

## 3. FOOTWORK



**Break the Knee**



**Back Leg Under**



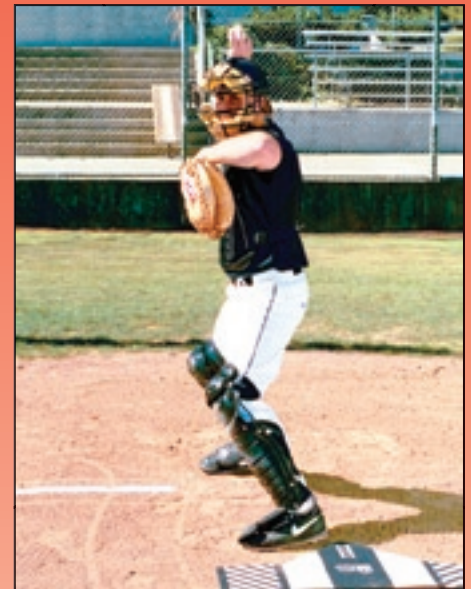
**Back Leg Drop**



**Back Leg Clear**



**(left foot lead)**



**(Jump Shift)**

Proper footwork enables more balls to be caught, and puts the catcher in a position to effectively throw the ball to any base quickly.

Footwork is developed systematically when worked on regularly by a player during practice.

Coaches should teach skills and monitor players closely during each drill.

## 3. FOOTWORK

### Skill Sequence Three: FOOTWORK

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**BREAK THE KNEE.** The catching knee needs to break for a pitch that is going to be received in the middle of the plate. The breaking of the glove-side knee, a slight turn of that knee into the middle of the body, is going to place the weight heavily on the ball of that foot.

**BACK LEG UNDER.** Breaking the catching knee enables the back leg to move underneath and slightly towards the pitcher with the toe outward. This critical 1-2 movement of, one breaking the knee, and two the back leg under, enables a catcher to quickly “jump shift” and be in a position to throw the ball quickly after catching it.

**BACK LEG DROP.** Additionally, the back leg can drop, after breaking the knee, when a throw is going to first base. When the back heel drops, it is effective for the catcher to quickly square the shoulders to first base in one quick movement. This enables the catcher to throw the ball to first base with speed and accuracy.

**DRILL TIP:** *The coach may throw balls down the middle so that the catcher practices getting the back leg under quickly for throws to second base. It is important for the coach to throw the ball down the middle and have the catcher work on the back leg drop for throws to first base.*

**BACK LEG CLEAR.** On these throws, the back foot is actually moving forward. The back heel is moving forward with the toe out as the ball is caught. This enables a catcher to throw the ball to third base in front of the batter without worrying about throwing over the top of them.

**JUMP SHIFT.** The Jump Shift is a very quick and deliberate movement into proper throwing position applying all of the FOOTWORK sequences.

*Coaching Comment* When the ball is thrown inside, the first step is taken slightly towards the ball with the left foot. Once the left foot has landed, the right foot drives towards second base for a throw to second. If the ball is inside, the catcher must make a drop step with the right foot enabling the throw to third base while getting quickly positioned behind the batter.

**DRILL TIP:** *It is important that the coach delivers pitches inside and calls either “second base” or “third base”. These situations have the catcher either stepping forward to throw to second or backwards to throw to third base. This footwork drill will assist catchers to improve critical footwork necessary for catching and defensive play.*



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