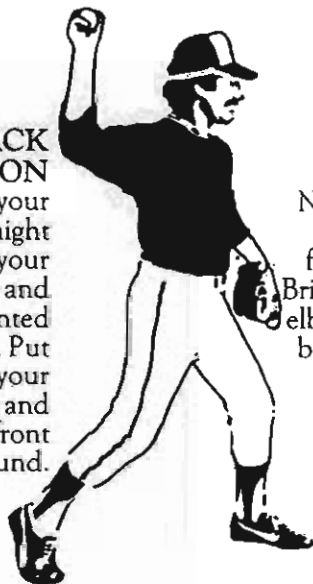
**2. STARTER STEP**  
Begin your throw by taking a small starter step with your power foot. (Right foot for right-handers, left foot for lefties.) Turn your other foot (pivot foot) outwards at a 90 degree angle. This allows you to use your hips in the throw. Keep your eyes on the target.



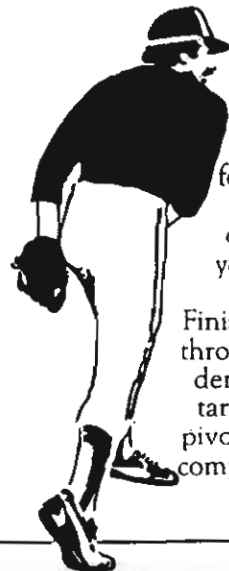
**3. ARM DOWN POSITION**  
When you take the ball from your glove, your throwing hand should break down, back and up, keeping your hand over the ball.



**4. ARM BACK POSITION**  
Extend your throwing arm straight back. Turn so your front hip and shoulder are pointed at the target. Put your weight on your pivot foot and bring your front foot off the ground.



**5. STEP AND THROW**  
Now step forward and plant your front foot toward the target. Bring your arm forward, elbow pointing out, the ball close to your head. As you throw, your hip and shoulder should turn toward your target.



**6. FOLLOW THROUGH**  
Bring your arm forward until it's completely extended. Snap your wrist as you release the ball. Finish up with your throwing arm shoulder pointing at the target. Swing your pivot leg forward to complete the throw.

# PLAYING THE OUTFIELD



## READY POSITION

Eyes fixed on the ball, feet shoulder-width apart, weight on the balls of your feet. This balanced stance allows quick movement in all directions. Remember, you're responsible for all balls hit to your area. Be alert and ready to move all the time.



## GROUND BALL

Ball in front of your body, glove leg slightly forward, go down on your power leg knee, hands in the "palms-up" position.

## 1. FIELDING A FLY BALL— FOREHAND

For a ball hit on your glove side, use a cross over step with your power foot. Run quickly, on the balls of your feet, with arms and hands down. Keep your eyes on the ball.



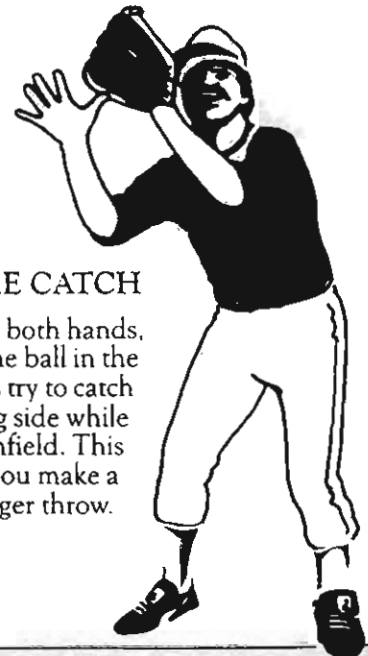
## 2. FIELDING A FLY BALL— BACKHAND

For a ball hit on your throwing side (backhand), use a cross-over step with your non-pivot (glove) foot. Run on the balls of your feet with both hands at your side. Keep your eyes on the ball.



## 3. MAKING THE CATCH

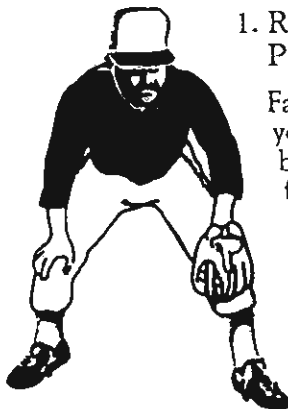
Reach for the ball with both hands, thumbs together. Catch the ball in the palm of the glove. Always try to catch the ball on your throwing side while stepping toward the infield. This movement will help you make a quicker, stronger throw.



# FIELDING GROUND BALLS

## INTRO

Handling grounders is tricky. It can take a long time to learn. You're always going to have errors. Don't let them bother you and, if you practice, you'll make fewer and fewer of them!



### 1. RELAXED POSITION

Face the batter. Keep your weight on the balls of your feet, feet shoulder width apart, knees bent, hands on knees.



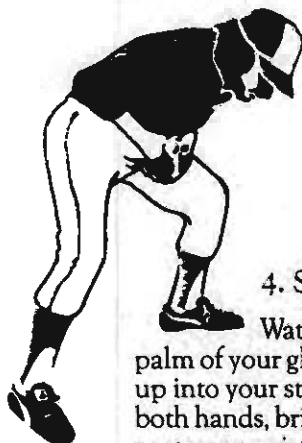
### 2. READY POSITION

As the pitcher moves, spread your feet further. Extend your hands, keeping them low, in the 'palms-up' position, elbows in front of your knees, seat down, head up.



### 3. RECEIVING THE GROUND BALL

Quickly move in front of the ball. Extend both hands, palms up. Keep your head and seat down.



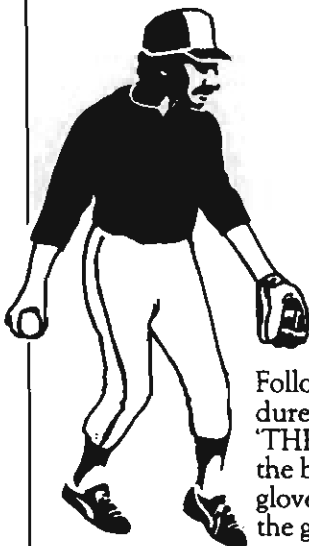
### 4. SUCK IT UP

Watch the ball into the palm of your glove. Suck the ball up into your stomach area with both hands, bringing your elbows past your waist. Grip the ball in the glove. Stay low.



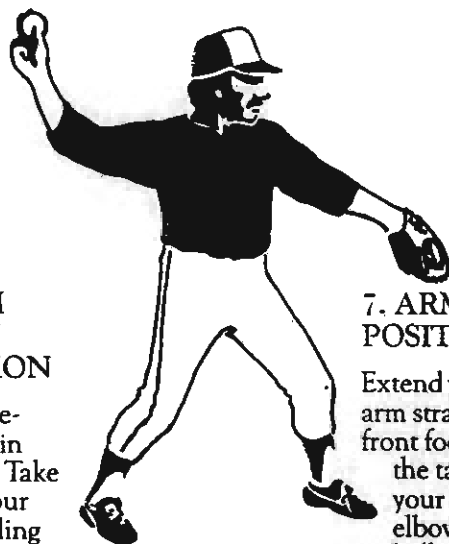
### 5. STARTER STEP

Move your pivot foot forward, head up, target in view. Keep the ball in your glove till this point.



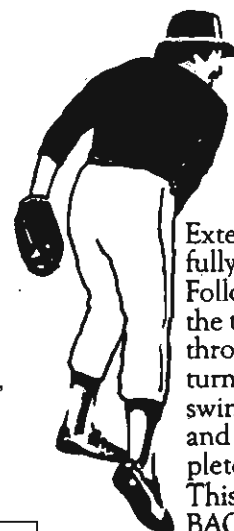
### 6. ARM DOWN POSITION

Follow the procedure described in 'THROWING'. Take the ball from your glove while finding the grip.



### 7. ARM BACK POSITION

Extend your throwing arm straight back, front foot toward the target. Bring your arm around, elbow pointing out, ball close to your head.



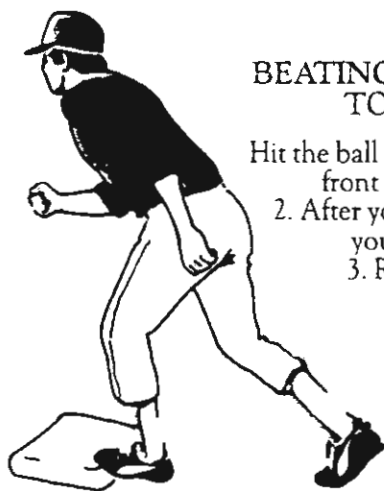
### 8. FOLLOW THROUGH

Extend your arm fully. Snap wrist. Follow through with the throwing arm, throwing shoulder turning, pivot foot swinging around and planted to complete the throw. This is the 'DOWN-BACK-THROUGH' MOTION.

*It is absolutely essential that all ball players wear a protective cup if they are to be confident in front of the ball, especially one hit hard!*

# BASERUNNING

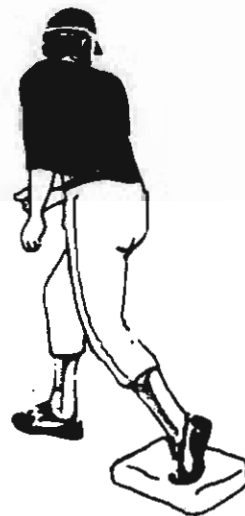
With good baserunning, an aggressive well-coached team can force the opposition to make defensive errors.



## BEATING A GROUND BALL TO FIRST BASE

Hit the ball and run hard. 1. Touch the front of the base with either foot. 2. After you cross the base, look over your shoulder for a bad throw. 3. Run well down the baseline.

*Don't watch the ball.  
Don't leap at the base.  
Don't slide or stutter step.*



## 1. CONTACT THE BASE

On a base hit, when you are rounding a base, touch the base's inside edge with either foot. Don't step right on top of the base.



## 2. FACE THE ACTION

If you have to hold up at first base, take 4 or 5 steps toward second base. Watch the ball. If it is fielded cleanly, return to the bag at first.



## 3. READY FOR THE NEXT PITCH

Left foot touches the bag. First step toward second base is a crossover step.



# SLIDING & TAGGING

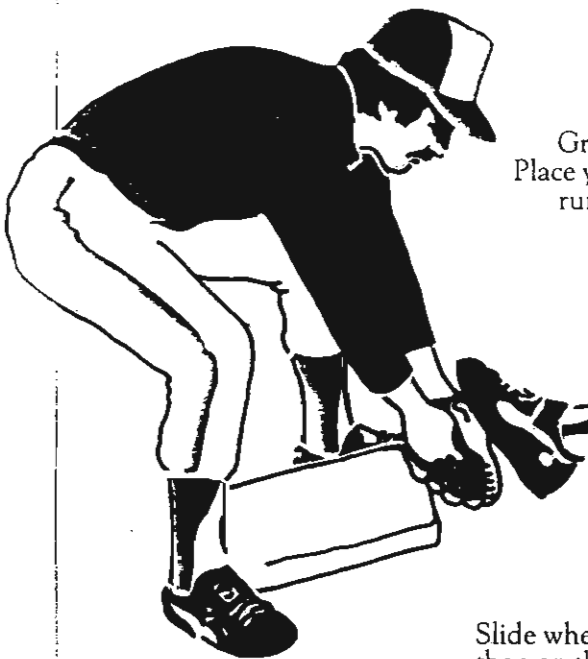
## PRACTICING THE SLIDE

Study the slide position from the diagrams and practice it without actually sliding. Your legs should form a figure 4 with one leg tucked under the knee of the extended leg. Slide on your bottom and keep your hands up and out of the

way. When you are ready to actually try sliding, start slowly, on grass, without your shoes on and go through the practice at half-speed. Once you feel more comfortable, try it with your shoes on at full speed but stay on the grass until you're ready to attempt it on the infield.

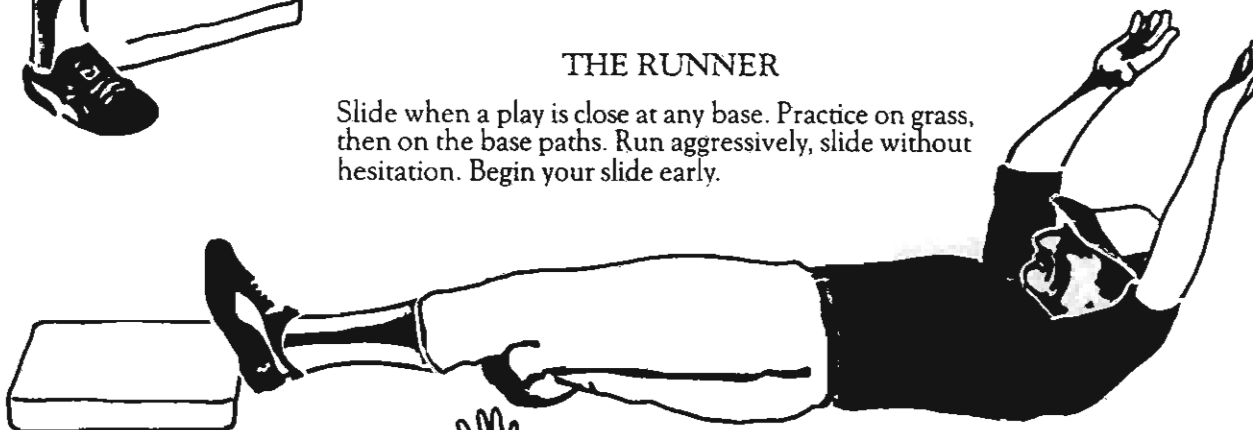
## THE INFIELDER

Catch the ball at a base in ready position. Grip the ball and keep it in your glove. Place your glove in front of the bag and let the runner slide into the back of the glove. Do not reach for the runner.



## THE RUNNER

Slide when a play is close at any base. Practice on grass, then on the base paths. Run aggressively, slide without hesitation. Begin your slide early.



## THE SLIDE POSITION

Kick one leg up, tuck the other under the knee of the extended leg, both hands in the air. Slide on your seat and back, not your side.



# HITTING

Hitting is one of the most difficult skills for a young ballplayer to learn because both the ball and bat are round and the contact point is the size of a dime. Bat selection is very important. Choose one that is not too heavy or too long.

**DO:** keep your eye on the ball; be aggressive; step directly toward the pitcher when you swing.  
**DON'T:** lunge or overstride; drop your hands before you swing (hitching); swing at bad pitches; worry about your last at bat; take your eye off the ball.

## THE GRIP



Grip the bat with your fingers, not your palms. Keep your grip loose until you swing.



## HAND POSITION

Keep your hands loose. Line up each hand's second set of knuckles (see dotted line). This allows proper 'wrist roll' after contacting the ball.

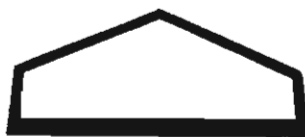


## CHOKE UP

If your bat feels too heavy or too long, slide your hands up the handle for better bat control.

## PARALLEL STANCE

This is the best stance for learning proper hitting skills. Both feet are the same distance from the plate, hips and shoulders parallel to it.



## DISTANCE FROM THE PLATE

Make sure your hitting zone covers the entire plate. 1. Hook the fingers of your forward hand (closest to the pitcher) over the bat's knob. 2. Assume your parallel stance and hitting posture. 3. Align yourself so that the bat's end just reaches the far edge of the plate.



# HITTING

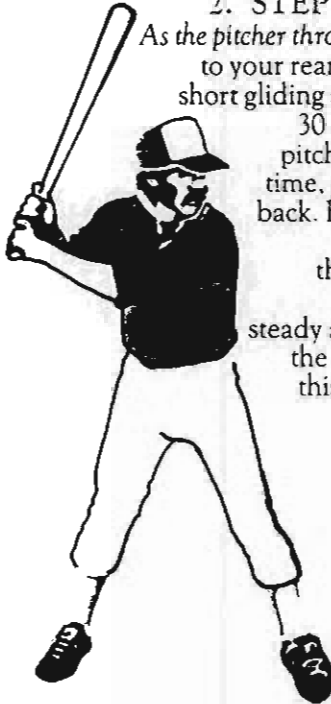
## 1. RELAXED AND READY

Relaxed grip — hands back, at shoulder level — arms away from body — rear elbow slightly up — head steady — eyes on ball — shoulders level — knees slightly bent — feet shoulder width apart — body balanced.



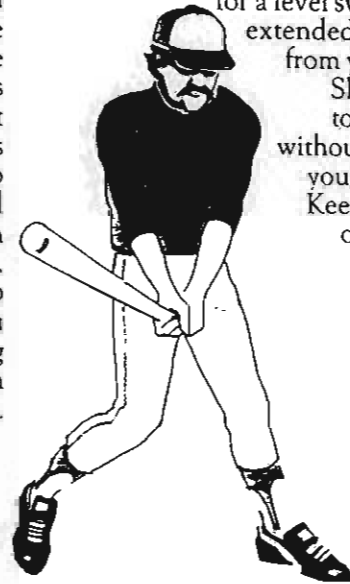
## 2. STEP AND COCK

As the pitcher throws, shift weight to your rear foot and take a short gliding step (maximum 30 cm.) toward the pitcher. At the same time, pull your hands back. Brace your front leg as it hits the ground, keep your head steady and your eye on the ball. In softball, this is the stance to take as you are waiting for the pitch to be thrown.



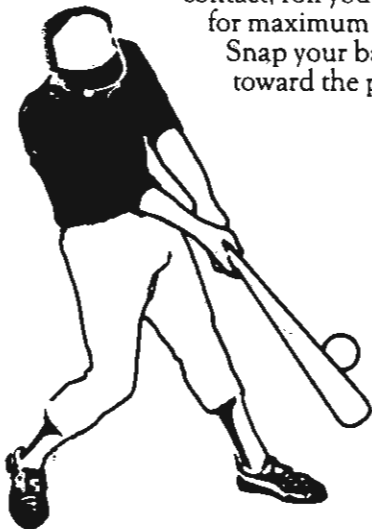
## 3. THE SWING

Throw your hands and bat down through the ball for a level swing, arms extended and away from your body. Shift weight to front foot without bending your front leg. Keep your eye on the ball.



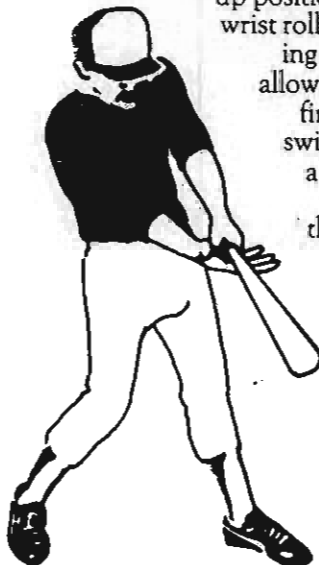
## 4. THE CONTACT POINT

Make contact in front of the plate, not on top of it. On contact, roll your wrists for maximum power. Snap your back hip toward the pitcher.



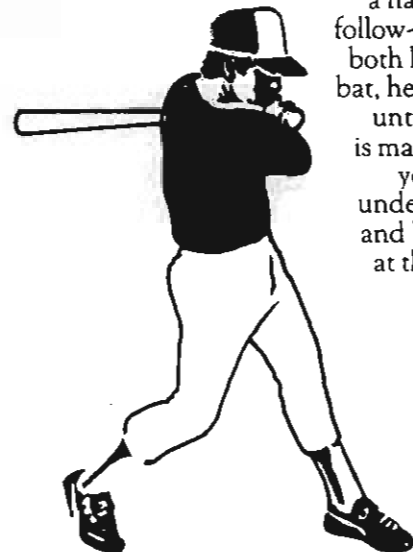
## 5. THE WRIST ROLL

In contacting the ball the top hand on the bat is in a palm up position. The wrist roll following contact allows you to finish the swing with a natural follow through.



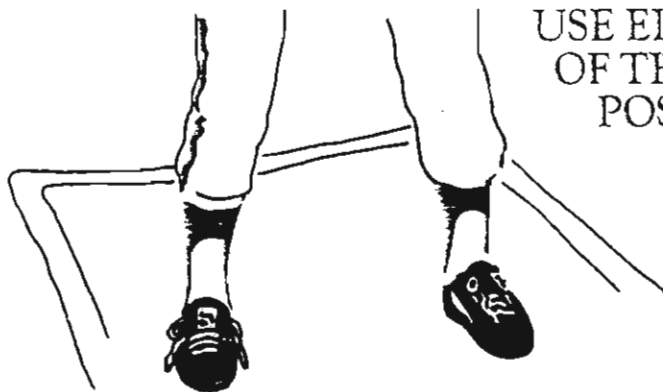
## 6. FOLLOW THROUGH

Pivot on both feet so you can "uncoil". Hips and upper body finish facing the pitcher. Take a natural full follow-through, both hands on bat, head down until contact is made. Keep your body under control and balanced at the finish.



# BUNTING

USE EITHER ONE  
OF THESE TWO  
POSITIONS



## 1. SQUARE AROUND POSITION

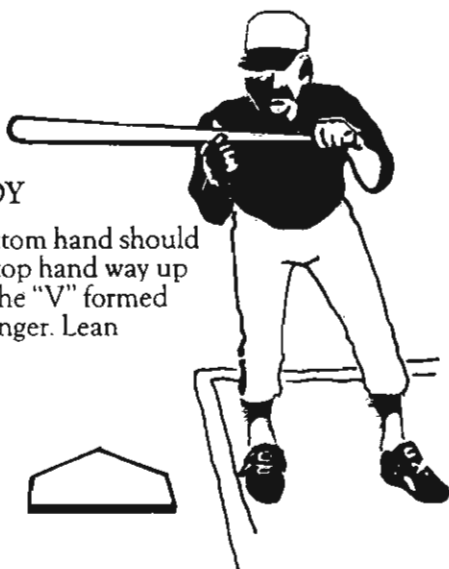
Both feet point toward the pitcher, even with the front of the plate. NOTE: If your foot is out of the batter's box when you hit the ball, you'll be called out.

## 2. PIVOT POSITION

Start with a normal open stance. Turn toward the pitcher by pivoting on the balls of your feet. Finish with a flat front foot and on your toes on your back foot.

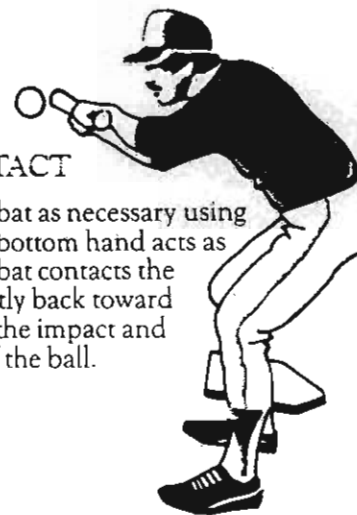
## 3. READY

Use a loose grip. Your bottom hand should be in its normal grip, the top hand way up the bat and holding it in the "V" formed by your thumb and forefinger. Lean slightly toward the plate.



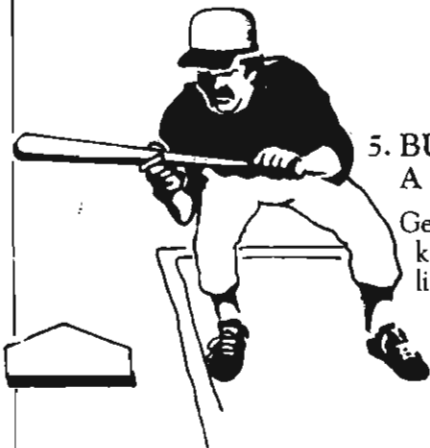
## 4. CONTACT

Change the angle of your bat as necessary using only your top hand. Your bottom hand acts as a pivot point. When your bat contacts the ball, pull your hands slightly back toward your body. This cushions the impact and gives you better control of the ball.



## 5. BUNTING A LOW STRIKE

Get down low by bending your knees. Try to move your arms as little as possible.



## 6. BUNT ONLY STRIKES

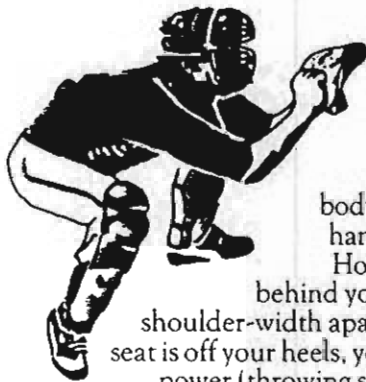
If the pitch is not in the strike zone, pull back. Don't leave the bat in the strike zone or the umpire might call a strike on you.



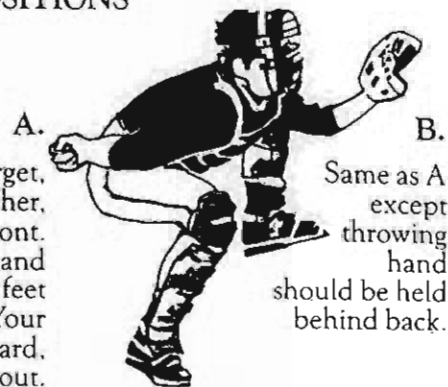
# THE CATCHER

The catcher is the leader of the defense. You must be strong and quick. You must have "good hands" and a strong throwing arm. Above all, you must be confident and you must want to be a catcher.

## READY POSITIONS



Provide a good target, body square to the pitcher, hands and arms out front. Hold your throwing hand behind your glove webbing, feet shoulder-width apart, shoulders low. Your seat is off your heels, your glove foot forward, power (throwing side) foot back and out.



Same as A except throwing hand should be held behind back.



RELAXED POSITION

Before pitcher steps on the mound, hold your body balanced, square behind the plate, weight on your toes.



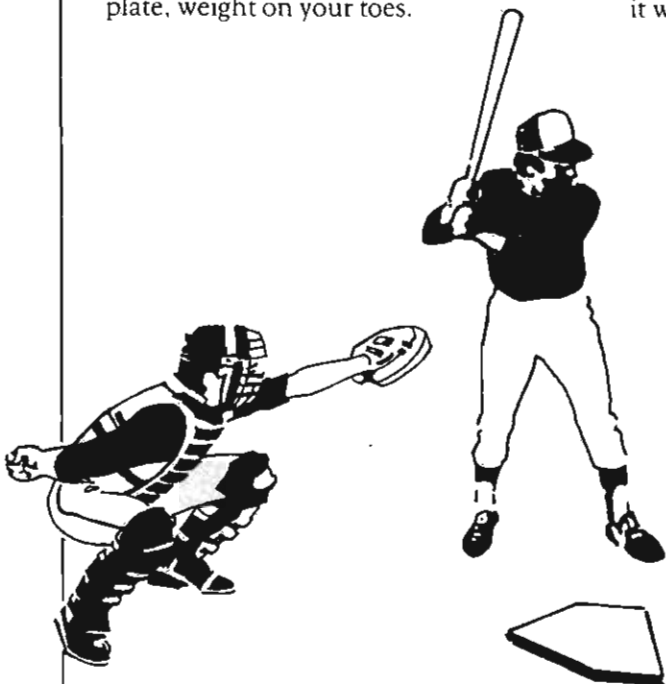
CATCHING ABOVE THE WAIST

Hands out in front, ("thumbs together" position). Catch the ball in palm of glove. Cushion it while receiving.



CATCHING BELOW THE WAIST

Hands out in front ("palms-up" position). Catch the ball in palm of glove. Cushion it while receiving.



## 1. CATCHER'S STANCE: SAFETY FIRST

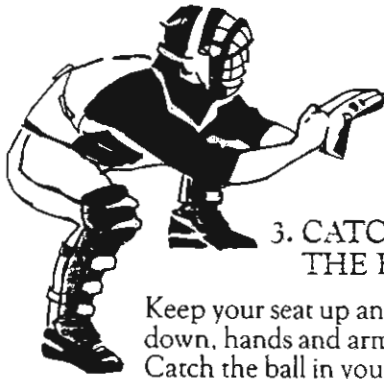
With batter in position, stay at least one arm's length from batter's back hip.



## 2. BAT CLEARANCE

Close, yet safely clear of the batter's swing, you'll reduce the difficulty of catching low pitches and balls in the dirt.

# THE CATCHER



## 3. CATCH THE BALL

Keep your seat up and shoulders down, hands and arms out front. Catch the ball in your palm, cushioning it on contact. Throwing to base, shift your weight forward as you catch.



## 4. GRIP AND STEP

Get the throwing grip. Pivot leg steps toward the target. Keep your body low and balanced for a quick release.



## 5. THE THROW

Use the 'DOWN-BACK-AND-THROUGH' motion. Eyes fixed on the target. Step toward the target with your glove foot. Throw overhand.



## 6. FOLLOW THROUGH

Extend your arm completely forward. Snap your wrist on release. Finish with throwing-arm shoulder pointing at target. Throwing arm follows through to opposite hip.



## BLOCKING A BALL

Drop to your knees. Stay behind the ball. Your glove and hand should cover the gap between your legs. "Look" the ball into your body, head down. Don't try to catch the ball - block it and keep it in front of your body.



## 1. RECEIVING THE THROW

Face the throw, heels of your feet at the front of the plate. Keep your knees bent, arms out front, eyes on the ball. Do not block the runner unless you have the ball.

## MAKING A PLAY AT THE PLATE



## 2. MAKING THE TAG

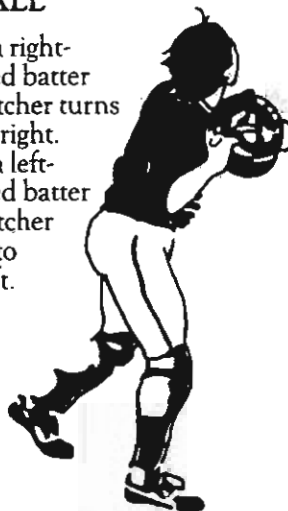
Catch the ball, grip it and keep it in your glove. Jab step into the baseline with your leg pad facing the runner. Let the runner slide into the tag - do not reach!



## CATCHING A FOUL BALL

Almost every foul ball popup is to the open side, away from the batter.

1. With a right-handed batter the catcher turns to the right. With a left-handed batter the catcher turns to the left.



2. Turn, take off your mask and helmet. Hold them. Locate the ball, call for it, move to it. Throw the mask and helmet out of the way. Keep your back to the infield - the ball will curve back toward you. Catch the ball with both hands at shoulder height.



# SOFTBALL PITCHING

## TIPS FOR BEGINNING PITCHERS

Concentrate on learning the basic mechanics of the windmill pitch. Learning to throw the ball hard with a smooth, efficient delivery motion.



### 1. PITCHING POSITION

Shoulders in line with first and third base. Ball held in both hands in front of the body. Both feet in contact with the pitching rubber.



2 Fingers



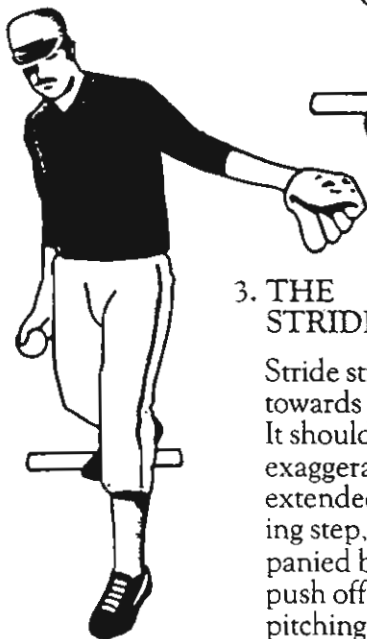
3 Fingers



4 Fingers

### 2. GRIP

If your hand is big enough, the ball should be held in the fingers, not the palm. Hold the ball across the seams, this will allow for downward rotation of the ball.



### 3. THE STRIDE

Stride straight towards catcher. It should be an exaggerated or extended walking step, accompanied by a hard push off the pitching rubber with the back foot.



### 4. ARM ACTION

The pitching arm makes a complete circle, moving straight down the back to complete the motion. Arm should be extended but relaxed. The larger the circle the greater the force.



### 5. HIP THRUST/ROTATION

As the pitcher strides, the hip and shoulders rotate away from the batter. As stride foot is planted, there should be a strong push off the pitching rubber. This will cause the hips to rotate back towards the batter, followed by the trunk and shoulders.



### 6. FOLLOW THROUGH

The follow through is from release of the ball until the body comes to a complete stop. The pitching arm should continue to shoulder height before stopping. Back foot should come forward to a position almost parallel with the front foot.



### 7. FIELDING POSITION

Always finish in a balanced position, ready to move in any direction.

SMALL GROUP DRILLS

1. Pick-ups:                   It is done by having one player in a stationary position about ten feet away, roll the ball to another player from side to side in an arc of about 12 feet.  
Purpose:                   To develop co-ordination, agility and endurance.
2. Wrist Rolls:               With weighted bat perform 10 wrist rolls, rest, repeat for five sets.  
Purpose:                   To develop wrist strength.
3. Starts from Home:         Swing bat and take off to full stride. Repeat several times.  
Purpose:                   To develop quick starts for running to first base.
4. Fly balls or Pop-ups:     Throw ball as high in the air as possible and try to catch it.  
Purpose:                   To develop ability to judge and catch fly balls.
5. Target Throw:             Place a target on fence or back stop. Fielders throw at target from varying distances.  
Purpose:                   To develop arm strength and accuracy.
6. Mimetic Footwork:         Assume ready fielding position and practice moving forward, backward, and sideward to field the ball.  
Purpose:                   To develop agility and co-ordination.
7. Bunting Drill:             With bat, execute correct fast movement and body position to perform successful bunt.  
Purpose:                   To develop correct body position to execute a bunt.
8. Catcher's Drill:          Catcher receives low, hard throws with equipment on.  
Purpose:                   To develop confidence and reaction time of catcher.
9. Bare Hand Pick-up Drill:   Fielders practice picking up slow rollers and throw to partner as quickly as possible.  
Purpose:                   To develop the ability to release the ball quickly and while off-balance.
10. Outfield Fastwork Drill:   Partner stands 30' from outfielder who is in his regular stance. Ball is then tossed over his head. Outfielder uses correct footwork to turn and catch the ball.  
Purpose:                   To develop quickness and co-ordination.

11. Ground Ball Drill:           Outfielders charge ground balls, pick them up and throw on the run.
- Purpose:                    To develop fielding ability and quick release of the ball.
12. Sun Drill:                   Practice shielding the eyes with glove and catch fly balls thrown up into the sun.
- Purpose:                    To develop confidence in catching fly balls.
13. Pivot Drill:                 Second baseman and short stop alternate receiving toss, pivot and throw.
- Purpose:                    To develop correct footwork on pivot for double play.
14. Isometric Exercise:         Squeeze ball as hard as possible for five seconds and relax. Continue for several minutes.
- Purpose:                    To develop grip and strength.
15. Fielding Drill:              In pairs players have 10 ft. area to cover. One fielder attempts to throw ground balls past the other in that area.
- Purpose:                    To develop fielding ability.

<b>RATING SCALES:</b> 1. consistent 2. inconsistent 3. needs reteaching		<b>RATING</b>	PLAYER: _____
1. THROWING			DATE: _____
			COMMENTS
a) STRIDE	-POINTS AT TARGET		
	-STEPS TOWARD TARGET		
b) ROTATIONS	-HIPS		
	-SHOULDERS		
	-ARMS		
c) ARM ACTION	-ELBOW UP		
	-HAND HIGH		
	-ARM RELAXED		
d) WRIST	-UNDER BALL		
e) FOLLOW THROUGH	-SHOULDER		
	-ARM		
	-BACK LEG		

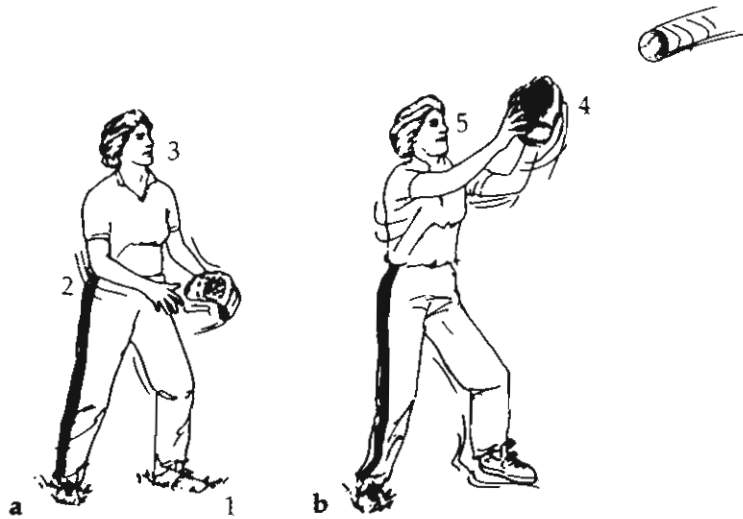
PLAYER: _____		<b>RATING</b>	<b>RATING SCALES:</b> 1. consistent 2. inconsistent 3. needs reteaching
DATE: _____			
2. FIELDING GROUND BALLS			
a) READY POSITION			
b) HANDS	-OUT FRONT(beyond knees)		
	-GLOVE OPEN		
	-FREE HAND TRAPS		
	-NOTICEABLE "GIVE"		
c) FEET	-SHOULDER-WIDTH APART		
	-STRIDE FOOT IN FRONT		
d) BODY	-LOW WITH "TAIL" DOWN		
	-SQUARE TO BALL		
	-UPPER BODY RELAXED		
e) EYES	-TRACKS INTO GLOVE		
f) MOVEMENT	-SIDE SHUFFLE		
	-CROSS STEP		

<b>PLAYER:</b> _____ <b>DATE:</b> _____		<b>RATING</b>	<b>RATING SCALES:</b> 1. consistent 2. inconsistent 3. needs reteaching
<b>BATTING</b>			<b>COMMENTS</b>
a) GRIP	-FINGER POSITIONS		
	-RELAXED		
b) READY POSITION	-FEET		
	-KNEES FLEXED		
	-ARMS AWAY		
	-EYES FOCUSED		
	-WEIGHT CENTERED		
	-BAT POSITION		
	-UPPER BODY RELAXED		
c) STRIDE	-STRAIGHT AT BALL		
	-FRONT FOOT POSITION		
	-LENGTH		
	-HIP ROTATION		
d) HEAD	-STEADY		
	-NOT TILTED		
	-SHOULDER TO SHOULDER		
e) EYES	-SQUARE TO BALL		
	-TRACKS ONTO BAT		
f) FOLLOW THROUGH	-SHOULDERS		
	-WRIST ROLL		
	-BACK FOOT PIVOT		
g) CONTACT	-BAT SPEED		
	-POSITION		

*Figure 1.3 Keys to Success:  
Catching*

**Preparation  
Phase**

1. Feet in forward stride, glove-side foot ahead
2. Face thrower, hips and shoulders square
3. Focus on ball in thrower's hand
4. Adjust glove to ball height
  - ball above waist, fingers up
  - ball below waist, fingers down
  - ball at waist, fingers parallel to ground
5. Focus on ball in flight



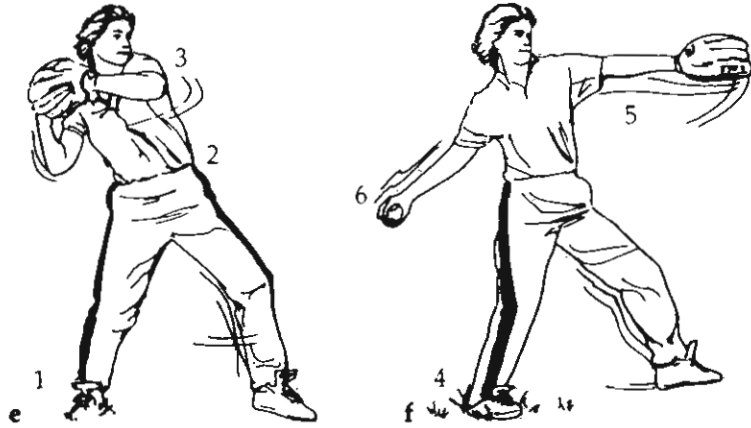
**Execution  
Phase**

1. Shift weight forward
2. Meet ball out front
3. Use two hands, squeeze ball
4. Begin shifting weight back, beginning pivot
5. Give with the ball
6. Throwing hand on ball in glove, two-finger grip



### Follow-Through Phase

1. Continue to shift weight back
2. Glove side toward target
3. Glove elbow points to target
4. Weight on back foot
5. Arms extend, move ball to throwing position
6. Throwing wrist extends



## Detecting Catching Errors

Catching errors frequently occur because of failure to watch the ball go into your glove or to use two hands for the catch. The most common catching errors are listed below, along with suggestions on how to correct them.

### ERROR



1. The ball drops out of your glove a lot.
2. You have trouble making the ball go into the glove.
3. The ball stings your hands when you catch it.

### CORRECTION

1. Use two hands. As soon as the ball enters your glove, cover it with your throwing hand. At the same time, squeeze the ball with your glove hand.
2. Watch the ball all the way from the thrower's hand to your glove.
3. Give with the ball as you make contact; reach out in front to meet the ball and draw the glove and ball to your throwing shoulder.

## Catching Keys to Success Checklist

Catching the ball involves tracking the ball, moving into position by getting into the path of the ball, and finally collecting the ball in both hands. Another important aspect of catching is making the follow-through phase of the catch the preparation phase for the throw. Ask your teacher, your coach, or a trained observer to evaluate your technique according to the following checklist. A checkmark should be placed in front of each item as the item is observed.

### Preparation Phase



#### The player

- \_\_\_ positions hips and shoulders square to thrower.
- \_\_\_ positions feet in comfortable stride position, with glove-side foot slightly ahead.
- \_\_\_ focuses attention on ball.

#### When the ball is

- \_\_\_ above waist, fingers are up.
- \_\_\_ below waist, fingers are down.
- \_\_\_ at waist, glove fingers are parallel to the ground, the thumb down.

#### The throwing hand is

- \_\_\_ adjacent to the glove.

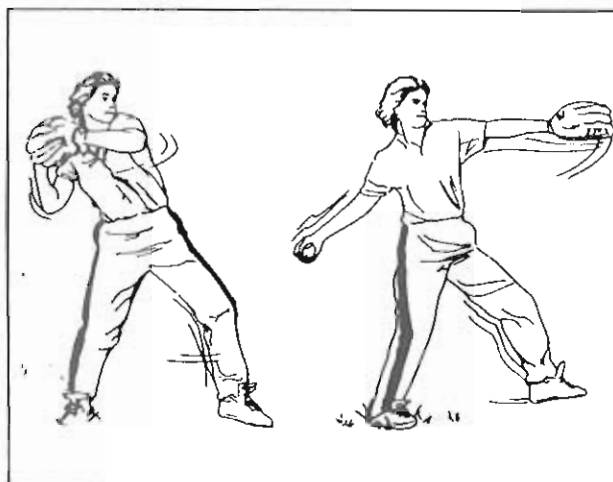
### Execution Phase



#### The player

- reaches out with both hands to contact ball in front of body.
- shifts weight onto front foot.
- catches ball in glove and immediately puts throwing hand on ball, making two-finger grip.
- squeezes ball in glove with thumb and ring finger of glove hand.
- cushions ball by collapsing arms and drawing ball in toward shoulder.
- begins to shift weight to back foot and begins turning the glove side toward throwing target.

### Follow-Through Phase



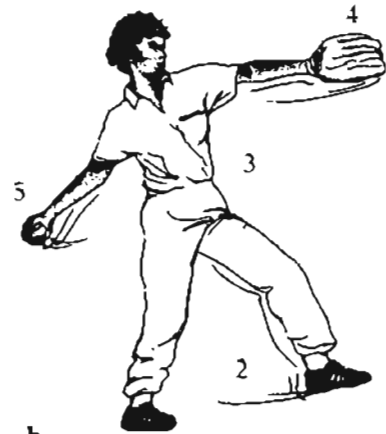
#### The player's

- weight is shifted onto back foot.
- glove side is turned toward throwing target.
- glove-side elbow is pointed toward throwing target.
- hands are separated and ball is in throwing hand in throwing position.
- throwing-hand wrist is extended.

*Figure 2.1 Keys to Success:  
Throwing Overhand*

**Preparation  
Phase**

1. Two-finger grip
2. Staggered stride, weight on back foot
3. Glove side to target
4. Arms extended, glove to target
5. Wrist cocked, ball to rear



**Execution  
Phase**

1. Step toward target
2. Push off rear foot
3. Elbow leads throw, hand trails



4. Weight on front foot
5. Hips square
6. Forearm rotates through vertical



7. Ball high
8. Glove hand low
9. Snap wrist



### Follow-Through Phase

1. Weight forward
2. Knees bent
3. Throwing hand low
4. Throwing shoulder forward
5. Assume balanced position



### Detecting Overhand Throwing Errors

Overhand throwing errors typically are caused by the improper release of the ball or the failure to go through the throw's full range of motion. Less experienced players tend to *push* the ball rather than throw it, because the hand

and ball move ahead of the elbow. However, the elbow must *lead* the forward motion of the throw. The most common overhand throwing errors are listed below, along with suggestions on how to correct them.

#### ERROR



1. You "push" the ball rather than throw it.
2. The ball's trajectory is too high.
3. The ball curves when you throw it a long distance.
4. The ball goes to the right or the left of the target.

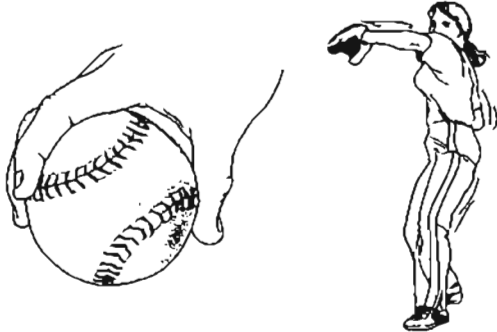
#### CORRECTION

1. Lead with your elbow as you bring the ball forward.
2. Snap your wrist as you release the ball, or release the ball a bit later.
3. Check that you are using an overhand delivery, not a sidearm one. Be sure your elbow is up and your forearm passes your head vertically.
4. Check that you are using an overhand delivery, not a sidearm one. Step toward the target as you throw. Imagine that you are throwing your hand toward the target as you release the ball.

## Overhand Throwing Keys to Success Checklist

The overhand throw is the most commonly used softball throw. You have developed your skills of throwing various distances and directions. Because technique is critical to accurate throwing, you need to check your form to make sure it's correct. Ask your teacher, your coach, or a trained observer to evaluate your technique qualitatively according to the following checklist. A check should be placed on the line in front of each *key to success* that you do correctly.

### Preparation Phase



The illustration shows a close-up of a softball on the left, held in a hand with the thumb on one side and two fingers on the other. To the right, a person is shown in a side profile, standing in a staggered stride with the back foot back, arms extended forward, and the glove hand pointing towards the target.

The thrower's

- \_\_\_ grip on the ball is with two fingers across one seam, and the thumb on the opposite side of ball on a seam.
- \_\_\_ feet are in staggered stride, the throwing-side foot back.
- \_\_\_ weight is on back foot.
- \_\_\_ glove side is toward throwing target.
- \_\_\_ arms are both extended, glove is pointed at target, and ball hand is away from target with wrist cocked (extended).

### Execution Phase



The thrower

- steps in direction of throwing target with glove-side foot.
- starts ball forward by leading with throwing-side elbow.
- makes sure ball hand trails elbow until shoulders are square to throwing target.
- forcefully rotates throwing-side forearm forward toward target, passing through vertical.
- keeps wrist cocked and the throwing hand and elbow high, the ball passing by the head.
- forces body weight forward by driving off back foot.
- has fingers directly behind ball, snaps wrist and releases ball toward target.
- has glove hand low.

### Follow-Through Phase



The thrower

- takes full weight on glove-side foot.
- drives throwing-side shoulder forward and down.
- brings throwing hand down past glove-side knee.
- brings throwing-side foot forward and shifts weight into balanced position.

### Execution Phase

1. Hands low, glove open to ball
2. Meet ball out front
3. Use two hands
4. Watch ball into glove
5. Throwing hand on ball



### Follow-Through Phase

1. Shift weight back
2. Glove side to target
3. Ball to overhand throwing position
4. Glove-side elbow to target



## Detecting Ground Ball Fielding Errors

Ground ball fielding errors usually occur because the fielder does not get in front of the ball or takes his or her eyes off the ball as it approaches. The most common errors committed when fielding a ground ball are listed below, along with suggestions on how to correct them.

### Preparation Phase



The fielder's

- feet are shoulder width apart, with the glove-side foot ahead.
- knees are well bent, with weight on the balls of the feet.
- back is flat, almost parallel to the ground.
- head is up, with eyes focused on the ball.

### Execution Phase



The fielder's

- fingertips of the glove and of the throwing hand are on the ground.
- approach places the ball inside and slightly in front of the glove-side foot.
- eyes focus on the ball, watching the ball go into the glove.
- throwing hand covers the ball in the glove and assumes a two-finger grip (first two fingers on a seam, thumb on seam on opposite side of the ball).

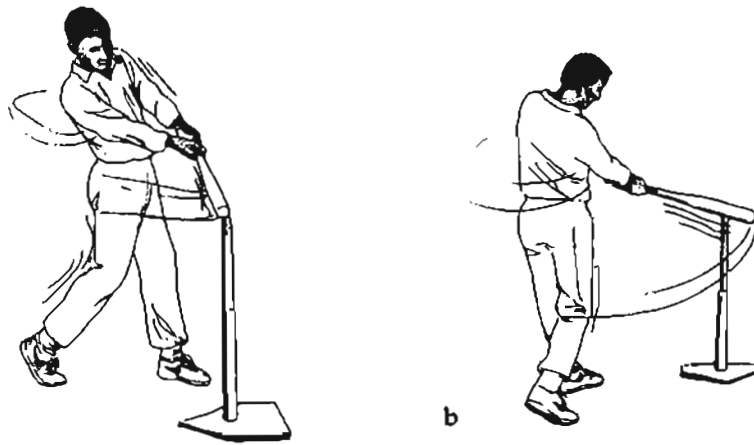


Figure 5.3 Adjust stance in relation to batting tee (a); adjust distance from batting tee (b).

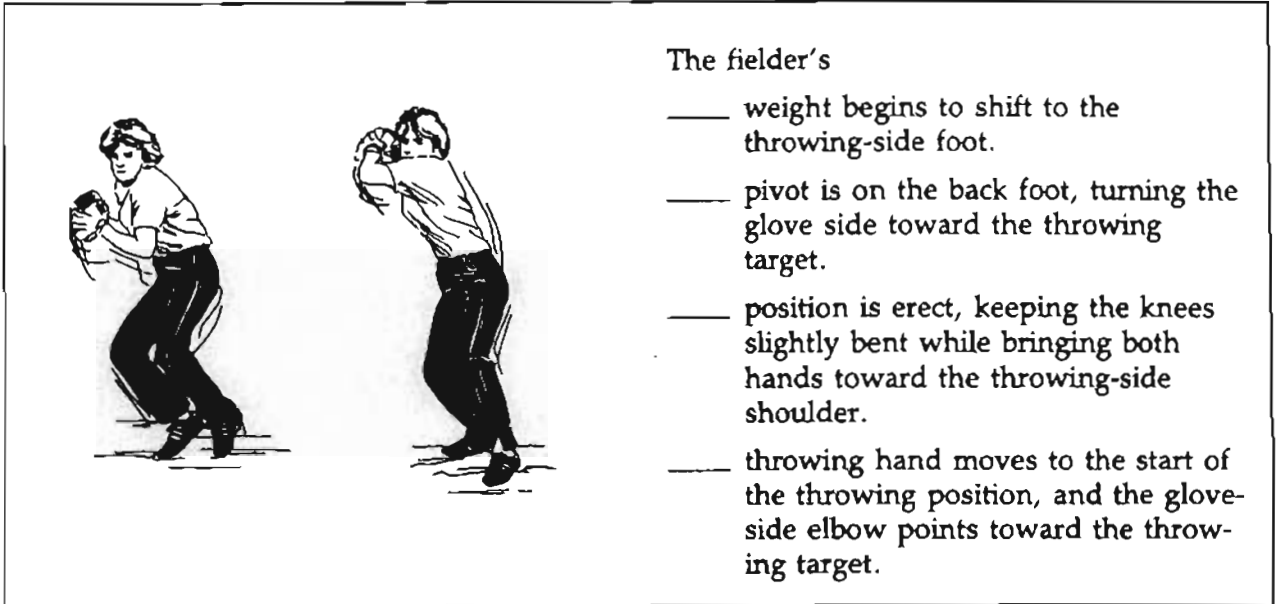
### Figure 5.4 Keys to Success: Batting Tee Hitting

#### Preparation Phase

1. Square stance
2. Front foot opposite tee
3. Knees bent
4. Middle knuckles aligned  
(on two hand grip)
5. Hands back
6. Focus on ball



### Follow-Through Phase



**Execution Phase**

1. Step with front foot, pointing toe toward pitcher
2. Lead swing with front elbow
3. Begin hip turn
4. Back knee bent
5. Front leg straight
6. Weight centered
7. Hips square
8. Arms extended
9. Head down



**Follow-Through Phase**

1. Weight centered
2. Roll wrists
3. Swing through ball
4. Back leg bent
5. Front leg straight
6. Hips square
7. Hands wrap around shoulder
8. Shoulder to chin



### Execution Phase



The batter

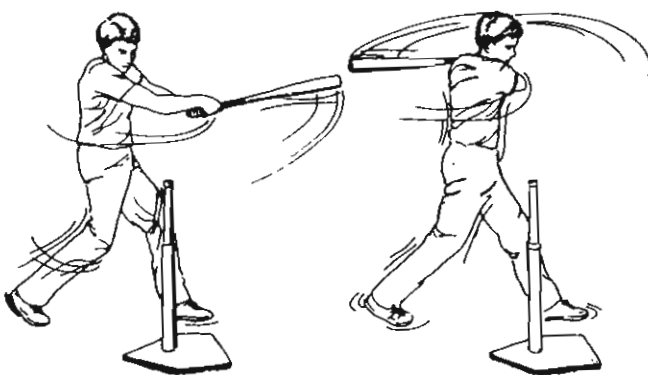
- takes a slight step with front foot and points toes in direction of intended line of flight of the ball.
- starts swing at ball by turning hips, pivoting on ball of back foot and heel of front foot.
- starts bat forward by leading with front elbow, wrists staying cocked as arms begin to extend.



At the point of contact (bat to ball), the batter's

- hips are square to the line of flight of the ball.
- back knee is bent, heel is up, toes are pointed along intended line of flight of the ball.
- front leg is straight, toes are pointed along intended line of flight of the ball.
- weight is under the back knee.
- arms are extended, wrists are extended.
- head is down, eyes are focused on ball.

### Follow-Through Phase



The batter

- continues swing through the ball.
- rolls wrists, top hand over bottom.
- holds the bat securely, letting the bat wrap around the body and hands wrap around the front shoulder.
- keeps head down and still, rear shoulder contacts chin.
- has weight centered under back knee (since hitter is not going to run now).
- has the back leg bent.
- has the front leg straight.
- has hips square.

## Batting Tee Hitting Keys to Success Checklist

The purpose of using the batting tee for hitting practice is to perfect your hitting stroke and to develop bat control. Your development of a smooth, coordinated swing in horizontal, high-to-low, and low-to-high swing paths is a prerequisite to your being able to successfully hit a pitched ball in a game. To check your development of these important techniques, ask your teacher, coach, or a trained observer to evaluate your hitting performance according to the checklist below.

### Preparation Phase



#### The batter

- \_\_\_ stands with feet in square stance, shoulder width apart.
- \_\_\_ positions body so that the front foot is opposite the post of the tee.
- \_\_\_ bend knees slightly, with weight centered.
- \_\_\_ grips the bat with both hands at the base of the handle, front-side hand on bottom, hands touching.
- \_\_\_ grips the bat so that the middle row of knuckles of both hands line up.
- \_\_\_ holds bat back, hands in front of the rear shoulder, bat angled back at 45 degrees.
- \_\_\_ looks at ball on tee, chin contacts front shoulder.

### Execution Phase



1. Toss ball
2. Front foot step in direction of hit



3. Bottom hand to bat
4. Focus on ball



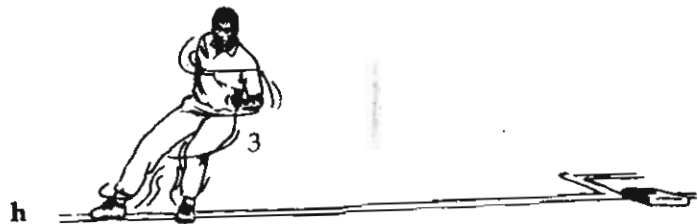
5. Pivot, swing down and through ball
6. Contact ball off front foot

### Follow-Through Phase



1. Weight on front foot
2. Hips square
3. Hands wrap low around body, below shoulder

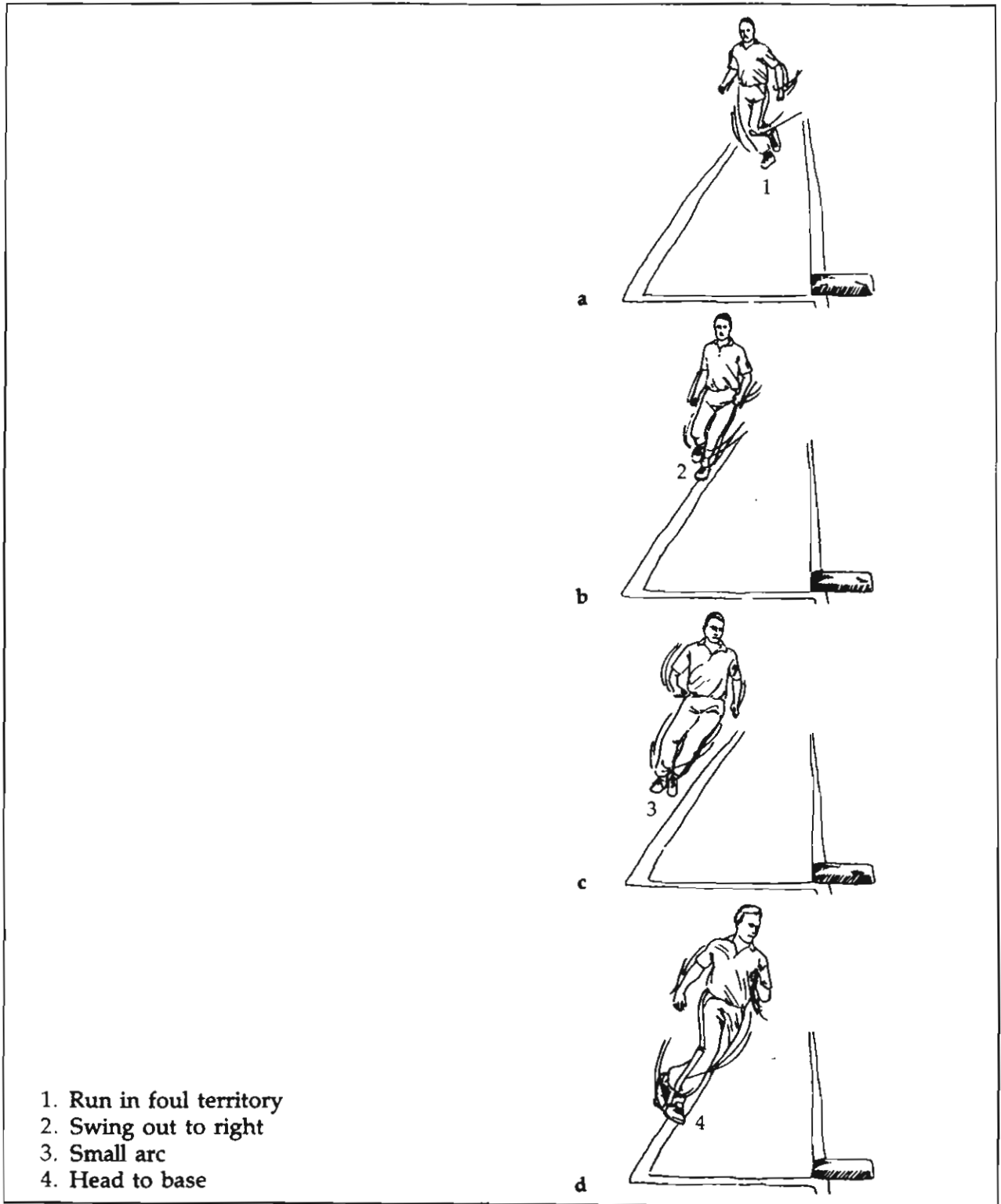
### Follow-Through Phase



1. Bend knees
2. Short steps
3. Sit back and stop
4. Turn to left
5. Go directly back to base

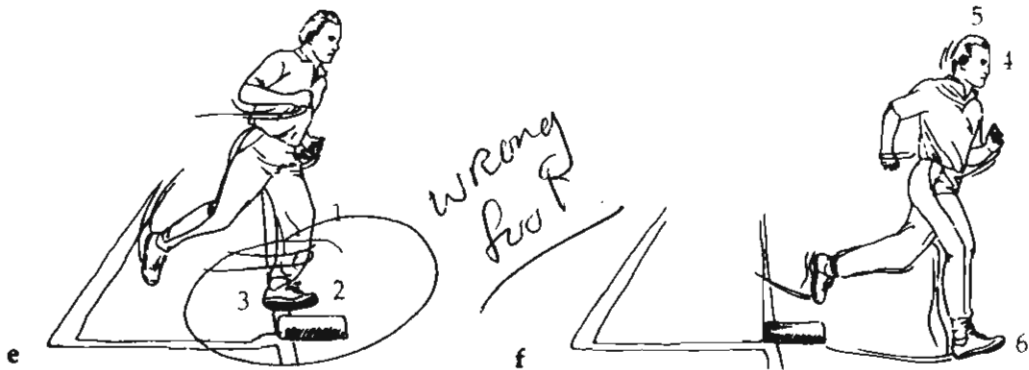
*Figure 9.2 Keys to Success:  
Rounding a Base*

**Preparation  
Phase**



1. Run in foul territory
2. Swing out to right
3. Small arc
4. Head to base

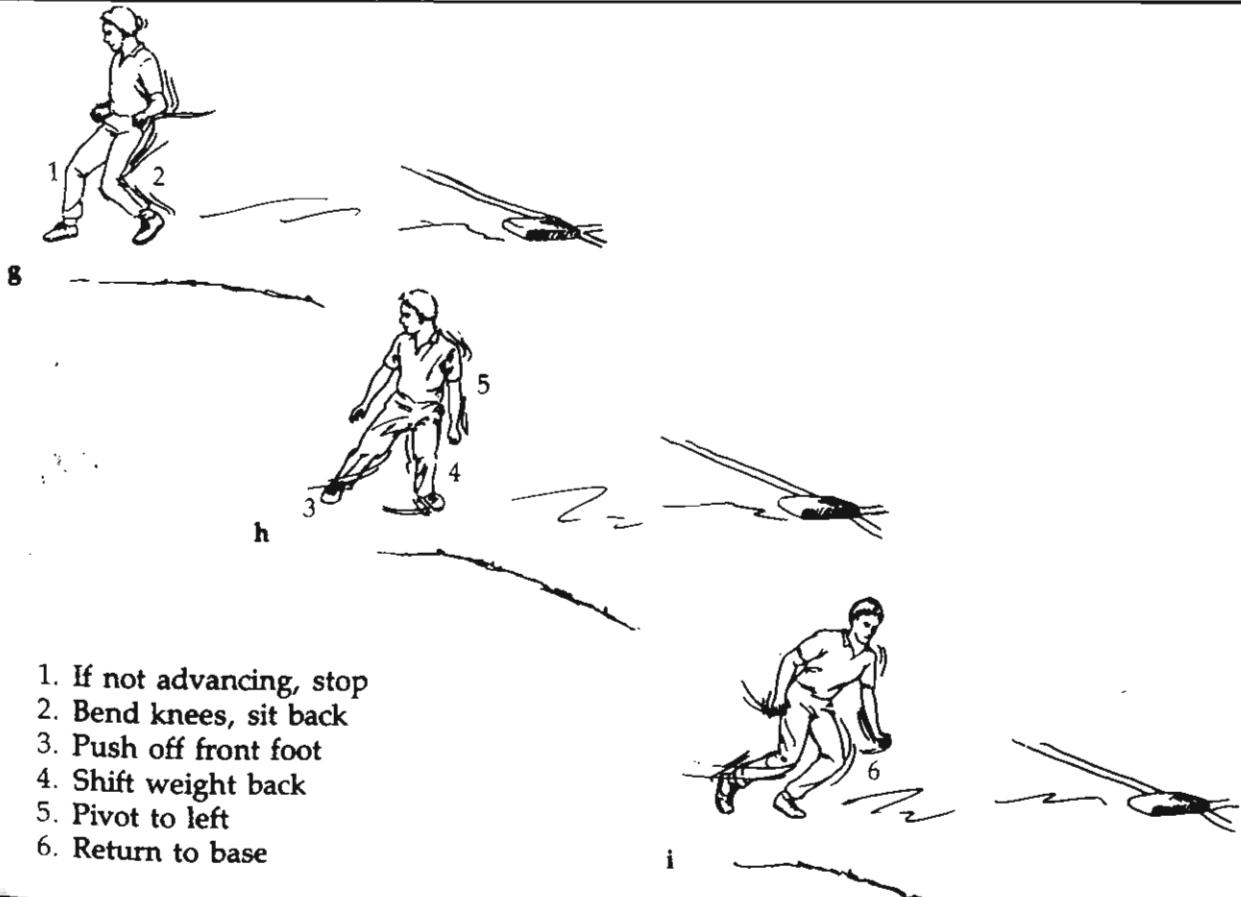
**Execution Phase**



- |                                  |                              |                                  |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Lean to left                  | 4. Focus on play             | 6. If advancing, continue to run |
| 2. Contact inside corner of base | 5. Decide whether to advance |                                  |
| 3. Contact with left foot        |                              |                                  |

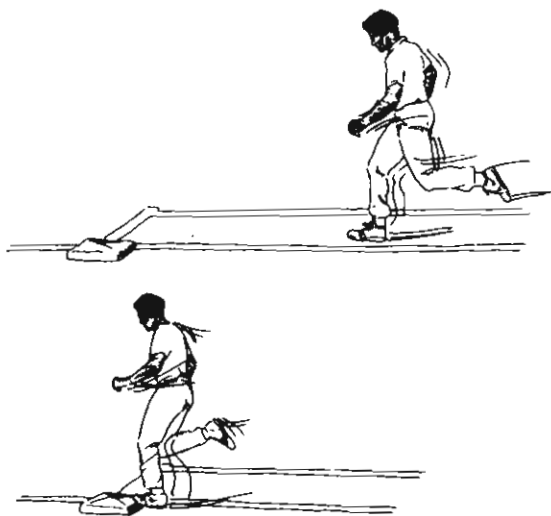
*Right.*

**Follow-Through Phase**



1. If not advancing, stop
2. Bend knees, sit back
3. Push off front foot
4. Shift weight back
5. Pivot to left
6. Return to base

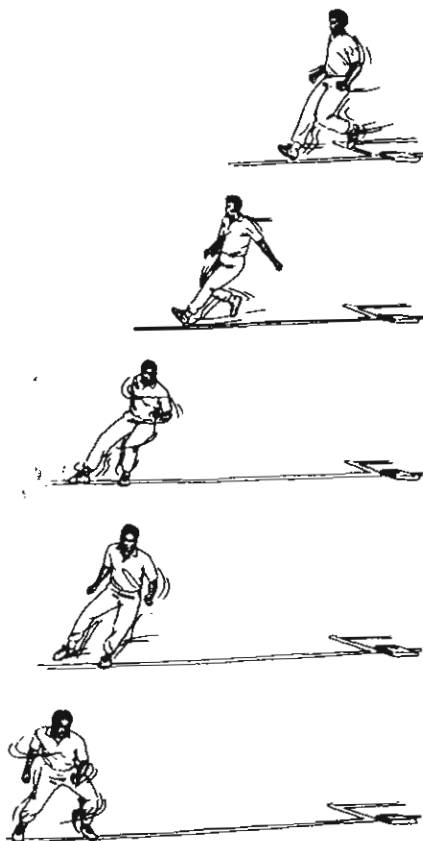
### Execution Phase



The batter-baserunner

- runs in foul territory within the alley markings.
- continues running at top speed until over the base.
- doesn't break stride when contacting the base.
- focuses on the base.
- contacts the base's front corner that is on the foul line.

### Follow-Through Phase

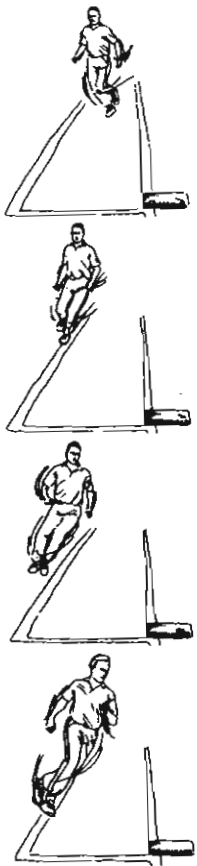


The batter-baserunner

- bends the knees after crossing the base.
- takes short steps to facilitate coming to a stop.
- sits back and shifts the weight back to come to a stop.
- turns to the left, toward the field of play, without making any attempt to go to second base.
- goes directly back to the base.

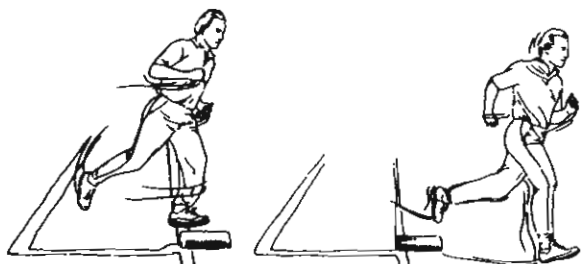
## Rounding a Base

### Preparation Phase



- runs in foul territory within the alley markings.
- swings out to the right when within 15 feet of the base.
- runs in a small arc.
- leans to the left and heads toward the base.

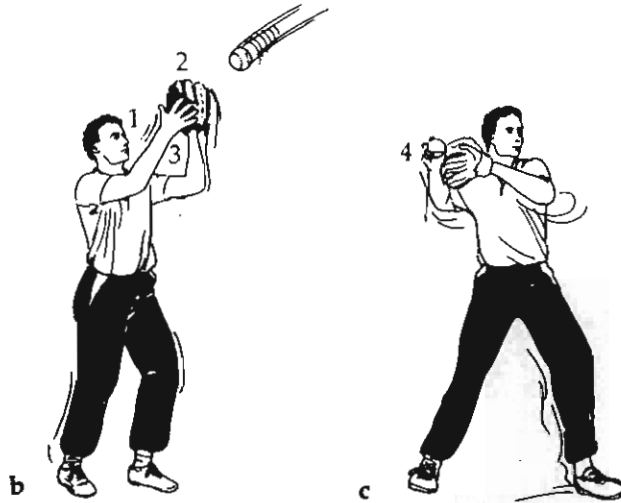
### Execution Phase



- leans to the left.
- contacts the inside front corner of the base.
- contacts the base with the left foot.
- looks for the ball and focuses on the play.
- decides whether to advance or return to the base.

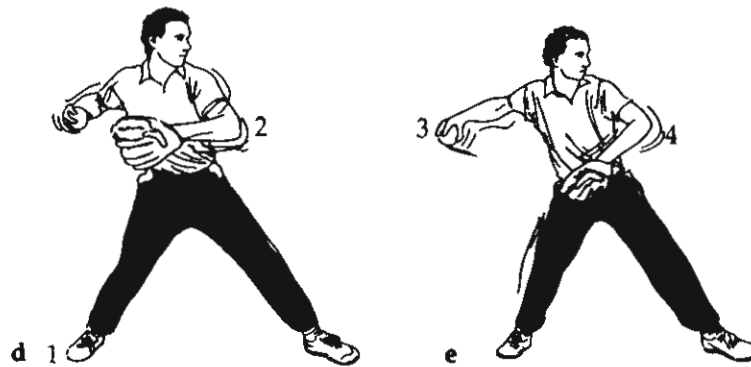
### Execution Phase

1. Watch ball go into glove
2. Meet ball high out front
3. Use two hands
4. Two-finger grip

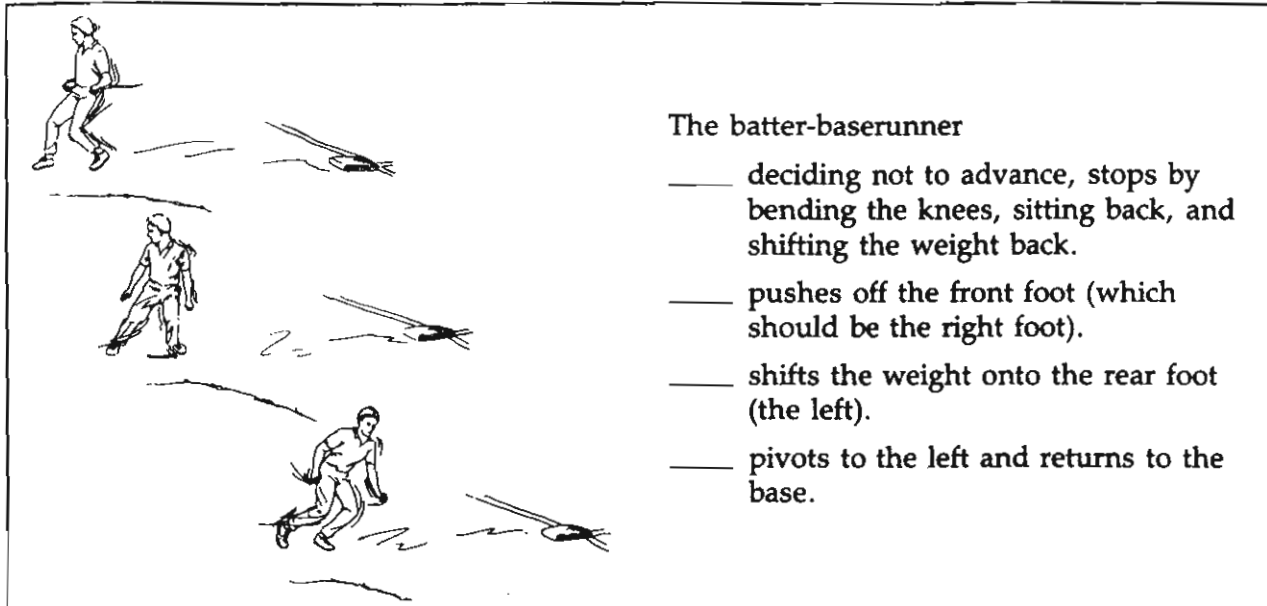


### Follow-Through Phase

1. Shift weight onto throwing-side foot
2. Glove side toward target
3. Ball to throwing position
4. Glove elbow toward target

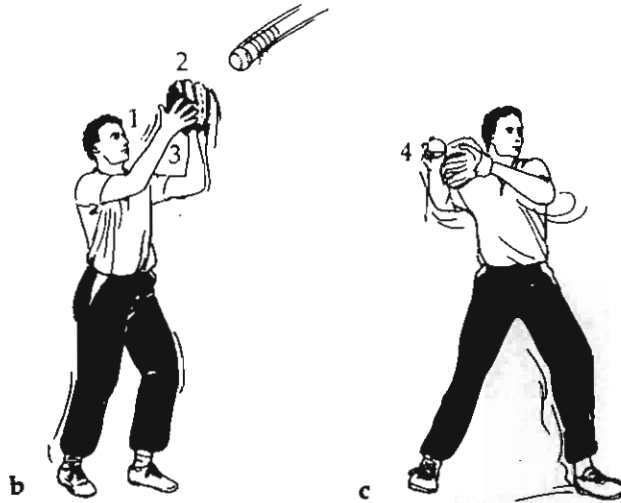


### Follow-Through Phase



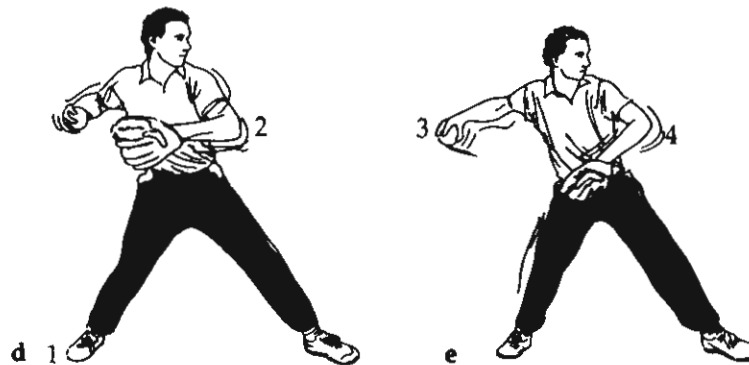
### Execution Phase

1. Watch ball go into glove
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4. Two-finger grip



### Follow-Through Phase

1. Shift weight onto throwing-side foot
2. Glove side toward target
3. Ball to throwing position
4. Glove elbow toward target



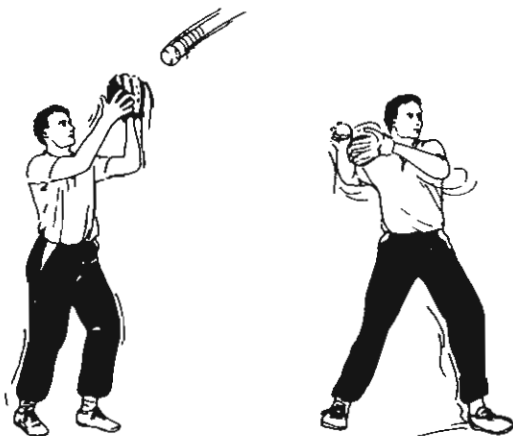
### Preparation Phase



The fielder's

- feet are shoulder width apart, with glove-side foot ahead.
- knees are slightly bent, with weight going onto the throwing-side foot.
- head is up, with eyes focused on the ball.
- hands are up by chest, with fingers pointing up and thumbs together.

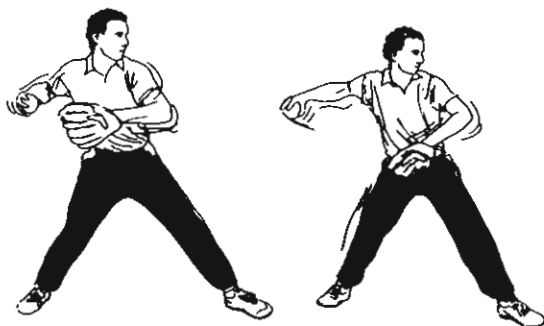
### Execution Phase



The fielder's

- eyes focus on the ball, watching the ball go into the glove.
- catch is made in front of the body, above the head and directly in front of the throwing-side shoulder.
- throwing hand immediately covers the caught ball in the glove.
- throwing hand grabs the ball in a two finger grip, with the first two fingers on a seam and the thumb on a seam on the opposite side of the ball.

### Follow-Through Phase



The fielder's

- pivot for the throw begins by shifting the weight onto the throwing-side foot.
- two hands are brought toward the throwing-side shoulder, with the throwing hand continuing to the start of the throwing position.
- glove side is turned toward the throwing target, with the glove-side elbow pointed toward the target.

motion of your hand and arm. This should make the ball loop toward the batter, coming down into the hitter's contact zone and about 2 feet from the front foot. Toss the ball as if you wanted it to land on an imaginary batting tee off the batter's front foot (see Figures 14.1a, b; remember, tee is only imaginary).

When hitting a toss, stand with the same batting stance as for hitting off the tee, your feet shoulder width apart. After your partner tosses the ball, take the same swing at the ball as you did at the tee. Initiate your swing with a slight step with your front foot in the direction you intend the ball to be hit (much the

same as you used for fungo hitting). Time your swing so that you contact the ball about waist-high and opposite your front foot. To protect the tosser, you must hit only balls tossed into this hitting contact zone out front and opposite your front foot. Do *not* swing if the toss does not drop to a position opposite your front foot; hitting a ball tossed toward the midline of your body, despite the fact that it might be in the strike zone, could result in the ball's hitting the tosser. After contacting the ball, complete your swing by wrapping your hands, still holding the bat, around your shoulders (see Figure 14.2).

**Figure 14.2** *Keys to Success:  
Hitting a  
Soft Toss*

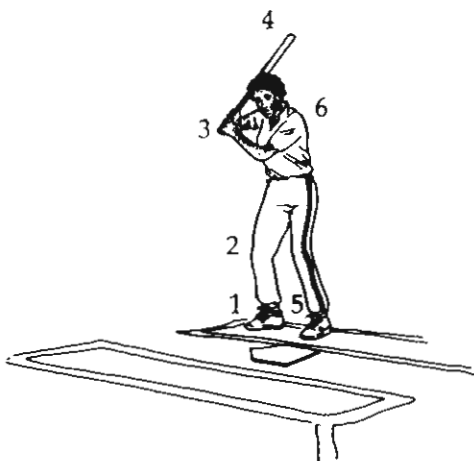
**Preparation  
Phase**

**For Tosser**



1. Kneel opposite hitter's back foot
2. Ball in throwing hand
3. Focus on target opposite hitter's front foot

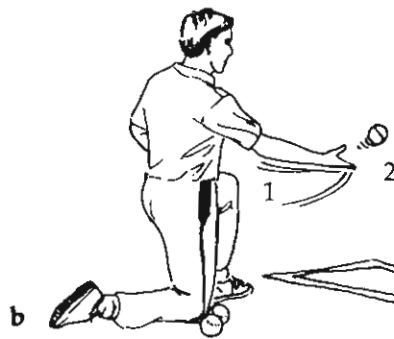
**For Hitter**



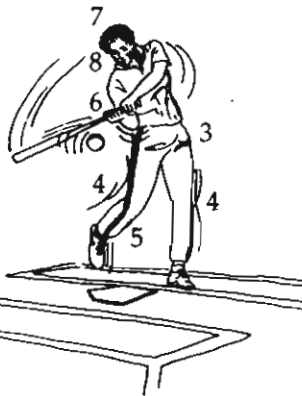
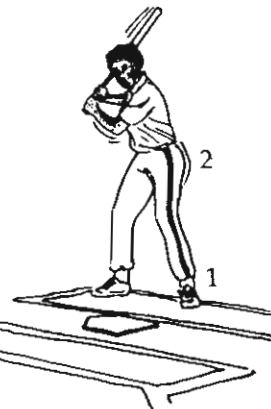
1. Square stance
2. Knees bent
3. Two-hand grip, middle row of knuckles aligned
4. Hands and bat back
5. Weight on back foot
6. Head down, focus on ball

**Execution Phase**

**For Toss**



**For Hitter**



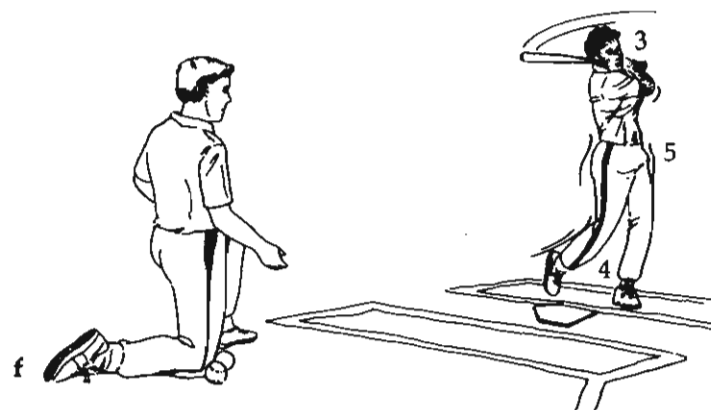
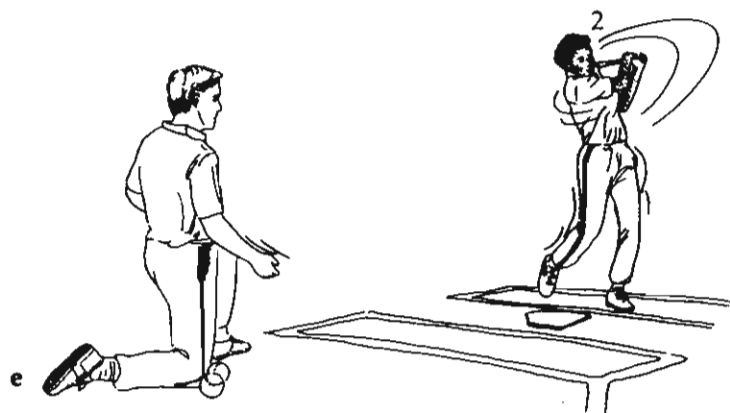
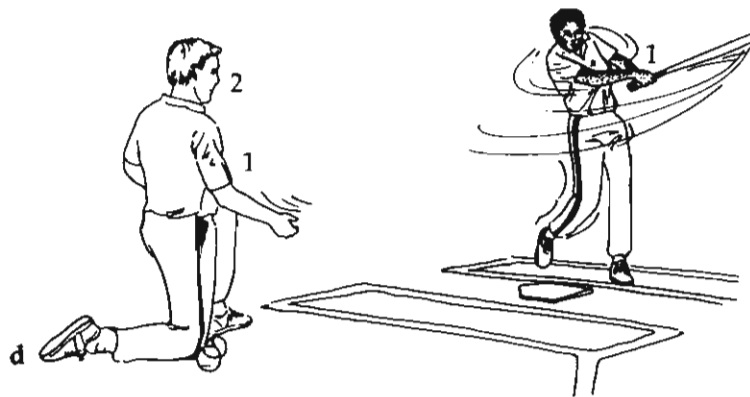
1. Lift hand and arm
2. Release ball up and forward
3. Watch ball drop to target area
4. Watch hitter make contact

1. Step with front foot to open stance (point toes)
2. Hips start pivot, heel of front foot, ball of back
3. Hips square at contact
4. Back knee bent, front leg straight
5. Weight over back knee
6. Arms and wrists extended
7. Head down, focus on ball
8. Back shoulder to chin

### Follow-Through Phase

For Toss

For Hitter



1. Relax arm
2. Watch the hitter's technique

1. Roll wrists
2. Hands wrap around shoulder
3. Chin on shoulder
4. Weight over bent back knee, front leg straight
5. Hips square

## Detecting Soft-Toss Hitting Errors

Frequently the errors that occur when performing this combined skill are caused by a poor toss. At this point, the hitter should have the basic swing under control. The hitting errors are usually caused by losing concentration and failing to watch the ball to the contact point. The most common errors for both tosser and hitter, with suggestions on how to correct them, are listed below.

### ERROR



### CORRECTION

#### For Tosser

1. The ball goes in a straight line.
2. The ball goes toward the midline of the hitter.

1. Make the ball traverse an arc to get to the target spot. Make your toss motion down and up, not back and forward.
2. If you are directly facing the hitter, be sure your hand and arm motion is to the side and forward toward the hitter's front foot.

[or]

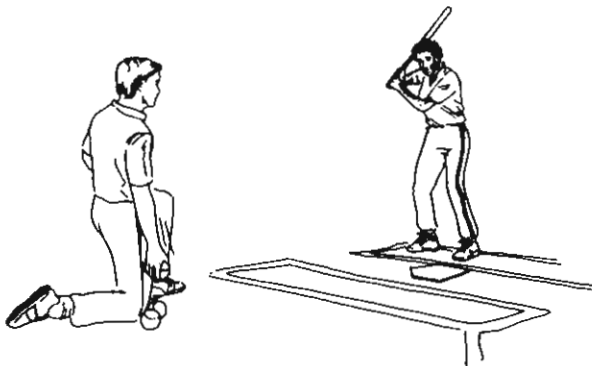
In your kneeling position, turn toward the hitter's front foot. Now make your hand and arm go down-up and straight forward toward the target spot.

#### For Hitter

1. You miss the ball completely.
2. You just tip the ball up or to the ground.

1. Watch the ball from the tosser's hand to your bat.
2. Try to contact the *middle* of the ball with your bat.

### Preparation Phase



#### The tosser

- kneels on the ground 8 to 10 feet away from the hitter.
- kneels directly opposite the hitter's back foot.
- holds the ball in the throwing hand with the palm facing forward, fingers under the ball, and the arm extended.
- focuses on the spot in the hitter's contact zone, waist-high to the hitter and opposite the hitter's front foot.

#### The batter

- has feet in square stance, shoulder-width apart.
- bends knees slightly, with weight centered.
- grips the bat with two hands, with the middle row of knuckles of both hands aligned.
- holds bat back, hands opposite rear shoulder, bat angled back at 45 degrees.
- keeps head down, focusing on ball in tosser's hand.

### Execution Phase



The batter

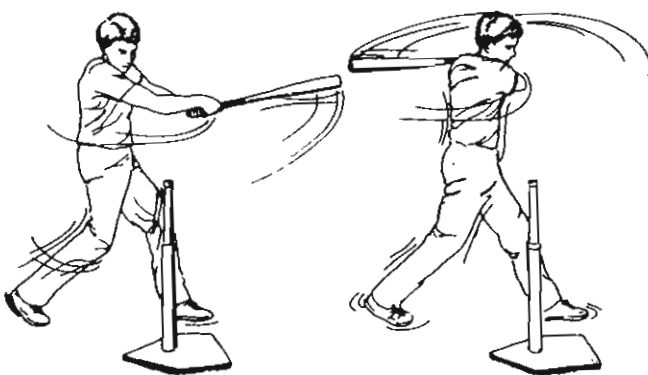
- takes a slight step with front foot and points toes in direction of intended line of flight of the ball.
- starts swing at ball by turning hips, pivoting on ball of back foot and heel of front foot.
- starts bat forward by leading with front elbow, wrists staying cocked as arms begin to extend.

At the point of contact (bat to ball), the batter's



- hips are square to the line of flight of the ball.
- back knee is bent, heel is up, toes are pointed along intended line of flight of the ball.
- front leg is straight, toes are pointed along intended line of flight of the ball.
- weight is under the back knee.
- arms are extended, wrists are extended.
- head is down, eyes are focused on ball.

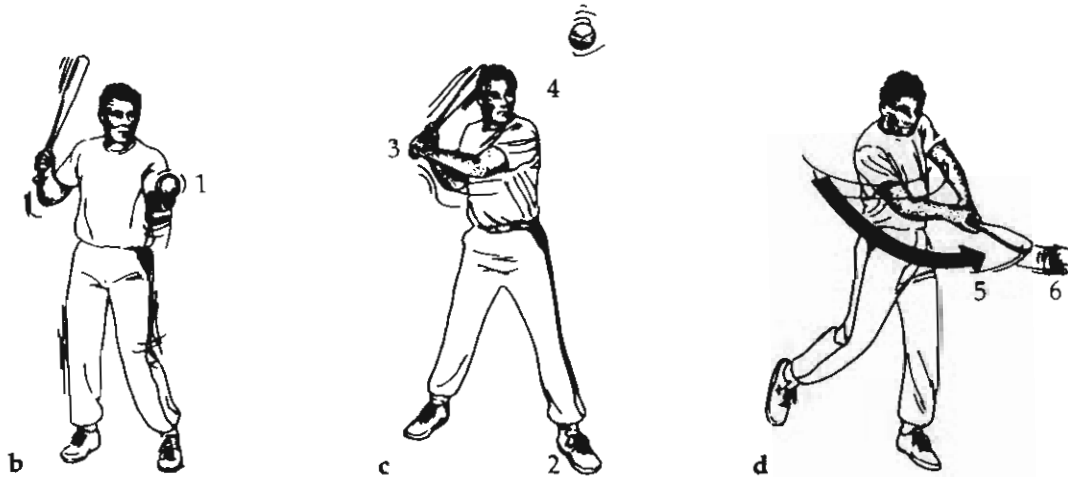
### Follow-Through Phase



The batter

- continues swing through the ball.
- rolls wrists, top hand over bottom.
- holds the bat securely, letting the bat wrap around the body and hands wrap around the front shoulder.
- keeps head down and still, rear shoulder contacts chin.
- has weight centered under back knee (since hitter is not going to run now).
- has the back leg bent.
- has the front leg straight.
- has hips square.

### Execution Phase



1. Toss ball
2. Front foot step in direction of hit

3. Bottom hand to bat
4. Focus on ball

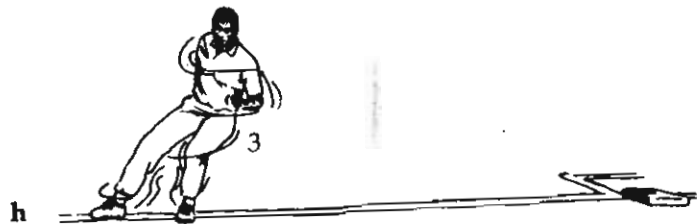
5. Pivot, swing down and through ball
6. Contact ball off front foot

### Follow-Through Phase



1. Weight on front foot
2. Hips square
3. Hands wrap low around body, below shoulder

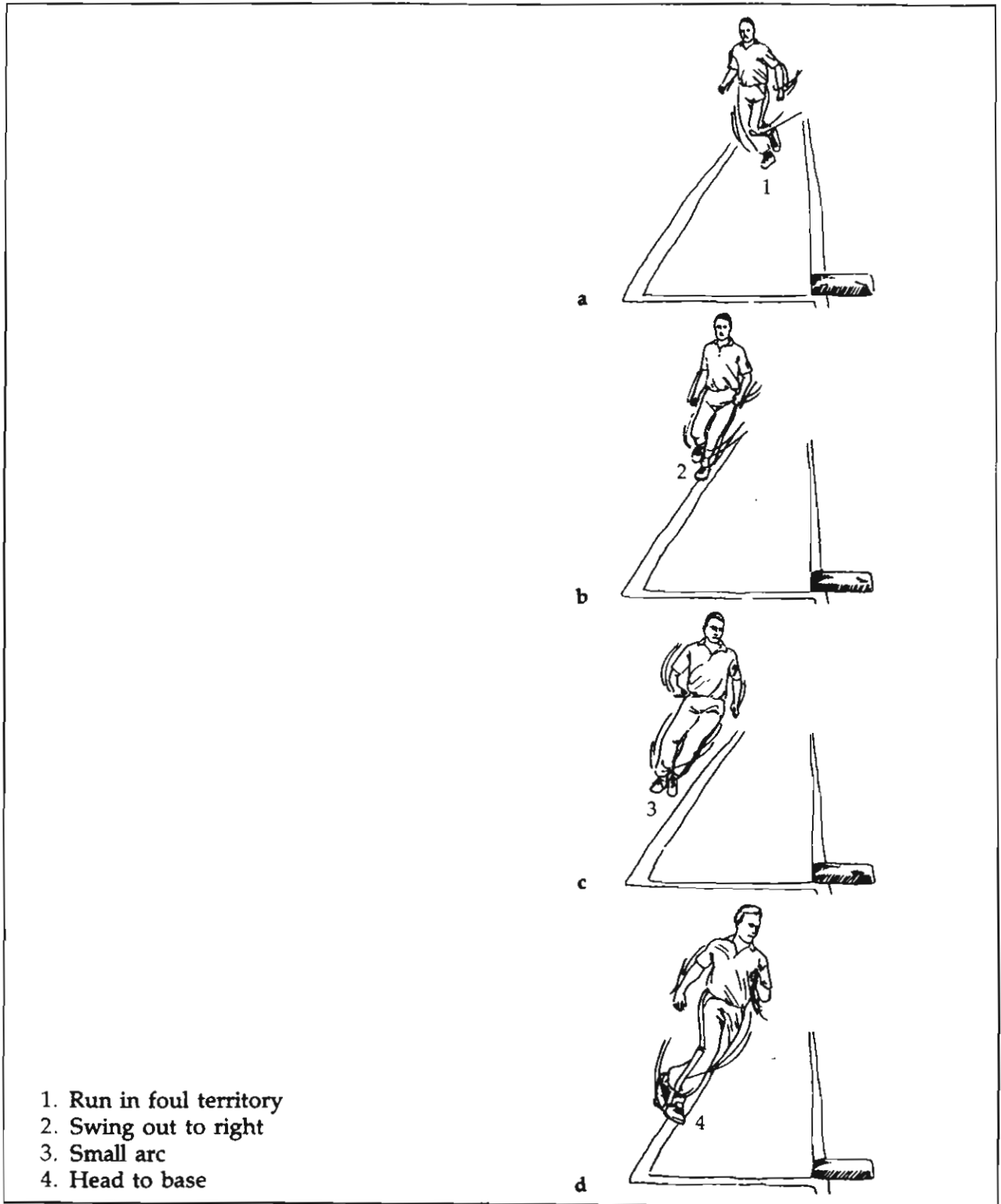
### Follow-Through Phase



1. Bend knees
2. Short steps
3. Sit back and stop
4. Turn to left
5. Go directly back to base

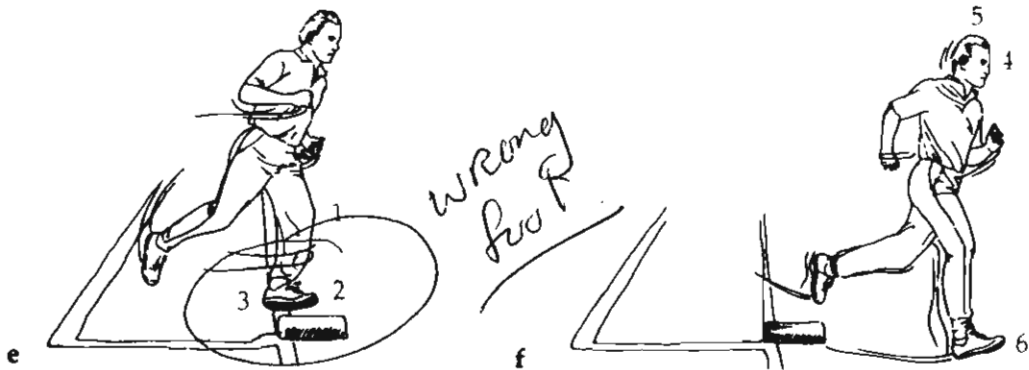
*Figure 9.2 Keys to Success:  
Rounding a Base*

**Preparation  
Phase**



1. Run in foul territory
2. Swing out to right
3. Small arc
4. Head to base

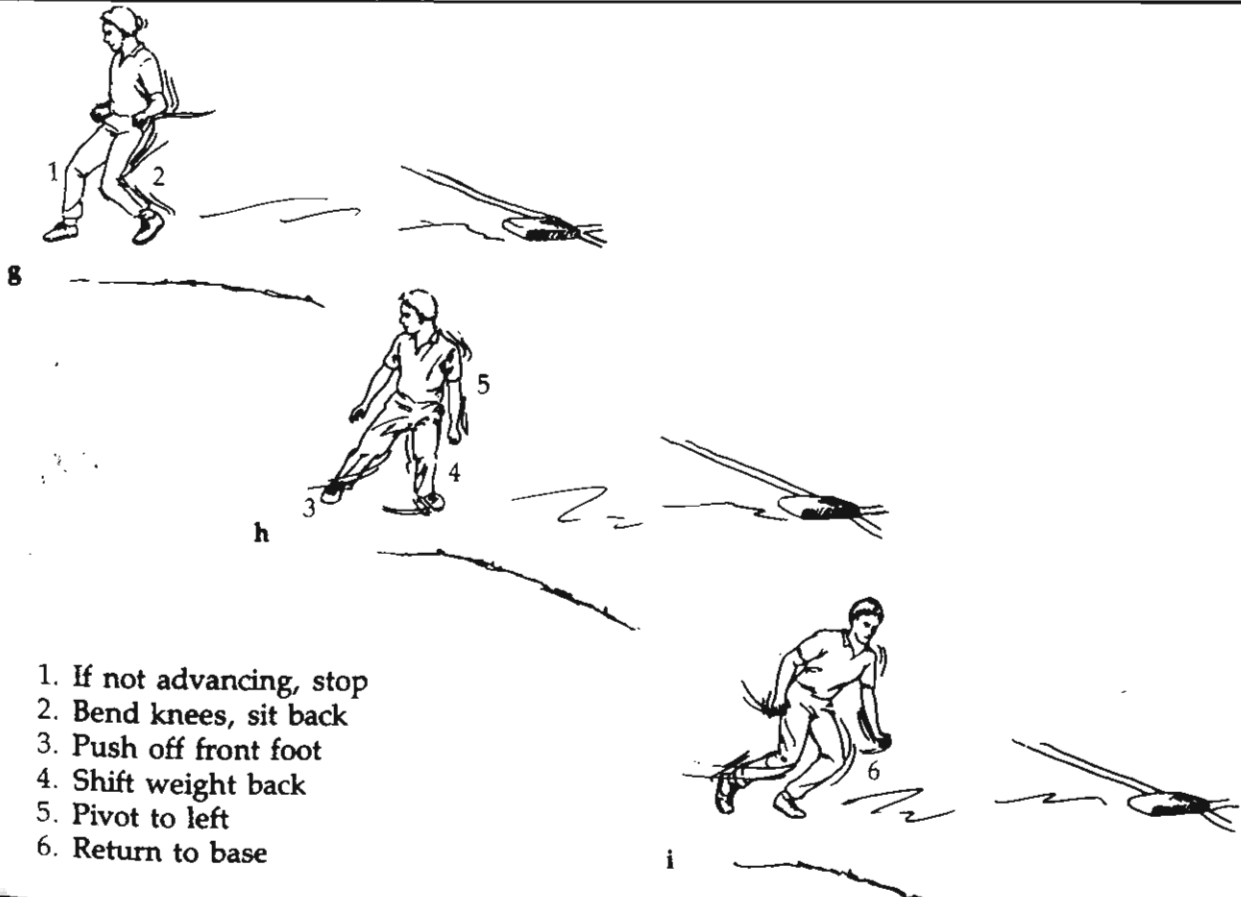
**Execution Phase**



- |                                  |                              |                                  |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Lean to left                  | 4. Focus on play             | 6. If advancing, continue to run |
| 2. Contact inside corner of base | 5. Decide whether to advance |                                  |
| 3. Contact with left foot        |                              |                                  |

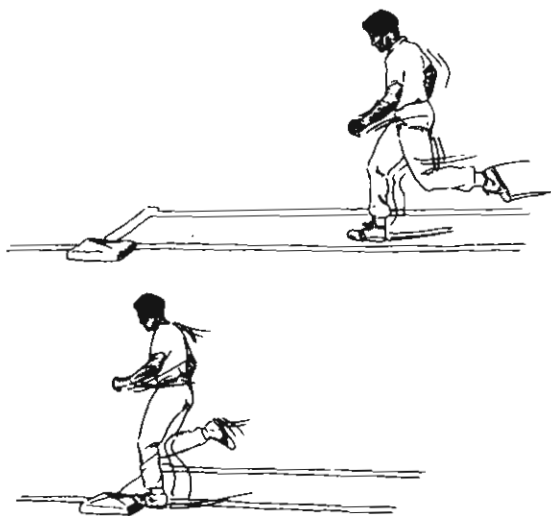
*Right.*

**Follow-Through Phase**



1. If not advancing, stop
2. Bend knees, sit back
3. Push off front foot
4. Shift weight back
5. Pivot to left
6. Return to base

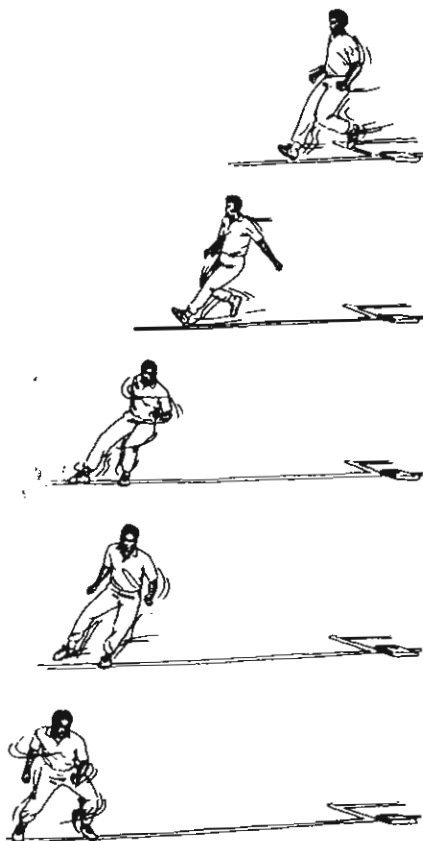
### Execution Phase



The batter-baserunner

- runs in foul territory within the alley markings.
- continues running at top speed until over the base.
- doesn't break stride when contacting the base.
- focuses on the base.
- contacts the base's front corner that is on the foul line.

### Follow-Through Phase

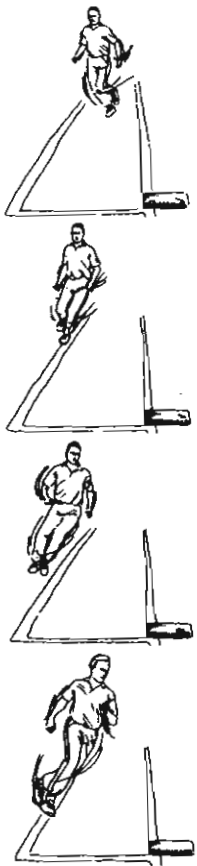


The batter-baserunner

- bends the knees after crossing the base.
- takes short steps to facilitate coming to a stop.
- sits back and shifts the weight back to come to a stop.
- turns to the left, toward the field of play, without making any attempt to go to second base.
- goes directly back to the base.

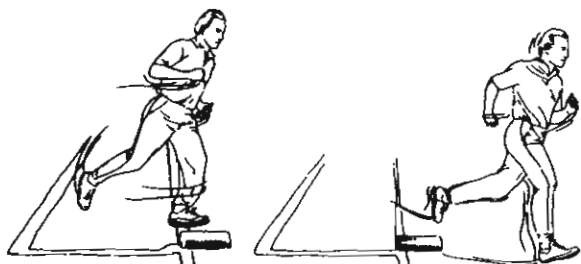
## Rounding a Base

### Preparation Phase



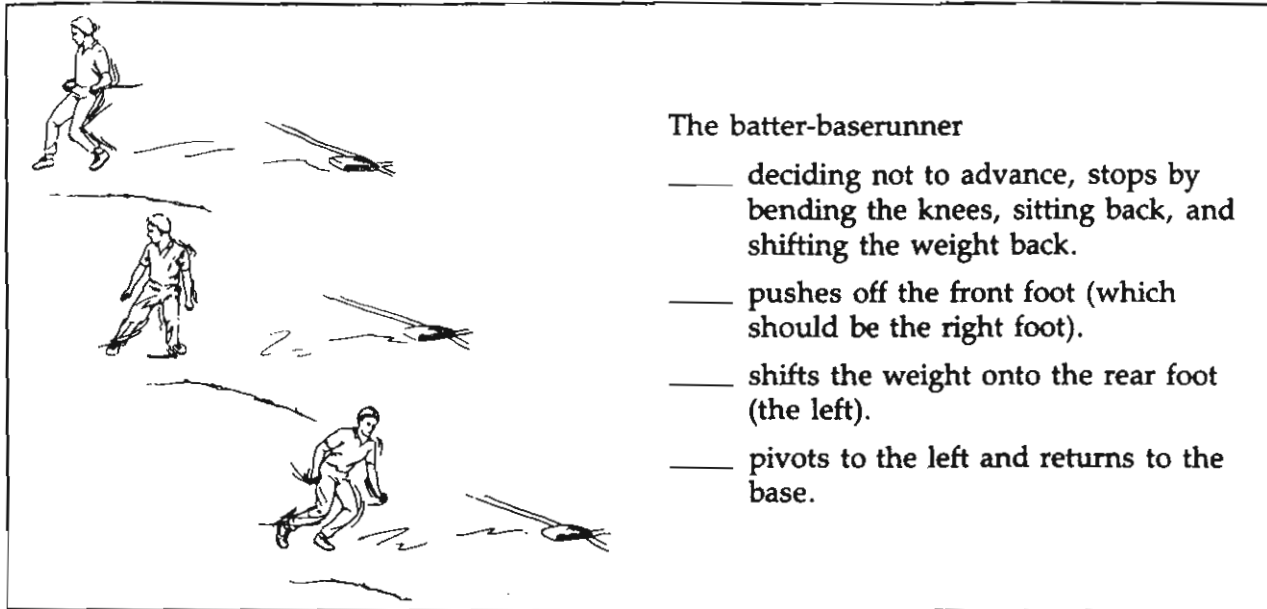
- runs in foul territory within the alley markings.
- swings out to the right when within 15 feet of the base.
- runs in a small arc.
- leans to the left and heads toward the base.

### Execution Phase



- leans to the left.
- contacts the inside front corner of the base.
- contacts the base with the left foot.
- looks for the ball and focuses on the play.
- decides whether to advance or return to the base.

### Follow-Through Phase



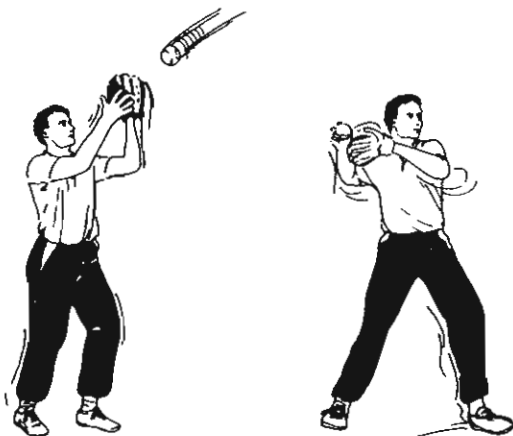
### Preparation Phase



The fielder's

- feet are shoulder width apart, with glove-side foot ahead.
- knees are slightly bent, with weight going onto the throwing-side foot.
- head is up, with eyes focused on the ball.
- hands are up by chest, with fingers pointing up and thumbs together.

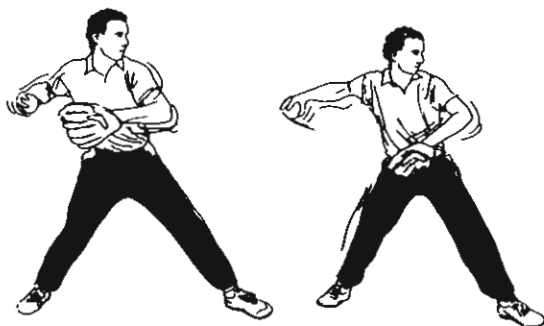
### Execution Phase



The fielder's

- eyes focus on the ball, watching the ball go into the glove.
- catch is made in front of the body, above the head and directly in front of the throwing-side shoulder.
- throwing hand immediately covers the caught ball in the glove.
- throwing hand grabs the ball in a two finger grip, with the first two fingers on a seam and the thumb on a seam on the opposite side of the ball.

### Follow-Through Phase



The fielder's

- pivot for the throw begins by shifting the weight onto the throwing-side foot.
- two hands are brought toward the throwing-side shoulder, with the throwing hand continuing to the start of the throwing position.
- glove side is turned toward the throwing target, with the glove-side elbow pointed toward the target.

motion of your hand and arm. This should make the ball loop toward the batter, coming down into the hitter's contact zone and about 2 feet from the front foot. Toss the ball as if you wanted it to land on an imaginary batting tee off the batter's front foot (see Figures 14.1a, b; remember, tee is only imaginary).

When hitting a toss, stand with the same batting stance as for hitting off the tee, your feet shoulder width apart. After your partner tosses the ball, take the same swing at the ball as you did at the tee. Initiate your swing with a slight step with your front foot in the direction you intend the ball to be hit (much the

same as you used for fungo hitting). Time your swing so that you contact the ball about waist-high and opposite your front foot. To protect the tosser, you must hit only balls tossed into this hitting contact zone out front and opposite your front foot. Do *not* swing if the toss does not drop to a position opposite your front foot; hitting a ball tossed toward the midline of your body, despite the fact that it might be in the strike zone, could result in the ball's hitting the tosser. After contacting the ball, complete your swing by wrapping your hands, still holding the bat, around your shoulders (see Figure 14.2).

**Figure 14.2** *Keys to Success:  
Hitting a  
Soft Toss*

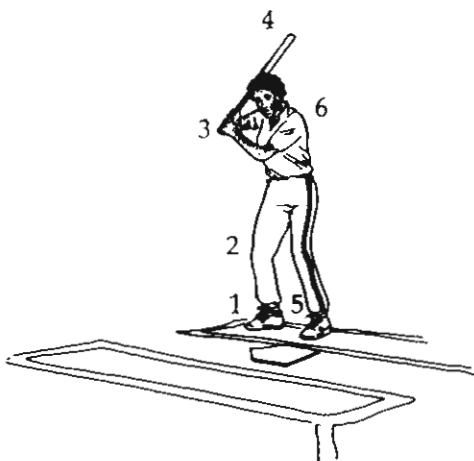
**Preparation  
Phase**

**For Toss**



1. Kneel opposite hitter's back foot
2. Ball in throwing hand
3. Focus on target opposite hitter's front foot

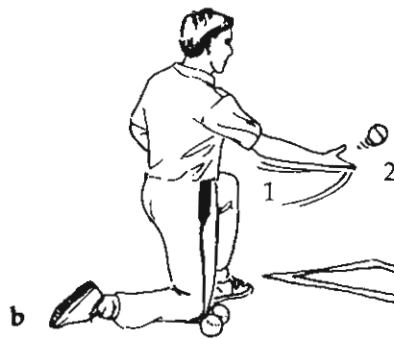
**For Hitter**



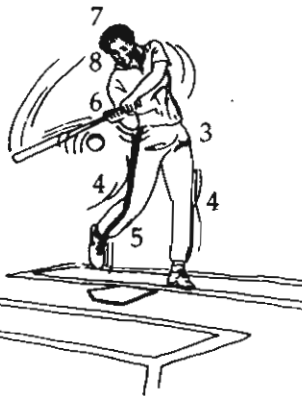
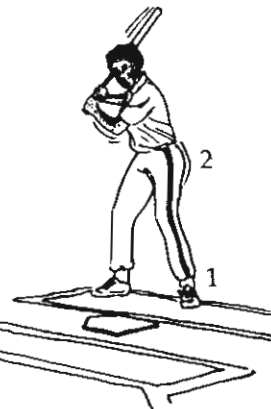
1. Square stance
2. Knees bent
3. Two-hand grip, middle row of knuckles aligned
4. Hands and bat back
5. Weight on back foot
6. Head down, focus on ball

**Execution Phase**

**For Toss**



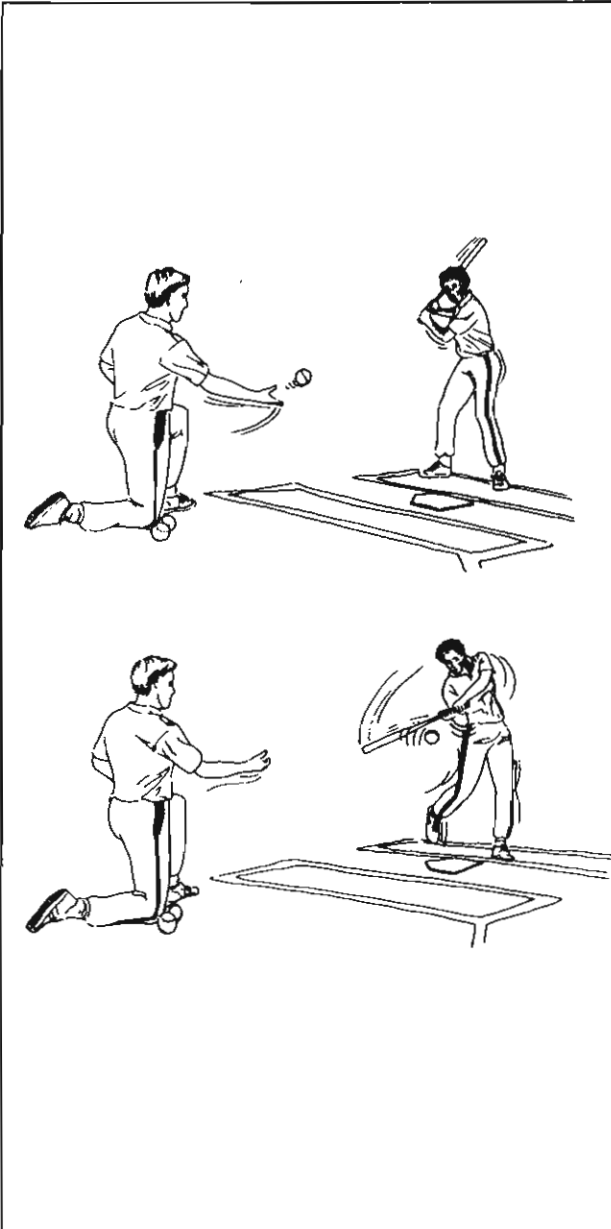
**For Hitter**



1. Lift hand and arm
2. Release ball up and forward
3. Watch ball drop to target area
4. Watch hitter make contact

1. Step with front foot to open stance (point toes)
2. Hips start pivot, heel of front foot, ball of back
3. Hips square at contact
4. Back knee bent, front leg straight
5. Weight over back knee
6. Arms and wrists extended
7. Head down, focus on ball
8. Back shoulder to chin

### Execution Phase



#### The tosser

- keeps the arm relatively straight and tosses the ball by swinging the arm down and up from the shoulder.
- releases the ball up and forward.
- tosses the ball so that it will drop *down* into the target area.
- watches the hitter make contact with the ball.

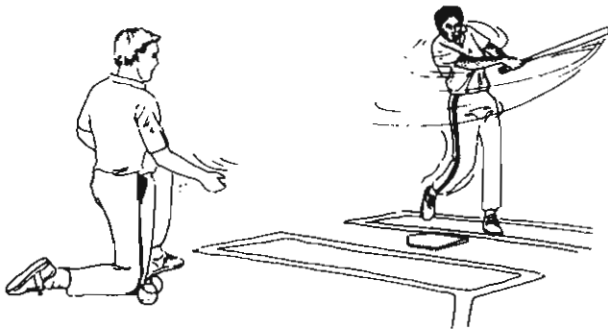
#### The batter

- as ball is tossed, takes a slight step with front foot toward the intended line of flight of the batted ball.
- points the toes of front foot in the direction of the intended line of flight.
- starts swing at ball by turning hips, pivoting on ball of back foot and heel of front foot.

#### At the point of contact, the batter's

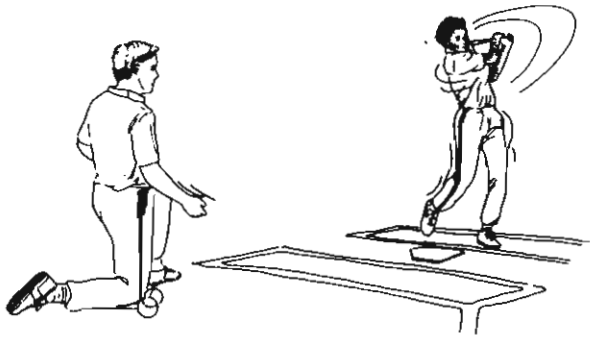
- hips are square to the line of flight.
- back knee is bent, heel is up, and toes are pointed in intended line of flight.
- front leg is straight, and toes are pointed in intended line of flight.
- weight is centered over back knee.
- arms and wrists are extended.
- head is down, eyes focused on the ball, and the rear shoulder contacts the chin.

### Follow-Through Phase



#### The tosser

- gradually returns the tossing arm to the starting position.
- watches the hitter's follow-through technique.



#### The batter

- rolls wrists, top hand over bottom, and continues swing through the ball.
- holds bat securely, lets bat wrap around back of body and hands wrap around front shoulder.
- keeps head down and still, rear shoulder contacts chin.
- has weight centered over back knee (batter is not going to run).
- has back leg bent, front leg straight.
- has hips square.

