

Little League Pitching Mechanics - Simple Instructions For Little League

Pitchers

By Steven Ellis, former Chicago Cubs pitching pro

The goal for any Little League coach or parent is to keep the game simple and fun for their young pitcher(s). That's what we're aiming to do with this lesson on Little League pitching mechanics.

Starting Position

- a. Right hand pitcher starts on right side of rubber, left hand pitcher starts on left side of rubber
- b. When toeing rubber make sure heels are on rubber & toes are on dirt, be balanced
- c. Feet should be inside your shoulders
- d. Both hands in glove
- e. Top of glove just below chin with back of glove facing target
- f. Elbows relaxed against stomach
- g. Slight bend in knees (comfortable position)

Little League Pitching From The Full Wind Up (Right Hand Pitcher)

Step 1 - Rocker Step Back

- a. Rock left foot straight back on ball of foot OR to the side of the mound
- b. Keep chin over pivot foot

Step 2 - Pivot And Turn Your Hips

- a. Turn right pivot foot in front of rubber
- b. Turn upper body so front shoulder facing target
- c. Glove should be six inches off chest

Step 3 - Balance (But Don't Stop!)

- a. Lift knee to belt with foot at 90 degree angle and toe down but don't stop here, keep moving
- b. Weight should be even on back foot
- c. Stay up right don't sink on back foot

Step 4 - Break And Stride

- a. Take ball out of glove break thumbs down and away from each other towards thighs
- b. Ball in hand should be facing 2nd base
- c. Slightly collapse back leg to keep weight back
- d. Bring heel into body then out towards target (this keeps front hip closed)

- e. Stride towards home plate w/ heel, inside of big toe should hit ground first at 1 o'clock
- f. Hands should spread into POWER T position w/ glove down elbow pointing at target
- g. Ball in hand should come out of glove down with fingers on top (knuckles to sky) and rotate up giving high five to centerfield or reaching to the sky

Step 5 - Tuck And Throw

- a. Front elbow drives down into hip
- b. Glove tucks
- c. Back hip rotates towards home plate
- d. Throwing elbow stays high
- e. Fingers stay on top
- f. At release body stays behind the ball pushing ball with body
- g. Wrist snaps down and through
- h. Arm continues to follow through until back of shoulder faces target
- i. Back heel goes up towards sky then rotates over and parallel to the stride leg
- j. Into ready fielding stance

Little League Pitching From The Stretch

- a. Stand with right foot against rubber feet about six inches apart
- b. Ball in glove against chest
- c. Throwing hand in glove
- d. When ready pick up left knee start at #3 position

Drills For Little League Pitchers

One knee drill - start with hands in glove rotate shoulders, hand out of glove point elbow (power T), fingers to sky, lead with heel, tuck elbow/glove follow through thumb to thigh.

Straddle throw drill - Feet parallel outside of shoulders, shoulder facing target, hands in glove, hand out of glove point elbow (power T), fingers to sky, lead with heel, tuck elbow/glove follow through thumb to thigh.

Cement throw drill - Feet slightly outside shoulders, chest facing target, hands in glove rotate shoulders, hand out of glove point elbow (power T), fingers to sky, lead with heel, tuck elbow/glove follow through thumb to thigh. Keep feet planted Balance position drill - Start from balance position (Step 3) hands in glove --shoulder facing target, hand out of glove point elbow (power T), fingers to sky, tuck elbow/glove follow through thumb to thigh.

- * Stay balanced and smooth
- * Don't rush delivery
- * Keep eye on target

One final note: When throwing the fastball, hold the baseball with two fingers with horseshoe facing first base side so four seams will rotate when ball is released.

Pitches & Grips



4-seam fastball - top
Thrown without squeezing the ball too tight & not touching the palm or too far back in the hand



4-seam fastball - front
Fingers (first knuckle) on the seams.



4-seam fastball - side
Don't let ball touch the palm or squeeze too tight.



2-seam fastball - top
You can rotate the ball so fingers don't touch the seams.



2-seam fastball - front



Knuckle Changeup - side



Knuckle Changeup - front



4-finger changeup - top
Ball should be back in the hand touching the top of the palm



Circle changeup - side
This is a hard pitch for most kids to throw.

Bad Grip. Unless this is a changeup, the ball is too far back in the hand.



Pitching Sequence / Good Mechanics
Same routine all the time.

These images are in order from left to right.
(Side, front, & rear view in sequence)



Pitching Sequence / Good Mechanics & Details

Same routine all the time.

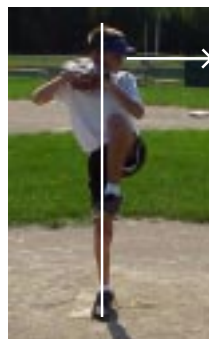
These images are in order from left to right.
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Stand straight, eyes on target



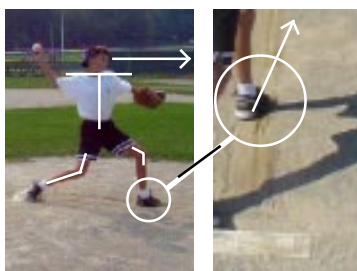
Start motion. Lead foot steps only 6-8 inches back. Eyes on target.



Bring lead foot around and straight up at least belt high. Head level & eyes on target.



Lead leg goes down & out, arms apart. Line up front elbow to target. Head over back knee. Eyes on target.



Shoulders "closed" & level (belly faces 3rd base at foot plant). Eyes level & on target. With chin above belt buckle & shoulders level & closed this should form a "T". Back knee slightly bent down and in & front knee with slight bend. Mitt curling to chest. Lead foot slightly angled and on line at foot plant.



Back foot is pulled (rolled) off mound with hip turn. Upper body straight, head level, eyes on target & mitt to chest



Follow-thru with flat back. Pitching hand swings past front knee. Back foot pulled off mound. Eyes level and on target.



Finish in good balanced fielding position with eyes level and on target.



Shoulders & eyes level.



Eyes level, shoulders closed & straight upper body.



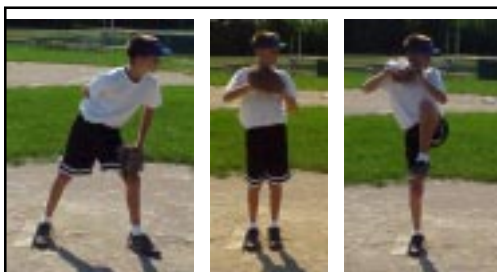
Shoulders closed at foot plant, shoulders & eyes level. Mitt curls to chest.



Hand follows through below knee. Flat back, eyes level.



Finish in a good balanced fielding position on balls of feet.



From the stretch, start with ball in pitching hand and front foot extended. After focusing on target, while bringing frontfoot back, bring ball into mitt at chest level. Take a deep breath and bring lead foot up to start motion.

Pitching Sequence / Poor Mechanics



Out of balance. Don't lean back



Step (rocker step) is too far back.



Out of balance. Body not straight. Leaning back



Glove is too low.



Glove too far from chest. Poor balance.



No "Karate Kid". Arms don't go straight out in opposite directions. Bad timing.



Fingers under the ball. When hands separate to go back, fingers should be on top of ball, with ball facing 2nd base.



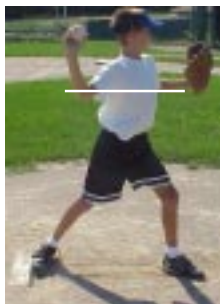
Skipping rocks & out of balance.



Lead leg during motion doesn't go high enough. Poor timing.



"Raring back" (leaning) to try and throw hard.



Elbow below shoulder. Shoulders "open" (belly facing plate) and back foot is pushing off the rubber.



Bad timing. Upper body is too far out in front and over front knee at foot plant. Shoulders are opening up too soon.



Shoulders "open" too soon & elbow below shoulders.



Upper body bent forward, head tilted, and pitching arm is straight back.



Shoulders "open" too soon, head is tilting & eyes are not level.



Back foot dragging straight off the mound & poor follow-thru.



Don't play "yo-yo" on the follow-through. Here the arm and hand stops out in front of body or resists swing out & past lead knee.

These are only a very few samples of poor mechanics. Many times one part of a mechanic might be perfect, while a slight problem with another part in the same photo goes un-noticed by a new or young coach.