



SOLD TO THE FINE
mmarianchuk@sasktel.net



40 Pitching Drills

The chart below contains 40 drills that can be used to improve various components of the pitching process. When you read through them, keep in mind the following:

1. The drills listed below can be performed by individual players working alone or with partners. Drills can be adjusted as needed for indoor or outdoor areas and to include multiple players in stations if needed.
2. All drills are not created equal. Some of the drills listed and explained below are better than others. However, all have some value depending on what skills, techniques, and/or mechanics you wish to focus on. Matching the drill to the specific area that needs improvement is key.
3. There are ways to perform these drills beyond what is described below. Issues of space, equipment, and time as well as the size and skill of the pitcher may require you to adjust the drill as needed.
4. The drills listed below are in no particular order. However, I personally use the first four drills the most.
5. Be sure to consider the safety of players and property involved or nearby whenever performing drills. No drill is completely safe for player or property. Proper supervision and execution is recommended.
6. Be creative and think up your own drills! Be sure to share them!
7. A full-length video demonstrating these drills is coming soon. Stay tuned!

Be sure to check out the Baseball By The Yard YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter pages!

	Drill	Works on ...	How to
1	One Knee Drill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proper arm angles • Proper ball path in delivery • Getting full range of motion in the wrist • Accuracy • Timing of the front side (closing & opening) • Weight shift 	<p>With a partner or using a wall. 10-20 feet in between.</p> <p>Player puts his back knee down and his lead foot up (beyond front knee). With shoulders squared to partner, player holds ball in his glove, turns sideways, separates hands correctly, and throws to partner with accuracy. Finishes with back shoulder pointing at partner, glove near the hip, chest over the front leg, and the throwing arm outside the lead knee. Partner does the same in return.</p>
2	Stride & Lean Drill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proper stride length and location of landing spot • Alignment to target • General throwing mechanics • Hip and back foot rotation 	<p>The drill is performed the same way as the <i>One Knee Drill</i> described above but with the pitcher(s) standing. Standing allows the pitcher(s) to turn the back foot on the throw so that the laces on the shoe are facing straight down to the ground. Turning the back foot like this promotes better hip rotation and proper weight shift forward on the delivery.</p>
3	Stride & Explode Drill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proper loading and storing of energy prior to the throw. • Improve velocity • Proper stride length and location of the landing spot. • Emphasizes arm speed and hip rotation • General throwing mechanics • Proper balanced finish • Alignment to target 	<p>Pitcher starts in his full stride position on the mound or flat ground in proper alignment. Front side is closed. Head, eyes, front arm, and glove are in the proper position. Ball is in throwing hand. Weight is between the feet. This body position is often called the “power position” or “power-T position.” Pitcher shifts his weight back with a little lean (eyes still level) onto his back leg and returns. Pitcher goes back and forth three times and then fires over the top after the</p>

			third weight shift back. Pitcher finishes in a good balanced position with shoulders and hips rotated properly.
4	Long-Toss Drill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve arm speed and arm strength • Proper alignment • Proper front side mechanics • General throwing mechanics • Accuracy 	A pitcher turns and uses the proper behind-the-foot crow hop method to close the front side before throwing. Phase 1 of long-tossing should focus on increasing distance and arc with controlled mechanics. Throwers progressively move back as the arm loosens up. Phase 2 of the drill should have the players progressively shorten the distance of the throws. This “pull-down” phase also decreases the arc to more of a firm line drive throw that also focuses more attention on a balanced pitching finish. Both phases include proper alignment to the target. Using an actual line (foul line works well) can be helpful for pitchers to properly align their footwork throughout both phases of the drill.
5	Tap & Go Drill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proper knee lift height and direction • Proper hip turn to load up. • Proper lead foot path to landing spot • Proper timing of hand/ball exit 	Pitcher goes from the stretch or windup and stops at the knee lift. Pitcher lowers his foot and taps his toes to the dirt area behind the rubber two times and throws on the third lowering of the foot.
6	Ball Exit Drill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proper exiting of the hand/ball from the glove • General mechanics 	Pitcher closes his glove and places the ball up against the backside of the glove (or the pitcher could use an infield paddle). Pitcher goes through his normal delivery and throws. Keeping the ball outside the glove gives him the feeling of separating his hands very freely and easily.

7	<i>Throw down Exit Drill</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proper exiting of the hand/ball from the glove. • Improves lengthening of the arm / creating a larger throwing circle. 	Pitcher starts in the stretch on flat ground. Pitcher lifts knee and upon separation, throws the ball down into a bucket or back (towards second base) into a net or to a partner.
8	<i>Train Axel Drill</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proper hand/ball exit • Lengthening the arm • Improves wrist action 	Pitcher stands in the stretch position with ball in his hand to the side about chest high. Pitcher moves the ball down and back up again twice using a flexible wrist. On the third time the pitcher continues up & over and throws.
9	<i>Wrist Toss</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve wrist action • Proper grip of fastballs and change up 	Pitcher stands squared up to wall or partner about 5-10 feet away. Glove arm is in front of the chest and parallel to the ground. The throwing elbow rests on the glove. Pitcher just bends at the elbow and throws forward using mostly the wrist.
10	<i>Bare Foot Drag Drill</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevents dragging the back foot on delivery 	Pitcher's back foot wears just a sock or goes barefoot up against pitching rubber. Pitcher goes through delivery and tries to lift the foot away from the rubber instead of dragging the back foot forward. If dragging occurs, pain will follow when no shoe is worn.
11	<i>Over the Bucket/Chair Drill</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevents dragging the back foot on delivery. 	Pitcher places a small bucket in front of his back foot. Upon delivery, his back foot should lift and travel over the bucket to prevent dragging. Can be done with a chair as well.
12	<i>Chair-Rotation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves front side loading/turning • Promotes proper and full rotation of 	Pitcher stands squared up to target and places his foot (right foot if right handed,

	Drill	the torso during the delivery.	left foot if left handed) on a chair with his instep flat to the chair. Pitcher turns his front side in and then opens to throw. Hips rotate properly. The foot on the chair rotates and finishes still on the chair up on the toes – heel facing up.
13	Chair Curve Ball Drill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves front side loading/turning • Promotes proper and full rotation of the torso during the delivery. • Improves “pulling down” feeling of the curve ball 	Same as <i>Chair-Rotation Drill</i> above but using a proper curve ball grip and delivery
14	Change-Up Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve change-up grip, motion and overall confidence. 	Pitchers pick a day of the week where every single throw they make (playing catch, drill work, etc.) uses a change-up grip
15	Big Circle Tee Drill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proper separation of the hands • Improves arm lengthening 	Pitcher stands in the stretch position. A batting tee with a ball on it (about mid-thigh high) is placed behind the pitching rubber. Pitcher lifts his knee. When the hands separate, the pitcher reaches down and/or back, picks the ball off the tee and continues his delivery
16	Freeze Finish Drill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total pitching delivery mechanics • Proper balanced finish • Body control 	Pitcher in slow or full motion proceeds through his entire delivery and freezes at the finish so he and/or a coach can check for mistakes in balance, alignment, and mechanics at the finish.
17	Accuracy Tee Drill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Throwing accuracy • Focus • General mechanics, especially alignment 	Place a ball on a tee and place the tee on or behind the plate and in front of a net, wall or pitching screen. Pitcher completes their delivery and tries to knock the ball off the tee with their pitch. Move the tee

			around to replicate different pitch locations.
18	Bottle Drill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curve ball grip • Proper wrist action/arm action on a curve ball • Provides instant visual feedback to the pitcher. 	Using an empty plastic water or soft-drink bottle (12-16 oz bottle is fine), the pitcher grips the very bottom of the bottle as if it is a baseball. When the pitcher delivers and throws with the proper curve ball wrist/arm action, the bottle should spin out of the hand in a 12 to 6 or 1 to 7 rotation (if right handed). If the ball rotates on a more 3 to 9 plane, the pitcher is too much on the side of the ball instead of the fingers more over the top of the ball where it should be.
19	Wall Arm Drill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevents bringing the arm/hand too far behind the body when exiting the glove in the throwing path. • Prevents excessive “hooking” of the hand. 	The pitcher stands with his back to a wall. He slowly proceeds to the power position (with or without a ball) using proper mechanics and arm path. If the throwing hand upon exiting the glove makes hard contact with the wall during the throwing path, the pitcher may be taking his arm/hand too far behind him during the path. This increases the length of the arm path and may make it tougher to get to the proper release point at the proper time.
20	4 Corner Drill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Throwing accuracy • General mechanics – especially alignment to the plate and stride direction • Focus 	This can be done while playing a simple game of catch or when throwing to a catcher during a bullpen session. The pitcher throws to each corner of the strike zone in succession – clockwise or counterclockwise. If playing catch, the pitcher can use the partner’s two hips and two shoulders as the four corners to aim

			for.
21	<i>Balance Toss Drill</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall balance • Proper knee lift & direction • Getting weight back • General body control 	The pitcher (on a mound or flat ground) proceeds through his delivery and stops at the balance point (knee lift). The coach or partner tosses a ball to the pitcher from the side or from behind. The pitcher catches the ball with his throwing hand and then continues with his throwing delivery.
22	<i>Crow Hop Drill</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve arm speed • Getting the proper alignment towards home plate • General footwork and balance skills • Proper closing and opening of the front side of the body. 	Pitcher and partner/wall/net are at least 10 feet beyond pitching distance. Pitcher uses proper crow hop footwork (long toss footwork applies as well) towards their target and throws. Thrower finishes with proper balance and body positioning seen on a normal pitch. Pitchers should warm-up properly beforehand since this is a high velocity throwing drill.
23	<i>Up the Mound drill</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaching out and getting better extension in the delivery • Promotes “chest/head over lead knee” finish 	Pitcher completes his delivery and throws to a target using the back incline of the mound. Pitcher’s stride foot travels up the backside of the mound. When this occurs, the pitcher must reach out more with his delivery to account for throwing uphill. His weight will naturally shift over his lead thigh as well which is something a pitcher should do under normal conditions.
24	<i>Screen Drill</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes a better curve ball arm action (some pitchers incorrectly lower their arm slot/release point on breaking pitches) • Raises the throwing elbow above 	A screen (L-screen or something of similar height) is placed a few feet in front of the pitcher’s stride foot landing area on the mound or flat ground area. The pitcher delivers the pitch and if done

		the shoulder.	correctly, the ball should travel over the screen but still proceed downward towards the bottom of the strike zone. This drill is more for older, taller pitchers who are able to properly manage the height of a normal screen.
25	<i>Brick Drill</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourages a pitcher to lift their back foot away from the rubber and not drag their back foot too much. 	Place a brick in front (home plate side) of the pitcher's back foot. Pitcher delivers from the stretch position. When the hips/torso rotates, the back foot should rotate and lift over the brick instead of bumping into it.
26	<i>Hit the Point Drill</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves location down in the zone • Improves downhill motion of the delivery • Promotes a better extension on the pitch and proper weight shift. • Promotes good change-up and 2-strike, out-pitch locations 	In this throwing drill the pitcher purposely aims for the back point of the home plate. Instead of aiming within the strike zone, the pitcher tries to literally hit this spot on the plate.
27	<i>Tap & Glide</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proper lead foot striding path and length. • Improves weight shift during the delivery. • Improves balance and body control through the delivery. • Promotes top half / bottom half coordination, sequence, and timing. 	Pitcher (with or without a ball on flat ground or mound) lifts lead knee up. Pitcher then drops leg and taps the ground with his toes out towards third base (to 1 st if left handed) and then sweeps/glides his lead foot around in an arc to his landing spot. After a couple reps, pitcher completes that down and around arc to the landing spot in one fluid motion without tapping the ground. This arc helps address the problem of lifting the knee and traveling straight forward (falling) towards the plate. The gliding arc creates a softer landing which will allow for better body control and balance.

<p>28</p>	<p><i>“Hershiser” Drill</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proper building of momentum and energy storage prior to throwing. • Proper knee lift height and direction. 	<p>Pitcher stands in the stretch position with his lead foot up against a wall. Pitcher lifts his knee properly and leading with his hip, bumps into the wall and stops. Can be done from the windup as well if the pitcher faces the wall with his feet about a foot away. Pitcher winds up, pivots, lifts knee, and bumps into the wall with his hip. A proper knee lift and hip turn will enable the pitcher’s back pocket (lead side) to contact the wall. Shoulders should finish somewhat level. A slight lean back is ok.</p>
<p>29</p>	<p><i>Balanced Pick-ups</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall balance and body control • Coordination • Proper knee lift 	<p>Pitcher stands in the stretch position with a ball. Pitcher lifts knee. Pitcher then bends over (balancing on back leg) and places the ball on the ground in front of his back foot and returns upwards to the knee lift position. After pausing at the knee lift, the pitcher bends over again, picks up the ball, and returns upward to the knee lift position. Repeat with multiple reps. Entire drill is completed while balanced on the back leg.</p>
<p>30</p>	<p><i>Hop Back Drill</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves the feel of getting weight back before going forward. • Can address rushing issues. • General mechanics from the leg lift on down through the delivery. • Coordination and body control. 	<p>Pitcher starts in the stretch position a few feet in front of the pitching rubber and aligned with home plate. Pitcher steps/hops back (uphill) to the pitching rubber and up into the knee lift position. He then continues back down the mound with his normal delivery to home plate or target. Pitchers should try to keep their back fairly straight when they step/hop back up the mound instead of just leaning</p>

			back with their body on the step/hop. Pitchers should be able to stay on their pitching line (imaginary or real) for the entire drill.
31	<i>Knee Lift Bucket Drill</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proper height of knee lift and direction. • Balance and body control • General coordination 	This basic drill has a pitcher in the stretch position lift his knee and place his lead foot onto a bucket or chair to show the pitcher the proper height and direction of the knee lift. Usually the bucket/chair is placed directly in front of the back foot. Only the toes should be contacting the bucket.
32	<i>Two Knee Drill</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upper body throwing mechanics. • Front side and back side coordination • Proper arm angle, slot, and release point. • Pitch grips and arm action for various pitches. • Warming up the arm • Accuracy 	This basic drill has two players face each other about 15-20 feet away. Both are squared up to their partner on both knees – upright and not resting back on their heels. Pitcher holds the glove/ball in front of the chest, turns and separates properly, and throws to the partner. Pitchers should finish with their shoulders reversed, glove near the hip, and still on both knees.
33	<i>Pause to Focus Drill</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balance and body control • Proper knee lift height and direction • Improve focus • Improves alignment • General throwing mechanics • Accuracy 	On a mound or flat ground, pitcher proceeds through his delivery from the stretch or windup and stops at the knee lift. He can pause for a second, focus strongly on the target, and proceed through his delivery. Another option is to get to his knee lift position and stay there until a coach or partner says “go.” Pitcher utilizes proper mechanics and alignment and finishes in a proper balanced position.

34	Short to Long Progression Drill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm up the arm. • Improves arm speed • Promotes good mechanics, alignment, and proper rotation. • Accuracy 	<p>With the catcher down in the squatting position, the pitcher starts at a distance about half way between the mound and home plate. Pitcher completes all proper mechanics (stretch or windup) and delivers a firm pitch down in the strike zone to the catcher. After a couple pitches, the pitcher moves back a few feet and throws a couple more. The pitcher progresses back in this manner until he is about 1 ½ times the distance of his normal pitching distance – about 90 feet (60+30) for a regulation size field. The pitcher then works his way, a couple throws at a time, back to his normal pitching distance. This is a common way for pitchers to warm up prior to a game. It is recommended that the catcher stay squatting the entire time so the pitcher is not only getting his arm loose but also focusing on keeping the ball down in the zone.</p>
35	Towel Drill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get the most out of the wrist • Work on arm angles and arm slot • Improve arm speed • General warm-up 	<p>A player grabs the end of a small towel, goes through his delivery, and snaps his wrist – and the towel – through the throwing area. The sound of the towel should be a quick “snap” and not a slow “whoosh”</p>
36	Release Point Wall Drill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proper arm slot and release point • Pitch grips • Proper arm and wrist action • Proper front side and rotation mechanics • Stride length, location, and alignment 	<p>Pitcher starts in the full stride power position with his lead foot touching the wall. The pitcher, in slow to medium motion, proceeds through his delivery from there until the ball touches the wall. He or a coach can then check the arm angle, release point, grip, hip rotation,</p>

			wrist action, etc. when he is in the freeze position against the wall. This drill should be done with all types of pitches that the pitcher throws.
37	<i>iPod Focus Drill</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve mental focus and the handling of distractions • Overall mechanics 	Pitcher throws a normal bullpen sequence while listening to something (music, comedy routine, etc.) on an iPod. The player must not allow the auditory distraction from altering his mechanics, command, and general pitching success.
38	<i>Mirror Drills</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General mechanics • Improve self-awareness and self-correcting 	Pitcher proceeds through any dry (no throwing) mechanical work to see what his mechanics look like. A pitcher can close his eyes, move through his delivery and stop at any time to check to see if where he thinks he is, is actually where he is when he opens his eyes. Another option is to do this in front of a large window when it is darker on the other side of the glass. When this occurs, the window will reflect like a mirror.
39	<i>Up and In Partner Drill</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Command on the inside part of the plate • General mechanics • Confidence to throw inside. 	Can be done with a partner or wall. Pitcher purposely throws to a spot that represents an up and in location to a batter to gain confidence in throwing inside without hitting a batter.
40	<i>Pitch-Out Drill</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve location of pitch-out throw • General throwing mechanics • Accuracy 	This rarely drilled skill has the pitcher throw to a partner, catcher, or wall with the intent of throwing to a location similar to that of a pitch-out. The pitcher delivers and throws to an imaginary spot up and away from the person (chest high) to

			mimic a pitch-out throw off the plate. Pitchers should throw to both sides to replicate a pitch-out to both left and right handed hitters.
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