

Phases of Getting an Arm Back in Pitching Shape

Pre-Season

For most pitchers, the pre-season usually starts 2-3 months prior to the first game of the year. Depending upon location, this could occur outside on a field or inside in a cage due to colder weather. Either way, there are a few standards that every pitcher should follow when preparing for the upcoming season.

- **Pre-Care**
 - Set up a routine to get your arm to throw.
 - Bands
 - Proper Stretching Routine
 - Arm Circles
 - Arm Isometric Movements
 - Shoulder Tubes
- **Arm Build Up**
 - Understand that arms need to be properly re-introduced into the throwing process.
 - Gradually build the distances and the frequency of throwing during the week.
 - Key to this process is to listen to your arm. Don't push the process. Don't jump right back into where you left off last year.
 - Start with 2-3 throwing sessions per week for 1st two weeks.
 - Weeks 3-4 the player can up his throwing to 3-4 times per week.
 - This build up generally takes 3-4 weeks to get your arm into fairly decent shape. Not game ready yet or even ready for bullpens.
- **Flat Ground Bullpens**
 - Once pitchers have gone through the Arm Build-Up stage, they should use flat ground bullpens to re-establish a feel for their mechanics and pitches. 4-6 flat ground bullpens would be ideal before a pitcher gets back on the mound.
 - Flat ground bullpens refer to a shortened bullpen distance in front of the mound. For example, high school pitchers throw from 60 feet 6 inches. A flat ground bullpen would be 45-50 feet. This allows players to slow down their motion and focus on mechanics without the element of the mound.
 - Perform 1 flat ground per week during the 3rd and 4th week of throwing. During weeks 5-6 of throwing, the player can throw multiple flat grounds per week while making sure they are spread out evenly throughout the week.
- **Bullpens w/ Pitch Count Build Up**
 - Once your Arm Build-Up and Flat Grounds are accomplished and your arm is in a state to where it can handle the mound, pitchers should start to work on a pitch count build up on the mound.
 - Pitchers should be entering the season with confidence that they can throw 40-60 pitches in a game depending on if they are relief pitchers or starters.
 - This should take place over a 6-8 week period. Starting around 20 pitches and building up incrementally. Make sure to work on gaining a feel for your mechanics while building up the effort levels of your throws through your bullpens. First bullpens should not be thrown over 60-80% effort. Last bullpens of the build-up should be closest to game effort as you can make them.

Pre-Season Throwing Time-line

Weeks 1 & 2

- 2-3 Throwing Sessions per week.
- Spread out evenly. Try to avoid back to back days. Allow for rest.
- Throwing sessions should start with lower efforts 60-70% and shorter distances
- Throwing build up should get you to 70-80% with further distances in the last part of week 2. Still should not be at your max effort or distance yet.

Weeks 3 & 4

- 2-3 throwing sessions per week.
- Effort and distance should continue to grow. Towards the end of the 4th week, you should be able to start getting your throws to you max distance with a high amount of effort being put into those throws.
- If throwing up to 3 times per week, only choose 2 sessions of throwing to be your higher effort sessions. Make the other one lower effort intensity.
- Add in 1 flat ground bullpen during week 4.

Weeks 5 & 6

- 3-4 throwing sessions per week.
 - o 1 bullpen off the mound per week.
 - Low effort. 70-80%.
 - 20-25 pitches
 - Fastballs & Change-Ups
 - o 1 flat ground bullpen.
 - o 1-2 throwing sessions with 1 long toss session.
 - o Spread out throwing sessions per week. Flat ground bullpen & bullpen off the mound should have minimum of 2 days in between.
 - o No long toss right after or before the bullpen off the mound day.

Weeks 7 & 8

- 3-4 throwing sessions per week.
 - o 1 bullpen off the mound per week.
 - 80-100% effort.
 - 25-35 pitches.
 - All pitches used.
 - o 1 flat ground bullpen.
 - o 1-2 throwing sessions with 1 long toss session.
 - o Spread out throwing sessions per week. Flat ground bullpen & bullpen off the mound should have minimum of 2 days in between.
 - o No long toss right after or before the bullpen off the mound day.

Weeks 9 & 10

- 3-4 throwing sessions per week.
 - 1 bullpen off the mound per week.
 - 80-100% effort.
 - 35-45 pitches.
 - Split pitches up into two halves when throwing. Do NOT throw 45 straight pitches.
 - All pitches used.
 - 1 flat ground bullpen.
 - 1-2 throwing sessions with 1 long toss session.
 - Spread out throwing sessions per week. Flat ground bullpen & bullpen off the mound should have minimum of 2 days in between.
 - No long toss right after or before the bullpen off the mound day.

Weeks 11 & 12

- 3-4 throwing sessions per week.
 - 1 bullpen off the mound per week.
 - 80-100% effort.
 - 45-60 pitches.
 - Split pitches up into two halves or 3 thirds when throwing. Do NOT throw 45-60 straight pitches.
 - All pitches used.
 - In your first game of the year, you should not be throwing more than 50-60 pitches. This will get you the closest to game ready as possible.
 - 1 flat ground bullpen.
 - 1-2 throwing sessions with 1 long toss session.
 - Spread out throwing sessions per week. Flat ground bullpen & bullpen off the mound should have minimum of 2 days in between.
 - No long toss right after or before the bullpen off the mound day.
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