

Softball Pitching

Basic Pitching Skills---Teaching points-

- Three keys to pitching: Accuracy, spin, and speed.
- Make sure children have feet positioned on the mound right. Both feet should be touching the mound if not their style is illegal.
- Left-handers have left foot forward and right foot back. Right-handers have right foot forward and left foot back.
- Make sure kids are using their legs and driving off the mound not just stepping.
- When kids stand mound the door is closed when the jump off the mound the door should open and stay open so the arm swing can come through.
- You do NOT want to close the door at the end that is not the proper style. Keep your hips open the whole time. If you close the door you do not use the full potential of your arm swing.
- After you jump off the mound you should have a strong front side and your back foot should slide into the heel of your front foot.
- Instead of closing the door think front hip at that target.
- Throwing arm should not be locked out straight it should have a little bend to it. This way your arm can be a whip so it can generate more speed and spin.
- Glove arm should point straight at target during pitch and then fall to side during release.
- It is best to throw a 4 seam drop ball instead of 2 seam because you will generate more spin.
- Make sure kids are dragging their back toe. Not their whole foot like an anchor just the tip of the back toe.

Basic Drills:

These drills will help work on muscle memory. So that when your pitchers actually do the circle in the open door position, they don't have to think about that part. They have put it in their memory and just bring their arm back and shoot the ball through.

With these four drills – the wrist snaps, the muscles, the half circles, and the full circles – you need to have your pitcher do these drills into their glove or into a wall, not to a catcher, for at least three to four weeks. Continue this until you feel like they have gotten

the technique. There's not going to be any aiming involved – you don't want them to try to worry where the ball goes ever. You just want them to get that momentum up, snap it at the hip.

Wrist Snaps

Have your pitcher begin with her feet perpendicular to the target . Isolate the pitching wrist with the opposite hand and cock the wrist back as far as possible. Elbow is at the side, bring the ball through, snapping the ball into their mitt, brushing the hip with proper four-seam spin and grip. When they release the ball the thumb should be up and the pointer finger pointing toward the target –like a pistol.

Muscles:

Same stance as with Wrist snaps. Arm in a 90 degree angle like you are flexing your bicep. Hand wrist is cocked, with the ball and palm of the hand facing the sky. Just bring the arm straight down and into the same motion of the Wrist Snap drill—snapping the ball into the mitt.

Half Circles:

Same stance as the wrist snaps. Arm above head NOT locked but with a slight bend. Wrist is cocked and the ball is facing the sky. Arm should be slightly forward so that when the pitcher looks up with just their eyes they can see the hand and ball. Pitcher brings the arm down and right into the wrist snap motion, snapping ball into their mitt.

Full Circles:

Same stance as wrist snaps. Cock wrist with ball at hip with hand on top of ball, finger pointing to where the catcher would be. Swing back a little bit and then begin to bring arm forward and above the head. As the arm moves forward and up have the fingers pointed to the ground and ball is too the sky. This bring them to having wrist cocked, ball up and arm slightly bent-- just like the starting position of the Half Circle Drill. Then bring the arm down and right into the motion of the wrist snaps. This is one fluid motion.

You can find more pitching drills and resources at:

<http://www.softball-spot.com/dir/drills/pitching/>

There is a link to this site on our Coaching Corner—on the KIDSPORTS website.