

## How To Catch a Football

### 3 step guide to catching a football

Not every pass is the same—some are thrown directly to you, some to the side. Sometimes you're facing the quarterback to catch the ball, and other times you're running full speed downfield. In every scenario, there are basic fundamentals you can use to successfully make the catch. Here are three steps you can take to learn how to catch a football:

**Align your body:** The easiest way to catch the ball is to square your shoulders and frame your body so that you're facing the quarterback. Of course, that isn't always possible during a game. Whether you're catching a low ball to the side or a Hail Mary over your head, you always want to focus on the ball's trajectory and align your body so that you're directly in the path of the ball.

**Hand positioning:** Your hand positioning will change depending where the ball is thrown. For example, if a pass is above your waist, you should extend your arms and create a diamond shape with your pointer fingers together. You always want to use this hand positioning for high balls, even if the ball is thrown to your side. For low passes, cup your hands in front of you with your pinky fingers together. Again, maintain this form for low passes whether it's thrown directly to you or to the side. Remember to catch the ball with your fingers, not your palms. Keep your elbows slightly bent and use big, soft hands to grip the ball.

**Tuck the ball:** After you catch the ball, you need to make sure you protect it from defenders. You can use your hand, forearm, and elbow to firmly press the ball and tuck it close and tight into your

body. As you run your route, keep the ball tucked high and tight to best keep it protected.

## Drills that teach how to properly catch a football

### High and low pass drill

**Setup:** All you need for this football catch drill is two players and a ball. They should line up about 10 yards apart from each other to start, and gradually get farther away as the drill continues.

**Directions:** You can't underestimate practicing the fundamentals and this basic football catching drill really gets back to basics. Two players practice throwing and receiving the ball with proper hand positioning, while playing catch. First, they should focus on high passes thrown directly to each other and then to the side. The player catching the ball needs to create a diamond shape with their hands and maintain this positioning with every catch. Then, after several throws, they change to low passes, also throwing straight and to the side. For low passes, players need to focus on cupping their hands with their pinkies together. To make this drill more advanced, the players can distance themselves farther apart from each other and throw harder.

**Tips:** If the ball is bouncing off of your hands, you're catching it with hard palms. You want to use your fingertips to grip the ball as it's thrown to you. It's also easier to catch the ball when your elbows are slightly bent.

### Over the shoulder drill

**Setup:** Many routes, like post and corner routes, force receivers to catch the ball over their shoulder while running. This drill helps receivers practice proper hand placement and to keep their eyes

on the ball's trajectory. This football catching drill requires two players and a ball—that's it!

**Directions:** Two players stand about 10 yards apart from each other, one as a receiver and the other as the quarterback. The receiver will begin moving forward, looking over their shoulder, as the quarterback throws to a designated position in front of them. The receiver must successfully catch the ball while continuing to move forward and tuck it in afterward. As you get more comfortable catching the ball this way, you can increase your speed and distance with the quarterback. After several throws, the receiver should switch sides and practice catching the ball over both shoulders. As an added bonus, this is a chance for quarterbacks to improve their accuracy by repeatedly throwing to a [designated position](#).

**Tips:** The key to successfully catching a football over your shoulder is to wait until the last minute to put your hands up. The defender guarding you will also have their back to the ball while running and you don't want to give them any time to block the ball. You also want to be running at full speed and doing that with your hands out can easily slow you down.