

Intro to Throwing

Throwing is the defining skill of ultimate. It's the first thing that distinguishes ultimate from other sports for newcomers, and is a large part of how players & teams differentiate themselves. This is because there are countless ways to throw a frisbee and while most throws can be neatly classified into a handful of distinct throwing types--two of which are almost used exclusively in competition, backhand and forehand--each type of throw can have many variations based on distance, velocity, spin, curve, release point, throwing-hand, pitch, etc... Additionally, the individuality of every person's body results in every player having a different ideal throwing form.

Unlike its counterpart skill of catching, ultimate players at every level rightfully spend a large amount of their practice time honing their throwing abilities. However, what throws players choose to practice and how they go about practicing them can vary wildly. Even among coaches, there are differing opinions on how to teach new players to throw.

Excel Ultimate's throwing introduction video is a great tutorial showing the basic concepts behind the backhand and forehand.

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/INQexzgzvw4?end=221>

Learning To Throw

Throwing a Frisbee is a complex motion that involves your entire body. However, the first hurdle that any player has to overcome when learning a new throw is the unfamiliar sensation of holding the frisbee in a new throwing grip. Throwing practice is going to be much less effective if you do not feel like you cannot comfortably hold the frisbee with the desired throwing grip. Therefore I recommend players trying to learn a new throw in the minimum number of throwing sessions to find time when they have a free hand--such as while watching TV, walking on the street, sitting as a passenger--to hold a disc firmly in the new throwing grip and practice varying the angles at which the disc is held. Once a player feels comfortable holding the disc in a certain way, they can focus on adjusting other aspects of their throwing motion during throwing sessions.

Most players when learning to throw will benefit from using mechanical cues to simplify the overall throwing motion. A cue is a simple mechanical task that a player can focus on, such as snapping their wrist or dropping their shoulder, that will inform the mechanics of the rest of the throw. Focusing on one or two cues will reduce the processing time needed when performing a new throw and makes throwing under pressure less overwhelming. There are many cues for every type of throw and different cues work for different players. A player may even find that the cue that works best for them will change between throwing sessions. The specific pages for each kind of throw will introduce some basic cues that new players can experiment with.

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