

SLIDING

(Emj)

REMEMBER, IF THE DEFENSIVE PLAYER HAS THE BALL AND IS WAITING TO MAKE THE TAG – YOU MUST SLIDE

THE STEAL

The steal is on, so you're ready to run as soon as the ball reaches the batter. If you aren't using the sprinter's start, keep your left foot pressed against the side of the bag, with your weight evenly distributed on the balls of your feet. You know you're going to slide before the play starts.

RUNNING

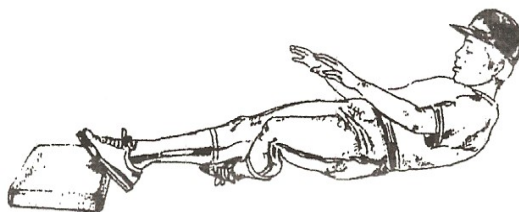
The pitcher throws the ball and it reaches the batter. Push off the base with a crossover motion by stepping with your left foot in front of your right foot, and run at full speed toward second. Don't look to see if the catcher is throwing the ball because that will slow you down. No matter what happens, you're going to slide straight into the bag.

A CONTROLLED FALL

About ten feet before you reach the base begin your slide. You may start with either foot, but most players find it more comfortable to start with the foot opposite the hand they throw with. If you're right-handed start your slide by striding with your left leg. If you looked at your slide from above, your legs would resemble the number 4. If that doesn't feel right to you, try tucking your right leg under. Both ways are correct.

Sliding is nothing more than falling to the ground while running, but you have to fall under control. It is the fastest way to get to the base without overrunning. Good sliding is a potent offense for your team.

SLIDING



Slide on your backside and lower back. Keep your head and shoulders forward, and watch the bag all the way in. Slide straight into the base, and keep your hands up, off the ground, so you don't cut them.

When your foot hits the bag, absorb the shock by bending your knee. You should come to a stop while touching the base.

You've probably seen some big-leaguer base stealers slide headfirst into second or third. Headfirst sliding can get you to the bag a little faster, but not only is it against the rules in Little League, you stand a much greater chance of getting hurt. It's much more fun to play than to have to sit out games because you're injured. Let's leave headfirst sliding to the pros.

A Special Practice Tip

The best way to learn to slide is to start in the outfield, your backyard, or any grass when it's a little wet. The grass cushions your fall and helps you learn not to jump into the air when you start your slide. It's better, too, if you don't wear your shoes when you start. Once you're confident sliding won't hurt, move on to a baseball diamond and keep practicing.