

TEACHING PITCHING SKILLS



Good technique in pitching has two benefits: better game performance and avoiding injury. Keeping the pitching arm in good shape is especially important for young players. Here are some tips to consider as you work with pitchers:

PITCHERS

1. Your pitcher's pre-game preparation should include the following three steps. First, stretch arms and legs. Second, play catch for about 10 minutes to get loose. Third, throw to the catcher on the side until he feels ready to pitch.

2. To be effective, at any level, a pitcher must throw strikes. The best pitch in baseball is a first pitch strike.

3. Change speeds. Young pitchers don't need to throw breaking balls to get outs. They can be very successful by just throwing fast balls and change-ups.

4. Right-handed pitchers should start with both feet on the rubber. The first movement is a six inch step straight back with their left foot. The right foot then moves into place against the front of the rubber, which allows the pitcher to push off and generate velocity on his throw. (For left-handed pitchers, just reverse the feet.)



5. A right-handed pitcher's left hip and shoulder should rotate so they are pointed to the target. The pitching hand comes out of the glove when both are over the left knee and thigh which are now parallel to the ground. This allows the pitcher to maintain his balance. (Reverse the set-up for left-handed pitchers.)

6. As the pitcher strides forward, his shoulder and hip should move directly toward the target. The stride length will depend on the player's height, but is generally a little longer than shoulder width. Their left foot should point toward the target.

7. Eyes should always remain focused on their target (the catcher's mitt) throughout the wind-up and delivery.

8. As the pitcher releases the ball, his arms should extend out, as if they are reaching for the catcher's mitt. He should then follow through by reaching down, as if trying to pick up dirt.

9. Pitchers should finish their delivery in a good, balanced position - facing the hitter - and ready to field.

10. Pitchers should always cover their arms after pitching in a game, regardless of the temperature.