78TH Precinct Youth Council
Pitching Instruction

GRIPS

Except for a change-up, the ball should be held in the fingertips away from the palm of the hand. The seams should be gripped by the fingertips to provide friction and control.

4 Seam Grip – two finger or, for smaller hands, 3 fingers:

2 Seam Grip

Change-Up (called the circle change-up)

Little League Curve (thrown like a fast ball without a twisting of the wrist)

PITCHING MECHANICS

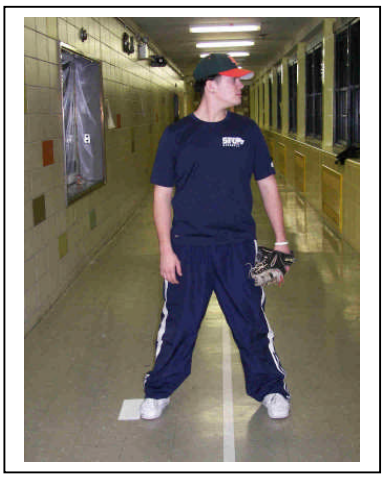
The Windup and Set Positions. We recommend learning the Set Position first because by the age of 11 the leagues we play in allow for runners to steal off the pitcher (lead and steal at any time, as in the Major Leagues).

Set Position

In the 3 steps: Ready Position, Set Position, Throw.

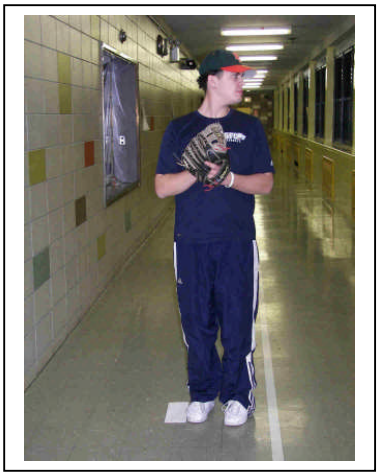
Ready Position

Back Foot against the pitching rubber, Hands down, front shoulder and eyes & facing the batter,



Set Position

Bring feet together, glove to the chest assume the desired grip.



Throw

Leg Lift: Lift the front leg up at an angle towards your back shoulder forming an “h” with your legs. To gain balance, relax your toe on the lifted leg. Another way to gain balance is to practice holding this stance for 10 second intervals. To achieve even more balance stand on a small pillow with your back foot for 10 seconds at a time until it is easy and seems to be effortless, add 5 seconds every time you feel it is easy. (See the Pitching Drills handout.)

Breaking hands. As your bring your leg up your hands go down as if breaking an egg over your knee. This leads you in a downward motion soon leading into a circle and ending with your arms making a “T” with your body.

Landing. Land with your toe facing home plate. The longer the stride, the better because you end up that much closer to the plate, giving the batter less time to react to the ball.

Hip Rotation The rotation of your hips is most important for velocity. After the landing twist your hips. This causes your legs to swing over and put all of your power into the pitch without forcing the ball to get to the catcher. Once you get good at the hip rotation the ball will seem to fly out of your hand effortlessly. A good way to practice hip rotation is to kneel on you back leg with your landing foot out to the side as if you landed already. Then act as you are throwing a ball and force your back leg up and into your final finish position. (See the Pitching Drills handout.)

The Follow Through and Finish. After your hip rotation, your throwing arm should be out in front as if you are trying to touch the catcher’s glove. (See the Pitching Drills handout for a follow through drill.) You should end up in a balanced ready to field position with your glove out in front ready to field anything hit back at you. This is the finish position.

Windup Position

Take a small step back or slightly back and to the side. After your first step you should be balanced and able to move your front foot against the front of the pitching rubber. Then the motion is the same as the setup position.

Following these steps should get you on the right track as long as you follow them correctly the only way to get better is practice correctly. You can practice the wrong way and never get better but if you practice the right way there will always be an improvement.

A special thanks to Marc Lussier, Jr.