

Physical and Mental Preparation

By Amanda Freed

Pitching is an extremely strategic position. A pitcher will perform at her best and with the most confidence when she feels well prepared. When pitching at a high level, there is nothing more uncomfortable than the feeling of being unprepared. The first thing that comes to mind when you think about preparation is the obvious, physical preparation. Is my body healthy and strong? Are my pitches working? But equally, if not more important, is the mental preparation. To prevent an extremely long article, today we will tackle the physical aspect of preparation and next month we will look at the mental side.

The softball season for many of you seems to be never ending so you never truly have a significant period of time to break down pitches and work solely on mechanics or speed. Now is as good a time as any to start thinking about what it is that is going to make you a better pitcher.

First of all, it is important that you go into each workout with a plan. What do you want to accomplish for the day? Let's look at a typical week for some of you. You have a tournament Saturday and Sunday and you are anticipating throwing at least one game each day. If this were my schedule, here is how I'd like my week to play out.

Monday: Day off. Recovery. (Assuming I pitched Saturday and Sunday)

Tuesday: Pitching drills for mechanics. Work on areas that I struggled with during the weekend. Normal length workout, approx. 30-45 min.

Wednesday: Long toss, speed work. Depending on feel, throw from mound but workout dedicated to strength, speed, endurance. Approx. 45 min.

Thursday: Hardest workout. Warm up, work out some kinks in mechanics, mix pitches, and throw game situations.

Friday: Day off or Light Workout depending on your preference the day before a game. I prefer to throw lightly for about 20 min.

Saturday and Sunday: Games

You have to push your body physically if you want to see results. Stagger your workouts so you focus on gaining the full benefit of what each has to offer. If you go out with the intention of working on consistently hitting locations with your moving pitches, stick with it. It's difficult and frustrating but those are the workouts that make you better. Same applies if you are wanting to increase speed. If you dedicate 10 minutes every week, or just whenever you feel like it, you can't expect to get great results. Consistency and persistence is the key.

This is only a rough guideline for you to work off of. Everybody's weeks are different depending on free time, weather, etc. so do what works best for you. There really is only so much that you can do physically to prepare yourself, your mental game is what will really give you that extra edge.