

## Footwork and Angles for Fielding

Players become stronger, faster, and more agile throughout the course of learning/playing the game of baseball. Even though our players become better athletes, a couple aspects get neglected along the way, footwork and proper angles to be exact. We will dig deeper into the importance of these two topics by examining how they can help your player(s) improve their fielding ability and range.

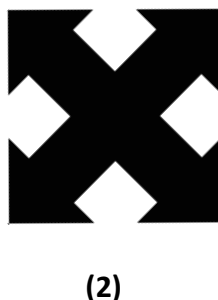
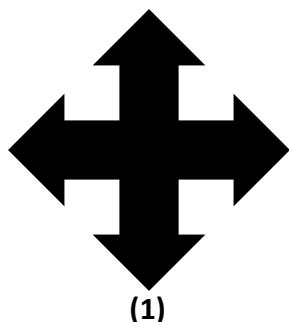
### Footwork

When a coach says an infielder has bad footwork, what are they talking about? First step(s), fielding the ball, on the throw, around a bag, feeding/turning a double play, or all the above? If the coach doesn't specify what he means by bad footwork, the player won't know what he needs to work on to get better. As coaches, we all strive to help our players get better. Improving their footwork through cone drills, ladders, and specific fielding drills will help in the short and long term.

Footwork is a vital part to fielding a groundball or fly ball and allows the player to keep their momentum moving towards their target. Obviously, the previous statement doesn't have complete merit when it comes to fielding a backhand. By having good footwork allows the player to get into fielding position and field the ball without having his/her feet stop and have to regain his momentum. One way to practice your fielding footwork and understand keeping your momentum moving towards your target is to balance are your right foot (right hand thrower), move your foot to the left and land as you are fielding the ball. This should help you feel the shifting of your momentum from right to left. By landing right foot and then left foot will allow you to get into a good throwing position. Take 5 minutes to work on footwork with your players and after a while you will see the benefits.

It is amazing to see how some athletes have good footwork and others do not, but that can contribute to how coordinated that player is. Think of a player or team that you have never seen before and just by watching them field a ground ball or fly ball and it is effortless and smooth. Most people just notice or say, "oh they are good." These are the types of players we want our kids to be when they are playing.

### Fielding on Correct Angles for Maximum Range



Looking at the images above are two different possible angles you can focus on fielding ground balls. If you were coaching, which image would you use to help facilitate the right angles you want your players to execute when fielding most ground balls? I am not going to assume which answer you chose since every coach has their own philosophies and beliefs. From experience, video analysis, and research, I have realized that having drills emphasizing on angles from image as a correlation of the proper angles for your infielders/outfielders to move in which allows for maximum range.

By focusing on different angles to approach the ball, allows your players to work on taking those angles and figure out how to get into a proper fielding position. When working with your players, I would recommend explaining, showing, and then let them execute the drill. By doing this, it allows the players to learn 3 different ways (auditory, visual, and kinesthetic).

While working on your footwork and proper angles, you'll want your fielders to take when fielding a groundball. It is important to stress the importance of having a quick first step and performing at game speed, but there may be times where you have your kids slow down to make sure their technique is correct (example – agility ladders). Below are drills that can help emphasizing footwork and proper angles. As a side note, there are a lot of ladder drills besides the ones listed below that can help improve your overall footwork.

Ladders	Cones	Drills	
Double trouble	3 Point Drill (with or w/out ball)	Hop Left, replace w/ right, field	1 <sup>st</sup> Step
River Dance	Balance 3 Cone Drill	Quiet Glove	Goalie Drill
2 feet in (lead w/ arm side)	Compass Drill	Count the Hops	Shuffle Drill
Ickey Shuffle	Pro Agility	Hip Turn Drill	Right Foot Balance
Carioca	Triangle Cone	Angled Cone Drill	Hop Back and Forth, Field
Centipede		Hat in Mouth	Gain Past the Line

Double Trouble – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jk4sy31PD1E>

River Dance – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FbHmU6qHF6Q>

Ickey Shuffle – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MHNkuGBZ9YQ>

Carioca – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BNCoPtTfHEI>

Centipede - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nBGC-3yVHw>