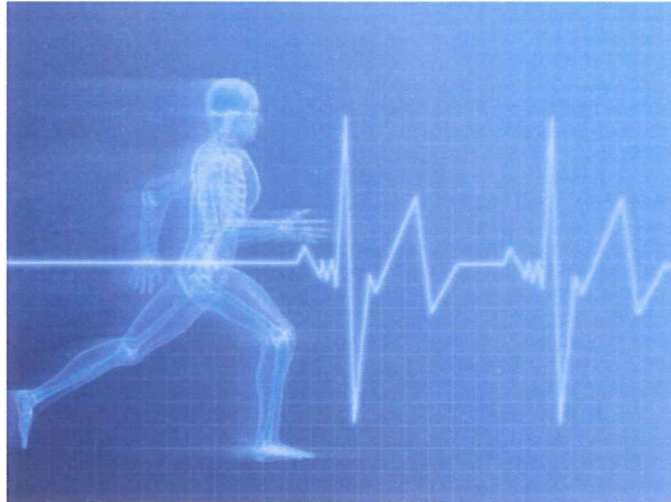


# **YOUTH SOFTBALL WARM-UP PROGRAM**

**A complete warm-up and training program to  
prevent injuries in softball players**



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**Christopher Gordos, PT, DPT  
Eric Parrish MPT**



## Youth Softball Warm-Up Program



The purpose of this warm-up program is to prevent youth injury. This warm up program should be performed before each practice or game and should take ~15-20 minutes to complete. Both the coaches and players need to understand the purpose and importance of a proper warm-up. A proper softball warm-up should involve warming-up to throw and not throwing to warm-up. Coaches should supervise players at all times to encourage proper techniques.

### Phase 1: Cardiovascular warm up

1. Run the bases: Run to 1<sup>st</sup> backwards, run to 2<sup>nd</sup> sideways, run to 3<sup>rd</sup> sideways facing the opposite side, and run home forward. Once 1<sup>st</sup> runner reaches 1<sup>st</sup> base, the second player can start running and so on.
2. Bounding -Lift the knee on the leading leg as high as possible and swing the opposite arm across the body and up over head; whole team starts spread out on 1<sup>st</sup> base foul line, finish at 2<sup>nd</sup> base. Jog back.
3. Open and close gait - Open the gate (leg brought straight up and then out - imagine stepping over something); whole team starts at 1<sup>st</sup> base foul line, finish at 2<sup>nd</sup> base. Jog back. Then do: close the gate (the opposite, outside to inside).
4. Karaoke – Standing sideways, cross your right foot over and in front of your left foot with your arms out to your sides. Step open and out to the side with your left foot, then cross your right foot behind your left foot and continue moving laterally then repeat the movement in the opposite direction; start at 1<sup>st</sup> base foul line, finish at 2<sup>nd</sup> base. Jog back.

### Phase 2: UE and LE stretching

#### *Static Stretching*

1. Cross body/post capsule stretch - Bring throwing arm across body at about chest-level. Lock that arm in place and stretch it by pulling with the other arm. Hold/count for 30 seconds and repeat once.
2. Inferior Capsule Stretch – Raise throwing arm up next to ear with elbow bent behind head. With opposite hand, gently pull elbow further behind head until you feel a slight stretch on the front side of your shoulder under arm pit. Hold/count 30 seconds and repeat once.
3. Hamstring– Stand with feet apart, just past shoulder width, bend at the waist, slowly reach down to your feet and touch your toes. Hold/count 30 seconds
4. Quadriceps - Reach back and grab ankle, gently pull heel back until you feel a stretch in front of thigh; use a partner if needed. Hold/count 30 seconds and repeat on opposite leg.

#### *Dynamic Stretching*

1. Small Shoulder circles / Large windmills– Stand with feet slightly wider than shoulder-width apart, knees slightly bent, Start with Small circles for 15 sec. and then Large circles 15 sec. (30 seconds clockwise, 30 sec. counterclockwise)
2. Huggers / Cross body arm swings – Swing both arms out to sides and then cross then in front of the chest; 30 seconds
3. Hamstrings/Quadriceps – Holding onto the fence, swing with a straight leg out in front of the body so that a stretch is felt in the back of the leg, then swing the leg behind the body; 30 seconds total. Switch legs.
4. Adductors – Holding onto the fence, swing the leg side to side as high as possible; 30 seconds. Switch legs.

### Phase 3: Strength, Conditioning, Throwing

1. Lunge and Twist - Lunge forward with a light twist at the waist from foul line to 2<sup>nd</sup> base , jog back.
2. Lateral slide -Stand with your feet just beyond shoulder width. Get in mini-squat position, with hips back, bend the knees, and lower the body until hips are just slightly higher than your knees. Slide from foul line to 2<sup>nd</sup> base facing the infield and then return still facing the infield.
3. Throwing (can use option a or b)
  - a. Grab a partner. One person stands at 1<sup>st</sup> base foul line with other partner about 6 feet away. Toss ball back and forth. After each partner throws, take a step back. Older players (>10) proceed until they are between 90-180 feet away from each other, depending on abilities. Younger players (<10) stop when they reach 2<sup>nd</sup> base line. Players then will begin taking steps closer to each other. Players will start by 1<sup>st</sup> getting further apart and then will come closer together. Special attention should be paid to form and accuracy. Repeat for 5 min
  - b. Light throwing warm-up with a partner. Special attention should be paid to form and accuracy. 5 min

**\*\*Immediately after throwing, there is a loss of motion of the shoulder. The deceleration with pitching causes damage to the rotator cuff; and posterior shoulder muscles get tight from the trauma of throwing. To prevent overuse injury in all throwers, end each throwing session with the Cross Body Stretch for 2 sets of 30 seconds.\*\***



## Youth Softball Warm-Up Program



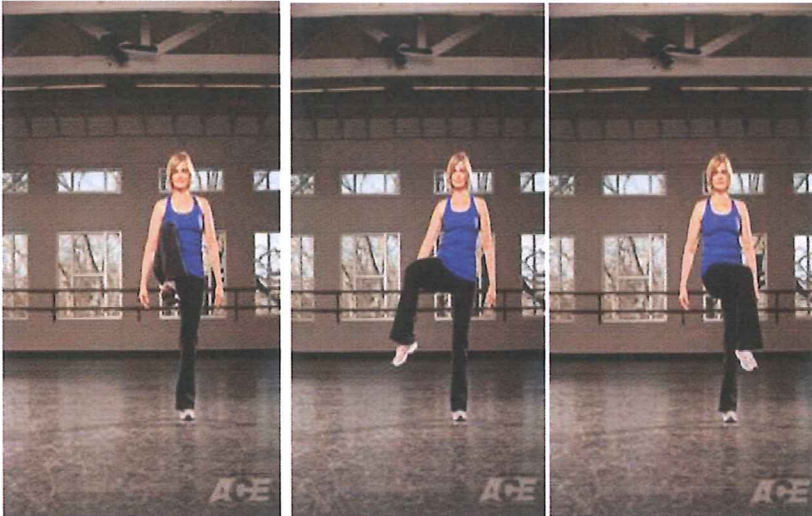
### Phase 1: Cardiovascular warm up

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2. Bounding -Lift the knee on the leading leg as high as possible and swing the opposite arm across the body and up over head; start at 1<sup>st</sup> base foul line, finish at 2<sup>nd</sup> base. Jog back.



3. Open and close gait - Open the gate (leg brought straight up then outside to inside - imagine stepping over something), close the gate (the opposite, outside to inside); start at 1<sup>st</sup> base foul line, finish at 2<sup>nd</sup> base. Jog back.

Open the Gate (move in opposite direction for close the gate)



4. Karaoke – Standing sideways, cross your right foot over and in front of your left foot with your arms out to your sides. Step open and out to the side with your left foot, then cross your right foot behind your left foot and continue moving laterally then repeat the movement in the opposite direction; start at 1<sup>st</sup> base foul line, finish at 2<sup>nd</sup> base. Jog back.



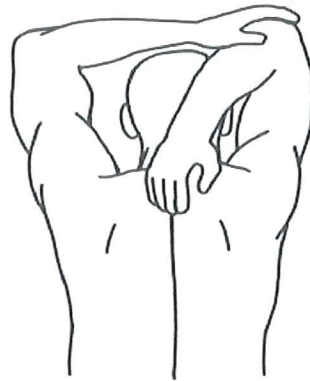
## Phase 2: UE and LE stretching

### Static Stretching

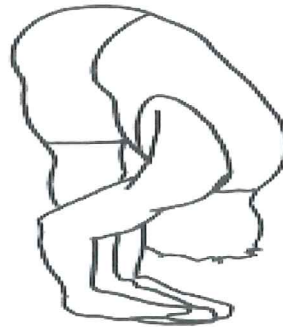
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2. Inferior Capsule Stretch – Raise throwing arm up next to ear with elbow bent behind head. With opposite hand, gently pull elbow further behind head until you feel a slight stretch on the front side of your shoulder under arm pit. Hold/count 30 seconds and repeat once.



3. Hamstring– Stand with feet apart, just past should width, bend at the waist, slowly reach down to your feet and touch your toes. Hold/count 30 seconds

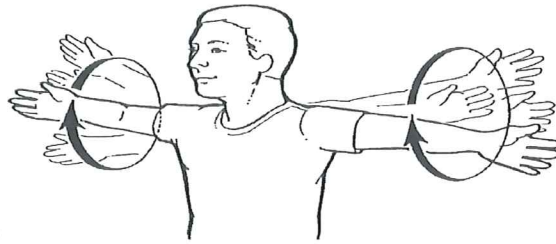


4. Quadriceps - Reach back and grab ankle, gently pull heel back until you feel a stretch in front of thigh; use a partner if needed. Hold/count 30 seconds and repeat on opposite leg.

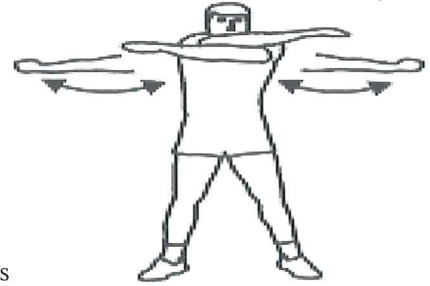


*Dynamic Stretching*

1. Small Shoulder circles/ Large Windmills – Stand with feet slightly wider than shoulder-width apart, knees slightly bent, Start with small circles for 15 sec. and then large circles 15 sec. (30 seconds clockwise, 30 sec. counterclockwise).

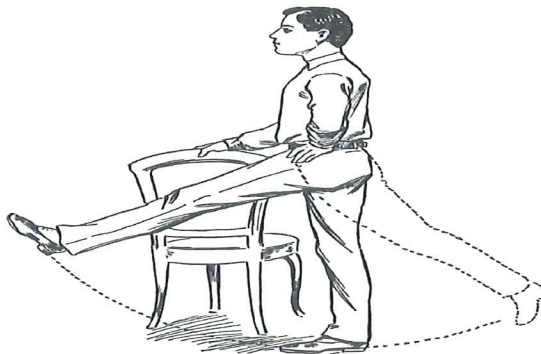


1. Windmills

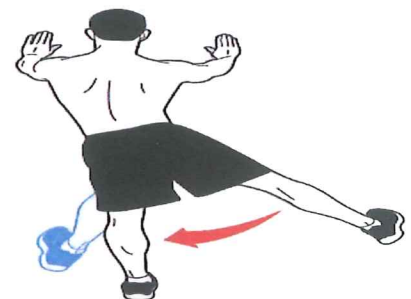


2. Huggers

2. Huggers / Cross body arm swings – Swing both arms out to sides and then cross them in front of the chest; 30 seconds.
3. Hamstrings/Quadriceps –Holding onto the fence, swing with straight leg out in front of the body so that a stretch is felt in the back of the leg, then swing the leg behind the body; 30 seconds. Switch Legs. First Picture Below.



3. Hams



4. Adductors

4. Adductors – Holding onto the fence, swing the leg side to side as high as possible; 30 seconds. Switch Legs.

**Phase 3: Strength, Conditioning, Throwing**

1. Lunge and Twist - Lunge forward with a light twist at the waist from foul line to 2<sup>nd</sup> base , jog back to foul line.



2. Lunge & Twist



2. Lateral Slide

3. Lateral slide -Stand with your feet just beyond shoulder width. Get in mini-squat position, with hips back, bend the knees, and lower the body until hips are just slightly higher than your knees. Slide from foul line to 2<sup>nd</sup> base facing the infield and then return still facing the infield. See second Picture Above.
4. Throwing (can use option a or b)
  - a. Grab a partner. One person stands at 1<sup>st</sup> base foul line with other partner about 6 feet away. Toss ball back and forth. After each partner throws, take a step back. Older players (>10) proceed until they are between 90-180 feet away from each other, depending on abilities. Younger players (<10) stop when they reach 2<sup>nd</sup> base line. Players then will begin taking steps closer to each other. Players will start by 1<sup>st</sup> get further apart and then will come closer together. Special attention should be paid to form and accuracy. Repeat for 5 min
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