

Speeds and Distance Measurements



www.PaulyGirlfastpitch.com

Many pitchers, parents, and coaches ask us what is the single best method of increasing pitching speed. Our normal answer is **DISTANCE THROWING**. I want to describe how we teach distance throwing because it is different than what most people think it is.

We try to do our distance throwing on a softball field that has a backstop. The reason for this is that the backstop provides a clear frame of reference for the pitcher.

Our method instructs the pitcher to throw the ball **as high in the air as they can** because this will typically be your longest throw also. As a matter of fact we want the pitchers to throw the ball 15—20 feet higher than the backstop and over the backstop. Most intermediate level pitchers should be able to do this from second base. The pitchers that successfully at least hit the backstop then step back another 5 feet and make another throw; again attempting on every throw to get it 15-20 feet higher than and over the backstop. As long as the pitcher can hit even the bottom of the backstop they are allowed to go back another 5 feet for another throw.....etc., etc., etc.

When the pitcher throws high you will note that their landing posture is tilted back behind vertical-----this is great since your pitcher should land tilted back on every pitch they throw regardless of drop, rise, curve, changeup, etc. Related to this you will also note that pitchers that don't land with the backward tilted posture can't throw the ball very far....of course not their mechanics are incorrect.

The second key is to use a riseball grip and spin when throwing distance. There are a few good reasons for doing this: 1) a riseball spin will travel farther than a dropball spin, 2) you must be strong to overcome the centrifugal force of the ball when your fingers are cupped under it like a riseball. Therefore, it strengthens your grip more than if you just grip dropball/fastball, and 3) it will improve your riseball faster than any other drill you can do.

We do encourage the pitchers to use a walk-in approach to throwing distance. It definitely helps the overall performance.

Speeds and Distance Measurements

Now here's an added advantage to throwing distance which can save you the \$800 purchase of a radar gun. There is a direct correlation between distance and speed. Below is the conversion chart. There are exceptions to every rule but we have found this to be accurate on 90% of the pitchers we measure and it is accurate within about plus or minus one mile per hour.

<u>Distance (Feet)</u>	<u>Speed (MPH)</u>
-------------------------------	---------------------------

100	50
------------	-----------

125	55
------------	-----------

150	60
------------	-----------

175	65
------------	-----------

You can easily interpolate between these distances/speeds. Every 5 feet equals 1 MPH.