

Sluggers Pitching Clinic

Curve Ball

Mechanics Overview- **Creating Spin (Curve Ball)**

- **Mechanics Overview- CURVE BALL**

- Curve Ball Spin is created with
 - Hand positioning
 - Fingers and hand velocity
- Grip: Middle Finger along seam, fingers together, thumb underneath bottom seam
- Keys to Release
 - Back of hand to the target (palm facing pitchers head)
 - Fingers over ball - Release with fingers on other side of ball
 - Fingers down, thumb up
 - Pull down through release, finish with hand at opposite hip

[Max Fried Curve Ball Technique](#)

[Adam Wainwright Curveball Demo](#)

[Curve Ball- Slow Motion \(Strasburg\)](#)

[MLB Best Curve Balls](#)

Strategy Overview- **When and Where to Throw Curve Ball**

- Goal is to be able to throw curve ball first pitch for a called strike
- 2 Locations
 - 1st Pitch - Called Strike, Aggressive middle
 - 2-Strike- Start on the plate and end out of the strike zone
- Design pitch by visualizing how your curve ball should be shaped (arm angle and ability to spin the ball/amount of break)
- Visualize where to start the curve ball, be aggressive to that spot



Videos

[Pedro Martinez- Pitch Mechanics](#)

[Trey Mancini- Tee Hitting Drills](#)

[Adam Eaton- Tee Hitting Drills](#)

[Max Scherzer- Bullpen Routine](#)

[Jacob Degrom - Bullpen](#)

[Shohei Othani- Bullpen](#)

[Max Scherzer- Discusses Pitching Mechanics](#)

[Tom House- NPA Wall Drills](#)

[Max Scherzer Slow Motion Mechanics](#)

[Jacob Degrom Slow Motion Mechanics](#)

[Jacob Degrom Slow Motion Mechanics- 2](#)

[Aroldis Chapman Slow Motion Mechanics](#)

1. Warm Up

- I. Resistance Bands
 - i. Pull Aparts (side and rainbows)
 - ii. Diagonals
 - iii. Unilateral Arm Circles
 - iv. External Pulses



2. **Towel Drills (Everyone)**
 - l. 2 x Balance Drill - Rocker
 - m. Quick Shoulder Turn
 - n. One foot balance throws (glove side foot down)
 - o. Hop-Hop Stride Throw
 - p. Quick Pivot Pick
3. **Heavy Ball Throws to Partner**
 - l. Flip Drill- 5 FB and 10 CB
 - m. Shoulder Turn- 5 FB and 10 CB
 - n. Pivot Pickoff
 - o. Rocker- 5 FB and 10 CB
4. **Drill Stations (All Pitching Drills focus on head positioning and athletic balance)**
 1. **Players work in pairs**
 1. **PFP Drill**
 - i. **Covering 1B (small space version)**
 1. **Have partner (1b) toss ball to pitcher to cover first- Pitcher starts about 5 feet from base and tries to catch and find base with foot on the run.**
 2. **Pickoff** - First base - Focus on quick feet and release..
 3. **Drill 1 - Crossunder stride to pitching Mechanics**
 - i. CrossUnder step, then drive/front knee up to get into pitching mechanics
 1. 2 Fastballs / 1 Curve Ball
 4. **Drill 2: Wrong Foot Curve Ball with Heavy Ball**
 - i. Step with opposite foot
 - ii. Feel fingers releasing on opposite side of ball out in front of face
 - iii. 2 heavy ball and 2 fastball
 5. **Drill 3: Max Fried Drill - Rocker with back foot up curve ball drill**
 - i. Low Setting into legs
 - ii. Rock back 2x then throw
 - iii. Full Extension over front side
 - iv. Feel Curve Ball release in front of face with fingers out and thumb up
 6. **Pulldown Variation** - Jog – Shuffle – Throw
 - i. Start jogging to gain momentum
 - ii. Turn sideways to shuffle, keep momentum to throw
 7. **Pitching Strength 1**
 - i. **Lateral Slides**
 1. Wide Stance like rocker – slide back and forth keeping hips low
 - ii. **Inch worm**
 1. All arms moving hands back to feet, then out to push up position
 - iii. **Rocker Position to RDL- Body Blade**
 1. Start in Rocker Position with arm in release point (shake body blade)
 2. Move over front side to back foot up and shoulder over opposite knee
 8. **Pitching Strength 2**
 - i. **Trampoline Curve Ball** (Green or blue ball)
 - ii. **Jump Rope** - 80 reps
 9. **Live Pitching 1:** 1 & 3 sec. holds/ 1.5 sec. Stretch
 - i. Situation = 3 Pitch Sequence
 1. First pitch curve ball – Fastball to a location – 2-Strike curve ball
 2. No middle strikes!!
 3. Walk = 5 burpees
 - ii. Hold Runner on second base (come set and look at second base, varying times to home)
 - iii. Partner- Change Up Flips
 - iv. Partners switch after 3 pitches
 10. **Live Pitching 2**
 - i. Situation = 3 Pitch Sequence
 1. 2 Fastballs to get to 0-2, then two strike curve ball
 2. No middle strikes!!
 - ii. Partner- Curve ball flips
 - iii. Switch after every 3 pitches

Silver Sluggers Hitting Clinic

Hitting Off Speed Pitches

Keys to Hitting the Off-Speed Pitch- Mechanics

- Front foot down on time for the fast ball, but keep hands back for off speed pitch
- Hands stay back, even when our weight is forward on an off-speed pitch
- Front shoulder down, and stays in (locked into pitchers feet)
- Feet stay planted- Stay down into legs, balanced during stride and swing
- Keep swing level and on plane- Do not chase the ball uphill
- Front knee softens immediately after contact to keep the swing on plane out in front
- Back knee down to allow hitter to get on the plane of a pitch moving down

Keys to Hitting the Off-Speed Pitch- Strategy

- Attack the bottom inside of the ball. The pitch is typically moving down off of the plane of the fastball. Hitters must hunt and attack the bottom half of the ball.
- Keep bat speed do not slow down with the pitch (hands back, late and quick)
- Study the pitchers release point while in the dugout and on deck
 - Baseball- Curve ball usually is perceived to "pop up" out of pitchers hand at release
 - Softball- Hitter can sometimes see ball release off of side of hand (perceived sideways)
- Recognize off-speed- first thought is WAIT/Hands back. Then see spin and react to pitch angle.
- Curve ball swing approach- "High, let it fly -- Low, let it go". See off-speed pitch up to swing.

Train to Hit Off Speed Pitches

Hitters can only hit off-speed pitches well after they practice hitting off-speed pitches. Hitters should simulate a pitcher disrupting timing, keeping hands back, and firing through the bottom of the ball. Have batting practice pitcher spin easy curve balls in batting practice. Focus on front foot down, wait, and fire hands.

Head Center with front shoulder down // Use Legs to hit



Back Shoulder and Hip to the Ball





Videos

[Mookie Betts Slow Motion Swing](#)

[Ronald Acuna - Slow Motion Swing](#)

[DJ Lemahieu - Movement and Rhythm](#)

[Juan Soto - Movement and Rhythm](#)

[Anthony Rendon - Stride and Separate / Hands Back](#)

[Nelson Cruz- Tee Hitting Routine](#)

[Albert Pujols- Tee Routine](#)

[Freddie Freeman- Keys to Hitting off of Tee](#)

[Juan Soto- Slow Motion Swing](#)

[Austin Riley- Slow Motion Swing](#)

[Josh Donaldson Slow Motion Swing](#)

[Josh Donaldson Weight Transfer/Separation Drill](#)

[Jim Thome Discusses How to Elevate Ball in Swing](#)

[Austin Riley Talking about Hitting Adjustments](#)

Warm Up

- Windshield Wiper
- Strides x 30
- Shoulder Rotations
- Contact Position
- One Handed Pendulums/Swings
- Hand Activation-Pulses
- Shoulder Hip Separation
- Full Swing-Balance

Tee Stations

1. Tee 1- **No Stride, Lean into front foot to hit**
 - a. Hands back with scap load
 - b. Move into front foot (off speed fooled)
 - c. Swing using stability from front foot into ground
2. Tee 2- **Out frontdown and away tee: ¾ slo mo swing over ball → Full swing through ball**
 - a. ¾ swing past ball in slo mo - top hand and back shoulder stays line to pitcher
 - b. Full swing, full extension with back side through the ball
3. Tee 3- **Bat Speed / Exit Velo (tee set low and away)**
 - a. Do not record bat speed or exit velo, just try to maintain bat speed compared to max in previous session
4. Tee 4- 90 Degree
 - a. Batter sets feet perpendicular to batters box
 - b. Batter swings focusing on staying in their stance and getting their hands through the ball.
5. **Short Toss Hit Downs (wiffle balls)**
 - a. No stride, hands above ball, hit the top of the ball
 - b. Have hitters experiment with pre-loading into front leg with hands back
6. **Strength Station 1**
 - a. Top Hand Resistance Band Punches - back knee down and low swing plane
 - b. Bottom Hand Punches (straight line, full extension to pitcher, band should not touch body)
7. **Bunting Pepper**
 - a. Active Fielding (quick to 10 reps, then rest)
 - b. Firm, overhand throws
8. **Strength Station 2**
 - a. Med Ball Rock the baby to slam
 - i. 4 reps of rock the baby into one slam
9. In Cage- **Heavy Ball Short Toss**
 - a. In front of stride (out front of hitter)
10. In Cage- **Wiffle Balls (Light bat)**
 - a. 5 into back hip
 - b. 5 in front of stride (out front of hitter)
11. **Live Hitting - Pitching Machine Swings (Curve Ball - 4-6-4 on machine)**
 - a. **2 Bunts - 2 Slash Hit (Fake Bunt and Hit) - 10 swings with curve ball**
12. **Green Net Area-**
 - a. Tracking Station (check head positioning at foot strike)
 - b. Move into pitch- find front foot down timing with movement
13. **Dry Swing Station**
 - a. Walking Karaoke, holding scap load and shoulders still while hips move with steps
 - b. 30 reps- Quick swings over tee



SLUGGERS CATCHING CLINIC

WEEK 6

THROWING/KEEPING THE HEAD BACK AND ON TARGET



- Walking lunges
- High knees
- Calf raises from toes
- Duck walk
- 90-90 switches
- 1 knee stretches to hip extensions
- Dry blocks (5-5-5)
- Agility drill



- Rectangle drill

Warm-Up(Hands)

- Heavy ball drop and catch
- Wiffle ball-bare hand with partner
- Rice bucket

MECHANICAL OVERVIEW-Throwing to Bases

- Don't get overextended going to the ball
- Croc arms/Changes if ball is taking you to base-1B or 3RD
- Redirect the ball
- Turn glove into body to throwing hand/don't take throwing hand around into glove
- Finding seams while shoulders/hips are rotating
- Hands break in the middle of the body/right foot forward/arm up
- Left foot toe-to-toe or toe to instep of right foot
- Front knee, hip, shoulder, elbow pointed at base
- Nose and chin to target
- If you miss, miss low

Throwing from knees

- Same transfer principles
- Rotation
- Left knee as jab toward base
- Knowing your ability
- Throw from knees to get outs not to try to show off your arm
- Pitch location can dictate standing up or throwing from your knees

STRATEGY OVERVIEW- Being a quiet/steady target for your Pitcher

- Relax and slow things down
- Be in rhythm with the pitcher
- We don't want to set up too late and have a lot of extra movement that the pitcher can see
- We don't want to set up too early and be waiting for the pitcher and possibly tipping pitch location



- Keep glove movement to a minimum
- Set glove low early and work up to the pitch
- The less movement we have, the easier it is for the umpire to see the ball behind us and easier it is for the pitcher to focus in front of us

DRILLS

Round 1

- Barehand-tennis ball bouncers
- Glove-hand ball bouncers
- Wall Drill
- Machine-catch and transfer
- Wiffle glove transfers
- Tennis ball against wall transfer
- Jump Rope
- Ladder
- Back picks into net outside of cage-from feet and knees

Round 2

- Warm-Up(Throwing)
 - Bands
 - Towel Drills
 - Flips
 - Shoulder turn
 - Rocker
 - Heal clicks
 - 1 Knee transfers
 - Right foot step
 - Left foot step
 - Catch-right-left
 - (2) footwork to each base-no throw
 - Ball in glove/secondary stance/throw to partner

CHALLENGE ROUND

PADDLE DRILL WITH LANDMARKS

POP TIMES



Sluggers Fielding Clinic - Week 7

Building on Greatness-Trust the Process

- Be an athlete, not a robot - learn to *dance* with the ball (literally)
- Create angles and maintain momentum to your target (when possible)
- Follow throws whenever possible
- Choose to field the long hop or short hop (avoid the in-between hop)
- Play low to high with flex gloved wrist
- Know when to use one hand vs. two-handed catch
- Know when to get in front of the ball or to declare backhand/forehand
- Know when to come and get it...really come and get it..and throw on the run
- Know when to execute minimum footwork (extra steps are a choice).
- WANT the BALL and EXPECT the ball on every single pitch

Simple to Complex-Our progression

Drill List to Becoming a Smooth Infielder

- PVC Pipe Fielding Drill
 - Player lays a PVC Pipe in front of the fielder
 - Person Throwing rolls the ball so it creates a “weird” hop for the fielder
 - Fielder needs to work on staying low and going down to up
- V-Slot Drills
- V-Slot Catch Play Routine - 1/2 of the Play is the Throw
- Fielding Posture Drills
- Footwork Drills
- Hands Drills
- Feet and Hands Combo Drills
- Purposeful Infield Drills...“Big 5”
- Quality Repetitions - Game Speed
 - Mechanic Overview-Building a Good foundation-First Week... Explain... and Slow down
 - Body position
 - Footwork
 - Arm strength
- Strategy Overview-Eyes through the ball



PASS the EYES TEST

- Over Emphasize seeing the ball
- Smooth
- Move your head to see through your hand

:10 Dynamic Warm-Up

- Pre-Throwing Shoulder Conditioning-Why we do this
- Shoulder Stabilization (with bands/towels)-Quick to wake up muscle

V-Slot Activation-10 to 20 reps-Every Days

- 1. Clap V's – No Feet
- 2. Clap V Into L Footwork
- 3. Clap V into Step Through Footwork
- 4. Dribble into V-Slot-With tennis ball
- 5. Dribble into L Box-Go around box-tennis
- 6. Self-Toss Picks into V-Slot
- 7. Backhand Self-Toss Picks
- 8. Self-toss forehand into V-Slot
- 9. ½ Bounce Throw Hand V-Slot

Solid Front Side mechanics

Nose/Chin to target (on centerline) Quiet Head

Instructional Points: V Slot

- Once the ball separates from the glove, the glove turns the thumb down to the target and leads the way to the target, with the front forearm positioned so that if you had a watch on, you could tell the time as you look to the target
 - After the front foot is down, the shoulders turn by the front elbow, returning to the body, moving past the glove side hip, with glove setting (palm up), somewhere between the glove side hip and armpit.
 - Nose/Chin to Target
 - As the shoulders start to turn and the glove comes into the body, the nose and chin go to the target.
 - Taking the nose and chin to target creates drive and momentum to target (velocity) and keeps the body on the centerline to maximize power through body alignment.

Advance from the Simple to the Complex - LADDERS



- A. Forward**
- B. Backward**
- C. Eyes closed – Trust your feet – Believe!**

Variations -Forward and Back

- 1.1 In the hole**
- 2. 2 in the hole**
- 3. Side shuffle each way**
- 4. In/in/out/out**
- 5. Double touch on the outside**
- 6. Hopscotch**
- 7. Slalom**

JUGGLE-Break down Juggle -Two ball-Up and under
Start with two balls in the dominate hand
Up and Under-Two balls

COMBINE BOTH Juggle and Ladders.

Wall Ball Routine

- 1. Two Ball Quick Exchange**
- 2. Two Ball Forehand Toss - Bounce**
- 3. One Ball Backhand Hinge - Pick**
- 4. Two Ball Standing Forehand Speed Exchange**
- 7. Kneeling – Zone 1 - Receive**
- 8. Kneeling – DP – Flip Feeds**
- 9. Kneeling – DP – Toss Feeds**
- 12. 3 ball partners juggle**

Outfield Progression

Hip Flexibility/Posture Holds

- Hip Henge Drops**
- Posture Holds x 30 Sec**
- Fore/Center/Back**

Jump Rope Routine Advance from simple to complex

- 1. Everything forward**
- 2. Everything backward**
- 3. Eyes close**



1. Standard
2. High Knees
3. Butt Kicks
5. Side to side

Cage Speed rollers Rollers-Attack the ball-receive through the ball.

Cage-OZZIE Drill Ball One Hop to Power with LyteFlight

One hop in front-throw to partner-Backhand

Cage-Tennis ball fielding-Barehanded-hitting 5 in a row at player

Need tennis racket.

Cage-TCU Drill Two hand, Fore and Backhand.

2 Ball Short Hop to Power - Forehand-Hop side to side

2 Ball Short Hop to Power - Forehand side into V slot

Bounce Back - Short Hop to Power Backhand

Work into V Slot

Soft Hands Drill-See through the ball-three positions (fore/center/back) Tennis ball. Move feet to the proper fielding position.

TCU-Know the hop-

YES, you can indeed work on this at home.