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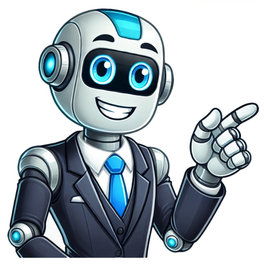

Last updated on February 1, 2024All pitchers know that it takes an immense amount of practice to become great. Not all pitchers know how to practice their skills and see true improvements on the field. In softball, with pitchers able to throw day after day, it can be a lot of pressure on one person to go out there and be the only person who touches the ball every single pitch. Not just physically, but mentally as well; theres a lot on the line with each game for many athletes. Thats why weve compiled a list of 21 fastpitch pitching drills to hone your craft. From the basics and fundamentals, to more advanced drills, to drills that put you in game-like situations, weve got it all covered.Why Its Beneficial: This drill is essential for pitchers aiming to dominate the strike zone. By focusing on hitting specific targets, pitchers develop a keen eye for accuracy and a consistent arm action, crucial in high-pressure game situations. This targeted practice leads to a significant improvement in pitch control, allowing pitchers to corner batters effectively. Additionally, the repetitive nature of this drill ingrains these precise movements into muscle memory, making accurate pitches more instinctive during critical game moments.How to Execute: Begin with a well-defined target within the strike zone. Pitch from a modest distance, ensuring a focus on form and precision. As accuracy improves, incrementally increase the distance to challenge and further develop control over longer pitches. Why Its Beneficial: Softball games often present unpredictable pitching situations. This drill prepares pitchers for this variability by simulating different pitch heights and locations. It develops a pitchers ability to quickly adjust their aim and technique, a skill invaluable against diverse batting strategies. The dynamic nature of this drill enhances reflexes, ensuring pitchers can react swiftly and accurately in various game situations. This adaptability is key in keeping batters guessing and maintaining control on the mound.How to Execute: A partner should toss balls from a range of heights and directions. The pitchers goal is to adapt their pitching motion to accurately hit specific areas within the strike zone, mimicking the adjustments required during actual gameplay.Why Its Beneficial: A powerful pitch starts with a strong and controlled leg drive. This drill emphasizes the importance of the knee-up position, a critical phase in the pitching motion. By focusing on this aspect, pitchers can develop a more forceful forward drive, translating to increased velocity and power in their pitches. Additionally, this drill reinforces the significance of balance throughout the pitching motion, ensuring that power is coupled with control for effective pitching.How to Execute: Start with the stride knee elevated, focusing on a powerful but controlled leg drive towards home plate. Ensure that this motion is fluid and balanced, aiming for a strong, yet controlled pitch delivery. Why Its Beneficial: Pitching efficiency often hinges on the pitchers balance and stability. This drill isolates these elements, allowing pitchers to concentrate solely on their upper body mechanics. By pitching from a kneeling position, pitchers can fine-tune their arm movement, shoulder alignment, and release techniques, leading to more consistent and precise pitches. This focused practice is particularly beneficial in correcting and refining specific aspects of a pitchers form, contributing to overall pitching effectiveness.How to Execute: From a kneeling position, pitchers should focus on maintaining a stable and balanced upper body. Each pitch should be deliberate, with an emphasis on smooth arm movement and precise release points.Why Its Beneficial: Endurance and the ability to maintain performance over longer distances are vital for pitchers, especially in prolonged games. This drill is designed to incrementally challenge a pitchers arm strength and stamina. By progressively increasing the pitching distance, pitchers are encouraged to maintain accuracy and power even as fatigue sets in. This not only builds physical endurance but also cultivates mental toughness, preparing pitchers for the demands of extended play.How to Execute: Start pitching from the mound and with each successful pitch, gradually step back, increasing the distance. Focus on sustaining both the strength of the pitch and its accuracy, replicating the conditions faced in later innings of a game.Why Its Beneficial: This drill is pivotal in building a pitchers arm strength and enhancing their ability to control pitches over long distances. Regular practice of the long toss drill contributes significantly to a pitchers overall mechanics, including arm action, shoulder stability, and follow-through. This enhancement in mechanics not only increases pitch effectiveness but also helps in preventing arm fatigue and injuries. Furthermore, the drill is excellent for improving a pitchers endurance, ensuring they can maintain a high level of performance throughout the game.How to Execute: Engage in long-distance throwing with a partner or towards a specific target. Begin at a moderate distance and gradually increase the range. Focus on maintaining proper pitching form, ensuring each throw contributes to developing stronger, more controlled pitching skills. Why Its Beneficial: The key to a powerful pitch lies in the strength of the pitchers lower body. This drill is specifically designed to enhance hip stabilization and glute activation, fundamental for generating force in a pitch. By focusing on these aspects, pitchers can achieve a stronger push off the mound, leading to increased velocity and power in their pitches. Additionally, this drill aids in overall pitching stability and control, ensuring a more balanced and effective delivery.How to Execute: The pitcher should concentrate on stabilizing the hips and engaging the glutes to maximize the push-off force from the rubber. This movement should be practiced repeatedly to develop both strength and consistency in the pitching motion, emphasizing the integral role of the lower body in pitching dynamics.Why Its Beneficial: A well-executed changeup can be a pitchers most deceptive tool. This drill trains pitchers to effectively vary their pitch speeds while maintaining a consistent delivery style. By practicing changeups alongside fastballs, pitchers learn to mask their intentions, keeping batters off-balance and uncertain. This ability to disguise a changeup as a fastball adds a crucial element of surprise in a pitchers repertoire, often leading to key strikeouts or mis-hits in games.How to Execute: Regularly alternate between fastballs and changeups during practice. Focus on keeping the physical delivery of both pitches as similar as possible, paying particular attention to arm speed, release points, and overall body mechanics.Why Its Beneficial: For pitchers aiming to reach advanced levels of play, developing arm speed is crucial. This drill employs the use of both a regular softball and a weighted ball to strengthen pitching muscles and increase the speed of the pitch. The variation in ball weight challenges the arm muscles differently, promoting strength and speed. This drill is essential for pitchers looking to elevate their pitching velocity and power.How to Execute: Alternate between throwing a regular softball and a weighted ball, focusing on increasing arm speed. Emphasis should be placed on maintaining proper pitching form throughout the exercise, ensuring that the increased speed does not compromise technique. Why Its Beneficial: The Wall Drill targets common pitching errors, promoting a fuller arm extension and correcting the posture to avoid T-Rex arms or too much height in the arms movement. It ensures the development of a smooth, complete arm circle, essential for accurate and powerful pitching. This exercise is instrumental in establishing a consistent release point, enhancing pitch control and effectiveness. Through repetitive practice, pitchers can also reinforce muscle memory for the correct arm path, crucial for long-term performance improvement.How to Execute: Stand close to a wall with the pitching arm side facing it, ensuring not to touch the wall. Begin with your glove hand pointed towards your target, and with the ball in your pitching hand, trace a circle along the wall. This motion helps in focusing on a smooth arm path.Why Its Beneficial: Core and glute strength are paramount in establishing a stable base for pitching. This drill targets these crucial muscle groups, enhancing the pitchers ability to stabilize their hips during the pitching motion. A stable hip region leads to more controlled and effective pitches, as it forms the foundation upon which the upper body mechanics operate.How to Execute: Swing your leg back like youre in the middle of your pitching motion, and then complete the rest of the pitch. Make sure to focus on your power through the finish, using your hips and momentum to add speed.Why Its Beneficial: This drill is a comprehensive approach that blends mechanical refinement with strength development. Its instrumental in enhancing a pitchers overall efficiency and strength in their pitching. The drill is particularly beneficial for building endurance and refining the intricate details of the pitching motion, making it a versatile tool for pitchers looking to elevate their game.How to Execute: Start the drill behind the rubber, then walk forward, integrating a pitching motion. Utilize both a weighted ball and a regular ball in this exercise. This repeated practice is key to building both physical strength and refining the nuances of the pitching motion, ensuring a balanced development of skills. Why Its Beneficial: Proper arm positioning is critical in preventing shoulder injuries and achieving optimal pitching speed. This drill teaches pitchers to maintain their arm in a half-circle motion, which resembles a whip-like action, essential for increasing pitching speed. It also encourages pitchers to keep their arm unlocked during the motion, allowing for more fluid and effective pitches.How to Execute: Focus on keeping the arm in a consistent half-circle motion throughout the pitch. Ensure that the arm remains unlocked, utilizing a whipping action to generate speed, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of the pitch while also prioritizing safety.Why Its Beneficial: This intensive drill is designed to enhance a pitchers arm speed and build endurance, crucial for maintaining performance under pressure, especially in later innings. By pitching continuously over short, intense intervals, pitchers develop the ability to deliver high-quality pitches even when fatigued. This exercise is excellent for conditioning the pitchers arm and body to sustain energy and efficiency, mirroring the demands of a tightly contested game where every pitch counts.How to Execute: The pitcher should aim to deliver as many pitches as possible within three separate one-minute intervals, taking short breaks between each. The focus is on rapid delivery and quick recovery, maintaining a steady, fast-paced rhythm. This drill not only tests physical stamina but also mental toughness, challenging the pitcher to keep their form and precision even as fatigue sets in.Why Its Beneficial: Securing an out against the first batter of an inning is crucial for setting a positive tone and gaining early control. This drill emphasizes the importance of a strong start, which can diminish the likelihood of offensive rallies by the opposing team and boost the confidence of the pitcher and their defense. It trains pitchers to focus on delivering their best pitches right from the start, understanding the psychological and strategic importance of the first out in an inning.How to Execute: Focus on developing and practicing pitches specifically tailored to retire the first batter efficiently. This may include studying and exploiting the batters weaknesses or perfecting certain pitches known to be particularly effective against lead-off hitters. This targeted approach helps pitchers begin each inning with a strategic advantage. Why Its Beneficial: This drill is geared towards improving a pitchers ability to maintain consistent mechanics and rhythm when delivering multiple pitches in quick succession. It simulates the conditions of an intense game where rapid, back-to-back pitches are required. This exercise is essential for developing a pitchers endurance and ability to keep their technique solid, even when under physical stress. Its an effective way to condition the pitcher for situations where sustained performance is crucial, such as during extended innings or high-pressure moments.How to Execute: Have the pitcher execute a series of pitches as quickly as possible, maintaining a fast pace until a predetermined number of balls are pitched. The key is to focus on speed without sacrificing the quality of the pitching mechanics. This drill builds muscle memory, ensuring you maintain proper form even when pushing your body to its limits.Why Its Beneficial: Live batting practice is a critical exercise for both pitchers and hitters, offering a realistic game-like experience. For pitchers, it provides an opportunity to practice against actual hitters, adjusting their techniques in real time. This exposure is invaluable for understanding how different pitches work against live batters and refining their strategies accordingly. For hitters, its an essential practice in timing, pitch recognition, and adapting to various pitching styles, improving their readiness for real game situations.How to Execute: Arrange a batting practice session where pitchers throw an array of pitches to hitters, varying the styles, speeds, and types to simulate a real game experience. This should include a mix of fastballs, changeups, curveballs, and other pitches commonly used in games. The goal is to create a batting environment that closely replicates actual game conditions, providing a comprehensive training experience for both the pitcher and the batter.Why Its Beneficial: Pitching in a full count situation is a common occurrence in softball games and requires a pitcher to demonstrate both mental toughness and strategic acumen. The Full Count Challenge drill focuses on developing a pitchers ability to handle stress, make calculated decisions, and deliver precise pitches under high-pressure conditions. This drill is crucial for teaching pitchers how to navigate these tense moments, focusing on maintaining their composure and executing their pitches with confidence and accuracy.How to Execute: Set up scenarios where the pitcher works with a full count (3-2). Emphasize the importance of staying calm, choosing the right type of pitch for the situation, and executing it with precision. This drill should mimic the high-stress atmosphere of a real game, challenging pitchers to stay focused and make smart, strategic decisions under pressure.Why Its Beneficial: Pitching with the bases loaded is one of the most challenging scenarios in softball, demanding a high level of skill, mental fortitude, and strategic insight. This drill prepares pitchers for these critical moments, focusing on their ability to remain composed, execute strategic pitches effectively, and leverage the support of their fielding team. Successfully navigating these high-pressure situations is key to minimizing runs and maintaining leads in closely contested games.How to Execute: Simulate situations where the bases are loaded, and the pitcher must work to prevent runs from scoring. The pitcher practices a variety of pitches and strategies to efficiently retire batters without conceding runs. This includes focusing on precise pitch locations, selecting the right types of pitches, and understanding the overall game situation to make the most effective decisions in these high-stakes moments.With these 21 fastpitch pitching drills, pitchers can develop the tools needed for excellence. They ensure that pitchers are well-prepared for the different demands of the game, from mastering the strike zone to handling high-pressure situations with confidence. Ultimately, consistent practice and dedication, along with these drills, will not only refine a pitchers skills but also elevate their performance on the diamond.Hunter Tierney is a passionate writer, loving dad, and true sports fanatic. His experience helping his two daughters through softball, in addition to playing baseball at the collegiate level, gives him a fresh perspective on all things softball. He earned his business degree from the University of Phoenix where he also took writing and journalism courses. at-home pitching practice breakthrew fastpitch daily habits lower body power myndie berka pitching coach pitching drills pitching mechanics small habits to breakthrew moments softball blog softball pitcher softball pitching coach Hey There, Friend! This week, Im sharing one of my favorite drills for teaching safe, efficient, and powerful lower body mechanics: The Stride & Drive Drill It isolates the lower half of the body and helps pitchers better understand exactly whats happening from the waist down throughout the pitch. In the video above, youll see each part of the movement in action. Lets break it down: Weight Starts on the Front Foot (Drive Foot) That front foot should be placed in the middle of the rubber, lined up with the middle of home plate. The back foot can either be off the rubber (start back method shown in the video) or on the rubber if using the step back method. Want to know the difference? Click here to watch this quick explanation Weight Shifts to the Back Foot (Stride Foot) Think of this like pulling back a bow before launching an arrowor the backward move that starts your swing at the plate. This movement should be controlled and rhythmic, setting up an explosive move forward. Load the Legs and Hips As the pitcher begins her stride, weight should be on the balls of both feet. Look for flex at the knees and hipsthis is what builds energy and explosiveness. Stride The stride should be aggressive but balanced. Her stride length in this drill should mirror her normal stride distance. As the stride foot reaches out, the drive foot must move forward with it. The key? Releasing the weight from the back foot by rolling over the toes and dragging lightly as the stride happens. Stride foot should land flat and get up and down fast Drive Once the stride foot lands, its time to drive the back knee forward. The stride leg should stay strong and firm. Think about closing the gap between the knees. A great cue? Drive your back knee toward the catchers glove. How to Use This Drill If your pitcher is working to build or correct her lower body mechanics, this is a drill to use dailybut just for a few minutes! Heres what I recommend: Do 2030 correct reps per day (that's less than 5 minutes) Once shes nailed the separate pieces, put it all together (like the first pitcher in the video!) This kind of short, consistent practice will build the right movement patterns much faster than long, unfocused sessions a couple times a week. A Quick Note to Encourage You Creating new movement patterns takes time. Be patient. Stay consistent. And rememberquality is more important than quantity. If your pitcher commits to a few correct reps each day, the results WILL come. As always, Im here for any questions you have! Just email me HERE. All my best, Myndie Join the BreakThrew Fastpitch mailing list to receive the weekly blog posts, and updates about new in-person and virtual training opportunities for pitchers, parents and coaches! Drills to improve leg drive:Drills to improve hip-timing and power: Softball Tip Presented by John Stegmaier, Camp Director TECHNIQUE:Let's discuss what you can do to enhance speed. Where does speed come from, outside of proper mechanics and sequencing?The downswing of the pitching arm, once the stride leg is planted. Remember that the downswing cannot generate any force until the stride-foot is down. It should be down by the time the pitching arm reaches one o'clock behind the pitcher. Then it should accelerate to the hip. Strong stride-foot plant. The stronger the stride-foot hits the ground, the quicker the arm snaps through Back leg drive. Even though the pitcher does not release the ball at the beginning of the leg drive, a strong leg drive transfers into a strong stride-foot plant, which, in the chain of sequence, transfers through the body faster, and generates more whip in the arm. Powerful stride plant with a firm, relatively straight, but not locked, stride leg, will transfer the energy through the body and into the arm whip Powerful wrist snap that is straight towards the target with a 12-6 spin.Powerful finger-push. The last body part to touch the ball are the fingers. Each finger is made up of three small levers. Pushing hard at the end of release enhances speed.Note: Having great snap from the wrist and push from the fingers not only increases speed but has the added benefit of increasing the spin on the ball which creates more late break on the pitches.DRILLS:IMPORTANT: Be certain that the pitcher has fully warmed up and stretched before beginning these movements as the movements are very ballistic and can cause injury if the pitcher is not warmed up. Also, if they show any signs of injury, stop immediately and let them rest until fully recovered (possibly several days)?Hard Walk-insDescription: Pitcher starts about 20 feet from a net with the ball separated from the glove. This is really a run-in as they start running at the hitting sock or other loose net, until they are ready to pitch. When they are ready, they need to plant hard and fire the ball as hard as they can into the net. The release, at this point, is probably about 6 feet from the net. Their only goal is to throw as hard as they can. You can have a "feeder" standing nearby to toss balls to the pitcher in order to add conditioning. As the pitcher finishes her pitch, she runs back to start position at 20 feet. On the way back, the feeder tosses a ball to her, so that there is no rest in between. After a given number of throws, she should rest completely for a minute or even two and then do another set. Reps: (vary as you see fit): 3-5 sets of 5 hard walk-ins Key areas enhanced: This drill focuses on leg drive and arm circle speedPitch & PirouetteDescription: Pitcher starts on the mound throwing to a catcher. She goes through her regular motion but as she comes down to the hip with her pitching arm, she accelerates her arm so much so that as she brings her it across her body she picks up her pivot foot off the ground so that the force of her arm finishing across her body causes her to pirouette. Note: with the strong metal cleats they wear her pirouette will likely be 1/4 turn. The emphasis here is that the force of the arm across the body is what causes the pirouette. So the harder and faster she brings her arm down and across, the more she will pirouette. She'll be surprised at how well the ball is pitched, but make sure that her focus is on the pirouette and not the pitch. Reps: One bucket of 25 Key areas enhanced: Arm speed and wrist snap/finger pushLong-TossDescription: There are many ways to do this. I really like having a target. What I mean is a goal of some kind; like throwing over a backstop or over a fence or goal-post. Throwing higher makes them work their wrist more. The pitcher starts, with a bucket of balls, about 80 feet back from their target. First, she backs up 3 steps then does a hard walk-in and releases as she is crossing the 80' mark. If it clears the bar, then move back another 5 feet, and so on. Once she gets to the distance that she cannot clear the target, throw the rest of the balls. Keep track of the greatest distance away from the target and try to beat it next time. Reps: 1 bucket of 25 Key areas enhanced: Leg drive, and wrist-snap/finger pushOURsDescription: Overload (heavy ball) - Under load (Lite-flite works great) - Regular (regular softball). VERY IMPORTANT: Never let your pitcher work all the way around with a heavy ball. I believe this to be dangerous for a pitchers shoulder. Just work all three pitches from the K-position-down, and snap as hard as they can Do sets of 10-10-10 and repeat 3 times. Finger strength and explosiveness.Other ways of building explosive powerShort sprints: 5 meters 10 sets Resistance bands and Tools: 5-10 sets Big tire flips: 5 sets 15 seconds All core work, especially plank Power-cleans. Be sure that these are taught by a trainer as these can cause serious injury: 3 sets of 5-10 Sponsored Content CoachTube.com is the go-to spot for youth, high school, and collegiate coaches and athletes to access training from hundreds of the top coaches in their sport. Read CoachTube stories ASU Coach Christina Steiner-Wilcoxson teaches players key techniques and provides a wide variety of uniquetips for practicing andmastering the basics of pitchingin her softball training course. Of the many fundamental skills covered, this video focuses on the leg drive drill which is instrumental to developing a successful softball pitcher.

Softball pitching drills for speed. Leg drive drills for softball pitchers. Softball leg drills. How to use your legs when pitching softball. Softball pitcher leg drive.