

## PLAYING SECOND BASE

The second baseman is usually thought of as the team's spark plug. Among a team's smallest players, what they lack in size second basemen must make up in volume. They lead the infield chatter and cheer their teammates on. Second basemen need to have quick feet to get in position to cover first base on bunts and second base on steals. Second basemen don't need to have as strong an arm as shortstops. Their pivot on the double play, however, is more difficult because they're moving away from first.

### BUNT COVERAGE

It is a bunt situation. You're in your stance, positioned about even with the baseline. Although you would usually cover second base on a steal, because it's a bunt situation you cheat a step or two toward first.

When the batter squares around to bunt, you should immediately run to first base. Stand with your left foot on the ground, pressed against the field side of the base. Keep your shoulders square to the fielder throwing the ball. Make a big target with your glove about chest-high and be ready to take the throw.

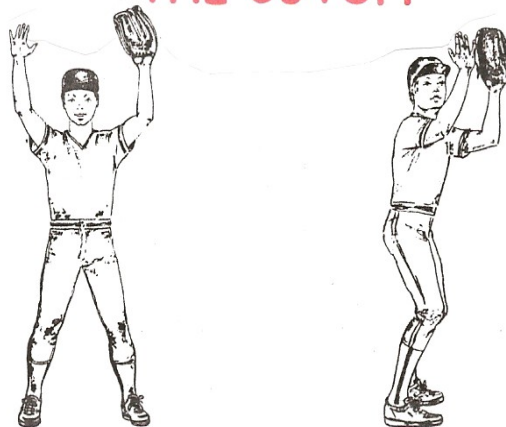
If the throw goes to the shortstop covering second, be prepared for a double play relay by squaring your body toward second base, with your glove as a target out in front of you.



### POP-UPS

The second baseman covers the area from the pitcher's mound on out to right center field. The second baseman is also responsible for the area behind first base, all the way into foul territory. Go for pop-ups into the outfield, but listen for the outfielder calling you off. Move away from the ball to your right if the outfielder is going to make the catch.

### THE CUTOFF



You are the relay man on balls hit to right or right center field. As the ball goes into the outfield, run out to short right, or right center, and line yourself up between the ball and the base to which the fielder's

Hold your hands up high over your head so that it's easier for the outfielder to see you. As the outfielder throws the ball, turn your body so that your throwing shoulder points at him. Catch the ball in front of this shoulder with both hands, get the ball in the proper grip, and you'll be able to make a quicker throw.

Listen to directions from the shortstop and other fielders. Since the play is behind you, they'll tell you where to relay the ball. If there is no play, the shortstop will tell you to run the ball back into the infield. On balls to left and left center you cover second base. Call out to the shortstop to make the play.

## TURNING THE DOUBLE PLAY

When there's a runner on first and less than two outs you must be ready to turn the double play. If the ball is hit to you, your job will be to feed the ball to the shortstop, who will step on second and throw to first. If the ball is hit to the left side of the infield you'll make the pivot at second and throw to first. There are a number of different ways to execute each, depending on the situation.

### THE FEED

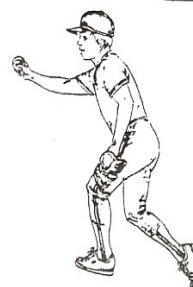
On a ground ball hit to you in your normal double play position, use a regular feed. As you field the ball get the proper grip, turn your body toward second base, and throw the ball with a short, sidearm motion.

If a double play grounder is hit to your left, use the drop-step feed. Field the ball and, as you get it in the proper grip for throwing, take a step backward with your right foot, so you face second base.

Bring the ball back and toss it sidearm toward the shortstop covering second base.

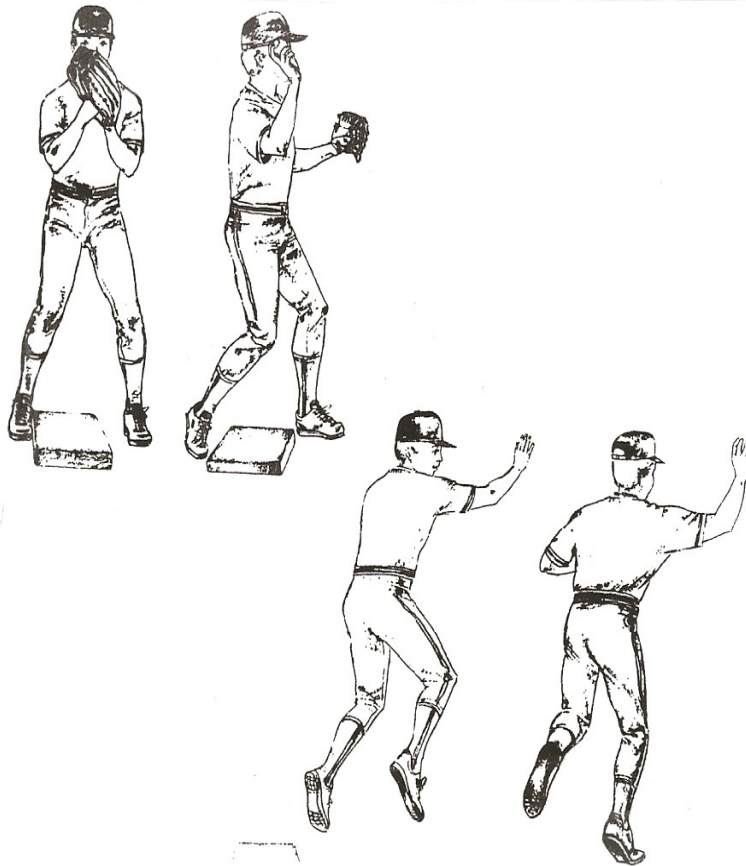
If the ball is hit up the middle you'll be close to the base when you field it. Use the underhand feed. As the shortstop approaches the bag, flip the ball underhand above the base. Follow through by moving after the ball toward second base, but don't get in the way of the play. If you don't follow through the ball may go straight up in the air and you won't get either out.

On all feeds you want to lead the shortstop with the throw by tossing the ball chest-high right over the base. If the feed is good, the shortstop will catch the ball just before he steps on the base and will be in good position to make a strong, accurate throw to first for the double play.



### THE PIVOT

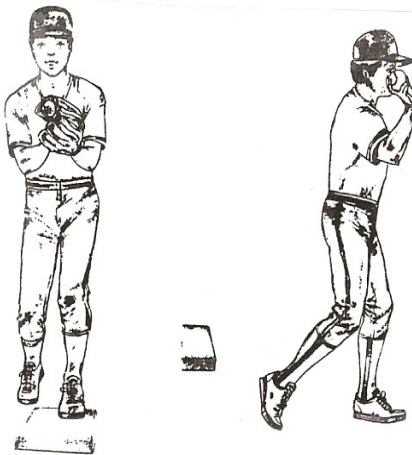
There are a number of different ways to make the pivot at second base on a double play. If you can get to the bag and be ready to catch the ball. Make sure one foot is touching the base.



As the ball comes into your mitt, turn your body and get the ball in the proper throwing grip. Release the ball to first, then hop up and over the sliding runner.

Use the across-the-bag pivot when you have to hurry because the runner is almost to second. It helps you get out of the way faster.

As the ball is hit, immediately begin moving toward second base. Take a few small, shuffling steps as the fielder gathers in the ball and throws it, so that you reach the bag at the same time as the ball.



Step on the base with your left foot as you catch the ball. With your right foot take one quick step



On a throw from the third baseman, which will be overhand and hard, you will want to use the backing-off-the bag pivot.

As the ball is hit you should immediately begin moving toward second base. Just as you do when you use the across-the-bag pivot, when you reach the bag put your left foot on top and make a big target for the fielder to throw to.

When the ball hits your glove, step backward with your left foot, push off your right foot, and make the peg to first. The advantage to this pivot is that you are able to catch the hard throw and make your throw to first base in a single, smooth motion. It takes a lot of practice, but you'll turn the double play much faster if you can do it.

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