WICKET KEEPING BASICS
Setup

• Wicket keeping is one of the most underrated yet difficult arts in cricket. It requires excellent Hand-Eye co-ordination combined with testing degrees of fitness and concentration.

• The keeper is the engine room of the team making poor deliveries and wayward returns look good and offering **tactical advice** to the captain based on his unique view of proceedings.

• When spirits flog during long partnerships he must give the side hope with an **encouraging word** as he is usually the only man on either team involved in every delivery of the innings.

• The following advice will prepare the wicketkeeper technically to handle the most difficult of pitches and the ever present threat of being unsighted by the batsman's body when standing up.

• Efficient wicket keeping is one of the greatest challenges in cricket. If you have someone prepared to endure this often thankless task treasure and nurture him.
The wicketkeeper should adopt a comfortable, balanced low crouch so that he can rise with the bounce of the ball. His feet should be shoulder-width apart with the weight on the balls of the feet. His hands should rest comfortably together on the ground palms forward with the gloves open presenting the largest possible catching surface. The **head should be still** and the eyes level focused on the impending delivery. The wicketkeeper should have a clear view of the bowler, directly facing his delivery path. This means that he will stand wider for someone bowling left-arm
Feet shoulder-width apart

- To pace bowling he should stand in a position outside the off-stump where he can take a good length delivery comfortably at waist-height as it begins to drop after bouncing. Standing up he should crouch with his left leg just outside the off-stump (for a right handed batsman), with his gloves resting just behind the bowling crease. The keeper may come up to the stumps for medium-pace bowling to put pressure on the batsman or to discourage him from batting out of his crease to change the length of the bowling.

- The wicketkeeper always moves into straight line, head steady, parallel to the bowling crease with knees flexed. Standing back, he will rise with the bounce off the ball, employing of **cross over step** or **shuffle** footwork. He should make sufficient ground to be able to take the ball on the inside hip.

- On the stumps it is even more crucial that he rise with the bounce of the ball. It is important that he gets on idea of the height of the bounce and extent of the turn for a leg-side take. He will be unsighted temporarily by the batsman's body and should move to the leg-side at the last possible moment. Having quickly assessed where the ball will arrive. The weight is on his right leg as he takes the first of two quick steps in to shuffle movement to **finish outside** leg stump. Gloves are the last to move and they will sweep low in the case off half-volley rising with the ball.
Glove work

- The hands should move together, gloves cupped with palms **outwards** and fingers **pointed** down, upwards or to the side - 90 degrees to (and never of ) the ball.

- The "long" catching technique should be employed with arms extended (but elbows flexed) in front of the **body and eyes** behind the ball.

- Retracting the elbows on contact takes the speed off the ball and cushions the impact with "soft" hands.

- The hands are brought back post the inside hip for a regular take and the eyes never leave the ball. For the awkward delivery arriving chest-height he keeper should **flex** his knees and use the reverse cup method of catching taking the ball back over the shoulder. He should never step backwards.
Glove work..

• Up on the stumps, it is vital that the keeper expects to take every delivery. He should not assume that the batsman will hit the ball nor be distracted by the swing of the bat and he should not assume that the ball will bounce at a comfortable height. As always. he should rise with the ball, backside before gloves.

• He should watch the bowler's hand intently for variations and the seam rather than the ball in flight. This will enable him to predict the path of the ball.

• It is important that the keeper allow the ball to come to him for a soft take rather than snatching at it in his haste to complete a stumping. At the take, the body weight transfers towards the stumps and the wicket is broken with both hands if possible.

• Once the batsman goes onto the back foot, a stumping is not on and the keeper should focus peripherally on the outside edge of the bat.
Glove work..

- This will enable him to adjust his gloves for the possibility of a thick outside edge. His weight should transfer slightly onto the right foot and gloves may move laterally depending on the bounce and turn.
- The wicketkeeper must set the standard for the fielding side. It starts with preparation in which it is recommended he tape every joint of each finger for support. He should wear a long-sleeved shirt tucked in at all times and be first in position for the start of every over. Where possible he should take returns on the full and always return the ball to bowler or fielder on the full to help maintain its condition.
Glove work..

• When standing back he should move to the stumps habitually when a stroke is played so as to be in a position to help effect a run-out or discourage a run.

• He should call fieldsmen (by name), indicating which end to return the ball.
• When taking returns, he will be **behind** the stumps or occasionally to the side (but never with his back to the stumps) so that he can effect a run-out or allow for a direct hit.

• He should stay low and rise with the ball for bounced returns and those on the **half-volley**. The keeper is sometimes in a position to effect a run-out on his own and should practice **whipping** off a glove while chasing the ball and throwing down the stumps at either end.
Thank you

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