

Guidelines for Catching

When catching, you *always* want to be using two hands when possible. Unless the disc is way off to one side, or you are laying out to catch it, you can probably use two hands. Even when you are jumping to catch a disc, try to use two hands; if you have boxed someone out well, don't let them back in by going up with one hand, seal them out by going up with two hands such that they will probably have to foul you if they want to touch the disc.



By using two hands, you don't give a defender an easy path to the disc.

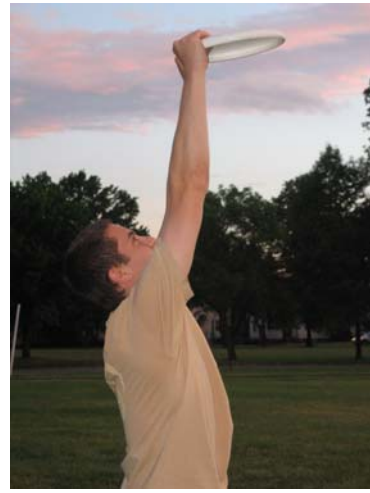


By using only one hand, you lower your chances of catching the disc and give the defender an easier path to the disc.

Another thing that you must practice doing is watching the disc all the way until it reaches your hands. When you are playing catch with a ball, you probably stop looking at the ball when it gets to be 2-3 feet in front of you. Well, a disc is not a ball. A disc does not follow that same trajectory that our brains have evolved to detect, and a disc is affected by wind by orders of magnitude more than a ball. A disc can change its flight dramatically in those last 2-3 feet and if you are not watching it, you will not be able to adjust. Watching the disc until it reaches your hands means that if you are making a catch below your shoulders, you may have bend your neck down in order to continue to look at the disc. While this may look and feel weird and unnecessary at first, it is something that will help our team reduce turnovers. Make sure that you watch the disc when jumping/skying as well. A common reason that people will stop watching the disc before it reaches them is that they want to set themselves for the next throw, *but you have to catch the disc before you can throw it!*



Although it may feel awkward, watching the disc all the way into your hands will lead to many fewer drops.



It is also important to watch the disc when jumping for it.

When catching a disc that is between about **mid-thigh and nipple-shoulder height**, you will probably want to “clap” catch the disc. This involves placing one hand above the other (it doesn’t really matter which hand is higher, just use whatever is more comfortable to you) and clapping them together to catch the disc. You don’t need to start with your hands very far apart; approximately six inches to a foot should be fine. When the disc is at this height, do not “claw” catch this disc with your thumbs up, or catch it by grabbing the rim on each side of the disc.



A standard “clap” catch before catching.



A standard “clap” catch after catching.

Insert picture of (bad) thumbs up side catch



You don't need to start with your hands this far apart.

Insert picture of (bad) thumbs up claw catch

When catching a disc that is **below mid-thigh height**, you will want to “claw” catch the disc with your *thumbs up*. Make sure that your hands are behind the disc and not to the side of the disc. When the disc is this low, you will not want to “clap” catch the disc. It will be difficult to get your lower hand underneath the disc and your upper hand will end up pushing the disc at the ground.



A standard lower “claw” catch.



A close up of the grip on a lower “claw” catch.



You do not want your hands on the side of the disc like in this picture. You want them behind the disc.



Catching with your thumbs down when the disc is low is very awkward and will result in drops.

Insert pic of (bad) clap catch (before and turnover)

When catching a disc that is **above nipple-shoulder height**, you will want to “claw” catch the disc with your *thumbs down*. Make sure that your hands are behind the disc and not to the side of the disc. When the disc is this high, you will not want to “clap” catch the disc. It will be difficult to get your upper hand above the disc and the disc will probably end up bouncing off of your arm. At this height, you might get tempted to jump so that the disc is at your midsection and then “clap” catch the disc. This is not recommended, because leaving your feet is never a good idea unless it is absolutely necessary. When you no longer have contact with the ground, it becomes difficult for you to make last second adjustments.



A standard upper “claw” catch.



You do not want your hands on the side of the disc like in this picture. You want them behind the disc.



Catching with your thumbs up when the disc is high is very awkward and will result in drops.

Insert pic of (bad) clap catch

Insert pic of (bad) jump clap catch

Something that you can do when playing is to judge how much pressure your defender is putting on you. You should think about this after the throw has gone up, but before you have to commit yourself to a particular catching technique. Something I would particularly like to emphasize is using senses other than vision to accomplish this. If your defender is behind you, you shouldn't turn around to see where he is, but you can use audio clues and possibly touch to get a sense of how close he is. If your defender is not putting a lot of pressure on you, then you can make a catch as described above. If he is putting a lot of pressure on you, you will have to catch the disc farther out in front of you. This may mean using one of the "claw" catches in place of the clap catch to gain extra reach. A general rule is that the farther out in front you are catching the disc the closer to your midsection you can use the "claw" technique.

Insert pics of claw catches at midsection far in front