

Pitching FUNdamentals

1 Pitching grip

- Hold the ball in the tips of the fingers and not in the palm
- Grip the ball comfortably but do not strain
- Hold the ball firmly to avoid slipping from the fingers
- Place the fingers in contact with the seams whenever possible
- Release the ball off the ends of the fingers



Pitching sequence

Stance

- Ensure both feet are in contact with the plate
- Feet are approximately shoulder width apart, with the pivot foot at the front of the plate and the stride (leg) foot at the back
- Shoulders and hips must be in line with first and third base
- Hold the ball in both hands in front of the body
- The entire body must remain motionless for at least 2 seconds but not more than 5 seconds



Pump (drive phase)

- Weight is transferred back on to the stride leg
- Glove and pitching hand extend down as the body moves over the front leg and into a sprint position
- In this position the weight is loaded onto the front leg
- Glove and pitching arm are usually in the middle of the body or slightly towards the throwing side



Stride

- Take an explosive stride straight towards the catcher by driving the stride leg up and out with the glove arm and pitching arm
- Accompany the stride with a hard push off the plate by the back (pivot) foot
- During the stride the pitching arm reaches the top of the arm circle (above your head) and the back foot pivots (squash the bug) allowing the hips and shoulders to rotate away from the batter (right handed towards Third base, left handed towards 1st Base).
- Point the toes of the stride foot almost towards the catcher (45 degree tolerance)
- The back leg continues to maintain weight as it drives forward off the plate
- The body moves from a forward lean (pump) to an upright or very slightly back
- For beginners use an exaggerated or extended walking step



Pitching arm action

- Move the pitching arm in a complete circle by bringing it straight up the front and straight down the back of the body
- Extend the arm but keep it relaxed
- At the top of the circle, have the arm close to the head by brushing the ear as it passes the head
- Ensure the arm makes the largest circle possible for maximum force
- Point your glove to the target to maintain balance and direction



Delivery phase

- Drive the total body weight towards the catcher
- Stride foot lands on the ground with knee flexed to absorb shock
- Toes should be at about a 45° angle
- As the stride foot is planted drive the back (pivot) foot forward directly to the target
- This causes the hips to rotate back towards the batter, followed by the trunk and the shoulders
- At this stage the pitching arm has come from above the head and is well on the way down with the ball still facing out and the wrist cocked
- At this point ensure that the shoulders are back in line with the hips. This is achieved by ensuring the glove arm remains at shoulder height and out in front of the body whilst pointing to the target.



Whilst the hips and the shoulders remain open with the glove arm coming down, snap the wrist alongside the thigh region to release the ball

It is important to keep the pitching shoulder back during release

- At this time the back leg is beginning to straighten in order to drive the hips square immediately AFTER the release of the ball
- If the hips square up too soon this will prevent the pitching arm from staying in line to the target and inhibit the speed of the wrist snapping action

Follow through

- Allow the pitching arm to continue forward naturally
- Allow the back (pivot) foot to come forward naturally to a position parallel with the stride foot
- The body should be well forward with the weight over the toes and distributed evenly on both feet



Summary – basic pitching technique

Stance

Ensure both feet contact the plate and are shoulder width apart



Pump

Weight is loaded on to the front leg (pivot foot) leg with hands and glove in front of the body



Stride

Take an explosive stride but ensure weight is maintained on the back (pivot)



leg

Arm circle/delivery

Hips and shoulders remain open

Snap the wrist at the thigh region



Follow through

Back (pivot) foot and pitching arm comes forward naturally

Body well forward and weight over toes

