

## GRIPPING THE BALL

(Emd)

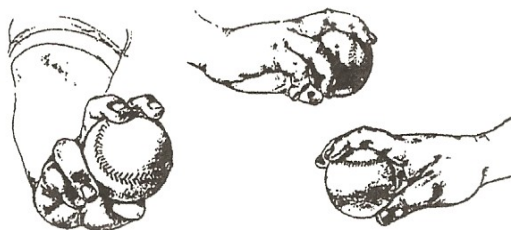
### A Special Training Tip

Squeezing a tennis ball in the palm of your hand will strengthen the muscles in your wrist and forearm. You can carry a tennis ball practically everywhere and squeezing it is a quite and hardly noticeable way to improve your game. Do it while you're watching TV, walking around, riding the school bus, or just about anywhere. Your mom will appreciate it, however, if you don't squeeze it at the dinner table.

## IT ALL STARTS WITH THE BALL

### THE GRIP

You should grip the ball exactly the same way every time you throw. Put your index and middle fingers across the wide seams, and hold the ball with the inside edge of your thumb on the opposite side. There should be a space between your index and middle fingers about the width of your index finger.



Your ring finger and pinkie finger should rest on the side of the ball. Wrap your index and middle fingers over the top of the ball, holding it with equal pressure from the base of your fingers to the tips. You should be able to see a space between the palm of your hand and the ball. Even if your hands are small you should be able to make that space.

Don't try to crush the ball. Keep your hand relaxed. You should use this grip every time you throw the ball.

### A Special Practice Tip

To make quick, accurate throws it's important for you to get the ball in the proper grip as fast as you can. To practice getting the grip quickly after you make the catch, throw the ball straight up a few feet and catch it in your glove. As soon as the ball hits your mitt, take it out in the proper throwing grip, ready to throw. But there's no need to throw it during this exercise.

The more you practice, the less you'll have to think about getting the proper grip for throwing. And the less you have to think about it the faster you'll be able to do it, which means your throws will be quicker and, since you won't have to rush them, more accurate.