



BASEBALL PITCHING DRILLS

PITCHING MECHANICS

Break pitching mechanics into 7 steps:

1. Step: Have players step back, or sideways, off the pitching rubber to begin wind-up. This is a small, rhythmic movement. It should not throw the pitcher off balance.

2. Turn: The foot that's still on the rubber turns 90 degrees so it's parallel with rubber. This foot angle is important to give pitchers proper direction to their target.

3. Leg Kick: Front leg comes up at least waist-high. At first, have players stop at the top of their leg kick and "balance". Then introduce them to the idea of moving forward as their leg comes up.

4. Separation: At the same time a pitcher starts coming down from the top of their leg kick, their hands separate. This separation timing is important, and is the beginning of their arm path.

5. Strike point: When a pitcher's foot lands, or strikes, it should be directly in line with their target, and their arms should be exactly half-way through their paths. Front side should be "blocked" at 90 degrees. Back arm should be up at roughly 90 degrees. Hand angle on ball should be neutral. Front side is directional. Backside is powerful.

6. Release point: As release, pitchers should sync'd up, front side is firm, back side is clearing through release. Hand angle is on top of ball. Release point is directly in front of eyes.

7. Finish: After release, pitchers back foot release from the pitching rubber and land next to stride foot on a comfortable fielding position.



BASEBALL PITCHING DRILLS

PITCHING DRILLS

Here are some essential PITCHING drills that keep your players active, engaged, and working on pitching fundamentals. Adjusting for younger or older players put these in your program and watch your pitcher progress.

1) 1, 2, 3 Drill: Have players stop at the top of their leg kick and balance. Have players stop at the strike point. Have players stop at their release point. Make sure pitchers in proper position at each of these critical points in their delivery. Teaches players proper isolated positioning.

2) Rhythm Drill: Have players spread their feet out wide. A pitcher's stride should be equal to their height. Have them rock back and forth 4 times starting forward, and throw on 4. Teaches players how to activate their lower half and gives them good direction to their target.

3) Separation Drill: Have players swing their arms in opposite directions. There should be no tension. And have them throw on 3. Teaches players proper separation tempo and timing. You can add a stride.

4) Towel drill: Have players go through their delivery with a towel in the in their throwing hand instead of a ball. Teaches players proper arm action.

5) Reverse Drill: Have players begin at their release point, or finishing point, reverse through their wind-up, then deliver the pitch. Teaches players release point and how to "finish" the pitch.

6) No release Drill: Have players work on throwing without releasing the ball holding either multiple baseballs or weighted baseballs.

Note: For general arm strength: rubber bands, "no release" drills, and long toss.



TRANSFER STEP DRILL

Purpose

Drill can be run anywhere on the field. You need a pitcher and either a catcher or net for him to throw to.

Drill Setup

- Pitcher works on perfecting transfer step and pivot step.

How it Works

1. Pitcher takes a transfer step straight back.
2. He then lifts his front foot, turns it parallel and puts it back down – “put it in the hole.”
3. He then repeats the process.
4. The ball is not thrown in this drill. This drill is focused on footwork and the player developing the proper muscle memory for both the transfer and pivot steps.
5. Complete 10-15 repetitions.



Coaching Tips

- Make sure pitcher is maintaining control. A transfer step that is too big will throw the pitcher out of balance and have him leaning backward.
- Pivot with the entire foot on the ground not just the heel or the toe.
- Pitcher should be developing a rhythm that is comfortable for him.
- Make sure pitcher is picking up the front foot so the pivot is not on the heel.

STRIDE FOOT DRILL

Purpose

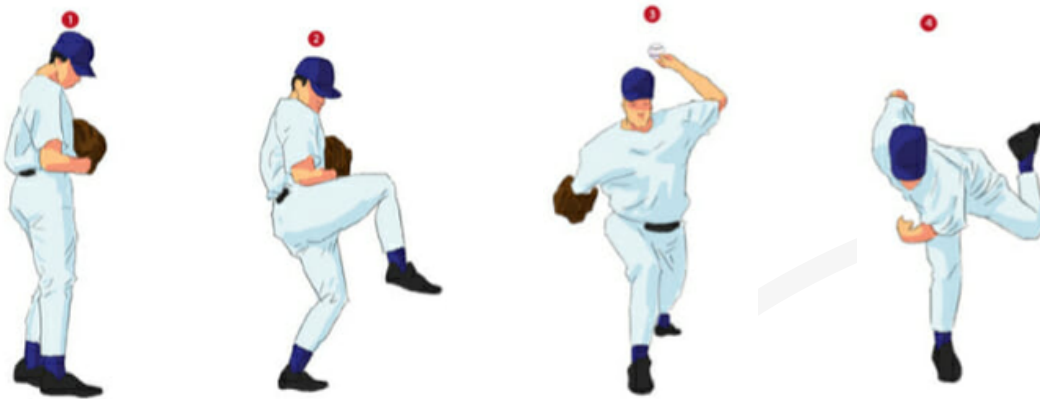
Pitchers work on taking a proper stride step.

Drill Setup

- Pitcher lines up anywhere on the field. They have a glove and a ball.

How it Works

1. Player starts from the stretch.
2. They shift their weight onto their push off foot and balance on it as they raise their opposite leg.
3. They then take a stride step forward and simulate a throw.
4. They hold the throw follow-through. Then go back and repeat the drill.
5. Drill should also then be run from the wind-up.



Coaching Tips

- On the stride, pitchers should land on the inside ball of their foot and maintain good balance.
- The goal is for the pitcher to be able to hang in the follow-through position for three seconds.

STRIDE DRILL

Purpose

Pitchers work on improving their balance on their front leg.

Drill Setup

- Pitchers line up anywhere on the field.
- They have a glove and a ball.



Starting position.

Simulated throw.

Finishing position.

How it Works

1. Players start from the stride position.
2. First, they simply shift their weight from the inside of the back foot to the inside of the front leg. They do this repeatedly to get a feel for proper weight shifting.
3. Next, they simulate a throw and hold the follow-through.

Coaching Tips

- The weight shifts at the beginning of this drill are important because they teach the pitcher to load up and then take the weight forward – when a player is doing this part of the drill stress “inside to inside”.
- On the simulated throw, pitcher should keep weight on inside of front foot. Front knee should finish inside the throwing elbow. Toes should be down flat against the ground.

PUSH OFF DRILL

Purpose

Pitchers work on balancing on their push off foot.

Set Up

- Pitchers line up anywhere on the field. They have a glove and a ball.



Starting from the stretch position.

Balancing on the push off foot.

Instructions

1. Players start from the stretch.
2. They shift their weight onto their push off foot and balance on it as they raise their front leg.
3. They hold their position balancing on their push off foot with their front leg in the air until coach says down.

Coaching Tips

- To begin, pitchers should be turning the push off foot “toe ahead of heel.”
- They should be balancing on the inside of the foot.
- When picking up the front leg, the toes leave the ground last.
- Back knee should be pointed toward the target; back knee is unlocked.



HIGH FIVE DRILL

Purpose

Helps pitchers develop a proper follow-through.

Drill Setup

- Drill can be run anywhere on the field. Coach stands or kneels next to pitcher.

How it Works

1. Pitcher gets in position with shoulders square to the target, his front leg bent, front foot pointed straight ahead. He has his arm up in an "L" shape. He has a ball in his hand.
2. Coach places his hand against pitchers hand.
3. Pitcher works on throwing straight through the ball against the resistance provided by the coach.
4. Pitcher does not throw the ball.
5. Complete 10-15 repetitions.



Coaching Tips

- In this drill, the focus should be on throwing straight through the ball instead of around it, which can cause arm injuries in young players.



TRAJECTORY DRILL

Purpose

Pitchers work on extension, right to left action and getting a good release point.

Drill Setup

- Pitchers line up anywhere on the field.
- They each have a ball and a glove.



Starting position.



Pitchers go "downhill" as they simulate a throw.

How it Works

1. Pitcher gets into load position with throwing arm raised and front glove hand approximately shoulder height.
2. Pitcher then goes downhill and simulates a throw to the target.
3. He repeats this process until coach says "Stop."
4. Next, have pitcher break his hands before going into the load position and then simulating the throw.
5. To work on balance even more, have the pitcher follow-through on the simulated throw and lift his back leg. He should then hang in that position (with back leg up in the air) for a three-second count.
6. You could also have the pitcher work on the heel over after the throw. You could also have them take a stride step at the beginning of the drill. then you could add a leg lift so that they leg lift, stride and heel over all together.

Coaching Tips

- The goal of this drill is for the pitcher to get a feel for having the ball back in a good load position and then extending and coming forward. Look for good balance on the feet and for proper weight shift backward and forward.
- Pitcher must keep knee inside on the stride and follow-through.
- Also, make sure pitcher is getting a good push off with back foot during the throwing motion.



HEEL UP PITCHING DRILL

Purpose

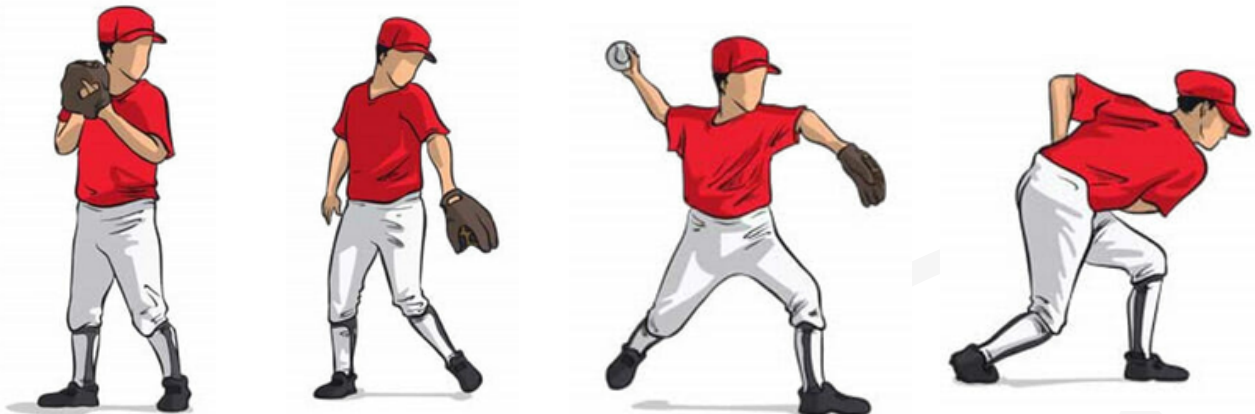
Focuses on rolling the back foot over, so that the knee is released and energy is transferred throughout the body.

Drill Setup

- Drill can be run anywhere on the field.
- You need a pitcher and either a catcher or net for him to throw to.

How it Works

- 1 Pitcher stands with feet shoulder-width or a little farther apart.
2. He rocks back, putting his weight over his back leg.
3. He then separates his hands down, forms the “T” position, throws the ball and finishes over the opposite knee.
4. Complete 15-20 repetitions.



Coaching Tips

- Look for a good roll of the back foot on the pitch.
- Also, make sure pitcher is maintaining his balance when finishing over his knee.
- This drill is great for helping pitchers generate speed and get the most from their bodies – particularly smaller pitchers.
- Ball should travel on forward and downward plane – which is the toughest type of pitch to hit.
- Drill can be done with or without coach’s supervision.

PICK UPS DRILL

Purpose

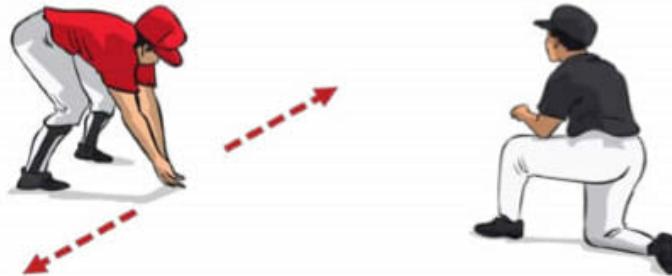
Improves lower back conditioning.

Drill Setup

- Player stands anywhere on the field. Coach kneels about six feet in front of him.

How it Works

1. Coach rolls a ball to the side of the player.
2. Player slides his feet and fields the rolling ball and tosses it back to the coach.
3. Coach rolls the ball to the other side. Player slides over and fields it and tosses it back to coach.
4. Complete 10-15 repetitions or do this drill for 30 to 60-second intervals.



Coaching Tips

- Lower back fatigue is common among pitchers. Look for poor follow-through as a sign a pitcher is getting tired.
- Player can also set two balls on the ground and run the drill by himself.
- Increase the distance between player and coach to make the drill more challenging.