

PITCHING DRILLS

COACHES:

These are drills all young and developing pitchers should know and work on regularly. Combined, their purpose is to build strong basic mechanics according to documented research. From that point, they will be able to go on to learn all the pitches and enjoy a regarding career pitching softball. All these drill are documented in the Squirt and Pee Wee player manuals.

The drills are progressive in nature, although all are easy to learn. Used regularly and with proper form, they will accelerate development and mastery of the pitching mechanics. Form is critical. All drills must be performed as perfectly as possible, otherwise the pitcher will simply master poor technique.

1. PENDULUM DRILL

This drill is designed to develop the feeling of throwing with the whole body rather than with the arm.

Start with a long step forward, the stride foot well in front of the pivot foot. The pitching hand is at the top, or back half of the Circle. Bring the pitching arm down to the release point, and

Hold it tight against the body for a second or two. The weight should be on the back foot.

Complete the movement by pushing hard with the pivot foot, forcing the body and hips to rotate forward. The arm then continues to a natural follow-through position.

As the motion becomes more natural with repetitions, allow the arm to swing right through without a pause. But ensure the arm makes contact with the hip each time.

2. DRY PITCHING

This drill is designed to develop a perfect circle, promote flexibility as well as arm/hip coordination. It can also be used for strength development by adding a weight to the

pitching hand. Start in the pitching position - long step forward - stride foot well in front of pivot foot.

Pitching arm makes continuous full circles at rate of about 1/sec. Circle must be aligned with target, with arm close to head at the top. Arm must make contact with hip at point of release on each repetition (see below). Beginning pitchers should do at least 50 repetitions per day for several weeks before the season starts.

_____ This drill promotes upper body rotation to increase power. You will have to throw a ball so a catcher is required.

3. STATIC PITCHING _____ Face the catcher at about 8 to 10 M. distance. Start with feet spread sideways, about shoulder width apart.

_____ Pitch with your normal windmill motion, while feet remain in place (static). Work on full rotation of upper body with each pitch. Weight should be on the inside or pivot foot at release.

Start at easy pace, and increase speed gradually as the motion becomes more comfortable. This is a good pre-game warm-up drill for pitchers who tend to be stiff in the upper body.

_____ This drill will improve hip thrust and coordination. You throw the ball to a catcher about 8 M. distance.

4. HIP PITCHING _____ Similar to Static Pitching except feet are in pitching position - stride foot in front of pivot foot.

Pitcher must use strong hip thrust as pitching hand releases ball. Try to develop a sense of power without using arm strength. Keep the weight back. Start easy; increase speed as motion becomes more comfortable.

This is an excellent drill for all pitchers and should be built into the pre-game warm-up. Do at least 20 repetitions every practice or game.