

# Port Washington Baseball Practice Drills



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# Throwing Routines

Infielders	Outfielders
<b>Wrist flips-</b> Check grip, 4 seams rotation	
<b>Straddle-</b> Ball straight down out of glove, 6-9-12 o'clock arm rotation, rotate upper half	
<b>Right, Left, Lock, Throw-</b> Check strong glove position before throw	
Glove to hand Transfers	Glove to hand Transfers
"Right, left, ready... right, left, field... right, left, throw"	
Front Shuffle	Singles in front
Glove side	Circle the ball hit to the left
Back hand	Circle the ball hit to the right
High chopper- land on back leg, throw	Doubles to the gap, pivot each way
Relays- back to partner (longest throw)	Fly ball routine- Get behind, catch above throwing shoulder, coming in
Dive and recover	Fly balls to the right and left
Error drill	Do or die throws (longest throw)
Pair up: Double plays	Dive and recover
Pair up: Run through, attack ball, throw off right leg	Error/bad field drill

## Eddy Morgan- Concordia "Catch Play" Routines

1. Have players play pepper, 2-ball, catchers framing, of throwing flyballs before warmups while they wait to get started (Stay baseball active)
2. Warmup to throw.
  - a. Start with dynamic warmup
  - b. Baserunning
  - c. Throwing routine
3. Pre-pitch movement (Always be on a hop when the pitch reaches the hitting zone)
  - Infielders (Nate Trosky drills)
    - Bow Drill- Shuffle feet, quick release and back up top (repeat)
    - During every drill have players receiving have a task (relay man, tag...)
    - Rotate upper half

- Angle throws (changing arm angles)
- Double play footwork throws
- QB Drill- sliding feet forward, backward, side to side and throw
- Game Action throws- field in front, forehand, backhand then throw
- Long cuts- works into long toss
- Outfielders
  - Pre-set position- fielding ball in front of left foot (or just outside or inside), mix in fly balls, gain ground (length) on crow hops
  - Fielding ground balls in front and then to the sides (ball in glove)
  - Self-fly's
  - Field ground balls in front and to the sides
  - Working on reverse pivots both directions
  - Dive drill
- Catchers
  - Catcher practice throws back to pitcher from squat, knee, standing
  - Block and recover throws
  - Shuffle, shuffle, go (could be bunts/dropped strike 3rds)
  - Steal throws
  - Backpick to 1 and 3
  - QB throws
  - Catcher Pops (3 catchers throwing to all 3 bases, 2-3 throws to each and rotate)
- Group Play for Infielders
  - Run-down drill (running back and forth in lines, meet the ball going forward)
  - Fielding on run (slow rollers, hard rollers) (possible use of bare hand)
  - Slow roller drill- 3 different spots (in front, right and left)
  - Double play 4 corner drill (footwork and tags)
  - STAR throwing- man in middle, can throw anywhere (be athletic, throw where ball takes you)
- Group Play for Outfielders
  - Lightning- Infielder and outfielders release and work quick
  - LF drill- balls lined up in a "V", further back throw to 2nd, closer throw to 3rd)

## CATCHING

1. Short toss framing
2. Bare hand framing
3. Blocking drills- footwork
  1. No hands- off the chest- move your feet (keep ball close to plate)
  2. Blocking with glove- drop to knees, take off chest, proper position, block ball get back up with power of legs

3. 24 ball block- block 12 balls to right, 12 to left, 2<sup>nd</sup> set alternate 1 left, 1 right till 12 on each side
4. Single ball block- block ball, get shoulder pointed toward base, throw ball to base
5. Block and Scramble
6. Catcher Catch- on haunches, glove to hand exchange, stiff wrist, ball up to ear quickly, footwork, no hop
4. Pick Offs- 1<sup>st</sup> base, 3<sup>rd</sup> base, fake 2<sup>nd</sup>, throw 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> base behind runner
5. Bunt Pick ups- circle in front of plate
6. Wild pitch/passed ball
7. Pop up drill- locate ball, throw helmet opposite way
8. Boxes- bounce right, back, left, front (30 sec.)
9. 3 ball roll- roll 3 balls, point to which ball to block
10. Throwing Routine- Long toss just like pitchers

### **The Big 5 Catching Drills**

1. Receiving- No glove/tennis ball
2. Receiving- Infield glove/Rapid fire
3. Blocking- Sit&Get (Balls thrown from pre-set blocking position)
4. Blocking- Push up, block and recover
5. Throwing- Catchers catch (standing stationary)

## **INFIELD**

1. No hands:
  - a. Normal ground balls
  - b. Move side to side
  - c. Short hops
  - d. Slow rollers
  - e. Back-hand
2. Glove:
  - a. SAME as above
3. Long Toss
  - a. SAME as pitching long toss
4. Normal Infield- work on situations
5. Double Plays- work on turning double plays with infielders
6. Do not bend at the waist- get butt down; athletic position, like defense in basketball
7. Quick feet and quick hands

8. Work short hops a lot
9. Keep out on field for bp; players will see live balls hit at them

### The Big 5 Infield Drills

1. Short Hop Glove Variation- 3 middle, 3 front hand, 3 glove side
  - a. Start both on knee
  - b. Fielder standing stationary
2. 3-step/5-step- Short hops with getting into throwing position
3. Rolens- 10 yards apart- roll front hand, back hand, throwing position
4. Choose hop- Short and high hops mix
5. Fly Balls- Start in front of partner throw, over shoulder catches

### Position-Specific

<u>1B</u>	<u>MIF</u>	<u>3B</u>
Footwork	Pivots & Feeds	Picks & tags
Picks	Tags @ Second	Relays
Relays	Flash to left side	Pop ups in foul
Pop ups on foul		Slow rollers
Fielding Bunts		DPs
DPs		Glove side balls

## OUTFIELD

1. Normal Pop-ups
2. 2 line Drill:
  - a. 2 lines, hit the ball in the middle
  - b. Work together to call off each other. COMMUNICATE
3. Relay Drills
  - a. Aim for front man's logo on hat
  - b. Tandem relay
    - i. MIF should be 15-20 feet apart to take cuts
4. Passing Drills:
  - a. Post pattern- I will show ball then throw it (works on foot work)

5. Ground balls:
  - a. Footwork- run through the ball
  - b. Hit cut off man on a line
  - c. Crow hops- (distance over height)
  - D. Rock and throw- ball dead go with bare hand, at warning track, turn and fire
6. Get footwork down- round the baseball, almost to running start with runner on base
7. Cone Drills
  - a. Christmas tree- cones in shape of christmas tree, open hips up going each way
  - b. Ladder with ball- go through ladder, keep eyes up and catch ball
8. Coverage Drills
  - a. Quarterback- go side to side, catching balls
  - b. Around the world (with and without glove)- hop to coach, go around the world tossing ball
  - c. 2/3/4 ball drills- opening up hips going separate direction each time
9. Explosion Drills- Land on toes not heel
  - a. Line drive coming at you, charging
  - b. Face down- start on ground, facing down get up quick (explode out, not up)
  - c. Fall down drill

## The Big 5 Outfield Drills

1. Short Hop Glove Variation- Same as infielders
2. 3-step/5-step- Same as infielders
3. Open Hips- Starting in front of partner, opening hips up where ball is thrown
4. Cone Drill- Going back and forth working on opening hips
5. Over the shoulder/coming in

# HITTING

1. Soft Toss:
  - a. Normal
  - b. Change-ups- throw it high, sit back and wait
  - c. High/Low- 2 balls used
  - d. Pump Fake Drill- teaches how to keep weight back
  - e. Inside/Outside
  - f. Hip turn drill
  - g. Rapid soft toss
2. Tee Drills:

- a. High Pitches/Low Pitches
  - b. Normal
  - c. Inside/Outside
  - d. Cross over
  - e. Top hand
  - f. Bottom hand
  - g. Grip opposite- helps with wrist turnover
  - h. Bat behind you- helps with pivot and getting torque into swing
  - i. Swing trainer
  - j. Step turns- flick of wrist
3. Daily Dozen
- a. Sac 1
  - b. Sac 3
  - c. Sac and Slash
  - d. Bunt for Hit
  - e. Squeeze
  - f. Hit and Run
  - g. Behind Runner
  - h. Man on 3<sup>rd</sup> < 2 outs
  - i. 2 strikes- stay alive
  - j. 2 outs man on third- drive him in
  - k. 2 outs, full count, bases loaded- hit or walk
  - l. 2 outs bottom of 7<sup>th</sup> inning full count, bases loaded- hit or walk
4. Hitting in BP:
- a. 3 bunts- 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, drag
  - b. Work on bunting a lot- sacrifice, drag, bunt for hit, suicide squeeze, sac and slash
  - c. One hit and run
  - d. One "get him over"
  - e. One "drive him in"
  - f. Normal Cuts- 1 rounds of 8, 1 rounds of 6, one round of 3, and one round of 2
5. Hitting Drills:
- a. One hop drill- batter will hit the ball off of the bounce; recognize and react (good for off-speed pitches)
  - b. Little League Bat- teaches hands inside the baseball and the barrel to the baseball (hit with force)
  - c. Thundersticks
    - I. Use with tee drills
    - Ii. Hit normal bp
    - Iii. Soft toss Drills

## Mike Goetz Hitting Drills

- Hitting Basics:
  - Stride then load on pitcher's "draw"/windup or stride/load simultaneously
  - Track the ball with front shoulder
  - Knob of the bat at the catcher, do not bat wrap
  - Lead with the hands, attack the baseball downhill
  - Focus on hitting inside of baseball, drive everything middle/oppo
- Soft Toss:
  - General:
    - Load and stride on "draw" back
    - Track with front shoulder
    - Knob of bat towards catcher
    - Down hill with shoulders, attack baseball
    - Hands inside, hit inside of the ball (middle/oppo)
  - Mound
    - Hit off mound, focus on driving down hill.
    - Leading with front shoulder, rotation
  - Stride backwards
    - Back foot strides backwards on draw from pitcher, puts you in load/stride position
  - No Stride drills
    - Athletic and wide, focus on rotating back half
  - 45 degree toss
    - Face pitcher 45 degree angle, toss comes from right in front
    - Work on driving ball other way
- Tee work
  - Basic tee work:
    - Move tee around, up/down, inside/out
    - Focus on driving baseball to tee location (where it is pitched)
    - Contact points with the plate, ball out front inner-half, travel outer-half
  - 2 tees:
    - Hit ball off front tee, level swing
  - 45 degree tee
    - Face pitcher, tee against the net
    - Hit inside of ball opposite field, along the net

## Darin Everson Hitting Philosophy and Drills

- Goals
  - Be obsessed with how you move your body
  - Practice timing (being on time) and taking pitches
  - Be on time with lower half for best Fastball

- Swing hard, don't stop lower half
- Stay behind the baseball (longer bat path in zone)
- Do damage early in the count- believe in aggressiveness and walks
- Cage goal- hit top of the L-screen
- Balance
  - Gather (load) into back leg/hip, Keep back knee inside back foot
  - Be in athletic position like you are ready to punch
- Rhythm
  - Limit a 2 part swing. Want to be early with lower half but be fluid
  - Same tempo/rhythm with lower and upper half
- Timing
  - Pitcher breaks, hitter gathers (loads)
  - Pitcher releases, hitter is going forward with lower half
- Drills
  - Extension- drive through ball, extend top arm to center field
  - 2-tee drill- inside, outside, take- launch (partner calls out in, out or take)
  - Flip with a tee- staying back through the ball (work on off-speed)
  - 1-2-hit: step in with front foot, back foot then drive
  - Arenado drill- Step back, keep knee in front of back foot, drive going forward
  - Happy Gilmore- step in with back foot then front foot, swing
  - Land and check (check your gather and back leg, hands with shoulder)
  - 1-2-3, 1-2-repeat- while checking your 5 parts to a swing
  - 4-2 seam recognition drill toss
- 5 Point checklist
  - Front heel down, back heel up when going forward to launch position
  - Back knee separation- keep inside back foot, front hip starts to open, drive with back leg- provide extension through back leg/hip
    - Land and separate lower half and hands from shoulder then pause then hit a toss or tee (drill)
    - Keep shoulders back/square
  - Hand-shoulder separation- bat coming from shoulder, hand little bit behind shoulder
  - Control head-line over cup/middle of body, stay tall, don't change posture
  - Front shoulder down then through swing it will raise, try and stay level, get flat with barrel through zone (6 degrees up on swing)

## **The Big 5 Hitting Drills**

1. Step forward/Step in (step right, left, swing)
  - a. Step forward- Start behind box then go R, L, R, L, Swing (Works on staying middle)

- b. Step in- Start on side of box and step in R, L, Swing (Driving the other way)
2. Ichiro Start/Feet together- Front foot behind back foot (Works on timing)
3. Face-off (Body opened up) or Step Through with back leg
  - a. Face-off- Body facing pitcher (hips open), work on rotation
  - b. Step Through- When finish swing, drive/step through with back leg
4. Hack Attack- Rock forward, back, forward, Swing
5. Stride and Check
6. Robbie Cano- Front leg up/balance (Working on timing)

## Conditioning

1. Running
  - a. Sprints
  - b. Karaoke
  - c. High knees
  - d. Skip for explosiveness
  - e. Frog jump
  - f. Lunges
  - g. The Hills
  - h. Pole to pole run/jog- (jog to left center, sprint to center, jog to right center, sprint to foul line)
  - i. Base running- "Road to Victory"
  - j. Relay competitions
  - k. Sprints
2. ABS: all for 30 seconds
  - a. Normal
  - b. To the left/right
  - c. Scissors
  - d. Side-ups
  - e. V-ups
  - f. Suit case crunch
  - g. Reverse crunch
  - h. Russian twist
  - i. Hold legs 6 inches up off ground and hold
  - j. Push ups

# PITCHING DRILLS

1. PFP's: (Pitcher Fielding Practice)
  - a. About 10 minutes every practice
2. Spot Pitching:
  - a. Short distance (30 ft-40 ft)
  - b. Work inside/outside with all pitches
  - c. 10 pitches each pitch (5 inside/5 outside)
  - d. One set from the stretch and one set from the windup
  - e. Work on one pitch hitting the same spot; then move to another spot
3. Bullpens:
  - a. 30-45 pitches to start, work up to 75-80, top out at 90
  - b. Work from both stretch and windup
  - c. Work on all pitches
  - d. I will come up with a chart of what pitches to throw
  - e. Throw lots of flat ground bullpens (better for mechanics and finishing pitches)
4. Wall Throw:
  - a. Put tape on wall (strike zone) and mix pitches
  - b. Chart amount of strikes thrown
  - c. Can do alone in off-season
5. Knee Drill:
  - a. Foot at 45 ft.- keep foot at 45 degree angle
  - b. Bend at the back- finish pitch
  - c. Teaches muscle memory
6. Tee Drill:
  - a. Pitch and try to knock ball off of tee
  - b. Set tee up inside, outside, high, and low
7. Towel Drill:
  - a. Work on release out front, finishing pitch with a towel not a ball
8. Walking Torques:
  - a. Walk straight forward, feet straight to the target (up-tempo)
9. Marshalls:
  - a. Throwing side towards target in backwards stretch position
10. Mechanics:
  - a. With no ball
  - b. Go through each step
  - c. Stop at balance point
  - d. Stop when foot lands
  - e. Check to see where hand and glove are at that point
  - f. Spend 5-10 minutes just doing that, then let them go through entire mechanics with no stopping

g. Towel drill- partner stands with glove short distance away and pitcher must snap towel to glove. He must reach for that glove. (gets release point out front, and gets pitcher to release at furthest point)

11. Pickoffs:

a. Just work on pick off to 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>

12. Long toss:

a. Stretch out the throws

b. On a line, **no** rainbows

c. If you need to bounce it, then bounce it

d. Helps strengthen arm

## John Vodenlich Pitching Concepts/Drills

- Basic Concepts

- Momentum

- Speed

- Direction

- Mass

- Leverage

- Positional advantage

- Ex: pushing a car (be athletic and strong)

- Release point

- Understand sequence and timing

- Drills

- Speed skater, hopping side to side focusing on driving off back leg

- Med-ball drills (6 Kilo ball or 14 lbs.)

- Face-off: Single arm push press

- Split Squat: Shuffle throws- pushing car throw across body

- Balance-Forward slam: get to balance point, step to power position, slam ball forward

- Straddle- Rotational slam: wide stride position, push ball down

- Step back- shot put

- Football Throwing Progression (Can use to save arm) (smaller football)

- Face-off- turn upper half and throw

- Split-squat- sideways, right and left foot forward

- Straddle Drill- Narrow stance

- QB 3 step drop

- Thread the needle- quick feet

- Dowel Drills- ( $\frac{3}{8}$  thickness, 2 ft. long)

- Face-off: continuous loop with dowel, down, then up

- Chair-cone drill: 6-8 inches in front of chair, balance on chair- use cone for the stretch

- Backside power drill: Back foot on chair, bring dowel back and throw

- Power drive position
- Set Lifts- Wichman, half, glide
- Hockey puck to work on release points with different pitches/grips

### **Pitching Drill - The Leverage Drill**

"drop and drive" is not a correct pitching mechanic because your pitcher will lose out on the all-important attributes of pitching leverage by dropping (and thus lowering his release-point).

Drop and drive guys typically have flat fastballs. (Of course, there are always exceptions like Sandy Koufax and Tom Seaver, but typically, the hardest throwers all stay tall to take advantage of the leverage on their fastball.)

Here's a baseball pitching drill, called **The Leverage Drill**, that may be helpful:

Get your baseball pitcher into his balance position, have the pitcher post on a slightly bent back leg and have him bring his knee to the height you'd like to see it during his pitching delivery. Measure the height by placing your hand palm-facing down.

Next, without a baseball, have your baseball pitcher go through his pitching delivery (as a coach, you should stand to the side out, of your pitcher's way, but in a spot where you can easily put your hand out to the spot where you initially measured your pitcher's high-knee to be in the balance position).

Have your pitcher go through his pitching delivery and have the top of his knee touch the bottom of your extended hand. This will force your pitcher to stay tall on the back leg. If he collapses, your

pitcher won't be able to bring his front knee to the same height that you had previously measured when he was in the balance position.

After a few sessions without a baseball, have your 10-year-old pitcher perform the drill throwing the baseball 35-feet, and then move the catcher back to 45-feet.

### **Pitching Drill - The Stride Drill**

The Stride Drill is designed to train a pitcher's body to get into the proper throwing position enabling him to maximize velocity while minimizing the risk of injury during game situations. This drill can be performed without a baseball and can be done individually by a pitcher if a throwing partner is not available.

First, let's take a closer look at the stride phase of the pitching motion.

A pitcher's should stride **at a minimum 80% his height** towards home plate during his fastball delivery. On the curveball and change-up, his stride should be six to eight inches less than his height. For example, if a pitcher is 5 feet, 10 inches tall, then his stride toward home plate on the release of the baseball should be 5 feet, 2 inches (or thereabouts).

In the stride phase of the pitching motion, a pitcher should be able to draw an imaginary line from the heel of his back foot, through the ball of his stride foot, and onward to the target. Keeping the lower body aligned in a straight line closes a pitcher's hips, directs the shoulders, and allows the throwing arm to reach the "high cock phase" of its arm path in the back of the pitcher's body.

Additionally, if a pitcher lands too far to the glove-side of his body, he will open the shoulder too soon. This causes the pitch to be low and outside while creating stress on the arm and reducing velocity. If a pitcher lands too far to the throwing-side, he will inevitably have to throw across his body making the outside part of the strike zone difficult to hit. Plus, if a pitcher throws across his body, he creates an increased amount of stress on the arm.

Let's begin. A pitcher will stand perpendicular to a straight line (like a foul line in the outfield grass or line on a gym floor). If the pitcher is on the pitching mound itself, he can use his spikes to drag out a straight line in the dirt 8-feet long and perpendicular to the rubber (i.e. directly in line with home plate). Then, he simply marks out the distance of his height and drags out a second line in the dirt--only this one is parallel to the pitcher's rubber. If the pitcher is not on a mound, he will simply place a second object like his hat on the ground. This will mark the distance he should be striding toward his target.

Now, the "markings" he will have on the mound should create an imaginary letter "H" if one looks from the side. The pitcher then goes through his entire delivery (with or without throwing the baseball at the end of the motion) and looks to see where his front foot lands in relation to the two lines he has etched out in the dirt. He can use either his full or set wind-up in this drill. Did the pitcher land the length of his height? Did the pitcher stride in a straight line toward his target? If not, a pitcher should perform this drill 50-times a day without throwing the baseball.

## **Power Position Drill**

In keeping with the theme of this month's **Coach's Clipboard**, the power position drill is an effective way for pitchers to use when troubleshooting or even when warming up before a game. It should be included as a part of any pitcher's flatwork routine between starts or relief outings.

### **The Setup**

All you need to execute the power position drill are two players and a baseball. Two pitchers can work together to make more efficient use of practice time. The pitchers simply stand anywhere from 40 to 60 feet apart (there are different variations of the drill). One will throw from the power position with the other receiving – either squatting down or standing. This drill also can be executed either on flat ground or a mound.

### **The Why**

This drill is designed to assist players with throwing mechanics. It can be used to address several aspects of the pitching delivery. First, to assume the proper power position, the pitcher must get the ball out of the glove and up. The drill stresses the importance of keeping the hand above the baseball in the power position and of keeping the elbow above the shoulder through rotation. The follow through in this drill is only with the arm, which means that both feet stay on the ground. This teaches a pitcher the importance of “staying back” until the ball is released and allows the pitcher to feel what it is like to rotate on the back side, creating a nice hip turn and finish. Pitchers who tend to short-arm the baseball can start from the finish position before taking the weight to the back side and executing the drill. This creates a long, whip-like motion which stretches out the throwing motion. Shortening the distance forces pitchers who drop their elbows to keep the elbow up and to stay on top of the ball in order to throw downhill to the catcher. This also will assist with pitchers who overstride by keeping them back and forcing them to get downhill quickly.

This drill should initially be performed with a four-seam grip, however as pitchers progress in age and as their seasons progress they can throw two-seamers or work on their breaking balls and change-ups.

### **Points of Emphasis**

The points of emphasis for this drill are as follows:

- 1) **Create a wide base with the feet.**
- 2) **Get the ball “out and up.” Take it out of the glove, back and up so that the hand is above the ball and the arm is extended toward center field.**
- 3) **Front shoulder should point directly toward the target.**
- 4) **Not a velocity drill. This drill focuses on mechanics and accuracy.**
- 5) **Create a weight shift to the back side before going forward.**
- 6) **Elbow above the shoulder through rotation.**
- 7) **Follow through only with the arm. Both feet remain on the ground.**
- 8) **Create a nice hip turn and finish.**
- 9) **No striding promotes a shorter stride.**
- 10) **Take the weight all the way back from the finish position to stretch out the throwing motion and avoid short-arming.**

### **Executing the Drill**

The pitcher starts by creating a wide base with his feet. First, using a four-seam grip, the hand is placed on the ball at chest level. Most – if not all – of the weight is shifted to the back leg as the ball is taken out of the glove. At this point the throwing arm should be extended toward center field with the hand above the ball. The front shoulder should be pointed directly toward the target, acting almost as a site as the pitcher peers toward home. From this point the weight starts to come forward through rotation, with the elbow staying above the shoulder. The ball is released and the arm completes the follow through. Both feet remain on the ground, and the hips turn. The trail foot should stay near the rubber and the front foot should point forward. This drill is not intended to be performed with the pitcher throwing at maximum velocity. The focus is on sound mechanics and developing muscle memory.

Short-armeders should start with the weight forward in the follow-through position before taking the weight all the way back and then completing the drill. This will give them the feeling of stretching out the throwing motion.

Pitchers who throw the ball high a lot and tend to drop their elbows can have the catcher shorten up. To throw strikes from a shorter distance, pitchers will have to get their elbows up and stay on top of the ball. A shortened throwing distance also is good for showing long-striders that a shorter stride will help them get on top of the ball and throw it downhill.

### **Teaching Point**

This drill is all about balance and timing. Have the pitcher stop and “pose for a picture” after the arm finishes to ensure that both feet remain on the ground and that the drill is completed properly.

## 1-2-3 Toe Tap Drill

For young baseball players – and sometimes even the pros – perfecting pitching mechanics is an ongoing process. Pitchers should use their off days to throw from flat ground and iron out any mechanical problems they have been experiencing. It is important for coaches to introduce a variety of throwing drills that help improve mechanics and to be able to explain what area each drill is designed to address. Pitchers often do their throwing on the side at practice when the rest of the team is involved in batting practice or some type of team fundamental. If the coach has explained all of the flatwork drills and what they are designed to address all he needs to do that day is tell his pitcher that he needs to work on his power position, balance position, staying back, etc. No matter what that pitcher needs to work on he will know the exact drill that can correct a particular problem. This is much more effective than just telling a young pitcher to go off on his own to throw.

One area of mechanics that can break down easily is the balance position. It is important for pitchers to understand that they need to stop their momentum and hold the balance position for at least a split second. This allows them to gather their energy before pushing off the rubber toward home. Pitchers who don't pause tend to "walk through" their balance position and are not able to generate as much power toward the plate. We have a drill called the 1-2-3 Drill that addresses this issue.

**The Setup** All you need for this drill is a pitcher and a partner, preferably one of the team's catchers. A throw-down home plate should be set up at a shortened distance. For players under the age of 13 the plate should be set up at about 40 feet. It probably should be set up at about 50 feet for older pitchers. The partner or catcher should squad to receive the pitches. Two pitchers can work together on this drill to maximize its efficiency. This is especially important if a team needs its catchers to focus on something else at the time this drill is being executed.

**The Why** This drill can be used for pitchers of all ages. It is designed to help the pitcher control his body and be able to keep his weight back while gathering energy in the balance position. By design the drill prohibits the pitcher from "walking through" the balance position. Pitchers will be able to generate more power toward home plate by gathering their energy at the balance position before pushing off the rubber and taking the body toward home plate. This should help improve control and velocity while eliminating wear and tear on the arm.

**Points of Emphasis** The main point of emphasis for this drill is body control. It should be executed from the stretch position. From the stretch the pitcher should focus on controlling the front leg so that it can be picked up and placed down softly two times before the pitch is delivered. Only fastballs should be thrown (two-seam or four-seam are okay).

**Executing the Drill** The pitcher assumes the stretch position and one of the fastball grips. After coming set he lifts his leg to balance position, shifting his weight to the back leg, and then puts it down lightly. Once the foot hits the ground the leg should be lifted in the same manner. After the foot touches the ground for the second time the leg is lifted again. This time the pitcher holds his balance position for a split second before pushing off the rubber and throwing home. This is not a velocity drill. It can be helpful to count, "One, two, three," for each part of the drill. The ball should be thrown on "three." After doing this for several minutes, depending on the day, the pitcher might want to throw a few pitches from the regulation distance at full speed to feel the drill's impact on his mechanics.

## Notes