



St Paul City Municipal Athletics

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Saint Paul Parks & Recreation is committed to providing quality athletic programming for youth of all ages and abilities. The basic foundation of our program is to:

Encourage participation in physical activity.

Promote the development of physical skills.

Provide a safe place and a fun experience.

Our program is built on the principles of fair play, good sportsmanship, respect for one's self and one's opponent. It is our expectation that everyone involved in youth athletic programming will contribute in a positive manner to a healthy environment where participants will feel safe and welcome, and where they will find their athletic experience rewarding.



City of St Paul is a partner with the Minnesota Twins.
(see Twin's mission statement below)

In that partnership, all teams are considered to be a part of the Twin's RBI (Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities) Program. One of the benefits to that partnership is the opportunity for any player interested, on a team in St. Paul and Minneapolis leagues in Boy's Baseball (15U and 18U) and Girl's FP Softball (18U), may tryout for a place on the Twins All Star Team(s).

The Twins RBI All Star Teams compete in a Regional tournament with other MLB sponsored teams for the right to advance to the MLB RBI World Series.

For more information on the All Star Program please contact your local Recreation Center or Municipal Athletics office 651-558-2255.

Twin's Mission statement:

The Twins Community Fund's mission is to enrich local and regional communities by providing resources for the healthy development of children and families through an association with baseball, softball and the Minnesota Twins.

Following Fundamentals presented on behalf of the MN Twins All Star Coaches and Staff

THIS IS



TERRITORY



BASEBALL AND SOFTBALL FUNDAMENTALS

BASIC BASEBALL AND SOFTBALL FUNDAMENTALS



The following slide presentation is designed to give players, coaches and parents information on basic fundamentals of: **Throwing, Fielding, Batting, Bunting, Pitching, Catching** and the importance of **Stretching**, to enhance the skills of coaches and participants in the Twin's RBI program.

Please feel free to share the information as a resource for anyone that you think might benefit from it. BB and SB are included together because it is the philosophy of the RBI staff that the fundamentals, except for pitching, are basically the same and may be taught the same.

Both games are very challenging and the skills to play at a high level demand excellent physical skills, knowledge of the total game and the technical components of each aspect of the game.

It is not our intent to go beyond the basics in this presentation. It is our belief that by keeping the information in a very simplistic and non technical form that all participants will have the opportunity to gain a better understanding of the basics. I hope you enjoy the presentations and they are beneficial for you and wish you the best in baseball and softball on behalf of our RBI staff and the Minnesota Twins.

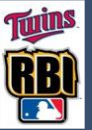


Frank White

MN RBI Coordinator



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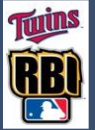


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MN TWINS ALL STAR “MANTRA”



HUSTLE





Mark Wilson
MINNESOTA TWINS
Midwest Area Scout

PLAYER MAKE UP & CHARACTER

Physical tools and talent are easy to see and identify. They are also the main ingredient for most players to succeed and advance to higher levels. However this alone is sometimes not enough.

Makeup and Character are the non-physical factors that can bring any level of talent to a higher level. Swinging a baseball bat or working on a pitchers delivery is based on repetition.

Players must be dedicated to this practice much like the time spent learning to read and write (good work habits). Coaches and managers do not like to spend all their time disciplining a problem player. This can disrupt a team and vice versa hard work is also contagious. Team unity and the ability to be coached is a must, especially at the Major League level where players are together for **162** games over an 8 month span.

As a Major League Scout I also look for “the winning attitude”, that player that is a leader, has courage and is confident not cocky, tough and durable, and has the ability to perform under pressure. All these characteristics can be found on and off the field. When I evaluate a player I am not only looking at the player and his skills but also how he interacts with teammates and coaches. I will also gather information about the player from other teammates and opposing coaches and that player’s teachers and counselors at school. This is all in an effort to get a complete all around picture of that player and if he has the good Characteristics and Makeup to be successful. As with any area of life success comes with dedicated hard work, good work habits, confidence, and the ability to listen and learn from coaches or teachers.





TIMING



JACKIE ROBINSON: First African American to break the Major League color barrier. In 1947 his rookie year in the Major Leagues led the National League in stolen bases and won the first-ever Rookie of the Year Award.

"I'm not concerned with your liking or disliking me... all I ask is that you respect me as a human being"

For timing players we use game times meaning home to first. We try to anticipate bat contact with the ball and start the watch. Stop the watch when the foot touches first. Major League averages are 4.3 for RH and 4.2 for LH. Tryout camp we do the 60 yd dash. We have a starter that holds up a hat and drops it. We start the watch when it hits the ground. We work off of that rather than runners 1st movement. A time for this that equates to ML average is 6.9. In games we also look at base stealing jumps-leads, turns-cutting the bases, 1st to 3rd speed, and reactions off the bat when on defense for a play that involves range. Some runners are good starters and don't finish well. Others have slow first step and pick up speed. Most high school players are 4.5 to 4.6 down the line and 7.1-7.4 in 60 yd dash. As with all averages numbers can mislead as some players are slower but are huge hitters for average and power and vice versa with the very speedy guys (Albert Pujols versus Juan Pierre).

Mark Wilson
MINNESOTA TWINS
Midwest Area Scout



THROWING



BASIC BASEBALL FUNDAMENTALS

THROWING & FIELDING



DEMONSTRATORS



BEN NELSON

JOSEF BETTS-FLOYD

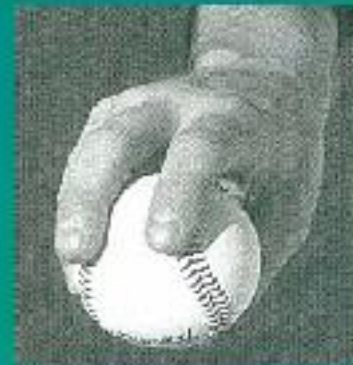
CENTRAL AREA BASEBALL (CAB)
TWINS JR RBI ALL STARS 2006



GRIP FOR THROWING



FINGERS ACROSS THE SEAMS



WITH THE SEAMS

THROWING FROM ANY FIELDING POSITION THE BALL SHOULD BE GRIPPED WITH TWO FINGERS ACROSS THE SEAMS (SMALL CHILDREN CAN USE THREE FINGERS) AND THROW OVERHAND TO THREE QUARTERS OVERHAND WHEN EVER POSSIBLE. THE BALL ROTATION WHEN THROWN WITH THE GRIP ACROSS THE SEAMS WILL GIVE THE BALL A STRAIGHTER PATH AND THE BALL WILL STAY IN THE AIR LONGER (ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT ON THROWS FROM THE OUTFIELD). WHEN GRIPPING THE BALL WITH THE SEAMS OR ANY OTHER VARIATION, THE BALL WILL HAVE A TENDENCY TO TAIL AND FALL SOONER AND IS HARDER FOR THE RECEIVER TO CATCH.

PLAYERS CAN LEARN THE GRIP BY PRACTICING WHEN THEY CATCH AND COVER THE BALL, PUSHING THE BALL INTO THE GLOVE WHILE ROTATING THE HAND ON THE BALL AND FEELING THE GRIP. THIS CAN BE PRACTICED BY SIMPLY FLIPPING THE BALL UP IN THE AIR TO THEMSELVES AND WITHOUT LOOKING INTO THE GLOVE, FINDING AND FEELING THE GRIP. SOON IT SHOULD BECOME AUTOMATIC WHEN THEY FIELD OR CATCH THE BALL.



Start with ball
In the glove

THROWING FUNDAMENTALS



READY

a



STEP

b



SEPARATE

c



STEP
THROW

d



FOLLOW THRU

e

- a. **READY TO RECEIVE THE THROW. LOOK THE BALL INTO THE GLOVE. AS THE BALL HITS THE GLOVE, COVER AND GRIP WITH THE BARE HAND.**
- b. **STEP OR HOP DIRECTLY AT THE TARGET WITH THE PIVOT FOOT. CONTINUE TO LOOK AT THE BALL UNTIL SEPARATION**
- c. **SEPARATE THE HANDS AS YOU STEP FORWARD DIRECTLY TOWARD THE TARGET WITH THE NON PIVOT FOOT (FORMING A T WITH THE BODY AND ARMS). THE GLOVE IS POINTED AT THE TARGET WITH THE ARM COMFORTABLY BENT**
- d. **AS THE LEAD FOOT HITS THE GROUND THE BALL IS RELEASED. ON THE RELEASE THE GLOVE MOVES TO THE HIP WITH THE THUMB OF THE GLOVE POINTING UP**
- e. **FOLLOWING THE RELEASE THE REAR FOOT COMES FORWARD APPROXIMATELY PARALLEL TO THE LEAD FOOT IN THE FOLLOW THRU**





THROWING SIDARM

BALLS THROWN FROM FIELDER TO FIELDER SHOULD BE THROWN OVERHAND, HOWEVER AT TIMES WHEN YOU HAVE TO CHARGE THE BALL AND MUST THROW IMMEDIATELY AND DO NOT HAVE TIME TO STRAIGHTEN UP, IT BECOMES NECESSARY TO THROW SIDARM.

WHEN YOU THROW SIDARM, YOU SHOULD ALWAYS THROW SLIGHTLY AWAY FROM THE TARGET ON YOUR GLOVE SIDE BECAUSE THE BALL WILL HAVE A NATURAL TAIL ON IT.





THROW AND FOLLOW

In the last step of throwing (e) the trail foot ends up parallel to the front foot. Good practice for learning the skills of throwing. When a player cuts loose with a throw the momentum of the arm and body

should take the player at least three steps in the direction of the throw. Most youth players and many adults do not follow their throws and as a result stop their arm motion and release the ball too soon and the ball sails high and away.



FIELDING



FIELDING PRIOR TO THE PITCH



WHEN THE PITCHER IS READY (ON THE PITCHING PLATE WITH THE BALL IN GLOVE OR HAND LOOKING IN FOR SIGNS), THE FIELDER(S) GET IN THE READY POSITION. EYES ON THE PITCHER, HANDS ON THE KNEES IN A RELAXED POSITION, BACK FAIRLY STRAIGHT AND FEET SPREAD COMFORTABLY, USUALLY SHOULDER WIDTH OR MORE APART.

EYES AND FOCUS SHIFT TO THE BATTER WHEN THE PITCHER STARTS THE DELIVERY AND THE FIELDER(S) MOVE TO THE SET POSITION (OUTFIELDERS STAY MORE IN THE UPRIGHT POSITION). FEET STAY THE SAME, BUT THE WEIGHT SHIFTS SLIGHTLY FORWARD TO THE BALLS OF THE FEET. GLOVE HAND COMES SLIGHTLY FORWARD AND OPEN TO THE BATTER. BARE HAND SLIGHTLY FORWARD OFF THE KNEE. BEND IN THE KNEES SLIGHTLY AND BE IN A POSITION WHERE YOU CAN MOVE QUICKLY UP, DOWN OR TO EITHER SIDE.



FIELDING AFTER CONTACT



PRIORITY WHEN FIELDING THE BALL IS TO GET DIRECTLY IN FRONT OF IT (BALL COMING DIRECTLY AT THE CENTER OF THE BODY) EITHER BY CHARGING FORWARD OR MOVING TO EITHER SIDE. GLOVE REMAINS OPEN TO THE BALL, BARE HAND IS FORWARD AND TO THE SIDE OF THE GLOVE. LEGS WILL BE SLIGHTLY WIDER THEN IN THE SET POSITION WITH FRONT FOOT SLIGHTLY AHEAD OF THE BACK FOOT. THE BACK (PIVOT) FOOT TOE LINED UP WITH THE FRONT FOOT HEEL. EYES TRACK THE BALL FROM BAT CONTACT ALL THE WAY INTO THE GLOVE.

AS THE BALL ENTERS THE GLOVE THE FIELDER CONTINUES TO LOOK AT THE BALL IN THE GLOVE AND THE BARE HAND IMMEDIATELY COVERS THE BALL.

THE HANDS BRING THE BALL TO THE WAIST (FINDING THE 4 SEAM GRIP AS THE BALL IS BROUGHT TO THE WAIST). IT IS HIGHLY RECOMMENDED IN THE TEACHING PHASE (DEVELOP GOOD HABITS) THAT PLAYERS CONTINUE TO WATCH THE BALL UNTIL THE HANDS SEPARATE FOR THE THROW.





FIELDING/THROWING SEQUENCE

FIELDING SLOW ROLLER/BARE HAND



THE BARE HANDED PLAY AS A GENERAL RULE SHOULD ONLY BE MADE ON A BALL THAT IS ROLLING AT A SLOW SPEED WHERE BECAUSE OF THE TIMING OF THE PLAY IT BECOMES THE ONLY CHANCE FOR MAKING THE PLAY. A BOUNCING BALL SHOULD ALWAYS BE PLAYED WITH TWO HANDS.

IN THE APPROACH PLACE THE LEFT FOOT BESIDE THE BALL AND SCOOP THE BALL WITH THE FINGER TIPS UNDER THE BALL. THE SAME PRINCIPLE APPLIES ON LOOKING THE BALL INTO THE GLOVE (HAND).

AFTER THE BALL IS SECURED MOMENTUM WILL TAKE YOU FORWARD LANDING ON THE PIVOT FOOT (STEP) AND IMMEDIATELY RELEASE THE BALL. THE BALL MUST BE THROWN SIDE ARM BECAUSE THERE IS NO TIME TO STRAIGHTEN UP, TAKE ANOTHER STEP AND THROW OVERHAND.

AS MENTIONED IN THE THROWING SIDEARM SLIDE, WHEN THROWING SIDEARM YOU MUST ADJUST FOR THE TAIL OF THE BALL AND THROW SLIGHTLY TO YOUR GLOVE HAND SIDE OF THE TARGET.

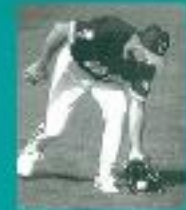


OUTFIELD PLAY



ON A GROUND BALL TO THE OUTFIELD WITH AN IMMEDIATE PLAY THE OUTFIELDER MUST CHARGE THE BALL AND PLAY IT WITH THE SAME FUNDAMENTALS AS AN INFIELDER.

IF THE BALL IS ROLLING AND THE GAME MAY BE ON THE LINE, CHARGING FULL SPEED PLAY THE BALL WITH THE GLOVE IN FRONT AND TO THE SIDE OF THE GLOVE SIDE FOOT. FIELD ON THE LEFT FOOT, TAKE A STEP (HOP) AND FIRE THE BALL



ON A HARD HIT GROUND BALL TO THE OUTFIELD WITH NO IMMEDIATE THROW NEEDED, THE THROWING HAND KNEE DROPS TO THE GROUND, SHOULDERS STAY SQUARE TO THE BALL AND THE GLOVE HAND AND THROWING HAND DROP TO THE SPACE BETWEEN THE LEGS AND REMAIN OPEN TO THE BALL. THE GLOVE HAND LEG IS OUT TO THE SIDE WITH THE FOOT POSITIONED AT ABOUT A 45 DEGREE ANGLE TO THE BALL

OUTFIELD PLAY



WHEN THE PITCHER STARTS THE DELIVERY THE OUTFIELDERS SHOULD GET INTO A READY (RECEIVING STANCE) POSITION AND FOCUS ON THE HITTER.



ON ANY FLY BALL THE FIRST REACTION BY AN OUTFIELDER SHOULD BE TO TURN AND STEP BACK, KEEPING THE EYES ON THE BALL. BETTER TO LET A BALL FALL IN FRONT OF THE FIELDER THEN TO LET IT GO OVER THE FIELDER'S HEAD. IF THE BALL IS HIT TO THE RIGHT SIDE (1) THE FIRST STEP BACK SHOULD BE WITH THE RIGHT FOOT. BALL TO THE LEFT SIDE (3) FIRST STEP BACK IS WITH THE LEFT FOOT. IF THE BALL IS HIT DIRECTLY OVER THE HEAD, STEP BACK TO THE THROWING HAND SIDE WHICH PUTS THE FIELDER IN AN IMMEDIATE THROWING POSITION. IF THE BALL HAS BEEN MISPLAYED AND IT IS NOW OVER THE OTHER SHOULDER, DO NOT TURN YOUR BACK TO THE BALL, BUT PIVOT INSIDE KEEPING YOUR EYE ON THE BALL (1-2-3)



IF THE FIELDER DOES NOT HAVE TO CATCH ON THE RUN, THEN THE FIELDER SHOULD TURN AND SET IN THE FIELDING POSITION WITH THE GLOVE IN FRONT OF THE CHEST (2) SO THE GLOVE DOES NOT BLOCK THE FIELDERS SIGHT OF THE BALL. IF AN IMMEDIATE THROW MUST BE MADE, THE FIELDER SHOULD TRY TO GO BACK FARTHER THEN NEEDED TO CATCH THE BALL SO THE FIELDER IS MOVING FORWARD TO MAKE THE CATCH. CATCH ON THE NON-PIVOT FOOT AND TAKE ONE (HOP) TO THE PIVOT FOOT AND STEP AND RELEASE THE BALL.



FOR THE BALL THAT THE FIELDER MIGHT HAVE TO DIVE TO CATCH (GOING FORWARD NOT TO THE SIDE) IT IS RECOMMENDED TO SLIDE AND CATCH INSTEAD OF DIVING HEAD FIRST. SAFER, BETTER BODY CONTROL AND THE FIELDER CAN FOLLOW THE BALL INTO THE GLOVE.





CUTOFFS



NO
SEEDS



CUTOFFS



Outfielder chases fly or ground ball



Outfielder fields ball



Cutoff person moves into position to line up the throw to the appropriate base. Receiver may help, but ultimately the responsibility to be in alignment is the cutoff persons !



Once in position hold arms up giving the thrower a target



DO NOT take the throw with your back to where you are going to throw.



Turn side ways to take the throw with your feet in line with where you are going to throw (pivot foot toward the thrower)



Lean toward the throw. Depending on the distance and/or strength of the arm, catch the ball, hop and throw or catch on the pivot foot and throw with no steps. Remember to “throw and follow the throw”.



BATTING



BASIC BASEBALL FUNDAMENTALS

BATTING & BUNTING



DEMONSTRATOR

DREW GUNDERSON

CENTRAL AREA BASEBALL (CAB)

TWINS JR RBI ALL STARS 2005



HITTING A BASEBALL



MOST PEOPLE IN THE ATHLETIC WORLD ACKNOWLEDGE THAT HITTING A BASEBALL IS THE NUMBER ONE MOST DIFFICULT THING TO DO IN TEAM OR INDIVIDUAL SPORTS. IT REQUIRES EXCELLENT HAND/EYE COORDINATION, PHYSICAL SKILLS AND STRENGTH, GREAT REFLEXES AND REACTIONS AND EXTREME PATIENCE AND CONCENTRATION. HITTING A BASEBALL IS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT, BUT GETTING A HIT IS EVEN MORE DIFFICULT. HERE ARE SOME INTERESTING THOUGHTS ON HITTING A BASEBALL AND WHY IT IS SO DIFFICULT:

- 1. A PITCH TRAVELS LESS THEN 60 FEET AT SPEEDS THAT VARY UP TO 100 MPH. A PITCH THROWN 90 MPH WILL REACH THE PLATE IN FOUR TENTHS OF A SECOND. THE BALL NOT ONLY VARIES IN SPEED IT VARIES IN MOVEMENTS DEPENDING ON HOW IT IS GRIPPED AND THROWN. THE HITTER HAS APPROXIMATELY ONE TENTH OF A SECOND TO PICK UP THE BALL, REACT AND SWING THE BAT.**
- 2. THE BALL AND BAT SURFACES ARE BOTH ROUND AND APPROXIMATELY THE SAME SIZE IN DIAMETER. TO HIT THE BALL SQUARE, CONTACT MUST BE ALMOST PERFECT.**
- 3. BASEBALL IS THE ONLY SPORT WHERE A PLAYER DOES NOT RELY ON HIS OWN TEAMMATES TO PASS HIM THE BALL (PUCK). IN BASEBALL YOU RELY ON YOUR OPPONENT TO PASS (PITCH) YOU THE BALL AND YOUR OPPONENT IS TRYING TO DECEIVE YOU AND THEREBY IS TRYING HIS BEST TO PREVENT YOU FROM HITTING IT.**
- 4. IF YOU DO HIT THE BALL THERE ARE NINE DEFENSIVE PLAYERS ATTEMPTING TO STOP THE BALL FROM BEING A HIT, SO JUST HITTING THE BALL IS NOT ENOUGH.**
- 5. THERE IS A MAN IN "BLUE" THAT EVERY PLAYER THINKS (USUALLY TOTALLY UNTRUE) IS THE TENTH PLAYER ON DEFENSE ATTEMPTING TO STOP THEM FROM GETTING A HIT.**
- 6. AT ALMOST EVERY LEVEL A HITTER IS GUARANTEED TO FAIL MORE OFTEN THEN SUCCEED. AT THE MAJOR LEGUE LEVEL A 400 BATTING AVERAGE IS UNHEARD OF WHICH MEANS THAT MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL PLAYERS FAIL TO GET A HIT AT LEAST 6 OR 7 TIMES OUT OF EVERY 10 TIMES AT BAT.**

HITTING MAY BE DIFFICULT, BUT IF SOMEONE IS WILLING TO PRACTICE USING GOOD BASIC FUNDAMENTALS AND IS WILLING TO PUT IN THE TIME AND EFFORT TO DEVELOP A SWING THROUGH REPETITION, REPETITION, REPETITION, THEY WILL GREATLY IMPROVE AND BECOME A "BETTER" HITTER.



CHOOSING THE RIGHT BAT



Players over the age of 13 playing in advanced leagues or high school are usually adept enough to figure out the bat that's best for them, and they can borrow teammates' bats to experiment. It's the younger players that need guidance and the right decisions made by mom and dad (or coach) to ensure they're swinging the right bat for their size, strength, and skill level. The bats chosen → are often too big, too heavy and too long.



As a general rule, the best bat will be the lightest bat at a given length. NFHS (High School) has a standard that the bat may not weigh, numerically, more than 3 ounces less than the length of the bat (e.g., a 33 inch long bat cannot be less than 30 ounces). Most youth leagues (12 and under) do not have a weight restriction, but some do not allow Big Barrel bats. Be sure to check with the league rules to find out if there are restrictions.



When shopping for a bat, have the player hold the bat straight out to player's side with the top hand.

(right for right hander)

left for left hander).



If they cannot hold the bat straight for twenty seconds without the arm starting to shake and the bat dropping, the bat is too heavy.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT BAT WEIGHT SUGGESTIONS



Youth 8-10 Yrs Old

Player Height	Best Bat Weight
---------------	-----------------

48 in.	16 oz.
--------	--------

50 in.	16.5 oz.
--------	----------

52 in.	17 oz.
--------	--------

54 in.	17.5 oz.
--------	----------

56 in.	18 oz.
--------	--------

58 in.	18.5 oz.
--------	----------

60 in.	19 oz.
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FORMULA (HT DIV BY 4 +4)

Youth 11-12 Yrs Old

Player Weight	Best Bat Weight
---------------	-----------------

70 lbs.	18 oz.
---------	--------

80 lbs.	19 oz.
---------	--------

90 lbs.	19.5 oz.
---------	----------

100 lbs.	20 oz.
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110 lbs.	20.5 oz.
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120 lbs.	21 oz.
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130 lbs.	21.5 oz.
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140 lbs.	22 oz.
----------	--------

150 lbs.	23 oz.
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FORMULA (WT DIV BY 18 + 14)

High School & College

Player Height	Best Bat Weight
---------------	-----------------

66 in.	27 oz.
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68 in.	27.5 oz.
--------	----------

70 in.	28 oz.
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72 in.	29 oz.
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74 in.	30 oz.
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76 in.	30.5 oz.
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FORMULA (HT DIV 3 + 6)

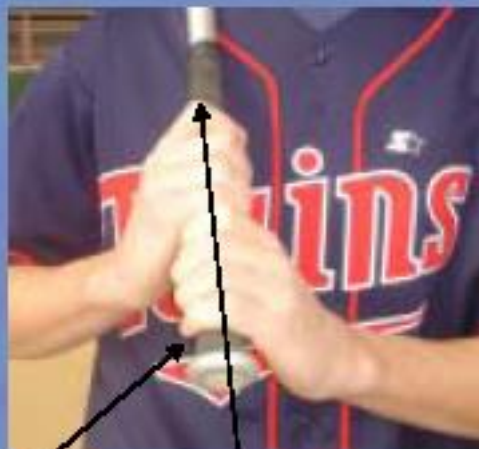
**Charts courtesy of
Worth Inc.**



BAT GRIP



PLACE THE BAT IN FINGER JOINTS OF EACH HAND (SIMILAR TO HOLDING A GOLF CLUB). BOTTOM FINGER SHOULD BE AGAINST THE KNOB. SOME PREFER TO HAVE UP TO AN INCH (CHOKE) SEPARATION BETWEEN THE KNOB AND FIRST FINGER



BRING THE BAT DIRECTLY UP AND PLACE ON THE SHOULDER. THE FRONT KNUCKLES, ALSO REFERRED TO AS THE "KNOCKING KNUCKLES" SHOULD LINE UP. ALTHOUGH UNNATURAL AT FIRST LINING UP THE FRONT KNUCKLES INSURES GOOD WRIST ACTION.



BAT GRIPPED TOO TIGHT AND THE WRONG KNUCKLES LINED UP WILL PREVENT PROPER WRIST ACTION AND A GOOD SWING. BAT SHOULD BE LOOSELY GRIPPED UNTIL THE FORWARD SWING BEGINS.

FOOT PLACEMENT



FRONT FOOT IN LINE WITH THE FRONT OF THE PLATE. FEET SPREAD AS WIDE AS THE SHOULDERS OR WHATEVER FEELS COMFORTABLE. BACK FOOT STRAIGHT OR SLIGHTLY PIGEON TOED TOWARD THE PLATE.

LENGTH FROM THE PLATE



PLACE THE BAT IN THE FRONT HAND AND WITH A SLIGHT BEND IN THE KNEES, REACH ACROSS THE PLATE HOLDING THE BAT AND ARM STRAIGHT. PLACE THE END OF THE BAT ACROSS THE PLATE AND REST IT ON THE OUTSIDE OF THE PLATE. ADJUST THE FEET ACCORDINGLY.

4 ELEMENTS TO HITTING



READY

LOAD

SQUISH/SWING

FOLLOW THRU



**READY
LOAD
SQUISH/SWING
FOLLOW THRU**



READY

POSITION THAT THE BATTER SHOULD BE IN WHEN THE PITCHER IS LOOKING IN FOR SIGNS AND IS READY TO PITCH. PITCHER READY BATTER IS READY.

IN A PROPER STANCE WITH THE KNOCKING KNUCKLES LINED UP, HANDS IN FRONT OF THE BODY AT ARMPIT HEIGHT AND THE BAT RESTING ON THE SHOULDER.

READY BUT RELAXED.

RELAXED



**READY
LOAD
SQUISH/SWING
FOLLOW THRU**



LOAD



POSITION BATTER TAKES WHEN THE PITCHER STARTS TO WIND UP OR ON THE FIRST MOVEMENT AFTER THE SET POSITION. WHEN THE PITCHER LOADS UP TO PITCH, THE BATTER LOADS UP TO HIT.

SHIFT WEIGHT TO THE BACK FOOT WHICH WILL PULL THE FRONT HEEL SLIGHTLY OFF THE GROUND. HANDS GO UP AND BACK AT ARM PIT TO SHOULDER HEIGHT. ELBOWS STAY DOWN, RELAXED AND CLOSE TO THE BODY. CHIN WILL BE CLOSE TO THE SHOULDER. BY SHIFTING THE WEIGHT TO THE BACK FOOT AND MOVING THE HANDS UP AND BACK, IT MOVES THE HITTER INTO AN ATTACKING POSITION, BUT STILL RELAXED.

RELAXED



READY
LOAD
SQUISH/SWING
FOLLOW THRU



SQUISH/SWING



SQUISH: BACK FOOT LIKE SQUISHING A BUG WITH YOUR TOES. WEIGHT REMAINS ON THE BACK FOOT, BUT THE BODY STARTS TO SHIFT FORWARD AS THE HANDS MOVE.

SWING: HANDS MOVE SLIGHTLY AFTER THE SQUISH. SNAP THE HEAD OF THE BAT (THE SWEET SPOT) AT THE BALL. THE BAT MOVES IN A DOWNWARD MOTION UNTIL IT REACHES THE PLATE, THEN LEVELS OFF THROUGH THE PLATE AND GRADUALLY BEGINS ON THE UP SWING IN THE FOLLOW THRU. EYES FOLLOW THE BALL. THE SHOULDERS MOVE WITH THE SWING, BUT THE HEAD DOES NOT MOVE.

EXPLODE



**READY
LOAD
SQUISH/SWING
FOLLOW THRU**



FOLLOW THRU

WHEN THE HITTER EXPLODES ON THE SWING, THE MOMENTUM OF THE EXPLOSION WILL TAKE THE BAT INTO THE FOLLOW THRU. DO NOT STOP THE MOMENTUM OF THE SWING. LET THE NATURAL FINISH OF THE SWING STOP THE BAT. THE BODY SHOULD FINISH STRAIGHT AND UPRIGHT. BACK LEG IN AN "L" AND FRONT LEG "SLIGHTLY" BENT.

REMINDER! CONTINUE TO KEEP THE HEAD AND EYES FOCUSED ON THE POINT OF CONTACT DURING THE FOLLOW THRU. THE CHIN STARTED ON THE FRONT SHOULDER. KEEPING THE HEAD STATIONARY DURING THE SWING, WITH THE ROTATION OF THE SHOULDERS DURING THE FOLLOW THRU, THE CHIN WILL END UP ON THE BACK SHOULDER.



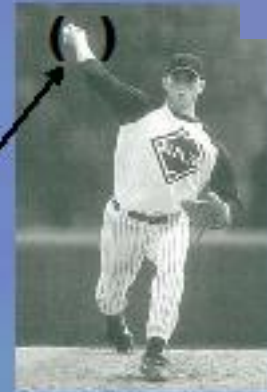
MOMENTUM



(#1)

A MOST IMPORTANT FUNDAMENTAL

WHEN THE PITCHER IS IN THE READY POSITION, THE HITTER SHOULD ALSO BE IN THE READY POSITION AND EYES SHOULD FOCUS ON THE PITCHER. AS THE PITCHER BEGIN THE DELIVERY THE FOCUS SHOULD SHIFT TO THE PITCHER'S "WINDOW" (THE SPOT WHERE THE BALL WILL ACTUALLY LEAVE THE PITCHER'S HAND). KEEP THE EYES FOCUSED ON THE "WINDOW" AND AT THE RELEASE OF THE BALL FOLLOW THE BALL ALL THE WAY TO THE POINT OF CONTACT WITH THE BAT AND CONTINUE TO FOCUS ON THE POINT OF CONTACT UNTIL THE FOLLOW THRU IS COMPLETED.



TRACK IT AND WACK IT



**READY
FOCUS ON
PITCHER**



**LOAD
FOCUS ON
WINDOW**



**FOLLOW FROM WINDOW
TO CONTACT**



**STAY WITH SPOT
OF CONTACT**



SLAP HIT

BEST IN POTENTIAL SACRIFICE BUNT SITUATIONS. EFFECTIVE FOR RIGHT HANDERS IN THE PIVOT BUNT POSITION. SHOW BUNT AND INSTEAD OF BUNTING SIMPLY BRING THE HANDS BACK AND MODIFY THE SWING. LIKE THE SACRIFICE BUNT, IF THE PITCH IS NOT A GOOD PITCH, DO NOT SWING.



SHOW BUNT



IN THE SLAP HIT, SHOW BUNT A LITTLE EARLIER THAN YOU WOULD IF YOU WERE ACTUALLY BUNTING. IF THE DEFENSE SHIFTS TO COVER THE BUNT IT OPENS UP MORE POTENTIAL FOR THE BALL GETTING THROUGH THE INFIELD.

AFTER THE FOLLOW THRU

RUN FROM UNDER THE BAT



**AFTER THE FOLLOW THRU THE
BATTER SHOULD LET THE BAT
DROP BY RELEASING THE HANDS
FROM THE BAT.**

**BATTERS THAT TAKE THE TIME
TO BRING THE BAT FORWARD AND
RELEASING IT IN FRONT OF THE
BODY WILL LOSE AT LEAST ONE
STEP IN RUNNING TO FIRST.**



BUNTING





BUNTING

AT THE MAJOR LEAGUE LEVEL THE HOME RUN AND “BIG” INNING BASEBALL HAVE BECOME THE EMPHASIS OF BASEBALL BOTH IN THE STRATEGY OF THE GAME AND IN THE FAN APPEAL OF BASEBALL. BUNTING HAS BECOME A LOST ART AND UNFORTUNATELY EVERYTHING DONE IN MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL HAS A TRICKLE DOWN EFFECT ON AMATEUR LEVELS OF PLAY.

THIS AND THE ADVENT OF THE ALUMINUM BAT HAVE DIMISHED THE INTEREST IN BUNTING AND IN MANY CASES HAVE DIMINISHED THE INTEREST AND SKILLS OF MANY YOUTH COACHES FOR TEACHING THE FUNDAMENTALS OF BUNTING.

EVEN SO, THE BUNT CAN BE (AND STILL SHOULD BE) AN EFFECTIVE WEAPON IN CLOSE BALL GAMES. A TEAM AND PLAYERS WHOSE COACH TEACHES EVERY ASPECT OF THE GAME (INCLUDING THE BUNT) WILL BENEFIT GREATLY.

Bunting improves hitting! Learning to bunt develops timing and helps the player see the ball better. It also develops discipline to actually keep your eyes on the ball as it comes in contact with the bat. The fundamentals of bunting, actually, should be taught before batting.

Just like in hitting, the single most important thing to remember in the bunting process is: The pitcher will have a release point (window). Keep your head and eyes focused on the window and at the release follow the ball all the way to the point of contact with the bat.



BUNTING FOOTWORK



**START IN BASIC
BATTING STANCE**



**STEP WITH FRONT FOOT
SLIGHTLY FORWARD AND TO
THE LEFT**

“SQUARE AROUND”



**BRING REAR FOOT UP PARALLEL
TO THE FRONT FOOT
APPROXIMATELY SHOULDER
WIDTH APART AND SIX INCHES
OFF THE PLATE**



**IF THE FIRST STEP IS WITH
THE BACK FOOT, THE
BATTER WILL STEP ON THE
PLATE OR IN FRONT OF THE
PLATE. IF THE BAT MAKES
CONTACT WITH THE PITCH,
THE BALL WILL BE DEAD
AND THE BATTER WILL BE
OUT.**

BUNTING FOOTWORK



**START IN BASIC
BATTING STANCE**



**PIVOT ON THE TOES OF THE BACK FOOT (SQUISH THE BUG).
PIVOT ON THE HEEL OF THE FRONT FOOT**



“PIVOT”

PIVOT: QUICKER THEN THE SQUARE AROUND. DOES NOT SHOW “BUNT” AS SOON



BUNTING

HANDS AND BAT PLACEMENT



BOTTOM HAND STAYS THE SAME AS BATTING EXCEPT LOOSEN THE GRIP SOME. TOP HAND SLIDES HALF WAY DOWN THE BAT



AND

PINCHES THE BAT BETWEEN THUMB AND FIRST FINGER.



ARMS EXTENDED STRAIGHT AHEAD, SLIGHT BEND IN THE ELBOWS. MEAT OF THE BAT SHOULD BE OVER THE PLATE AND HELD AT THE TOP OF THE STRIKE ZONE. UNLESS IT IS A SUICIDE SQUEEZE (YOU MUST BUNT THE PITCH NO MATTER WHERE IT IS), IF THE PITCH IS ABOVE THE BAT, THE BAT SHOULD BE PULLED BACK BECAUSE THE PITCH WILL BE A BALL. IF A HIGH PITCH IS BUNTED THE PERCENTAGE IS HIGH THAT IT WILL BE POPPED UP.

IF THE PITCH IS BELOW THE WAIST BEND THE KNEES TO COVER THE PITCH



LIKE BATTING, TRACK THE BALL FROM THE PITCH RELEASE (WINDOW) TO THE BAT



BUNTING BAT ANGLE



**BAT PARALLEL TO THE GROUND:
BETTER FOR BAT CONTROL AND
BEST WHEN FIRST LEARNING TO
BUNT**



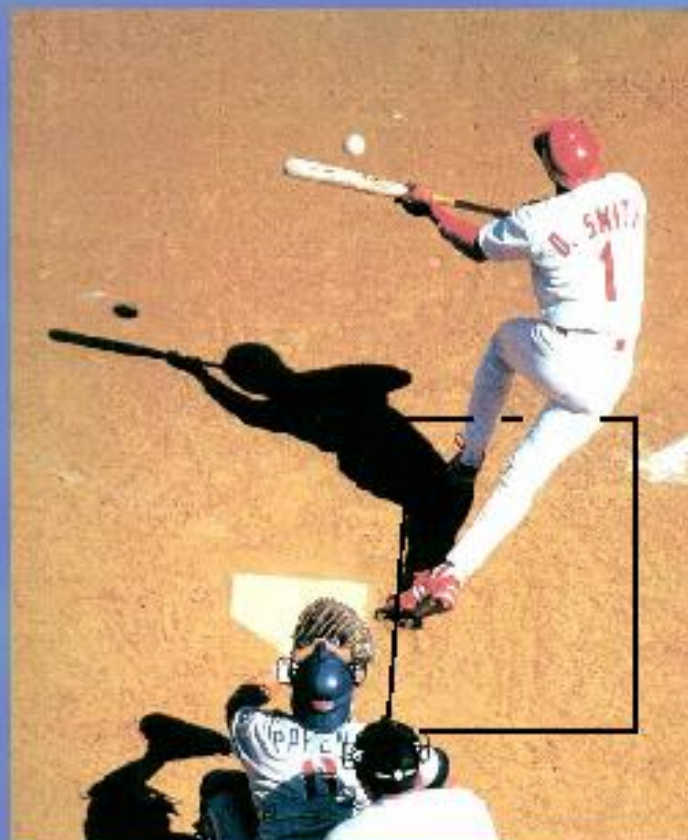
**BAT HELD AT 45 DEGREE ANGLE:
LESS CHANCE OF THE BALL BEING
POPPED UP.
SHOULD MASTER THE BAT PARALLEL
TO THE GROUND BEFORE USING THIS
METHOD**



DRAG BUNT LEFTY

THE DRAG BUNT IS EFFECTIVE WHEN IT BECOMES AN ELEMENT OF SURPRISE TO THE DEFENSE. THE BATTER WAITS UNTIL THE PITCH IS ON THE WAY AND TAKES A QUICK STEP WITH THE FRONT FOOT FORWARD AND SLIGHTLY TOWARD FIRST. THE FOOT TOUCHING THE GROUND AND THE BAT MAKING CONTACT WITH THE BALL HAPPEN SIMULTANEOUSLY. IF THE HITTER WAITS UNTIL THE BALL REACHES THE PLATE AND IS STATIONARY WHEN CONTACT IS MADE IT WILL NOT BE AS EFFECTIVE.

SLAP HIT: THE SLAP HIT IS MORE COMMONLY USED IN SOFTBALL, HOWEVER, MANY GREAT LEFTHANDERS IN BASEBALL (ROD CAREW) HAVE USED IT EFFECTIVELY. SAME FOOTWORK AS THE DRAG BUNT HOWEVER INSTEAD OF HOLDING THE BAT IN THE BUNT POSITION THE HITTER TAKES A MODIFIED SWING AT THE BALL. ALSO EFFECTIVE FOR RIGHT HANDERS IN THE PIVOT BUNT POSITION. INSTEAD OF BUNTING SIMPLY BRING THE HANDS BACK AT THE LAST MOMENT AND MODIFY THE SWING. (SEE BATTING).



THE FRONT FOOT CANNOT BE TOTALLY OUT OF THE BATTER'S BOX AND ON THE GROUND WHEN CONTACT IS MADE WITH THE BALL. IF THAT HAPPENS THE BALL BECOMES DEAD AND THE BATTER IS OUT.

PITCHING BB



BASIC BASEBALL FUNDAMENTALS

PITCHING



DEMONSTRATORS



JOSEF BETTS-FLOYD

DREW GUNDERSON

CENTRAL AREA BASEBALL (CAB)

TWINS JR RBI ALL STARS 2006

TWINS JR RBI ALL STARS 2005





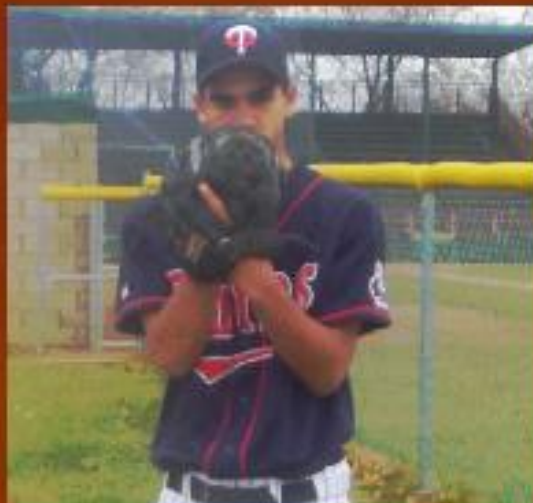
PITCHING PHILOSOPHY

Most kids learn their pitching mechanics by watching Major Leaguers on TV or by emulating older kids that they see out on the ball fields. Not good! They usually do things that they have seen that look cool, but are in most cases way too complicated. The following is a most simplistic approach to pitching, eliminating wasted and unnecessary motion, and keeping the focus on body control. Until you can master body control you cannot master pitch control.

If you have (or teach) good basic fundamental throwing mechanics, then you already have or have been teaching the basic fundamentals of pitching. In the following slides demonstrating pitching fundamentals, we will show the similarities to the throwing mechanics. There is no wheel to reinvent.



PRIOR TO THE PITCH TAKING THE SIGN



WIND-UP POSITION

BALL IN THE BARE HAND IN THE GLOVE. BACK OF THE GLOVE FACING THE BATTER AND CLOSE TO THE CHEST. KEEPS EVERYONE FROM SEEING THE GRIP ON THE BALL.

ONCE THE SIGNAL IS ACCEPTED THE PITCHER SHOULD ALWAYS MOVE THE BALL IN THE HAND (GRIP OR REGRIP) SO NO PATTERN OF A SPECIFIC PITCH CAN BE PREDICTED. NOTE! THE SIGN MAY BE ALSO BE TAKEN WITH THE BALL IN THE GLOVE OR HAND AND THE HAND BEHIND THE BACK



BOTH FEET ON THE PITCHING PLATE ABOUT SIX TO 12 INCHES APART. MIDDLE OF THE FEET FORWARD SHOULD HANG OFF AND IN FRONT OF THE PLATE. THIS POSITION MAKES BOTH THE FIRST STEP BACK AND FIRST STEP FORWARD EASIER. SIMPLY TURN THE FOOT SIDEWAYS



PITCHING FOOTWORK



a

b

c

d

e

f

g

h

a) BOTH FEET ON TOP OF THE PITCHING PLATE, 6" TO 12" APART WITH FRONT HALF OF BOTH FEET HANGING OVER THE FRONT EDGE

b) SHORT STEP STRAIGHT BACK (APPROXIMATELY 6") WITH NON-PIVOT FOOT

c) SLIDE AND TURN PIVOT FOOT DIRECTLY IN FRONT AND TOUCHING THE PITCHING PLATE WITH THE ANKLE POINTING DIRECTLY TO HOME

d) LIFT NON-PIVOT FOOT APPROXIMATELY WAIST HIGH AND POINT KNEE DIRECTLY AT THIRD BASE

e) LOWER NON-PIVOT FOOT STRAIGHT DOWN A FEW INCHES OFF THE GROUND

f) PUSHING OFF THE PITCHING PLATE WITH THE PIVOT FOOT AND STRIDE WITH NON-PIVOT FOOT DIRECTLY TOWARD THE PLATE

g) MOMENTUM OF THE PITCH RELEASE CARRIES THE PIVOT FOOT UP (KICK THE BUTT) AND FORWARD

h) FOLLOW THRU BRINGING THE PIVOT FOOT FORWARD AND PARALLEL TO THE LEAD FOOT

IN a, b, c, d, AND e, THE PITCHER'S BODY REMAINS STRAIGHT AND DIRECTLY OVER THE PIVOT FOOT. THE GLOVE, HANDS AND ARMS ALSO REMAIN IN THE SAME POSITION IN FRONT OF THE BODY.



BODY BALANCE AND CONTROL



THE PITCHER'S BODY REMAINS STRAIGHT AND BALANCED DIRECTLY OVER THE PIVOT FOOT, THE GLOVE, HANDS AND ARMS ALSO REMAIN IN THE SAME POSITION DURING THE (a) SIGN, (b) STEP BACK WITH THE NON-PIVOT FOOT, (c) FORWARD STEP WITH THE PIVOT FOOT, (d) LIFT UP OF THE PIVOT FOOT KNEE AND (e) THE MOVEMENT OF THE PIVOT FOOT STRAIGHT DOWN SEVERAL INCHES OFF THE GROUND



STRIDE



RELEASE



FOLLOW THRU



F. WHEN THE PITCHER PUSHES OFF THE PITCHER'S PLATE WITH THE PIVOT FOOT IT IS THE FIRST TIME THE BODY MOVES IN A DIRECTION NOT DIRECTLY OVER THE PIVOT FOOT. AT THE SAME TIME THE LEAD FOOT STRIDES FORWARD AND THE HANDS SEPARATE.

G. THE LEAD FOOT HITS THE GROUND AND ALMOST SIMULTANEOUSLY THE BALL IS RELEASED AND THE PIVOT FOOT COMES OFF THE PLATE. MOMENTUM OF THE PUSH AND RELEASE DRIVES THE PIVOT FOOT (KICK THE BUTT) UP IN THE AIR.

H. IN THE NATURAL FOLLOW THRU THE PIVOT FOOT RETURNS TO THE GROUND APPROXIMATELY PARALLEL TO THE LEAD FOOT. GLOVE ENDS ON THE HIP, THUMB POINTED UP (SEE ARROW).

DISENGAGING THE PITCHING PLATE

WINDUP POSITION



a

b

b

a

c

d

- a. TWO FEET ON THE PITCHING PLATE (THE NON PIVOT FOOT MAY BE BEHIND THE PITCHING PLATE. THE BALL MAY BE IN THE GLOVE, HAND OR BOTH.
- b. PITCHER STEPS BACK WITH THE NON PIVOT FOOT OR IF NON PIVOT FOOT IS ALREADY OFF THE PLATE ANY MOVEMENT OF THE NON PIVOT FOOT PRIOR TO BACKING OFF THE PLATE WITH THE PIVOT FOOT. THE PITCHER MUST CONTINUE TO PITCH TO THE BATTER. ANY STOP OR PAUSE PRIOR TO DELIVERING THE BALL WOULD BE A BALK.
- c. PITCHER STEPS BACKWARD WITH THE PIVOT FOOT.
- d. STEPPING BACKWARD IS NOT ENOUGH. THE PIVOT FOOT MUST TOTALLY DISENGAGE THE PLATE AND LAND ON THE GROUND BEHIND THE PLATE. FAILURE TO COMPLY IS A BALK.



HIGH SCHOOL AND BELOW WHEN A BALK IS CALLED THE BALL BECOMES DEAD.



PRIOR TO THE PITCH



TAKING THE SIGN



NON-PIVOT FOOT IN FRONT OF A LINE EXTENDING THROUGH THE FRONT EDGE OF THE PITCHER'S PLATE. ENTIRE PIVOT FOOT MUST BE ON OR IN FRONT OF, IN CONTACT WITH AND WITHIN THE 24 INCHES OF THE PITCHING PLATE. FEET SPREAD ABOUT SHOULDER WIDTH APART. HANDS MUST BE SEPARATED. THE BALL MAY BE IN THE GLOVE OR HAND AND THE PITCHING HAND SHALL BE DOWN AT THE SIDE OR BEHIND THE BACK.

SET POSITION



MUST GO TO THE SET POSITION WITHOUT INTERRUPTION AND IN ONE CONTINUOUS MOTION. MUST COME TO A COMPLETE STOP (CHANGE OF DIRECTION IS NOT AN ACCEPTABLE STOP) WITH THE BALL IN BOTH HANDS IN FRONT OF THE BODY AND THE GLOVE AT OR BELOW THE CHIN.

ANY TIME FROM TAKING THE SIGN TO COMPLETING THE SET POSITION, THE PITCHER MAY TURN ON THE PIVOT FOOT OR LIFT IT IN A JUMP TURN TO STEP WITH THE NON-PIVOT FOOT TOWARD A BASE. AN OVERTHROW FROM THIS POSITION WOULD BE FROM THE PLATE (A ONE BASE AWARD)



DISENGAGING THE PITCHING PLATE



SET POSITION



FOOT IN CONTACT WITH THE PITCHING PLATE AND BALL IN HAND OR GLOVE OR HANDS TOGETHER IN THE SET POSITION

MUST STEP BACK OFF THE PLATE WITH THE PIVOT FOOT PRIOR TO SEPARATING THE HANDS

WHEN A PITCHER DISENGAGES THE PITCHING PLATE, THE STATUS CHANGES FROM PITCHER TO FIELDER. ANY OVER THROWS MADE WILL BE COVERED UNDER THE OVER THROW RULE BY A FIELDER. (2 BASES FROM THE RELEASE OF THE THROW)

**PROPER SEQUENCE WOULD BE (A) OR (B) THEN (C) FOLLOWED BY D (HANDS SEPARATED)
IN (A) AND (B) STEPPING OFF THE PLATE SIDWAYS OR FORWARD WOULD BE A BALK.
IN (B) SEPARATING THE HANDS BEFORE STEPPING BACK WOULD BE A BALK.**



THROWING TO A BASE FROM THE SET



Runner on first
Pivot or jump
turn, must
throw to first

(RIGHT HANDED PITCHER)

WHEN THROWING OR BLUFFING
A THROW TO A BASE, THE
PITCHER MUST STEP DIRECTLY
TOWARD THAT BASE AND THE
STEP MUST PRECEDE THE
THROW. ON THE FAKE THIRD,
THROW TO FIRST THE PITCHER
MUST STEP DIRECTLY (WITH THE
NON-PIVOT FOOT) TOWARD
THIRD BEFORE PIVOTING AND
THROWING TO FIRST.



Runner on first must
deliver to the plate.
Runner on third may
throw to third, fake
a throw to third.
Runners on first and
third may fake a
throw to third and
throw to first



Runner on second
may in a continuous
motion, spin and
throw to second or
fake a throw to
second



THROWING TO A BASE FROM THE SET

(LEFT HANDED PITCHER)

LEFT HANDED PITCHERS HAVE A DEFINITE ADVANTAGE HOLDING A RUNNER ON FIRST. THEY MAY RAISE THE LEAD FOOT AND ARE NOT COMMITTED TO FIRST OR THE PLATE, HOWEVER THE LEAD FOOT MAY HAVE NO HESITATION OR STOP IN THE MOTION. IN THROWING TO FIRST THE FOOT MUST COME DOWN SOMEWHERE WITHIN A 45 DEGREE ANGLE (BETWEEN(A) AND (B)). IF THE PITCHER SWINGS THE LEAD FOOT BEHIND THE PLANE OF THE PITCHING PLATE (C) THE PITCHER IS COMMITTED TO PITCH TO THE PLATE.

Runner on first
Pitcher may throw to first or pitch to the plate.



Runner on second Same as right handed pitcher, may in a continuous motion spin and throw to second or fake a throw to second



**STRIDE AND THROW
GLOVE ON THE HIP
IN THE FOLLOW THRU**



SEPARATE



STEP



HEROS-20

1-4-10-20

SAME BASIC FUNDAMENTALS



HOW TO GRIP THE BASEBALL



Pitching Grips - How To Grip And Throw Different Baseball Pitches

Proper pitching starts with the right grip on the baseball. The following slides are some of the most common baseball pitching grips and how to throw using them. Use these grip descriptions and pictures as a guide to getting a better GRIP on the baseball.

- [How to grip and throw a four-seam fastball](#)
- [How to grip and throw a two-seam fastball](#)
- [How to grip and throw a three-finger changeup](#)
- [How to grip and throw a circle changeup](#)
- [How to grip and throw a palmball \(palm ball\)](#)
- [How to grip and throw a beginners curveball](#)
- [How to grip and throw a straight curveball](#)
- [How to grip and throw a knuckle curveball](#)
- [How to grip and throw a slider](#)
- [How to grip and throw a split-finger fastball](#)



How To Grip And Throw A Four Seam Fastball



Four-seam fastball

To grip the four seam fastball, place your index and middle fingertips directly on the perpendicular seam of the baseball. The "horseshoe seam" should face into your ring finger of your throwing hand (as shown in the picture on the left). I call it the horseshoe seam simply because the seam itself looks like the shape of a horseshoe. Next, place your thumb directly beneath the baseball, resting on the smooth leather (as shown in the picture on the right). Ideally, you should rest your thumb in the center of the horseshoe seam on the bottom part of the baseball. Grip this pitch softly, like an egg, in your finger-tips. There should be a "gap" or space between the ball and your palm (as shown in the middle picture). This is the key to throwing a good, hard four-seam fastball with maximal backspin and velocity: A loose grip minimizes "friction" between your hand and the baseball. The less friction, of course, the quicker the baseball can leave your hand. Does a four-seam fastball rise? "No," says Bill James, author of the the Neyer/James Guide to Pitchers. "A fastball can't rise unless it's thrown underhand. But if you throw the fastball overhand with enough force, it will appear to rise because it's not dropping as much as the batter's brain thinks it should."

How To Grip And Throw A Two Seam Fastball



Two seam fastball

A two seam fastball, much like a sinker or cutter (cut fastball), is gripped slightly tighter and deeper in the throwing-hand than the four-seam fastball. This pitch generally is thought of as a "movement pitch" (as opposed to the four-seam fastball, which is primarily thought of as a "straight pitch"). When throwing a two-seam fastball, your index and middle fingers are placed directly on top of the narrow seams of the baseball (as shown in the picture on the left). Next, place your thumb directly on the bottom side of the baseball and on the smooth leather in between the narrow seams (as shown in the picture on the right). Again, a two seamer is gripped a little firmer than the four seamer.

A firm grip causes friction, which causes the baseball to change direction, usually "backing up" - or running in - to the throwing hand side of the plate. It also slightly reduces the speed of the pitch, which is why most two-seamers register about 1 to 3 mph slower than four-seam fastballs. Throw the two-seam fastball to the throwing-hand side of the plate and the four seam fastball to the glove-hand side of the plate. In other words, a righty, throw two-seamers inside to right-handed batters and four-seamers away. You will like the feel of the grip of the two-seamer in the glove (in your pre-pitch stance). It will let you know on a sub-conscious level that you are going inside on the hitter.



How To Grip And Throw A Three Finger Changeup



Three finger changeup

A three-finger changeup is a good off-speed pitch for younger baseball pitchers – and for those who do not have big hands. To throw an effective three-finger changeup, center your ring, middle, and index fingers on top of the baseball (as shown in the third picture at right). Your thumb and pinky finger should be placed on the smooth leather directly underneath the baseball (as shown in the middle picture). A lot of pitchers like to "touch" their pinky and thumb when gripping this pitch (as shown in the middle picture). It helps to develop a good "feel" for the pitch, which is important since the changeup is a finesse pitch. OK, now that you've got your grip, hold the baseball deep in the palm of your hand to maximize friction and to "de-centralize" the force of the baseball when the pitch is released. This helps take speed off of the pitch. Throw it like you would a fastball: Same mechanics. Same arm speed. Same everything. One way to develop "fastball mechanics" but changeup speed is to practice throwing your changeup as you long toss (throwing beyond 90 feet). Alternate fastballs and change-ups at 90-or-more feet for about 20 throws a couple of times a week.

Note: Advanced pitchers can experiment with "turning the ball over" to create even more movement on the pitch.

To do this, pronate your throwing hand (turn it over as if you were giving your catcher a "thumbs down" hand signal) as you throw the pitch.

How To Grip And Throw A Circle Changeup



Circle changeup

The circle changeup and the four-seam fastball are both great pitches. To throw a circle changeup make - quite literally - a circle or an "OK" gesture with your throwing hand (using your thumb and index fingers). You then center the baseball between your three other fingers (as shown in the middle picture above right). The baseball should be tucked comfortably against the circle. Throw this pitch with the same arm speed and body mechanics as a fastball, only slightly turn the ball over by throwing the circle to the target. This is called pronating your hand. (Think about this as giving someone standing directly in front of you a "thumbs down" sign with your throwing hand.) This reduces speed and gives you that nice, fading movement to your throwing-arm side of the plate. A great way to develop the "fastball mechanics" but changeup speed is to practice throwing your changeup as you long toss (throwing beyond 90 feet). Alternate fastballs and changeups at 90-or-more feet for about 20 throws a couple of times a week.

How To Grip And Throw A Palmball



Palmball

The palmball (sometimes called a palm ball or four-finger changeup) is one of two or three variations of the changeup. It's an off-speed pitch. A palmball is gripped by essentially choking the baseball deep in your hand and wrapping all of your fingers around the baseball. It's essentially a four-fingered change-up where the baseball is centered in your hand between your middle and ring fingers. The index and ring fingers are placed on either side of the baseball for balance, and the thumb is placed directly below the baseball. At its release point, try to turn the ball over a little to get more movement. The deeper the grip, the more friction that is created on the ball, which takes off velocity. However, as with all off-speed pitches, the arm speed and mechanics of your pitching delivery have to be the same as your fastball.

How To Grip And Throw A Beginner's Curveball



Beginner's curveball

The beginner's curveball is a great pitch for younger pitchers. In essence, this pitch does the exact opposite as a fastball. Whereas a fastball spins from the bottom to top (which is known as "backspin"), a curveball spins from top to bottom. And instead of leverage coming from behind the top of the baseball (as a four-seam fastball), leverage on a curve comes from the front of the baseball. Teach a beginners curveball grip to younger pitchers who are learning a curveball for the first time. It's the easiest way to correctly learn proper spin. (This is also a great grip for more advanced pitchers to use in a practice setting if they're having trouble with the breaking ball.) Here's how it works: Grip a baseball leaving the index finger off – like you were pointing at something. (Your index finger will be used to aim the baseball at your target). Next, place your middle finger along the bottom seam of the baseball and place your thumb on the back seam (as shown in the middle picture above). When this pitch is thrown, your thumb should rotate upward, and your middle finger should snap downward while your index finger points in the direction of your target. This, of course, is the reason this pitch is great for beginners: the ball goes where your index finger points. The beginners curveball helps to align your hand and ball to the target. Note: Because hitters at the college and professional levels may be able to pick up on the "raised" finger during this pitch's delivery, a beginners curve shouldn't be used past high school.

How To Grip And Throw A Straight Curveball



Straight curveball

The straight curveball (or "overhand curveball") is one of the most common breaking ball grips. It's a variation of my beginners curveball and my knuckle curveball. A straight curve requires mastery of my beginners curveball, because many of the same principles that apply to both grips. This doesn't mean that you have to throw a beginners curve (most pitchers actually start right out with this pitching grip). But the beginners curveball is a good place to start. Then, of course, this pitching grip is the next step. That's because there is essentially no significant difference between a straight curveball and a beginners curveball, except for the finger placement of your index finger. It should be placed *on* the baseball as opposed to pointed at a target. The thumb action of the pitch is upward. The thumb rotates up while your middle and index fingers rotate down. The arm action on this pitch is a little abbreviated at the end. Instead of getting a nice long arc of deceleration and finishing throwing elbow outside of your opposite knee (as with your fastball), you'll want to bring your throwing-hand elbow to the opposite hip. This, of course, shortens your follow through, but allows you to really snap off the pitch.



How To Grip And Throw A Knuckle Curveball



Knuckle curveball

Another more advanced variation of the curveball is the knuckle curveball (sometimes called a spike curve). This is the curveball grip that I used. Thrown the same way as beginners curveball only you'll tuck your finger back into the seam of the ball. Your knuckle will now point to your target instead of your index finger (in the beginners curve). The difficulty with this pitch isn't from the pitch itself. In fact, most pitchers feel this grip gives them the most rotation – and most movement – of any breaking pitch. However, many pitchers who are learning this pitch for the first time, aren't comfortable with the "tucking" part. It's not super comfortable at first to tuck your index finger into the baseball. This is why it is recommended that you spend a few weeks – preferably during the off-season – working on tucking your index finger into the baseball. Do it while you're watching TV or in study hall at school. Once your index finger is comfortable with the grip, you can progress into spinning a baseball to a partner without any trouble.

Note: You've got to maintain short and well-manicured nails – especially on your index finger of the throwing hand – for this pitch to be effective because long fingernails can get in the way of the grip. One thing you can do is apply a thin coat of [nail polish](#) or [fingernail strengthener](#). It's in the women's section where fingernail polish is found, of course. It's shiny (even the matte finish is a bit shiny), but dries clear. And it helps to make fingernails a little tougher.

(If you do use it, you really need just apply it to your index finger.)

How To Grip And Throw A Slider



Slider

Ted Williams once said that a slider was "the best pitch in baseball". Whether or not that's true depends on a lot of things, of course, but the slider is certainly an effective pitch for those who can throw it correctly. A slider is the third fastest pitch in baseball. (The No. 1 fastest is a four-seam fastball and No. 2 is a two-seam fastball.) It's important for pitchers, parents and coaches to learn a proper slider grip and to learn correct throwing technique of a slider to ensure and promote arm-health. A slider is gripped like a two-seam fastball, but held slightly off-center. When thrown, try to manipulate the pitch to come off of the thumb-side of your index finger – NOT your index- and middle-fingers, as with a two-seam fastball – because a two-finger release will cause the pitch to balance out, which reduces the spin that you are looking for. Most good slider pitchers grip the outer-third of the baseball and cock their wrist slightly, but not stiffly, to their throwing hand's thumb-side upon release of the pitch. This enables a pitcher to apply pressure to the outer-half of the ball with the index finger. Avoid any twisting of the wrist upon release. Place the long seam of the baseball in between the index- and middle-fingers, put the thumb on the opposite seam underneath the ball (as shown in the first picture above). Some baseball pitchers may find it more helpful to place their index finger along the seam of the baseball since the index finger is the one from which the slider is thrown. The key with the slider is to hold the ball slightly off-center (on the outer third of the ball). Remember to slightly cock your wrist, but don't stiffen it. That way, you can still get good wrist-snap upon release. If your wrist is slightly cocked to the throwing hand's thumb side, your wrist-snap will enable you to have the pitch come off of the thumb-side of your index finger, which, in turn, promotes good spin on the ball. The rest is simple: This pitch should work for itself. The movement on this pitch comes from the baseball spinning off of the index finger from the outside of the baseball – NOT from twisting your hand underneath the ball. Slider arm speed should remain the same as fastball arm speed.

How To Grip And Throw A Splitter



Splitter

A split-finger fastball (sometimes called a splitter or splitty) is an advanced pitch. Typically, it's only a good pitch if you've got bigger hands. That's because the pitch itself should be "choked" deep in the hand. This is how splitters get their downward movement. Your index and middle fingers should be placed on the outside of the horseshoe seam. The grip is firm. When throwing this pitch, throw the palm-side wrist of the throwing-hand directly at the target while keeping your index and middle fingers extended upward. Your wrist should remain stiff.

Bruce Sutter, one of the best splitter pitchers in the history of the game, says that it is very important to put your thumb on the back seam, not the front seam. This puts the ball out front just a bit more than a fork ball. Then, he says, you just throw a fastball. A very sophisticated and misunderstood point is that the split-fingered fastball should be thrown with back spin just like a two-seam fastball. But in a Roger Kahn/Bruce Sutter interview in Kahn's book, [*The Head Game: Baseball Seen from the Pitcher's Mound*](#), he points out that this is not the case.

PITCHING SB



FP Techniques and Mechanics



The best pitchers have different techniques or mechanics.

Some pitchers bend over when they start, some crouch, and some stand straight! Some pitchers start their windmill at their hip, others go back a little and some swing their arm way back. Some pitchers pivot on their back foot and others do not. The following slides are a basic way to start out as a pitcher or for teaching potential pitchers, but certainly they do not depict the only way to pitch. Always continue to seek out more information. Google is a great place to go.



Basic Mechanics Covered



**BASIC BALL GRIP
FOOT PLACEMENT FOR
DRILLS**

**WRIST SNAP DRILL
ARM WHIP (T-DRILL)**

WINDMILL

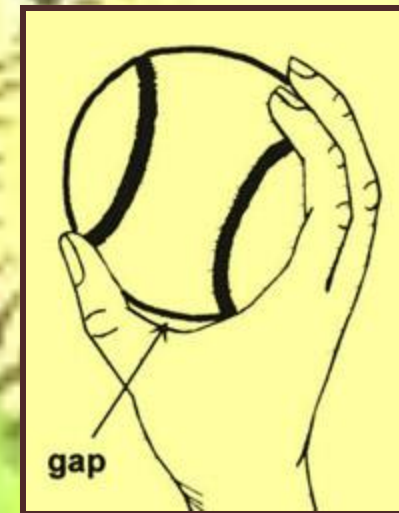
PUSH OFF DRILL

**BREAKING & CHANGE-UP
PITCHES**

**The goal of the beginning windmill pitcher:
Get the softball over the plate with as much speed as possible.**

Basic Ball Grip

**The thumb is opposite the middle finger.
The ball is held on the fingertips with as much gap as possible**



There are other grips but this is the one typically used

Foot Placement For Drills



(POWER POSITION)

This foot position is very similar to how your feet end up when pitching. Your hips should be facing midway between home plate and third base. The stride foot should be pointing in the same direction as the pivot foot, i.e., pointing midway between home plate and third base (right handed).

Stride foot - left foot for right handed... right foot for left handed.

Pivot foot - right foot for right handed... left foot for left handed.

If you are left handed, your hips should be facing midway between home Plate and first base.

Beginning: When you first start, do not move your feet!

Mid-Level: As you progress, you may allow your pivot foot (the one standing on the pitching mound) to move forward while you are closing your hips. Closing your hips means quickly changing your hips and shoulders so they are facing home plate.

Advanced: In advanced drills, you may step with your stride foot (the one you step with) and then close your hips quickly by moving your pivot foot up beside your stride foot.

RHP



LHP



Wrist Snap Drill



This drill improves the wrist snap to improve control of the ball during ball is that it can be done almost anywhere

Mechanics

a) In the position shown, rest your wrist and throwing hand out over

b) With a fastball grip, cock and snap

upward. You may initially hold your forearm down with the other hand to ensure that only the wrist muscles are used, but eventually you must learn to do this drill by relaxing your forearm during the wrist snap,

c) You may use any ball but a weighted softball, like a 1 pound cannonball which can be purchased on-line, works well.

d) Work on increasing the height of the ball as it is thrown (ball speed) and work on controlling where it lands (ball control).

The benefits of this drill are it helps increase ball speed with better wrist snap, improves control by practicing ball release and it corrects improper release.

You should feel the ball roll off the ends of the fingers, feel the laces on the ball as it is released and you should relax your arm muscles as you flick your wrist.



achieve more ball speed, and it release. One of its main advantages

forearm on your thigh. Extend the the knee.

your wrist to throw the ball straight

An alternative drill can be used to warm up before pitching. Simply stand, facing your catcher, and with your pitching arm straight down at your side with your hand a little behind your hip. Throw the ball using only your wrist. Do not move your arm! Make sure you are looking at and hitting your target.

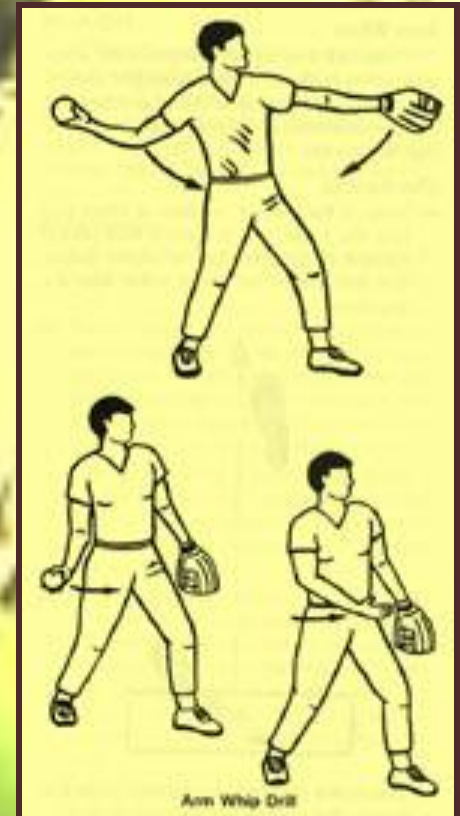
Arm Whip (T-Drill)



This drill is designed to improve the whipping action in the arm that occurs just prior to ball release. This action works in combination with the wrist snap, and it is necessary to achieve high ball speeds. Stand in the "power position" in which you face the target with the stride foot placed forward of the pivot foot as shown. The feet should be spread wider than the shoulders. You should be relatively close to the catcher or target at about midway between home plate and the pitching rubber.

Mid-level and advanced may have to back up closer to the pitching rubber to prevent injuring the catcher.

Beginning pitchers should start by throwing the ball slowly, always down the center of the target, and gradually increasing speed. If you start throwing to the right or left of the target, slow back down until you can throw down the center.



Arm Whip/T-Drill cont.

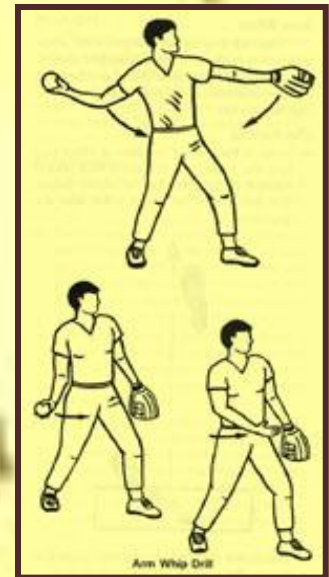


Always snap the wrist... never aim!

b) Extend the glove arm toward the target and swing the pitching arm rearward to a horizontal position while rotating hips and shoulders to the "open position." The wrist should be "cocked" and the arm straight or only slightly bent at the elbow. Beginning pitchers may start in this "T" position.

c) From this "T" position, bring the pitching arm down forcefully to the side while closing the hips and shoulders. Beginning pitchers should stand still and mid-level and advanced pitchers move their feet to achieve hip/shoulder closure.

d) Release the ball with a snap of the wrist just before it reaches the hip. After the ball is released, the elbow may follow the pitching hand past the hip. Throw the ball as fast as possible without letting the elbow pass the hip before ball release.



Arm Whip (T-Drill) notes:

- 1. Insure your arm does not go behind your back... keep it out away from your body so the ball will have a straight arc from behind you through the follow-through. If your arm starts behind your back, you will have to go around your hip instead of straight past your hip. This will cause you to throw either low to the right or high to the left (right handers) depending on your release point.**
- 2. Keep your hand as close to your hip during the down-swing as possible.**
- 3. Follow through to the catcher's glove or your target and then to your shoulder. Your hand should end up in front of your shoulder... not in front of your chest.**
- 4. If you are not throwing down the center of the plate (or target), you are probably doing it wrong. Your catcher or coach can help identify the problem areas.**
- 5. Perform this drill at least 20 times. Mid-level and advanced should be able to throw 10 pitches down the center of the target, not to the right or left, in a row.**
- 6. You can help increase speed by using a heavy ball like the 1 lb cannonball.**

Warning:

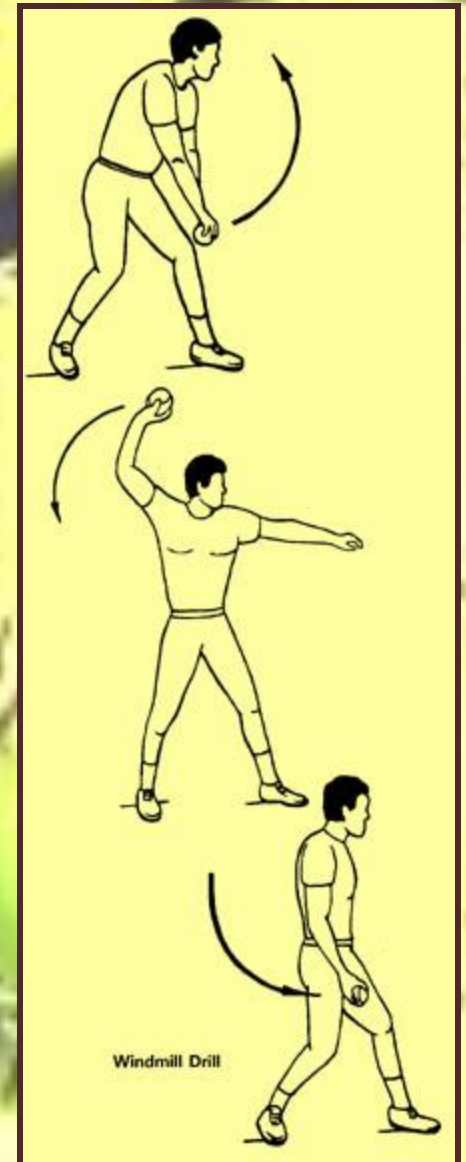
Never swing the cannonball in a full circle or you will hurt your shoulder.)

Windmil



a) From the power position, extend arms forward toward target with glove hand covering the ball in the pitching hand. Revolve the pitching arm in the complete windmill motion without moving your feet. Rotate the hips and shoulders to the "open" position as the pitching arm swings overhead, and then close as forcefully as possible when the pitching arm reaches straight back from the shoulder. The glove arm should be moving down to the side to assist this closing rotation. Make sure your arm remains in a plane that intersects the target during all phases of the arm revolution and keep the arm extended and relaxed.

b) As the elbow is pulled downward to the hip, initiate the arm whip and release the ball with a wrist snap so that it rolls off the ends of the fingers (unless practicing an advanced pitch).



Push off drill



The drill works on developing proper footwork. It is important to push off the mound forcefully (speed), to maintain good balance of your body at all times (control) and maintain proper weight distribution on each leg (advanced pitches). Proper footwork also reduces leg injury.

a) Start at the normal pitching position with weight back on the stride foot, but without a ball.

b) Transfer weight forward to the pivot foot and start taking a step with the stride foot to move your body forward. Bend the knee of your pivot leg as your stride foot reaches to take a forward step.

c) Push off the mound by straightening the pivot leg and thrusting the hips/stomach forward. This is where throwing speed can be achieved. Be sure to thrust toward the target and not upward.

d) The stride foot should land pointing substantially in the direction of the throw; if your stride foot lands to one side your body will be out of balance and control will be more difficult. The knee should be bent on the stride leg when it lands.

e) Follow through by dragging the pivot foot forward off the mound in a position which will enable you to field a ball hit back to you. Don't JUMP, HOP OR LEAP off the pi— it is illegal for women!



BREAKING & CHANGE-UP PITCHES



Breaking Pitches

Drop Ball

Screw Ball



Backhand or Flip Change-up

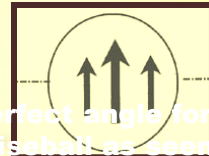


Breaking Pitches



The primary breaking pitches in fastpitch softball are the drop ball, rise ball, curveball and screwball. Breaking pitches are accomplished by spinning the ball at the correct angle to get an air pressure difference causing the ball to move from the high pressure side toward the low pressure side. The grips used are many and varied. Pitchers should experiment with grips until they have one that imparts the most spin at the best angle. After the ball leaves the pitchers hand, the only thing that has an impact on ball movement is the number of rotations, the direction of the rotation and the angle of rotation

The angle of the ball rotation has a large impact on the amount of movement you will get. The best angle is 90° as shown in the "perfect angle for a riseball". If you can achieve the perfect angle, you can expect about 1" (inch) of movement for every rotation. For example, 4 rotations will result in a 4" rise, 5 rotations equal 5 inches, etc.



Perfect angle for a riseball as seen by the catcher

The worst angle is 0° or the bullet spin. There is NO movement in any direction with the bullet spin regardless of the number of rotations. This angle of spin results in the easiest pitches for the batter to hit.



Bullet Spin

For most of the breaking pitches, it is almost impossible to achieve the perfect 90° angle. Typically, you can achieve a 70° or 80° angle which is good. The further from 90° you get, the less movement you get so pay close attention to the angle when developing the pitch. The amount of ball movement is reduced by the cosine of the angle.



Typical Riseball as seen by the catcher

Drop Ball

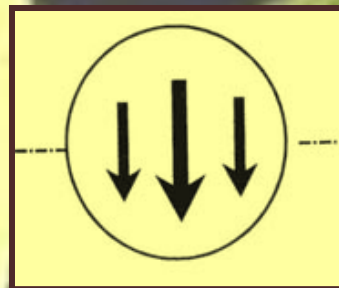


There are two methods used to throw a drop ball. The first is called the 'peel off' and the second is called the 'roll over'.

The 'peel off' drop ball is thrown like a fastball with more spin. It seems to be a little easier for younger pitchers to learn this method. A perfect drop ball spin, as seen by the catcher, can be achieved using the 'peel off' drop ball.

The 'peel off' drop ball will NOT drop sharply unless you get a fast spin. There are a few techniques to help. Take a little shorter stride and shift body weight forward as the ball is released. Shoulders should be over the stride (front) foot and you should feel you are on top of the ball as it is thrown. You want your hand to act like it is pulling the rug out from under somebody that is standing behind you. Some pitchers pull up on their pitching arm shoulder to get more spin. You may want to modify your grip by gripping the ball with your thumb joint rather than the end or pad of the thumb.

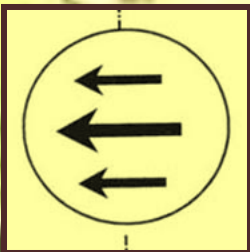
Perfect Drop Ball Spin



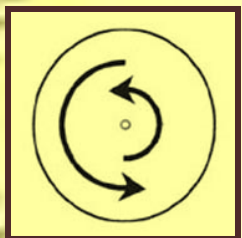
Screw Ball

The screw ball moves in toward a right hand batter when thrown by a right handed pitcher and is sometimes called the 'in-shoot'. The ball spins from right to left as seen by the catcher (when thrown by a right handed pitcher).

Perfect Rotation Screw Ball

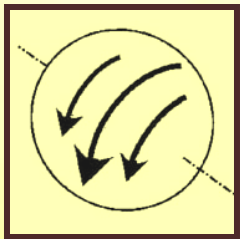


Bullet spin - NO movement

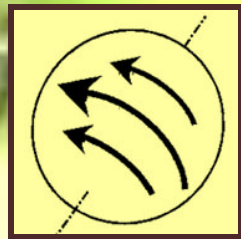


Typical spins are shown below and depend on how the screw ball is thrown. These views are from the catcher's point of view and are for a right handed pitcher.

This Spin will also drop



This Spin will also rise

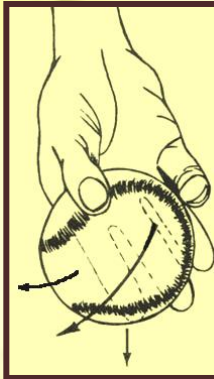


Screw Ball cont.

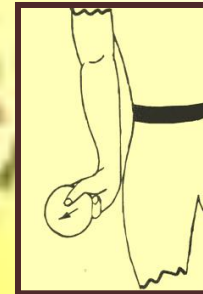


There are a number of ways to throw the screw ball and none appear to be "Best." The pitcher should experiment with methods and grips to achieve the best spin and subsequently the most ball movement.

One method is gripped like a fastball but the ball is released off the side of the hand or the pointer finger.



For another method the ball is still gripped like a fastball but the ball is released off the finger tips with the hand tipped to the right.

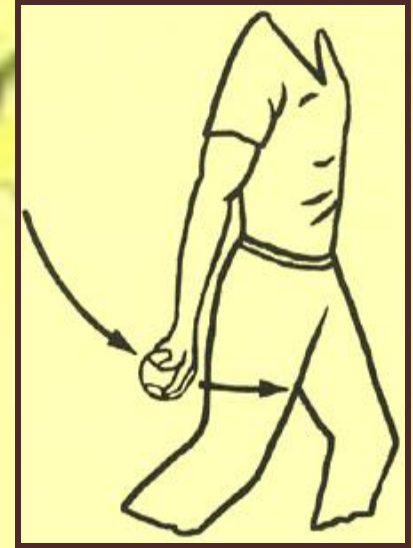


Frequently, both methods are combined to achieve the fastest rotation with the best angle. Techniques that help include leaning a little to the right and stepping a little to the left while pulling the hand across the body.

Backhand or Flip Change-up



There are many ways to throw a change-up but the backhand or flip keeps the same arm speed and stride as the fastball which helps keep the batter from realizing a slower pitch is being thrown. The change-up is the off-speed pitch that is thrown at about 75% of normal speed.



The grip used for the backhand or flip change-up is either the fastball grip or the grip of the best pitch you use. If you throw a rise ball most, use the rise ball grip. The batter may see the grip and think a rise ball going to be thrown.

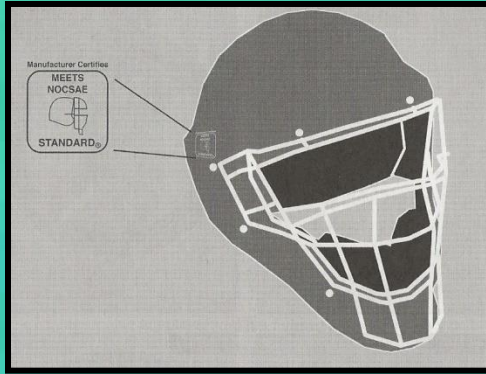
Throw the change-up with the same arm speed as the fastball, flipping your wrist and forearm before you reach your hip. Flip the ball out of your hand with as much speed as possible. Imagine a rope in front of you that is about waist high. Throw the ball under the rope.



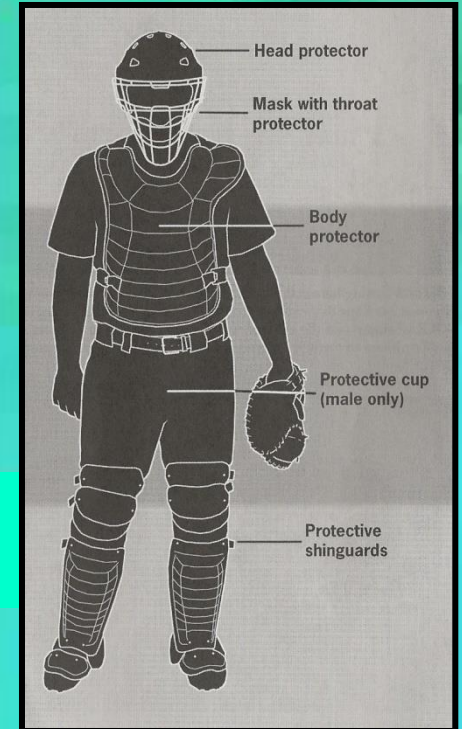
CATCHING



BASIC BASEBALL FUNDAMENTALS



CATCHING BEHIND THE PLATE



DEMONSTRATOR

CHASE GUNDERSON

CENTRAL AREA BASEBALL (CAB)

JR RBI 2006



FIRST THINGS FIRST, PUT YOUR SHIN PADS ON RIGHT!



BUCKLES GO ON THE OUTSIDE

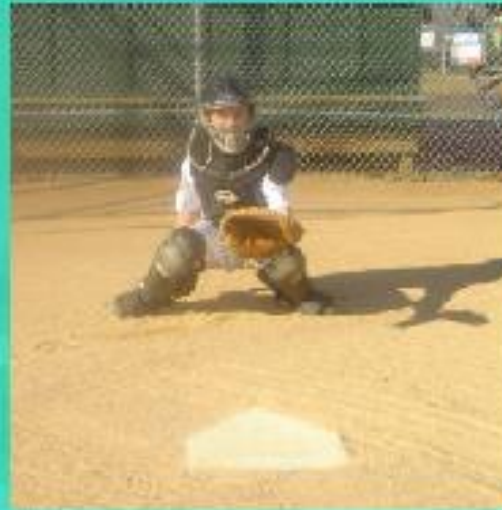


CATCHER STANCES



SIGNAL*

***NEVER RECEIVE IN
THIS POSITION**



**RECEIVING
(RELAXED)**



**RECEIVING
(RUNNER(S)
ON BASE)**

SIGNAL STANCE



FEET 6-12 INCHES APART
TOES STRAIGHT AHEAD
FINGERS TIGHT IN THE CROTCH
(HIDES THE SIGNAL)



GLOVE OVER LEFT KNEE
(HIDES THE SIGNAL FROM 3RD BASE COACH)
SIT IN THE SQUAT POSITION
(NEVER RECEIVE FROM THIS POSITION)

RECEIVING (RELAXED)* STANCE



AS THE PITCHER IS CLOSE TO RELEASING THE BALL, SPREAD THE FEET A FEW INCHES WIDER

PULL KNEES SLIGHTLY TOWARD EACH OTHER WHICH WILL SHIFT THE WEIGHT ONTO THE INSIDES OF BOTH FEET

CATCHER SITS APPROXIMATELY THE SAME HEIGHT AS IN THE SIGNAL STANCE, BUT WILL HAVE BETTER MOBILITY TO MOVE OR BLOCK



BARE HAND MAY BE PLACED BEHIND THE BACK OR BEHIND THE LEG. THIS ONLY APPLIES WITH NO ONE ON BASE

RECEIVING (RUNNER(S) ON BASE) STANCE



AS THE PITCHER IS CLOSE TO RELEASING THE BALL WIDEN OUT BOTH FEET SHOULDER WIDTH OR MORE APART WITH WEIGHT ON THE BALLS OF THE FEET



BACK STRAIGHT, BUTT EVEN WITH KNEES OR SLIGHTLY HIGHER

BARE HAND IN A FIST BEHIND THE THUMB OF THE GLOVE. SLIGHT BEND IN THE ELBOWS



RECEIVING THE PITCH



SET UP JUST FAR ENOUGH BEHIND THE BATTER SO THE GLOVE ARM CAN BE EXTENDED (WITH A SLIGHT BEND IN THE ELBOWS) AND FAR ENOUGH AWAY TO NOT INTERFERE WITH THE SWING.

CATCH THE BALL WITH THE GLOVE ARM EXTENDED AND ANY PITCH IN THE STRIKE ZONE OR CLOSE ON CORNERS FREEZE THE GLOVE AND HOLD THE PITCH FOR A 2 COUNT TO GIVE THE UMPIRE A GOOD LOOK. CORNER PITCHES SHIFT THE BODY SO THE SHOULDER IS IN LINE WITH THE GLOVE. NEVER MOVE PITCHES THAT ARE OUT OF THE STRIKE ZONE INTO THE STRIKE ZONE TO TRY TO FOOL THE UMPIRE! GOOD CATCHER'S NEVER MOVE STRIKES SO IF A CLOSE PITCH IS MOVED IT WILL HELP THE UMPIRE DECIDE THAT IT IS A BALL. IF THAT SAME PITCH IS FROZEN YOU MIGHT GET THE CALL.



TRACK THE BALL



THE EMPHASIS OF THIS SLIDE IS TO SHOW THE CATCHER'S EYES AS THEY FOLLOW THE BALL INTO THE GLOVE.

ANY BALL CAUGHT BY ANY FIELDER INCLUDING THE CATCHER, IT IS AN ABSOLUTE MUST THAT THE FIELDER OR CATCHER TRACK THE BALL FROM THE RELEASE POINT INTO THE GLOVE

KNEE PITCH



CATCH WITH GLOVE DOWN

FREEZE THE PITCH, DON'T DROP THE GLOVE

**(IF YOU DROP THE GLOVE OR PUSH IT DOWN IT WILL GIVE THE
IMPRESSION THAT IT IS A LOW PITCH AND WILL BE BALLED)**

RECEIVING THE *SAME* LOW PITCH



GLOVE UP
“BALL”



GLOVE DOWN
“STRIKE”

Perception by the umpire is that the pitch is **LOW**

Catch and freeze. REMEMBER
Drop the glove and it will be BALLED



BLOCKING



KICK FEET BACK, DROP STRAIGHT DOWN TO THE KNEES

HUNCH FORWARD WITH SHOULDERS AND TUCK THE CHIN ON THE CHEST

PLACE GLOVE STRAIGHT DOWN ON THE GROUND BLOCKING THE SPACE BETWEEN THE KNEES

BARE HAND BEHIND THE GLOVE

KEEP ENTIRE BODY FACING FORWARD TO BLOCK THE BALL FORWARD

THE PRIORITY IS NOT TO CATCH THE BALL, BUT TO BLOCK IT AND KEEP IT IN FRONT OF YOU OR THE PLATE TO PREVENT A RUNNER FROM SCORING OR TO MAKE A SUBSEQUENT PLAY



BLOCKING

CENTER

RIGHT



LEFT



IF THE BALL IS TO EITHER SIDE, MAKE A QUICK STEP WITH THE CLOSEST FOOT TO THAT SIDE AND FORWARD SLIGHTLY. SLIDE THE BODY OVER IN FRONT OF THE BALL AND TOWARD THE CENTER OF THE PLATE. KEEP SHOULDERS SQUARE TO THE PLATE SO THE BLOCKED BALL GOES TOWARD OR IN FRONT OF THE PLATE

THROWING FROM THE STANCE



RECEIVING STANCE



**SHORT STEP FORWARD
WITH PIVOT FOOT**



**SEPARATE AND STEP
DIRECTLY TOWARD
THE BASE YOU ARE
THROWING TO**



**IF THROWING TO THIRD
THE FIRST STEP IS WITH
THE PIVOT FOOT BEHIND
THE LEFT FOOT. DO NOT
ATTEMPT THROW DIRECTLY
TO THIRD WITHOUT THE
STEP BACK UNLESS YOU
ARE MUCH TALLER THAN
THE BATTER**

PLAYING THE BUNT



ANY TIME YOU LEAVE THE PLATE TO MAKE A PLAY OR BACK UP THROWS, IMMEDIATELY FLIP OFF THE MASK. RELEASE THE MASK WITH YOUR THUMB AND RUN FROM UNDER THE MASK



FIRST THING SET YOUR FEET IN LINE WITH FIRST BASE WITH THE BALL IN THE CENTER OF YOUR BODY. PLACE THE GLOVE DIRECTLY IN FRONT OF THE BALL, PALM UP SCOOP THE BALL INTO YOUR BARE HAND WITH THE GLOVE AS A SUPPORT TO STOP THE BALL

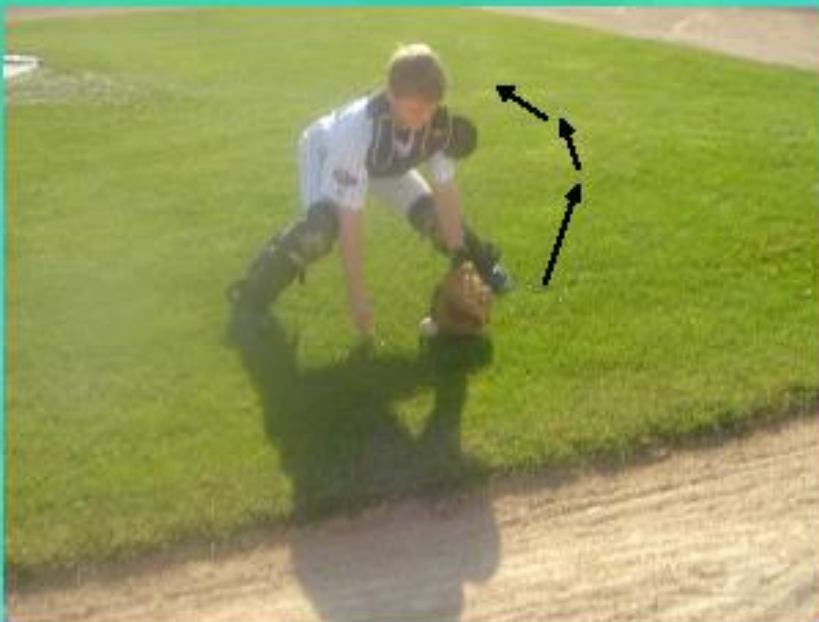


TAKE A HOP STEP TOWARD FIRST AND COMPLETE THE THROWING FUNDAMENTALS

PLAYING THE BUNT DOWN THIRD BASE LINE



PICK UP THE BALL WITH YOUR BACK TO FIRST. ON THIS PLAY THE CATCHER DOES NOT HAVE THE TIME TO TURN INSIDE AND LINE UP THE FEET TOWARD FIRST BASE. SPIN OUTSIDE (TOWARD THE PLATE) AND THROW TO FIRST. THIS IS CALLED MAKING THE PLAY "BACKWARDS".



PLAY AT THE PLATE



KEEP MASK ON *



PLACE LEFT FOOT ON FRONT CORNER OF THE PLATE, LEGS SPREAD IN THE RECEIVING POSITION



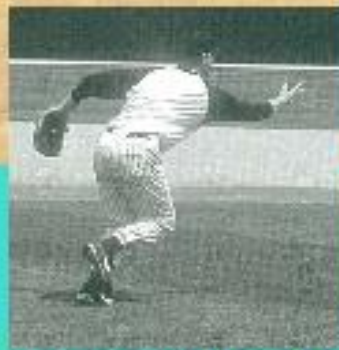
DROP TAG IN FRONT OF LEFT FOOT. STRAIGHT IN TAGS SHOULD BE MADE WITH THE BACK OF THE GLOVE AND THE BALL IN THE BARE HAND. ON A SLAP OR SWEEP TAG IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO TAG WITH ONE HAND



NO PLAY, REMOVE LEFT FOOT FROM THE PLATE. MAY NOT BLOCK THE PLATE (or any base) WITHOUT THE BALL

*** A PLAY AT THE PLATE IS THE ONLY PLAY WHERE THE MASK IS RECOMMENDED TO REMAIN ON. ANY OTHER PLAY REMOVE MASK AND FLIP IT AWAY.**

PLAYING THE PASSED BALL (WILD PITCH)



IMMEDIATELY FLIP THE MASK AS YOU GO TO THE BALL. SLIDE BESIDE THE BALL ON THE RIGHT KNEE WITH BOTH FEET LINED UP TOWARD THE

PLATE. FOCUS ON THE BALL LIKE ANY OTHER FIELDING PLAY. PICK UP THE BALL (ON YOUR KNEES), SIMILAR TO PICKING UP A BUNT, AND THROW TO THE PLATE FROM THE KNEES. DO NOT PICK UP THE BALL WITH YOUR BACK TO THE PLATE.



GENERAL PHILOSOPHY "CATCHING"

AGE LEVELS 12 AND UNDER

THERE ARE NINE DEFENSIVE POSITIONS IN THE FIELD. AT THE YOUNGER AGE LEVELS, SOME TIME DURING THE SEASON, FOR EIGHT OF THOSE POSITIONS EVERY PLAYER SHOULD BE GIVEN THE CHANCE TO PLAY EACH ONE. CATCHER IS THE ONE POSITION (UNLESS YOU HAVE NO CHOICE AND NO ONE WANTS TO VOLUNTEER) THAT ONLY SOMEONE THAT WANTS TO CATCH AND IS CAPABLE SHOULD BE PLACED IN THIS POSITION

CATCHER ATTRIBUTES:

1. TOUGH, NOT AFRAID TO GET HIT BY THE PITCH OR FOUL BALL OR OCCASIONALLY GET RUN INTO OR TO GET DIRTY.
2. ALERT, GOOD UNDERSTANDING OF THE GAME. USUALLY ONE OF THE BETTER PLAYERS WHO CAN PLAY ELSEWHERE WHEN NOT CATCHING.
3. TEAM LEADER, ONLY PLAYER FACING THE FIELD AND BECOMES THE ON-FIELD GENERAL SHOUTING INSTRUCTIONS TO OTHER PLAYERS

REMINDER AGAIN:

NEVER RECEIVE THE PITCH IN THE SQUAT (SIGNAL) POSITION



FINAL THOUGHT ON CATCHING



FOR CATCHERS, COACHES AND SPECTATORS

ONE OF THE BIGGEST PROBLEM IN YOUTH BASEBALL IS THAT GAMES ARE SLOW MOVING AND TAKE EITHER TOO LONG TO COMPLETE OR WITH TIME LIMITS DO NOT GET COMPLETED. ONE OF THE MAIN REASONS FOR THIS IS THE TIME TAKEN BETWEEN INNINGS AND QUITE OFTEN THE CATCHER IS AT THE ROOT OF THE PROBLEM. IT SHOULD NEVER TAKE MORE THAN ONE MINUTE BETWEEN INNINGS TO GET A PITCHER AND DEFENSIVE PLAYERS LOOSE AND HAVE THE OFFENSE READY TO BAT. BECAUSE THE CATCHERS (AND PITCHERS) ARE NOT READY OR SOMEONE ELSE IS NOT READY TO WARM UP THE PITCHER WHILE THE CATCHER GETS READY, IT TAKES UP TO SEVERAL MINUTES. THIS PROBLEM CAN BE CORRECTED WITH AWARENESS AND EFFORT. IN A SEVEN INNING GAME IF IT TAKES TWO OR MORE MINUTES BETWEEN INNINGS (WHICH HAS BECOME THE NORM) IT WILL EXTEND THE GAME 14 MINUTES OR MORE. THERE ARE OTHER FACTORS THAT SLOW THE GAME DOWN, BUT THIS IS A MAJOR PROBLEM, BUT ONE THAT CAN EASILY BE CONTROLLED AND IMPROVED.

SUGGESTIONS:

- 1. LEAGUES SHOULD HAVE THEIR UMPIRES STRICTLY ENFORCE THE ONE MINUTE RULE BETWEEN INNINGS. THIS IS THE RULE IN EVERY RULE BOOK AT EVERY LEVEL OF PLAY INCLUDING MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL.**
- 2. COACHES NEED TO BE AWARE AND MAKE THEIR PLAYERS AWARE. PUT THE HUSTLE BACK IN THE GAME OF BASEBALL. HUSTLE IN AND HUSTLE OUT**
- 3. IF YOU ARE ONE OF THOSE COACHES THAT NEEDS TO HUDDLE UP EVERY TIME PLAYERS COME IN OR GO OUT ON THE FIELD, HUDDLE WITHOUT THE PITCHER AND CATCHER OR THE FIRST BATTER OF THE INNING. BETTER YET, FORGET THE HUDDLE. THAT IS THE SECOND BIGGEST PROBLEM THAT PROLONGS GAMES.**



MBB BB & SB FUNDAMENTALS

“MOST IMPORTANT STEP FOR EACH FUNDAMENTAL”

IN THE TEACHING PROCESS EVERY “FUNDAMENTAL” IS BROKEN DOWN INTO A SERIES OF STEPS. EVERY STEP IS IMPORTANT FROM THE START TO THE FINISH. WHAT IS LISTED HERE AS THE MOST IMPORTANT IS ACTUALLY THE ONE THAT CONSISTENTLY IS NOT DONE BY MOST YOUNG PLAYERS AND NEEDS TO BE EMPHASIZED! REPETITION-REPETITION-REPETITION



THROWING: THROW AND FOLLOW (SLIDE 16)



FIELDING: LOOK (SLIDE 19)



BATTING: SQUISH/FOLLOW THROUGH (SLIDES 36-37)



BUNTING: HAND AND BAT PLACEMENT (SLIDE 46)



CATCHING: NEVER CATCH/RECEIVE IN THE SQUAT POSITION (SLIDES 91-94)



PITCHING: PITCHING FOOTWORK (SLIDE 50)



BASE RUNNING FROM THIRD



LOOK

LOOK at the coach for signals (on the base)
LOOK at the pitcher
(focus stays on the ball until released on pitch or on pickoff)



LEAD

LEAD off (in foul territory)
(check third baseman) (maximum lead off)
(balance on both feet)
(when **SURE** the ball is delivered to the plate take one more step off and LEAN)



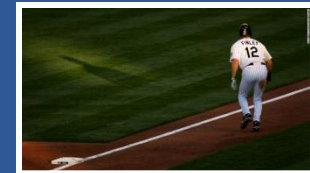
LEAN

LEAN on your right foot toward the plate
(catcher misses the ball, without hesitation go)
(batter hits ground ball, without hesitation go)
(line drive freeze, fly ball react, go or tag)



LINE

LINE (catcher catches the ball, move to and onto the line and hold)



LOOK

LOOK at the catcher with the ball, hold position,
(react to catchers throw, pickoff, pitcher catches or over throw)
(pitcher catches throw, return to 3rd looking at the ball)



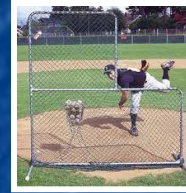
Four good ways to throw/toss batting practice:

1. Soft toss on the foul line 10-12 feet from home plate.
2. Soft toss from 10-12 feet directly behind home plate.
3. Soft toss (behind a screen) 20-30 feet in front of home plate
4. Live batting practice (behind an "L" screen) (10-15 feet in front of the mound) 5
5. Live pitching (from the mound)



3

4



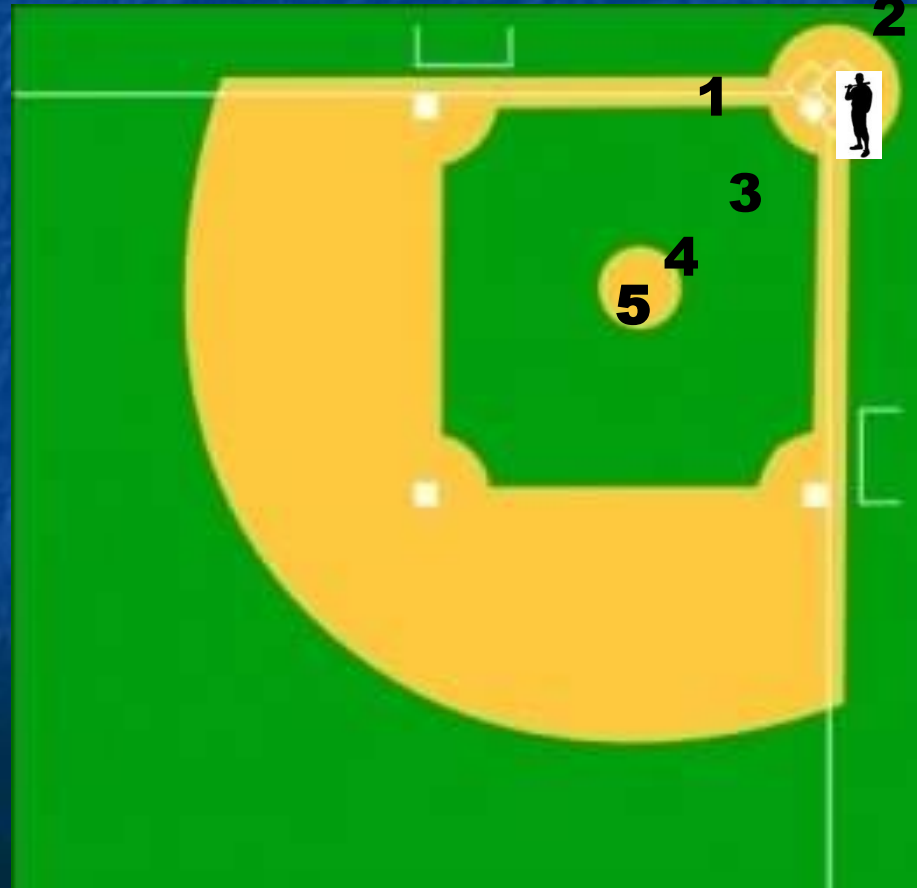
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SOFT TOSS



All five ways to throw/toss may be thrown over hand, but 1 & 2 may be better for the batter and easier and more accurate for the thrower if thrown under hand.

1,2,&3 are better for the thrower if tossed or thrown from a sitting position on a stool or bucket.



STRETCHING



Stretching for Sport WHY?

Stretching is an important tool in managing the muscle imbalances that occur as a result of the young athletes growing body. By maintaining this muscle balance stretching plays as important part of injury prevention.



Stretching also aids in:

- a. flexibility which is critical for sport**
- b. blood circulation in the muscle**
- c. relaxation in the muscle**
- d. decrease the sensation of tightness in the muscle**
- e. psychological preparation**

Interestingly, research suggests that static stretching before a game alone does not reduce the risk of injury which is why it is important to undertake some light aerobic exercise prior to stretching, as a warm muscle responds better to stretching than a cold one.

Types of stretching : Static vs Dynamic stretching

Dynamic: Stretching movements that use muscle power to move arm/leg through full ROM. Dynamic exercises stretch the muscle in a more functional way.

Static: Placing a muscle in its most lengthened position and holding for at least 20 seconds. The stretch is taken to the point where resistance is felt but no pain.

Principles:

- always warm up before stretching**
- stretch to the point of resistance and not pain**
- hold static stretches for 20-30 seconds**
- keep breathing during stretch**
- during the warm up a balance between static and dynamic stretching is best**
- target the main muscle groups that will be used during training/game**

A good balance between Static and Dynamic stretching is recommended to gain maximum benefits.



Stretching the key for life long fitness



Generally speaking, most athletes young and old, have one thing in common. They usually are very inflexible. They spend so much time developing strength and muscle mass for the specific sport they play that they neglect stretching for flexibility. It is particularly important in the growth stages of young athletes. Many of the physical problems that athletes encounter later in life may be attributed to the lack of stretching in their younger days. Below are some exercises that will help develop muscle tone and flexibility and if we expose young athletes to them it could be a key in their life long fitness.

IMPORTANT:

A light jog or some loosening up exercises should always precede stretching. Never stretch cold muscles. Stretching should also always follow the completion of practice. Always take the opportunity to cool muscles down. If done together as a team it becomes a great opportunity to discuss the practice and/or to include discussions on game situations, rules and above all, respect for the great game of baseball.





CONDITIONING: Too often players put strenuous demands on their bodies without the proper preparation. Poor pre-game warm up is the cause of most baseball injuries. Good physical conditioning will minimize strains, muscle pulls and shin splints. A twenty to thirty minute warm up period is recommended before each game and work out. The stretching exercises described on the following slides are designed to condition the muscles most frequently used in baseball. It is imperative that these exercises are eased into and done very carefully. Players should not bounce or over stretch, and they should not start or stop quickly. An eight count is recommended for these exercises as follows:

1-2 begin the stretch

3-4 ease into the stretch

5-6-7 reach your maximum position and hold to 8



Stretching calf muscles



Done religiously, this exercise nearly eliminates the possibility of shin splints (tightness of the calf muscle that causes pain to the front of the leg.) Stand with feet hip-width apart, toes slightly pigeon toed with the weight on the outsides of the feet.

Lean against a wall with feet apart(18” from the back of the wall), and with a slight stretch on the calf muscle. Lean forward, bending elbows just enough to slightly increase the stretch in the calf muscle. Keep heels on the ground and do not strain. Hold for 10 seconds. Repeat 10 times.

The calf muscle stretch takes only about 3 minutes and should be done three times a day during the playing season. As the muscle becomes more flexible, move the feet farther out from the wall. Used frequently, this exercise will eliminate any tightness in the calf.

From a squat position, stretch the right leg straight out to the side. Lean toward your right foot. Hold 8 seconds and repeat with the opposite leg. Repeat as above, toes pointing up this time.



Shoulders:

THE ROLL: Arms outstretched to the side, palms up, start with small circular motions (10), medium circles (10), and then large circles (10). Palms down, repeat

CIRCLES: With the arms at your sides, make large circular motions, first forward (10), then reverse (10)



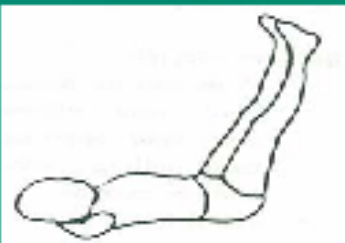
SHOULDER STRETCH Top left. With arm overhead, hold your right elbow with your opposite hand, pull gently. Hold 8 seconds Top right. Gently pull to the opposite side while bending at the waist. Hold 8 seconds. Bottom. Gently pull your elbow across your chest toward the opposite shoulder. Hold 8 seconds. Reverse Arms.



BACK EXTENSION Lying prone, lift legs and chest off the ground at the same time. Return to a flat position. Do 12 Reps



BENT KNEE SIT-UPS Lay on the ground, knees slightly bent and hands behind your head. Pull up, keeping your elbows back. Use your stomach muscles, not your arms, to pull yourself up. Go back half way and don't let you head touch the ground. 25 reps



LEG LIFTS Lay down, legs straight. Lift legs up to a 90-degree Angle and lower them to about 3" off the ground. Hold 8 seconds. You must be careful if you have back problems.



GROIN STRETCH Sit with the soles of your feet together. Gently bend forward from the hips while pushing your knees to the ground with your elbows. Hold 8 seconds.



HIP STRETCH With left leg out in front, grab the right ankle with your left hand and pull up to the left shoulder. Right hand and forearm should be supporting the right knee. Hold 8 seconds; Repeat to opposite side.



ACHILLES TENDON STRETCH In a semi-kneeling position, the toes of your right foot should be even with your left knee. The heel of the bent leg can come off the ground about one inch. Lower your heel to the ground, keeping it flat while you push forward on your thigh with your chest and shoulder. Hold 10 seconds. Repeat, changing legs.

FOREARM STRETCH Arms straight out in front of you, grasp your right hand at the fingertips with the left hand and pull your fingers backward to flex the wrist. Hold for 8 seconds and repeat with the opposite arm.



HAMSTRING STRETCH Put left foot slightly in front of the right and bend forward at the waist while keeping your right leg straight. Reach as far down as you can, hopefully, sliding your fingers under your toes. Hold 8 seconds. Repeat with right foot forward.



QUADRICEPS STRETCH Left leg extended out in front, sit with right leg bent, heel touching right hip. Bend backward, forcing your knee flat on the ground. Hold for 8 seconds switch and repeat.



HIP FLEXOR STRETCH In a semi-squat position, force your hip downward. Hold for 8 seconds. Switch legs and repeat.

TRUNK ROTATIONS With feet spread at a comfortable distance and hands stretched straight in front of your chest, rotate upper body right and then left

BACK STRETCHES



Sit with your left leg straight. Place right foot outside of the left knee, and left elbow outside of right knee. Rotate lower trunk to the right while looking back as far as possible. Hold 8 seconds and repeat to the opposite side.



Lying on your back with right leg straight, place left foot outside right knee. Drop right knee to the ground while keeping both shoulders on the ground. Hold 8 seconds. Repeat to opposite side.



Lay down, arms outstretched. Raise right leg, bringing right foot to your left hand. Alternate. 12 reps.



Lying down, pull left knee to chest. Hold 8 seconds and repeat with right knee.



Raise legs slowly over your head and move your toes toward the ground. Point your toes and stretch. It is not necessary to touch your toes on the ground. Doing so could be harmful to your neck. Hold 10 seconds. Relax, maintaining your position. If you can, rest the balls of your feet on the ground and flex. Hold 10 seconds. Come down slowly, one vertebrae at a time.



SUMMARY/COMMENT:





Summary/Comment:

The old cliché “Practice makes Perfect” that parents and coaches have stressed to us all our lives is only true if what we are practicing are good things. We need to update the cliché to: “Perfect Practice makes Perfect”. Once players have been exposed to good basic fundamentals then it becomes repetition, repetition, repetition! “Perfect Practice makes Perfect”

Players today want instant success. Baseball/Softball does not give instant success because repetition, repetition, repetition takes time. They are also games where often there is more failure than success as evidenced by batting averages. An excellent youth batting average is 400 which means the batter has failed 6 out of 10 times.

These two factors along with the slow pace of the games compared to other team sports makes both games unattractive to a lot of today's “fast pace” society. But they are also three important factors that make these games so great.

What we have provided should be helpful, but it is only a start and hopefully you will be motivated to seek out more information.

“THANKS FOR COACHING”

RBI ALL STAR COACHES AND STAFF

