

# Backyard Tip: Teaching the Block Step Featuring Andrew Solomon

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Andrew Solomon, Manager of the 2015 Little League Baseball® Southwest Region Champions from Pearland East Little League, knows the importance of fundamentals. Behind solid play both defensively and offensively, his team advanced all the way to the United States Championship game.

This month, Mr. Solomon describes the “block step” which is the foundation for any young Little Leaguer® learning how to accurately and consistently throw a ball to a teammate or base.

For this drill, all you will need is your child’s hat or visor, their fielding glove, game shoes/cleats, and a baseball, softball, or tennis ball. Doing this drill in an open, grassy, or dirt area is preferable, but it can be done on a paved surface.

## Balanced Starting Position

With your Little Leaguer® in an athletic stance, stand facing each other, approximately 10 feet apart.

## Making the Turn

Begin to illustrate turning the right foot (for a right-hander) or the left foot (for a left-hander) so that the “block foot” and leg are at a 90-degree angle to the “step foot.” The player should focus on the

foot and leg turning and planting on a 90-degree angle, with their instep facing toward you.

## Pointing the Shoulder

Executing a proper block step naturally rotates the hips and torso so that the non-throwing shoulder is pointed in the direction of the intended target. Once the rotation of the block step, hips, and torso become consistent and comfortable, add a ball to the drill.

With ball in hand, go through the steps, concluding with the extension of the throwing arm toward the intended target. Do NOT let your Little Leaguer release the ball. Continue to work on the block step, with the proper leg and torso turn, and conclude with shoulder point toward the target. When these fundamentals are mastered, then you can have your player deliver the ball to you.