

Basic Mechanics of Catching

- Tracking fundamental movements are required. This will directly lead into the teaching progressions of the catching fundamentals. It is absolutely imperative to be able to track an implement before progressing to catching.
- As with tracking, start with a balloon to allow the participant to make the hand and body adjustments that will encourage a successful catch.
- The hands reach for the balloon. The participant learns the timing of the squeeze of the hands to hold on to the balloon.
- Once success has been achieved with a balloon, the participant may drop a ball out of their hands and re-catch it off the bounce.
- Next, the participant may lightly toss a ball off a wall.
- The ball will move faster, but if the participant allows for a bounce or two, the extra time will give them a better opportunity to make the catch. The participant will eventually progress to no bounces.
- The participant continues to learn the timing of the 'reach' to catch the implement in accordance to the flight path and speed of the incoming implement. Much of this will be an extension from what was learned when tracking (refer to tracking airborne implements).
- Once the implement contacts the hands, the arms bend in toward the body to cushion the catch in toward the chest.
- The learner will require a stable balanced stance. The feet are shoulder width apart and widened in the direction of the incoming force, with an engaged core.
- The positioning of the hands:
 1. Catching at head height and above the pinkies will be up.
 2. Catching at chest height and below the pinkies will be down.
 3. Eventually, the hands will squeeze in the sides of the ball with the palms toward the ball or squeeze in the top and bottom of the ball.
- The participant eventually learns the touch perception ('feel') of the implement hitting the hands, the glove, the scoop, the lacrosse stick.
- As the speed and/or weight of the implement increases, the musculature required to make the catch (hands, forearms, core, legs, ground forces) increases. The participant learns to have the involved musculature engaged before the catch is made.

- With continued practice the participant learns the timing of the body's reaction to get to the flying implement. This will require 'reading' the flight path and speed of the implement.
- The body needs to get there early enough to be balanced and centered to the incoming implement.
- In the beginning, use slower moving objects (balloon or beach ball) which will give the participant the opportunity to learn the timing of the footwork.
- Effective footwork is established to ensure the participant catches the implement.
- Lead with the foot that is closest to the flight line of the implement, as opposed to crossing-over and going. Learn to utilize a strong push-off of the stationary or take-off foot, as opposed to a simple step and go.
- The participant learns to 'read' the trajectory of a ball thrown at an angle off a wall or the floor and react accordingly to make the catch. Eventually they learn the difference between tight-angled flight lines and wide angled flight lines.
- Anticipation of the rebound angle will afford the catcher far more success of catching an implement. The development of the skill of anticipation requires repeated practice.
- The participant eventually realizes the extent of their 'reach' to get to a flying implement. This includes knowing their personal speed and reaction time. This will include moving forward, backward, to their right, or to their left.
- Various heights and speeds of the ball will all factor in as 'tracking' variables, when calculating where the possible catch will be made.
- Learn to catch with either the right hand or the left hand. Begin with bouncing and catching the ball off the floor and then off the wall.
- The amount of finger squeeze and the backside movement of the arm at the critical instant of the one hand catch, will depend on the speed of the incoming ball.
- Practice with slow moving balls will develop the tracking and catching progressions of the one hand catch.
- The participant learns to maintain eye contact with the incoming implement right into the hand.