



THE INFIELDER'S CHEAT SHEET

Step 1 to fielding like a pro is to master these 7 insider tips

❑ Tip #1: The Secret is to Use Your Feet

It may look like smooth fielders have soft hands, but it is actually their feet that allow their hands to work so freely.

The better your footwork, the easier your glove work becomes and the smoother it looks. Once you stop your feet, your risk of letting the baseball dictate what is going to happen skyrockets.

When your feet shut down, your hands follow, and your body tends to get stiff. So keeping your feet moving and taking small steps is a huge key to being a successful infielder. This is something I will explain in more detail in the following articles on fielding.

❑ Tip #2: Position your Glove for Maximum Benefit

Another MUST for fielding ground balls is to take your glove hand and push the heel of your wrist toward the baseball (see pictures below).

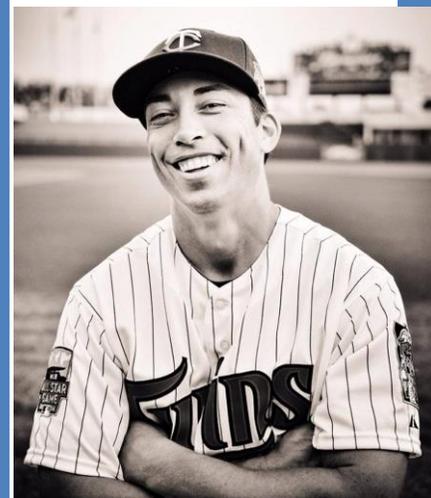
A. Wrong



B. Correct



"If you hit it to him you're out. That's the bottom line. He's really consistent and he has range and he can do some things." – Joe Girardi, Manager for the New York Yankees



About the Author

Doug Bernier debuted in the Major Leagues in 2008 with the Colorado Rockies at 2nd base. Known as an infield specialist, Bernier has consistently maintained one of the highest defensive fielding percentages throughout his 14 year career playing professional baseball. While primarily a shortstop, Doug has also played 2nd and 3rd base at the Major League level.

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Ideally you want it more perpendicular than parallel to the ground. This allows you to use your entire glove. It will also prevent balls that take a little hop from rolling up your arm.

To illustrate, glove position (A) is NOT ideal, while (B) is much better because it lets you use the entire surface area of the glove, and it doesn't allow balls that take late hops roll up your arm.

You'd be surprised how many fielders are never taught this, but it helps a lot when the baseball takes a late tricky hop.

Tip #3 - Keep it natural

When fielding a ground ball, do not make your glove hand cross your body.

It is NOT ideal to catch the baseball in the center of your body or to your right side, but rather more to the side of your glove hand. In other words, the ball, your glove, and your left pectoral should be in a straight line.

This allows your glove to work more freely in front of you, since it doesn't have to slide across your body. When the left hand is trying to work on the right side of the body, people tend to get tense. This is when mistakes happen.

So, rather than moving your arm across your body to get the baseball, use your feet to get into position so your arm doesn't have to reach across.

Tip #4 - Keep your hands extended

This is for two reasons: (a) the ball and glove are always in your line of vision (!!!!); and (b) on a bad hop, you still have room to bring your glove into your body to make the play.

Tip #5 - Relax your glove hand

Relax your glove hand while fielding a ball. All of your reflexes are quicker when you are relaxed. Also, the ball seems to stick in your glove easier without tensing up and fighting it.

Tip #6 - Start low

With a short hop from a throw or a hard hit ball, start with your glove on the ground and work up to field this ball. These are very difficult plays, but it is easier and quicker to move up than down.

Tip #7 - A Four Seam Grip is a must for an infielder

Every time you throw a baseball, get a four-seam grip on the ball. This means your index and middle finger are across the horseshoe.

No matter where on the ball your fingers are, you are never more than a quarter-turn of the ball away from getting that ideal 4-seam grip. This may seem difficult, but all infielders do this.

This grip keeps the ball flying straight and with the proper backspin, and will help your throws to be more accurate. If you only get a two-seam, one-seam, or no seam grip, the ball will most likely sink, run, or dive. So work on getting a four-seam grip every time.

Looking for more free tips from the pros?

Each of these tips will be talked about in more detail in the following free defensive articles.

1. Part 2, [Routine Ground Balls](#)
2. Part 3, Proper fielding mechanics for [Backhand Plays](#)
3. Part 4, Proper fielding mechanics for [Forehand Ground Balls](#)
4. Part 5, Fielding mechanics for [Plays on-the-run, and slow rollers](#)
5. [Best infield gloves](#)

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