

Softball Pitching Equipment

recommended by Gerald Warner, Softball Pitching Instructor



There are lots of good training products that we recommend for our pitching students...so we've listed a few below, along with where to buy them. Product availability and the prices shown are believed to be accurate, but check with the supplier for the latest information. Shipping charges will also apply.

Training Products for Pitchers

1. Striped ball

Here's something that doesn't cost you any extra, and is a great help to make certain you use the proper release of any pitch. For all of our pitchers, regardless of age, we occasionally use a softball with a stripe around it so we can see the rotation of the ball. The stripe needs to go evenly around the middle of the four seams. Therefore, use a larger mug or one of the plastic beverage cups from your recent visits to a convenience store (7-11 loves us for this). Place the softball on the open end of the cup so *nearly* half (but not quite) of it fits down into the cup. Therefore more than half of the ball will be sticking above the rim of the cup...with the "narrows" of the seams at the absolute top. Now, use a permanent-ink (Vis a Vis - type) felt-tip marker to put the first line around the middle of the ball by tracing around the top rim of the cup. Turn the ball over placing the "narrows" on the other side on top, and draw another line around the middle of the ball. Use the same (or different color) permanent-ink marker to fill in the space between the two lines.

2. Weighted training ball

An overweighted ball, when used correctly, can be an excellent aide in developing strength and pitching speed. We do **NOT** recommend the 1-pound "cannonball" because we feel its excess weight poses a risk of injury for some girls. Similarly, balls that are only slightly overweighted (7 oz. or 8 oz.) have had minimal effect for many pitchers. Since the regulation softball is approximately 6½ ounces, we encourage our pitchers to use a regulation size (12" circumference) "training" ball that is no more than 9 oz. to 12 oz. (depending on age, strength, and physical development). However, even at this weight, it should NOT be thrown at full speed. Follow the instructions that come with the ball, and be careful!

Visit www.softball.com for the FastPitch Express weighted training ball (12" ball in 9 oz., 10 oz. 11 oz., and 12 oz. weights) -

\$6.99<http://www.pitchsoftball.com/user/ProgramFilesWebSiteCompleteDeluxeEditionSoftballsite2productDesc.do?productDesc=1239>

3. Oversized ball

To help develop your breaking pitches (drop, rise, screwball, curve) we recommend using an oversized (but not overweighted) ball. Since the regulation softball is 12 inches in circumference (11 inches for younger players), we have found that a 14" ball is right for most pitchers to help them concentrate on their grip, release, and spin. A larger 16" ball is available, but that is generally

too large, and consequently less effective, than the 14-inch ball.
www.clubk.com 14-inch ball - yellow - **\$13.95**

4. Spinner

This seems like a comparatively high price for something that looks like a bright-colored oversized hockey puck...the Spin Right Spinner. Throwing it correctly can initially be frustrating, but it is a great tool in assisting young pitchers the value of a proper release. www.clubk.com **\$19.95**

5. Pitching Rubber - End-spiked

Here is a VALUABLE discovery for all pitchers, parents, and coaches...a durable and *portable* pitching rubber that you can use in your backyard, on a school playground or ball field...and when needed even in a game. Then you can easily remove it and take it back home with you. This is a regulation-size (6" x 24") pitching rubber, but doesn't pound into the ground with the traditional 3 spikes on the bottom. Instead, it is installed with a removable 2 spikes driven into a bracket on each end of the rubber. Use it, you'll love it. www.tomark.com **\$15.95**

6. Indoor Pitching rubber for wood floor

The Portolite® Softball Pitching Mat is an oval-shaped soft rubber mat with a standard-width pitching rubber built on top. By slightly moistening the underside of the mat, it adheres to a smooth hardwood floor to prevent slipping. The mat is large enough for a typical pitcher's pre-delivery stance. Available via the internet, including Hoover Fence Company -Sports www.hooverfence.com/sports/baseball-softball/training-pitcher.htm **\$163.11** includes shipping

7. Indoor Pitching rubber on 9-foot stride mat

The PowerLine® mat from Cheri Kempf's Club K is great for pitching on a gym floor or other indoor facilities. It is essentially a 9-foot long mat with a pitching rubber built-in on one end, giving a safe stride and landing area for even the most aggressive leap-and-drag style pitchers. It even has a built in power line, with additional stripes extending from the sides of the pitching rubber for side-steppers. PowerLine® Club K Fastpitch Mat at www.clubk.com - **\$199.99**

8. Softball Cleats for girls and women

Although softball shoes with non-metal cleats are available at most local sporting goods stores, we suggest you consider Ringor cleats. Although slightly more expensive than some, we feel that these shoes are as good as you can get...especially for girl softball pitchers. Ringor uses a circular four spike design that can reduce injury to ankles and knees by minimizing drag when pivoting both the push-off foot and the landing foot. It allows for a safer pivot of the rear foot when batting as well. Cleats for pitchers and catchers come with a built-in toe guard called Pro-Tec-Toe™. Special team prices are available.
www.ringor.com or call Ringer toll-free at 1-(800) 746-4670 **\$85.00/pair**

9. Toe protection for pitching shoes...Tuff Toe and Tuff Toe Pro

The "toe drag" used by most pitchers causes shoes to wear out quickly. Although the Ringor cleats described above have a built-in toe protector, most pitching shoes do not. For them you can buy a molded rubber pitching toe called Tuff Toe that is attached to the drag foot shoe (right for right-handers, left for lefties) with a special epoxy adhesive. However, we like the Tuff Toe Pro brush-on type that is a special polyurethane material that dries as a tough, flexible protection on the toe and side of the shoe. Applied correctly, it covers the toe areas of two shoes.

Tuff Toe molded rubber pitching toe - about **\$10**

Tuff Toe Pro polyurethane application kit - **\$15 to \$17**

at various local and on-line sporting goods stores, including Anaconda Sports
www.anacondasports.com



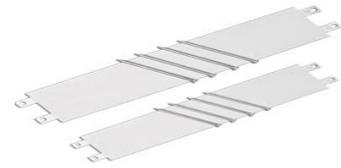
Ringor softball cleats



Powerline® 9' Pitching Mat



Portolite® Pitching Mat



End-spiked pitching rubbers
(with 4 spikes each)

Softball Pitching Books

FastPitch Softball, the Windmill Pitcher by **Barry Sammons**

The Softball Pitching Edge by **Cheri Kempf**

The Complete Book of Pitching by **Cindy Bristow**

Just Let the Kids Play by former NBA basketball player **Bob Bigelow** (published by HCI)

And any pitching video, book, or clinic by former UCLA pitcher **Dee Dee Weiman**. Dee Dee has a series of videotapes produced with UCLA Coach Sue Enquist that are a little more expensive than most, but are well worth the investment.