



## Catching

### Main Points - Technique

1. The catcher has two separate stances from which to start defensively. The *primary* stance is used when no one is on base and there are fewer than two strikes – when the catcher does not need to worry about blocking pitches. The *secondary* stance is used when either there is a runner on base, or two strikes to the batter.
2. In the primary stance, the catcher should begin in a relaxed crouch, with his knees (and most often his toes as well), pointed towards the middle infielders. When giving the sign, he should hang his glove off of his knee in order to obscure the signs from the base coach. Signs should always be given from the primary stance. To further obscure the signs, avoid giving them too low to the ground, and hold the hand close to the body. After giving the signs, the primary stance is completed giving the pitcher a clear target with the glove arm flexed but relaxed, and the back at an angle somewhere in the 30-45° range.
3. The secondary stance differs from the primary stance in that after giving signs, the catcher moves in to less relaxed crouch, standing up slightly taller and placing more/all of his weight on the balls of his feet. This will cause him to need to have a flatter back angle in order to place his target in the same place, which he should try to do.
4. When receiving the pitch, the catcher should reach slightly for the ball, but not to the extent that his arm is fully extended. In the case of pitches on the edges of the strike zone, the catcher should “frame” the pitch in order to make it appear best to the umpire, but should not develop a habit of dragging pitches that are clearly balls into the strike zone. The catcher should also attempt to avoid “swaying” his body in order to get to a pitch that he feels is a borderline strike; rather he should use his glove hand/arm to get to the pitch. There are many video resources available on the internet for both visuals of what framing looks like and how to teach it.
5. Catchers should block pitches when either runners are on base or there are two strikes on the batter. There is no need to attempt to block every pitch without runners on and fewer than two strikes on the batter. When blocking, the catcher should of course begin by moving to get his body in front of where the ball will bounce. He then flips his glove down between the legs, which will lead the movement of the rest of his body down to the ground. The catcher should drop to his knees and attempt to block the ball with his chest whenever possible, looking to deaden the ball straight down in front of himself. The goal is to block the ball so that it lands as close to him as possible and doesn’t skip away or bounce to the side. After blocking the ball, time is of the essence. The catcher must gather himself, stand up quickly while staying low, and use both hands to gather the ball from the ground so that he is prepared to throw to the appropriate base if necessary.