



One of the first questions often asked by parents is, “Can you teach my young ball player to pitch?” We normally reply, “Yes. But we need to them how to throw first.”

The throwing mechanics and process of throwing does not start at the high school or collegiate level, it often begins at the ages of 6, 7 or 8 when young participants are first exposed to the sport of baseball. Developing good habits in the throwing process starts early and is refined as the player advances in age.

### 5 Objectives of the Throwing Exercises

- 1) Glove Side Finish – at our chest.
- 2) Arm Circle
- 3) Keep fingers on top of the ball
- 4) Torque – creating energy from the ground up.
- 5) Pelvic Tilt – throwing shoulder to opposite hip

1) **The glove side finish** is typically the easiest fix. All of our exercises encompass this activity and it helps to keep the thrower in line with the target. Those players whose glove finish behind them, or at their backside, often reduces their chances to throw accurately to the target they are throwing.

2) **Arm circle** in playing catch creates a tension free motion and reduces strain in the joints and muscles in the shoulder and throwing arm.

3) For maximum velocity and minimum risk of injury, the ball should extend straight out from the wrist. Regardless of arm angle, (overhand, three-quarter, or side-arm), the hand and ball should line up with the wrist to ensure total mobility of the wrist in the release. Hence, the importance of keeping our fingers on top of the ball, as we release the ball towards our target.

4) **Torque** – to keep it simple, we want our shoe laces of the pivot leg pointed toward the target. This will provide the habit of staying linear to the target rather than a rotational movement when finishing the backside.

5) We have often heard on youth baseball fields from parent coaches yelling out “Bend your back”. If taken literally, bending your back may lead you straight to the chiropractor. The Pelvic Tilt, we want to see from the young ball player should mean that the throwing shoulder should finish equal to the non-throwing side hip. The term we prefer to use is “Get over your front side”, which is more appropriate to get the player thinking that they have to bend over at their waist line. Those with a stronger core, typically will do better getting over the front side.

### **Core 4 – Throwing Exercises**

- 1) Standing 45 (degrees)
- 2) Dangle
- 3) Figure 8
- 4) Walkout drill

#### **1. Standing 45**

- The number one reason for doing this exercise is to speed up our arm action.

How to set up:

- 1) Stand square to your partner. Ask participant to drop throwing side foot back to 45 degrees. Most children don’t know what that means, so be sure to show them what it looks like to aim the shoulder to the target. Then show them that you want them in between square to partner and shoulder to partner.
- 2) Always start with ball in glove with 5 fingers up. Every time! Non athletic event, everyone can do this as a starting point!!



Doug Fister, when on the mound, always starts in the position with ball in glove and fingers pointed up.

- 3) When the ball exits the glove, it is as if we are rolling it off the heel of the glove. This starts our arm circle. At the same time, the glove side is used to aim to the target four fingers to the target and thumb down.
- 4) “Thumb to thigh ball to sky” is the saying that we use that describes the motion of the ball as it exits the glove. Pulling the ball out of the glove, like a pin from a grenade, is an improper action that needs to be corrected.
- 5) As the ball passes the sky, let the ball lift the participants had to the sky. Many players use their elbow to lift and this is incorrect. Ball faces away from the target.



Correct – Kershaw



Incorrect - Reyes

- 6) As the arm starts to come forward, we want to release the ball in front of our face. The lower half will begin to torque.
- 7) As the ball is released, this is where we want the glove to get to the chest. Finished position.
- 8) As we finish, the emphasis is to get over the front side where our throwing shoulder is even with our non-throwing hip.



Cliff Lee of the Phillies getting over the front side with throwing shoulder even with non-throwing hip.

## 2. Dangle

– The number one purpose of this exercise is to help us keep our fingers on top of the ball.

How to set up:

- 1) Start with feet together with throwing side shoulder aimed toward the target.
- 2) Step out with stride foot toward the target. Feet more than shoulder width apart with knees inside our feet.
- 3) Aim throwing side elbow to the target.
- 4) Get participants into power “L”. Back of ball should be in a line through the back elbow.
- 5) Transfer weight to the back leg.

When the coach says “GO” it is three forward rotations of the ball before the participants finishes the throw. Try to stabilize the throwing shoulder to elbow as much as possible. The only part of this drill that doesn’t exist is the arm circle. All other parts of the throw including glove side finish, fingers on top of the ball, torque and pelvic tilt will be completed.

## 3. Figure 8

- The number one purpose of this exercise is to develop smooth, long and loose arm action.

How to set up:

- 1) Start with feet together aimed at your target.
- 2) Step out to target with glove side leg. Make sure back heel is off the ground with shoelaces toward target.
- 3) Start with glove in finished position.



**Nolan Ryan's finished position was glove by chest. Need participants to start with glove by chest.**

- 4) Hold ball out in front of face to release point. Last Raps Baseball to begin the "Figure 8", the first movement is down to the glove side foot. This starts the motion of a sideways 8. Terminology for the children is "Down, Back, Attack".

#### **4. Walkout Drill**

– The number one purpose of this exercise is to gain momentum to our target.

How to set up:

- 1) Begin with feet shoulder width apart facing the target.
- 2) Ball in glove out in front with fingers up. This is the same as the Standing 45 exercise.
- 3) Right handed throwers begin with a step with the left foot, then a step with the right foot with a little inward turn. When the right step is taken, this is where the participant needs to break their hands apart to begin the throwing motion. As they take the next step with the left foot that is at the same time where they complete the throwing motion to their partner.
- 4) After the ball is released, a couple more steps should be taken in the direction of their target.

This drill encompasses all five of the objectives that we look for in the throwing motion:  
1)Glove Side Finish 2) Arm Circle 3) Keep fingers on top of the ball 4) Torque – creating energy from the ground up, and 5) Pelvic Tilt – throwing shoulder to opposite hip.