

Throwing/Pitching Drills

Objective

- Prevent player injuries to shoulders and elbows
- Develop mechanics to more consistently hit the target when throwing

Warm-up

Dynamic exercises must be done before throwing the baseball.

1. Arm Circles (start small, finish big)
 - Palms up
 - Palms down
2. Over/Under
 - Rapidly moving open hands in front of chest, alternating which hand is over/under
3. Arm across
4. Arm over-top
5. Extend forearm, pull fingers back towards torso
 - Palms up
 - Palms down
6. Hands behind back, pinch elbows forward
7. Sleeper stretch
 - Lie on side, position tricep flat on ground, stretch palm towards ground

It's important to work both sides of the body in these exercises.

Throwing/Pitching Drills

Establish proper balance, body positioning, and direct momentum towards target.

Keep elbow at/above shoulder level and ball above elbow on delivery to help prevent injury to elbow and shoulder.



All players have their own “arm slot”; it’s unnecessary to make everybody throw from the same slot. Simply keep the elbow above shoulder level and the ball at/above the elbow.

Upon release of the ball, the glove should be in front of the torso; pushing off the back leg will propel the throw (body) through the glove (don’t pull glove back).

Utilize 4-seam grip for all drills.

1. Power Position Drill - Use upper body only
 - Set base with feet wider than shoulders (this drill can also be done from knees)
 - Arms in “power position”
 - ✦ Player is balanced, with nose and chin aligned over belly button
 - ✦ Opposite and equal (see “Gators” pitcher in photo above left, for example)
 - Elbow at/above shoulder, ball above elbow
 - ✦ right-hander has ball facing short stop position
 - ✦ left-hander has ball facing second base position
 - Throw to partner
2. Power Position Drill from Set Position (ball in glove) - Use upper body only
 - Set base with feet wider than shoulders (this drill can also be done from knees)
 - Ball in glove - Start upper body motion to get to power position described above

- Progression - thumbs to the thigh, ball to the sky as you move to the power position
 - Throw to partner
- 3. Balance Position Drill (Helps balance and feel for weight shift from back leg)**
- Hold front foot 2 inches off ground
 - Weight balanced over back leg
 - Glove in throwing position
 - Baseball by hip pocket (facing short stop for righties, 2nd base for lefties)
 - Follow through as outlined above (make sure elbow above shoulder/ball above elbow)
- 4. 3-Pump Drill**
- Act as if the glove and front foot were connected by rope, glove pulling foot up
 - Start with front foot 2 inches above ground/ball in glove at belt level
 - Glove/pitching hand pull front foot three times before initiating throwing motion
 - Front foot doesn't touch ground until throw
 - ☛ Remember thumbs to the thigh, ball to the sky
 - ☛ Exercise proper elbow and ball positioning
- 5. Step-Behind Drill (Also good for long-toss)**
- Small step toward target with front foot
 - Big step toward target (behind front foot) with back foot
 - Throw
 - Hold balance on front foot for 3 seconds
- 6. 3-HopDrill (Insure Player Momentum is Moving Toward Target)**
- The above drills can be extended, by having player hop three times towards target on front foot after releasing ball.

Questions/Additional Information

- 1. How many pitches can children safely throw in a season?**
- As a member of Little League Baseball, all coaches will adhere to the pitch count guidance that will be outlined by the Commissioner of your Division.
 - The September 2004 edition of Contemporary Pediatrics has published the following additional Guidelines to prevent elbow and shoulder problems:

- ♣ 9 - 10 - 1,000 pitches per season (i.e., spring, fall); 2,000 pitches per year
- ♣ 11 - 15 - 1,000 pitches per season (i.e., spring, fall); 3,000 pitchers per year
 - This applies to pitches off the mound
 - Be mindful of children playing on teams outside GELL
- 2. When should children begin throwing curveballs?**
 - The September 2004 edition of Contemporary Pediatrics has the following recommendations on age to start throwing the following pitches:
 - ♣ Fastball - 8 years
 - ♣ Change-up - 10 years
 - ♣ Curveball - 14 years
 - ♣ Knuckleball - 15 years
 - ♣ Slider - 16 years
 - ♣ Screwball - 17 years
- 3. Succession of Pitching Skills**
 - Also from the September 2004 edition of Contemporary Pediatrics:
 - 1.** Control - Getting the ball over the plate
 - 2.** Command - Placement in specific areas
 - 3.** Velocity - speed
 - 4.** Ball Movement - Curve, slider, etc.
- 4. Link to Article in Contemporary Pediatrics**
 - <http://contemporarypediatrics.modernmedicine.com/contpeds/data/articlestandard/contpeds/452004/131827/article.pdf>
- 5. All-Star Baseball Academy Contact Information:**

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