



MANLY SEASIDERS BASEBALL CLUB

PITCHING GUIDE



Last updated: October 2016

Overview

"I became a good pitcher when I stopped trying to make them miss the ball and started trying to make them hit it."

- Sandy Koufax (Los Angeles Dodgers)

Proper pitching starts with the right grip on the baseball. The 'four-seam' fastball is a pitchers main pitch.

To grip the four-seam fastball:

1. Place your index finger and middle fingertips directly on the seam of the baseball.
2. A 'D' shape should be formed with the seam and your index finger.
3. Place your thumb directly underneath the baseball.
4. You do not want to be squeezing hard when holding the ball; just a soft grip is enough.
5. There should be a 'gap' between the ball and your palm as this makes it easier for the ball to leave your hand.



A normal (side-on) pitching motion has 5 steps:

1. The **"Set"**
2. The **"Lift"**
3. The **"Star"**
4. The **"Release"**
5. The **"Follow Through"**

Step 1 – The “Set”



In the “Set” position, you should be standing side-on to the catcher with your back foot in contact with the pitchers plate. You want to have your feet slightly wider than your shoulder width with your weight even on both feet. You should have your hands together in front of you resting comfortably around your belly button height.

This step does not begin until you have brought your hands together. Once you are in this position, you should pause for a second and start to focus on the catcher’s glove.

Once you have moved into the “Set” position, you have started your pitching motion. You are no longer a fielder; you have officially become a pitcher. Because of this, there are a few things to keep in mind:

- You cannot move your hands apart unless it is to continue your pitch delivery;
- You cannot move your shoulders to look at the runners/bases around you; and
- To step off the plate, you have to move your **BACK FOOT** first. All that you need to do is step over the pitchers plate, towards 2nd base. Once you have done this, you have become a fielder again.

Step 2 – The “Lift”



This step is all about balance. During this step your balance should shift onto your back foot so you can comfortably stand on one leg. In this step, you want to lift your front leg to about waist height. This allows you to generate the majority of your power.

You **DO NOT** want to be holding your foot parallel to the ground, aim to keep your foot relaxed and let it hang in that position. It should be slightly pointed to the ground. The photo below shows roughly where you want your foot to be.



You do not want to turn your shoulders during this step as it can make it difficult to focus on the catcher's glove with both eyes.

Your hands should rise slightly during this step; it doesn't have to be anything too dramatic, no higher than your neck.

Step 3 – The “Star”



This step can also be called the “Stride” or “Lunge” position as the player is lunging towards home plate to generate a lot of their power.

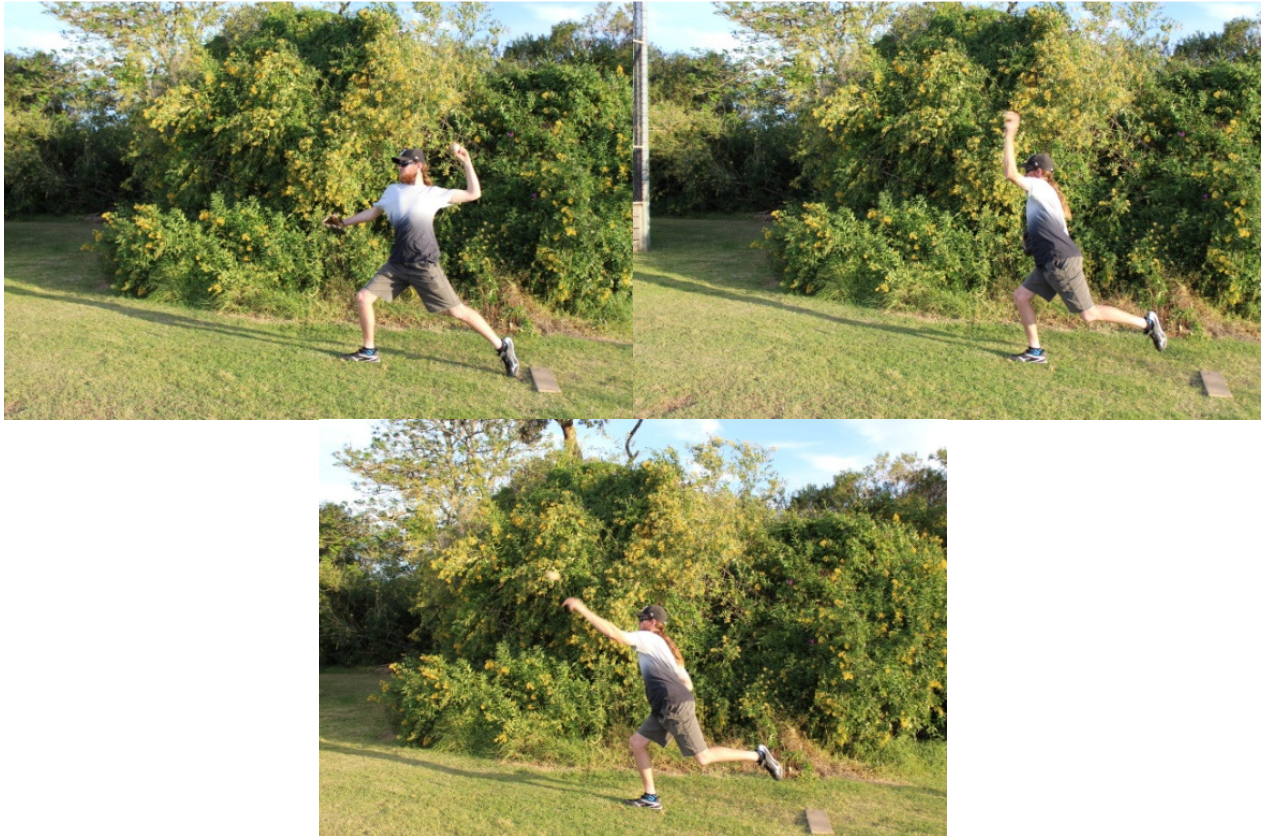
Once you have completed the “Lift”, a few things now move at the same time such as:

- Your balance is shifting back onto your front foot as you straighten your leg and lunge towards home plate;
- Your hands should separate and you should be forming a “star” pose;
- Your glove hand should end up pointing towards the catcher while your throwing hand is now pointing behind you (towards 2nd base);
- Your elbow on your throwing arm should be slightly higher than your shoulder height; and
- You should have the ball facing back towards 2nd base.

As you are moving forward, you would want your front foot to be pointing towards the catcher (Note: If your foot is pointing towards the catcher once it lands, it will more than likely, travel right to the catcher). If a lot of your pitches are heading off to one side, have a look at which way your foot is pointing. It’s probably pointing the same direction.

During your lunge, you want to start to rotate your upper body towards home plate so you are front-on to the batter. You want to try and aim to have your hips rotate slightly before your shoulders rotate.

Step 4 – The “Release”



Once your foot has landed back on to the ground, you want to try and keep your front leg almost straight, and since you are still moving towards home plate, you want to start to throw the ball.

During this motion you **DO NOT** want to bring your elbow any lower than your shoulders. If your elbow drops lower than your shoulder it can put unnecessary strain on your arm and can damage your shoulder.

Your glove arm should now start to tuck back into your chest. You should try and aim to tuck your glove under your armpit. Try and avoid leaving your arm outstretched as it can be uncomfortable and makes it very difficult to field a ball if it is hit straight back to you.



Your release point is extremely important as a very slight change can alter where the pitch ends up dramatically. You do not want to be releasing the ball behind your head. You want to release the ball in front of you. You want to be able to see your hand out of the side of your eyes when you release the ball.

During your pitching motion, you do not want to try and ‘guide’ the ball to the catcher, the more you try and place the ball directly into the catcher’s glove, the more likely you are to miss your target. As a pitcher, the motion should end up coming naturally and shouldn’t require much thought.

Step 5 – The “Follow Through”



Once you have released the ball, your body should be still moving forward. You want to use this momentum for your follow through. Your throwing arm should continue around and your hand should brush past your hip on your glove side.

Your back leg should start to lift and start to come around so you end up completely facing the catcher. A good thing to remember is to think that there is a bucket in front of your foot and you have to step over the bucket to complete your pitch. Your back foot should not drag along the ground at any point.

At the end of your pitching motion, you should end up completely facing the catcher and have your glove ready to field a ball.

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BASEBALL BY THE BEACH