



Pitching Skills and Drills

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Target Throwing Drill

Goal

This can be used as a warmup drill to get loose before a more intense pitching workout. It also helps with command and control, and allows pitchers to experiment with different grips.

Setup

Place two players approximately 46-60 feet apart - around the same distance as the gap between the pitching mound and home plate at your level of play. Both players have gloves and are standing in an athletic ready position. One player in each pair has the ball.

Execution

On the coach's signal, the first player will throw to a specific target on the second player's body.

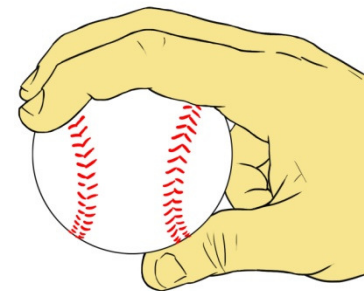
1. Right shoulder
2. Right hip
3. Right knee
4. Left shoulder
5. Left hip
6. Left knee

Coaching Tips

- This should be a relaxed, low intensity drill used for warmup.
- Look for a smooth, fluid throwing motion and good rotation on the ball.
- The receiving player should place his glove at the target point
- Players should use a four seam grip for maximum accuracy. This would apply for all throws made in the field, as well as any straight fastball thrown by a pitcher



FOUR SEAM GRIP



Dry Run Pitching Drill

Goal

To help pitchers understand and develop the phases of the pitching motion, in a slow, controlled manner that allows the coach to make adjustments and corrections.

Setup

Line up your pitchers facing the coach with about 4-5 feet of space between them. They will wear gloves but do not need a ball for this drill.

Execution

Take your pitchers through each phase of the pitching motion one by one, stopping at the end of each phase to make adjustments and corrections.

Phase 1: Stance

- The pitcher's weight should be evenly distributed on both feet
- Eyes should be facing the target
- The glove should be palm up and the throwing hand palm down to conceal the ball

Phase 2: Pivot and Balance

- Take a short "rocker step" with the stride foot (glove side foot) that goes backward, away from the rubber
- The step should be short, and compact so the pitcher's head remains over the ball side foot.
- Following the rocker step, the pivot foot (ball side foot) will square off parallel to the rubber
- Bring the stride leg up into a controlled motion to transfer the pitcher's weight into the pivot leg
- Hold the "balance" position with the stride leg up and balance until the coach says stop

(cont'd on next page)



Dry Run Pitching Drill (continued)

Phase 3: Separation and Stride

- After the stride leg reaches its highest point of elevation, the pitcher will separate his hands in a thumbs down position, while beginning his stride toward home plate
- Perform a controlled "fall" towards home plate, with the head, glove side knee, elbow and shoulder leading the way
- Make sure to keep a firm back pivot leg, rather than collapsing it down into a "drop and drive" motion. This will help pitchers keep the ball release point high, and develop pitches that travel on a downward plane toward the hitter
- Upon foot strike of the stride leg, the arms and body should form a "T" position. Minimize stress on the stride leg by landing with a bent knee.

Phase 4: Release and follow through

- After achieving the "T" position, the throwing shoulder will accelerate explosively toward the plate for the release and follow through
- The pitcher's head should move to directly over the stride leg, while the throwing shoulder, arms and upper torso extend toward home plate
- As the throwing arm moves forward, the throwing elbow should be even or slightly higher than the throwing shoulder
- The elbow snaps to full extension
- The wrist should be straight and firm, while the fingers stay on top of the ball
- The pivot foot heel rotates up and out, then comes off the rubber to complete the weight transfer from the back foot to the front foot

Progress through each of the phases one by one, providing corrections and adjustments along the way. Once the player is comfortable, with phase 1, have them complete phase 1 and 2 together, then stop. Then add phase 3 and stop. Then add phase 4 to create the complete pitching delivery.



Stick Drill

Goal

To improve arm and hand speed, and help develop the proper release point.

Setup

Line up your pitchers facing the coach with about 4-5 feet of space between them, wearing their gloves. Instead of a ball in the pitching hand, they will hold a light wooden dowel or stick approximately 18-24 inches in length.

Execution

The pitchers will go through their complete pitching motion, keeping the stick in the pitching hand throughout. The pitcher should explode toward home plate and finish with the throwing arm outside of the stride leg. Complete 10-15 reps.

Coaching Tips

- This drill is great for developing arm and hand speed. It provides instant feedback to the pitcher - a louder whipping noise generated by the stick translates into more velocity on the pitch.
- Pay attention to where the whipping noise is being generated, which will correspond to where the ball is being released.
- The pitcher should hear the sound right in front of the bill of their cap and off the glove-side eye. If the sound is too high or too low, have them make small adjustments until it's right.

Towel Drill

Goal

To improve extension and develop the proper release point on the pitch.

Setup

The pitcher will set up across from you around 9-10 feet away. Instead of a ball, the he will be holding a medium sized knotted towel between the pitching fingers. The coach will kneel down, and hold up a glove or similar target at the pitcher's release point.

Execution

The pitcher will go through his normal delivery so that the towel snaps down onto the target.

Coaching Tips

- Avoid over-striding or losing your balance. The extension should come by reaching forward with the chest and head, and extending the arm out toward the target
- Watch your pitcher's alignment. The stride should be directly towards home plate



Stationary Stride With Heel Over

Goal

To teach the proper motion of the pivot foot during the pitching delivery.

Setup

Line up your pitchers facing you, with about 4-5 feet of space between them, wearing a glove but without a ball.

Execution

Begin in a stationary "T" position with the stride foot forward and the arm cocked back.

Then, in slow motion, deliberately bring the arm forward in the throwing motion while reaching forward with the chest and head. Finish with the arm fully extended across the stride leg.

The focus for this drill is the motion of the pivot foot. The toe should stay planted while the heel lifts and rotates to the outside.

Coaching Tips

- Make sure your pitcher stays balanced and under control throughout the entire delivery
- Keep the stride knee inside the stride foot, with the weight on the inside of the stride foot
- Reach forward with the chest and head, while staying balanced



HEEL OVER

Circle over the Cup Drill

Goal

To develop the proper weight transfer, from pivot foot to stride foot, during the follow-through phase of the pitching delivery.

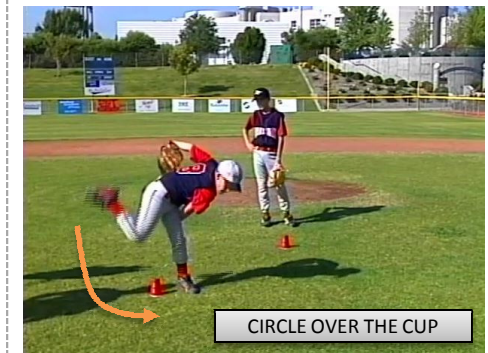
Setup

Line up your pitchers facing you, with about 6-8 feet of space between them, wearing a glove but without a ball. Place a plastic cup on the ground approximately 12 inches to the inside of the stride foot.

Execution

Begin in a stationary "T" position with the stride foot forward and the arm cocked back. On the coaches command, bring the throwing arm forward and drive towards the target in the simulate the release and follow through.

The focus of this drill is the pivot foot. After lifting and rotating the heel out, lift the back foot off the ground and bring it up and over the plastic cup in a circular motion. Finish by softly placing the pivot foot toe down, with the heel facing out, completing the weight transfer.



Bottom Out Drill

Goal

To develop the proper arm motion during the separation phase of the delivery. Getting the throwing arm up with the correct timing.

Setup

Line up your pitchers facing you, with about 4-5 feet of space between them, wearing a glove but without a ball.

Execution

Begin in a stationary stride position, with the stride foot forward, and the hands together at waist level. Slowly drop the hands down to "bottom out" then lift and separate the hands while keeping the thumbs down. Bring the throwing arm back while extending the glove arm out in front of the body, creating the "T" position. Then, slowly bring the throwing arm forward in the release and follow through, rolling the pivot foot heel up and over.

Coaching Tips

- Focus on getting the throwing arm up, then releasing the ball on a downward plane toward home plate
- To generate more power, pull the glove arm in towards the hip and brush it against the rib cage as the throwing arm comes forward. Rotate the glove from a thumb down position to a thumb up position.



One Hop Throwing

Goal

To improve arm separation, getting the throwing arm up and releasing the ball on a downhill plane.

Setup

Place two players approximately 40-50 feet apart. Both players have gloves and are standing in an athletic ready position. One player in each pair has the ball. Place a cone about 2/3 of the distance between the pitcher and catcher.

Execution

The pitcher should start in the stationary stride position, with the stride foot forward and hands at chest level. On the coach's command, he will separate the hands, bring the throwing arm up then explode forward and release the ball, trying to one-hop it just in front of the cone. The pitcher will take 10 throws, then switch positions with the catcher.

Coaching Tips

- Focus on getting arm up while keeping the fingers on top of the ball
- The wrist should be straight and firm
- Follow through, circle the pivot foot around and finish on the pivot foot toe



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