

Basic Baseball Fundamentals

Pitching (Simplified)

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 motion, and keeping the focus on body control. Until you master body control you cannot master pitch control.

Windup/pre-pitch position:

1. Feet about six inches apart. The front half of both feet, are off and in front of the pitching plate and the back of both feet are on the Rubber (from the arch back). This makes the first movement of the pivot foot easier to slide to the front of and in contact with the Rubber. Face straight ahead and stand upright. With the chin over the ball of the pivot foot, place the ball in the bare hand and place the ball (in hand) in the glove with the palm of the glove facing and close to the chest. This hides the ball from the third and/or first base coaches.
2. To change from this position the pitcher must FIRST step back off the pitcher's plate with the PIVOT foot (Right foot/right-handed. Left foot/left handed). Stepping back first with the non-pivot foot is the first movement to pitch and commits the pitcher to pitch. This would be a Balk if the pitcher stepped back with the non-pivot foot did not continue to pitch.

Pitching movement:

1. (STEP) Short step back with non-pivot foot (2-6 inches).
2. (UP) Turn pivot foot toward third and at the same time turn entire body toward third and lift the non-pivot foot knee, up, waist high. Entire body should be facing third. Glove and hand are still facing and close to the chest.
3. (DOWN) Non-Pivot foot leg goes down approximately six inches off the ground. The glove and hand go down to the waist and the focus now is on Home Plate.
4. (OUT) Kick front foot toward the plate. Glove and hand separate. Point glove at target and extend hand and ball back forming a T with the body.
5. (SNAP) As the front foot hits the ground, snap the ball on the release.
6. (FOLLOW THROUGH) Kick up the back foot about waist high. Keep the head up looking at the plate. Tuck the glove against the chest with the thumb pointing up. Drop the back foot to the ground.

Comment: Body control is extremely important. In 1,2, and 3 the chin remains over the pivot foot. When going through the steps, 1, 2, 3, and 4 may be held for several seconds to develop control and balance and you can reverse them. Example: 1 hold for a count of X seconds, then go to 2 and hold for x seconds, then go to 3 and hold for x seconds and back to 2 then to 3 then to 4 then back to 3, etc.

Set/pre-pitch position:

1. Body facing third (first if left handed). Pivot foot in front of and in contact with the pitcher's plate. Non-pivot foot forward toward home plate with feet separated approximately shoulder-width apart. Hands separated, at the side, and a little higher than the waist. The ball may be in the glove or the hand.
2. To change from this position, the pitcher must first step, backward off the pitcher's plate with the pivot-foot, except to throw or fake a throw to a base.

Pitching movement:

1. Brings hands together and stop for a second. From the set position the non-pivot foot is only raised slightly up and out (quick kick) to prevent runners from getting a big jump when stealing. The rest of the mechanic (Snap and Follow Through) is the same.

Throwing to bases from the Set position:

1. The pitcher may pivot and throw to any occupied base. The pitcher may throw to an unoccupied-base, if the runner is advancing toward that base. In pivoting the pitcher may stay in contact with the pitcher's plate or take a jump pivot, which removes contact with the plate. The pitcher must complete the throw to first, but may fake a throw to second or third. In throwing to or faking, the pitcher must step directly toward the base and the step must precede the throw or fake throw.
2. If the pitcher steps back and off the pitcher's plate with the pivot foot, he becomes an infielder and is no longer governed by pitching rules and is considered an infielder.