

MECHANICS OF CONTROL

Control must be developed in two different directions.

1. **VERTICAL CONTROL** is the ability to throw the ball high or low.
2. **HORIZONTAL CONTROL** is the ability to pitch to either side of the plate.

VERTICAL CONTROL

For vertical control, you must increase the friction for high pitches, and decrease it for low ones.

To increase friction:

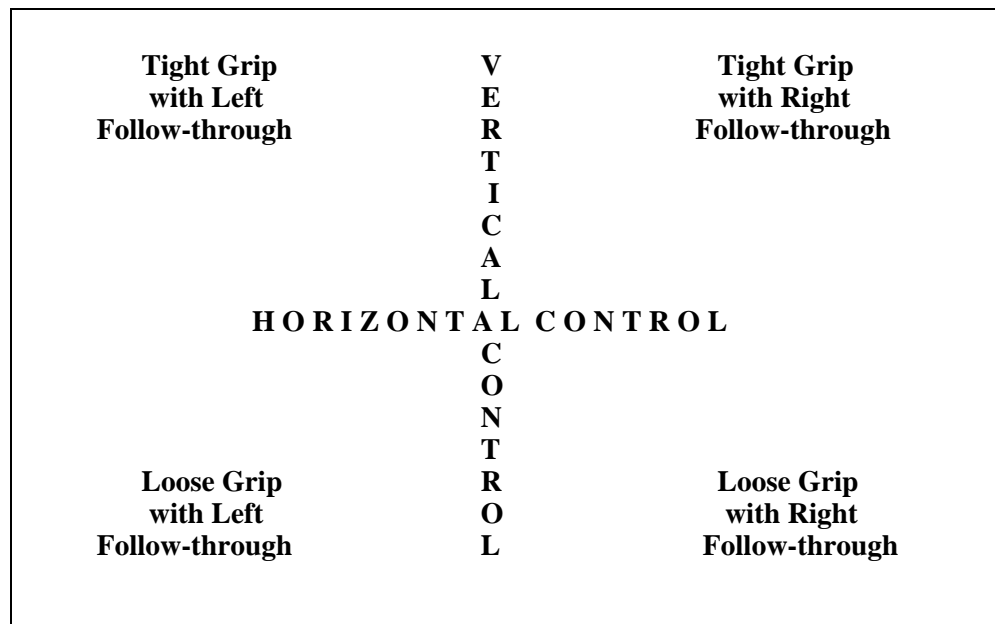
- a) Place the fingers on the threads, or
- b) Put more fingers on the ball, or
- c) Squeeze the ball tighter, or
- d) Any combination of these.

Learn to pitch at these five elevations. 1) Peak of the cap; 2) Shoulders; 3) Top of strike zone; 4) 4" above the knees; and 5) below the knees.

The question is how much pressure do you need to throw at the different heights? This can only be learned through practice.

HORIZONTAL CONTROL

This is achieved by allowing your pitching hand to follow-through in the direction of the target. Horizontal target areas are; 1) 8 - 12 " off the plate (waste pitch); 2) ½ the ball in the strike zone and ½ out; 3) Complete ball inside the edge of the plate. Pitchers must learn these zones on both sides of the plate. Use this model for reference.



DEVELOPING CONTROL

COACHES: Control in pitching is the product of:

- a) Consistency - Throwing with the same motion and rhythm every time, and
- b) Concentration - ability to focus complete attention on the target.

TIPS TO IMPROVE CONTROL

1. At every practice, have pitchers set aside a specific number of pitches to work on control only!!
2. Use a target apparatus to increase concentration and intensity.
3. Test your pitchers regularly; it's a motivator.
4. Set specific interim improvement goals for each pitcher.
5. Set up competitions among the pitchers, i.e. how many consecutive strikes can they throw?
6. Have pitchers practice for control with each pitch separately.
7. Expect progress to taper off from time to time. These are learning plateaus.
8. Encourage pitchers to count pitches for better measure of workload.
9. Increase workloads; they can probably throw more than they normally do.
10. Make sure they HAVE FUN!! That's what the game is all about.

CONTROL DRILLS

DRILL	NOTES
1. Out to In	
2. High-Low	
3. Three and One	