

Pre-Game Routine Action Guide

- 1. Bed Time / Wake Up Time.** Proper rest is critical to pitching your best. You must get 8-9 hours of good sleep to feel mentally and physically refreshed. Going to bed before midnight and waking up between 7:30 to 9am is a good sleeping pattern to make a habit of.
- 2. Nutrition.** Eating healthy and proper hydration plays a huge role in how you feel while pitching. Nothing is worse than feeling bad and cramping while pitching. It emotionally and mentally drains you as much as it does physically. Make sure to drink plenty of water the night before and throughout the day leading up to game time.
- 3. Arrival at the Field.** Make sure you get to the field in plenty of time. You don't want to feel rushed on game day. The pre-game process is about emotionally, mentally and physically preparing to pitch that day. Make sure it gets started off in the right frame of mind.
- 4. Emotionally, Mentally and Physically Checking In.** After you arrive at the field it is important to leave the rest of the world in the parking lot. To pitch your best that day requires you to be emotionally, mentally and physically ready for today's opponent. Learning to check in will give you the freedom and peace of mind to focus on the job at hand. You can check back into the world after the game. Game day is the reward for all your hard work, preparation and practice give yourself every opportunity to have fun and pitch your best.
- 5. Pre-game Preparation.** Now it's time to sit down with your coach, catcher and whoever else can help you prepare for today's opponent. This doesn't have to be insanely complicated; every pitcher needs to have a game plan for each opponent. If you have individual reports, charts or a history for each hitter it gives you an idea of their strengths and weaknesses and how you need to attack each hitter with the pitches you throw. A lot of times this is just a review of what you have been preparing for since your last start or outing. You don't have to over prepare, but it's better to have a plan than to go into a game blind if at all possible.

- 6. Finalize Pitching Plan.** Now it's time to take what you do well and review how you specifically want to pitch to each hitter. This is about your strengths against his weaknesses. You also want to prepare for the second and third time through the batting order. The pitcher that can make confident adjustments quickly and on the fly will win more games. Be confident in what your plan is today. There is no perfect plan, but there is an opportunity to execute great pitches one pitch at a time. Staying focused and making confident adjustments is the most important trait of being an elite pitcher.
- 7. Competitive Visualization.** Now that you have the knowledge of what you need to do against today's opponent it's time to emotionally and mentally implement the pitching plan. 60 to 90 minutes prior to game time find a quiet place and emotionally and mentally pitch today's game. Go through each hitter and visualize your thoughts and feelings of executing the pitches you want to throw against them. Go through your pre-pitch routine and feel yourself throwing each pitch. Go through post pitch routine and see yourself making confident adjustments pitch by pitch. This isn't about pitching the perfect game, it's about getting emotionally and mentally into a competitive mindset that helps you focus on doing whatever it takes to help your team win today's game. By emotionally and mentally visualizing your game plan prior to the game you can feel confident that once the game starts you're ready for any situation. It gives you the ability to stay calm and focused under extreme pressure of the game knowing that you have already emotionally and mentally pitched the game before it started.
- 8. Pre-Game Warm Up.** Now that you are emotionally and mentally prepared it's time to physically prepare. 35 to 40 minutes prior to game time you want to start your pre-game warm up. Every pitcher is different in what they need to get ready so customize your pre-game warm up to what you want to do. The key is to get your whole body ready to pitch and to remember that you warm up to throw, not throw to warm up. Take the time to get your whole body warmed up and ready to pitch.