

*Ten Softball  
Throwing Mistakes  
And How To Fix Them*

**DAN BLEWETT**

# *10 Softball Throwing Mistakes*

## *And How to Fix Them*

by Dan Blewett

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Please use what I've written only as a guide. Always consult a local coach before starting any new exercise regimen and use proper supervision, warm-up and technique.

The advice and examples contained in this document are not intended to substitute for common sense or professional counsel.

# 10 Softball Throwing Mistakes

## Intro Why Girls Are Getting Left Behind

### *The Problem*

At the age of nine, I vaguely remember listening to my coach as he counted out the steps of the windup. He had invited my 10U baseball team over to his house to learn the basics of pitching and to eat some pizza.

For young boys, pitching *is* throwing - when I learned to pitch, I at the same time learned good throwing mechanics. The instruction served me well not just on the mound, but in the field as well - everywhere I played, good throwing instruction gave me an edge.

I grew up into an exceptionally hard thrower - pitching professionally and throwing in the low-to-mid 90s. When I started working with young players, it became my job to teach both boys and girls how to throw *hard*. Accurate, hard throws are required at every position, and are a requirement for playing in college.

I've worked with hundreds of softball players in my training facility, Warbird Training Academy. Early in my career as a coach, I came to the realization that no one was helping girls throw harder like they do with boys. It's not fair! An average MLB pitcher earns \$10 million a year...so a lot of money is at stake. But, softball players are willing to work hard, and they deserve much, much better. I want to be a part of the solution.

### *The Solution*

Yet, girls and their parents seem to just accept the fact that they don't throw very well - neither hard nor accurately. That's just the way it is. This is *not* the way it has to be.

Nearly any softball player can add 5-10mph to her her throwing velocity in a year's time...if she wants it badly enough.

It doesn't come easy, though. It takes hard work and consistent practice to make these gains, but I see them all the time. I often shake my head when I assess a new player, wondering how she made it so far in life without anyone correcting the glaring, basic technique flaws I see on a daily basis.

Most softball players I work with add 3-5 miles per hour in the first month because cleaning up the basic, foundational things like footwork, hip position and follow through make such a huge difference.

If you throw harder, you can play more positions, experience more of the game and have more fun. *That* is the point, and the reason I wrote this eBook. Read on and have the best season of your career.

Dan Blewett

# 10 Softball Throwing Mistakes

## Mistake One Failing to funnel the ball

### *The Funnel*

To *funnel* means to bring a ground ball immediately to the center of the body (think belly button) after it contacts the mitt.

When squared up (and hopefully moving through) to a ground ball that's hit right at you, the hands have to be out in front. This gives us a chance to have soft hands, which absorb bad hops and reduce the likelihood of an error.

Every high-level fielder does this on balls that they square up to.

Think about an NFL quarterback - where do they keep their hands and the football? Right below their chest. This is because the center of the body is a secure place from which to start a throwing motion, where the arms will have a consistent distance from which to start their respective motions.

Most players are not taught this - fielding the ball is stressed, but what comes after it hits the glove is not. The ball must be funneled to the center to give us a good chance to make a strong throw.

### *The Funnel & Arm Action*



In the video above, I explain the softball arm action, which includes the first step - funneling the ball.

[Click the photo or click here to watch](#)

# 10 Softball Throwing Mistakes

## Mistake Two Poor crowhop footwork

### *Crowhop Footwork*

A good throw starts with good footwork.

We need our feet to align with the target once we've fielded and funneled a ground ball. If our feet are misaligned with our target, we'll either lose velocity because our hips rotate open too early, or because our hips can't rotate fully.

Either way, it's a problem.

The crowhop I teach is simple, and professionals do it the exact same way as 10 year-olds. The feet shuffle as follows (instructions for a righty, reverse for a lefty thrower).

- 1. Inside of the right foot ankle points to the target.**
- 2. Left foot reaches toward target to make a line.**
- 3. Think of it like this:** *Right-to-left, left-to-target.* The right ankle points and shuffles toward the left, then the left strides to the target.



In the video above, I explain the softball arm action, which includes the first step - funneling the ball.

[Click the photo or click here to watch](#)

# 10 Softball Throwing Mistakes

## Mistake Three Not gaining momentum

### *Momentum is Free Velocity*

Many softball players who have good footwork still leave extra throwing velocity on the table because they fail to move and produce momentum toward their target.

Many simply crowhop in place where they fielded the ball. These girls waste a free source of velocity!

Imagine you're driving in a car on the highway. You're going 60 miles per hour, driving slowly like grandpa even though the speed limit is 70.

You take a softball and chuck it out the window in the direction you're driving. You throw it 40 miles per hour in front of the car.

How fast is the ball going? If you answered 100mph....ding ding ding! You're a winner. Good math!

Your body is the car and your arm is along for the ride. The more aggressively you crowhop toward the target, the faster your arm will go along with it. It's easy to add 1-3 mph just from this tip.



# 10 Softball Throwing Mistakes

## Mistake Four Taking it out of the glove too fast

### *Keep the Ball at The Center Longer.*

Many coaches rightly preach getting rid of the ball quickly. This is good, smart advice. Softball is a fast game played on a small field.

However, the arm only needs to go as fast as the stride. Getting the ball out of the glove and into the L-position *too* early is not a good thing. [Click here to watch a video of the softball arm action.](#)

The hardest throwers in the world have their legs, hips, core and arm all move in synchronicity, and no part ever stops.

Most softball players are told to get rid of the ball so fast that they get their arm into the “cocked” position (known as the L-position) well before their stride is finished. The arm only needs to be in the cocked position when the stride foot touches the ground.

The solution is to keep the hands at the center longer. It may feel weird, but quarterbacks, baseball players and elite softball players alike all keep the ball at their center until the back foot initiates the stride. Wait longer to remove the ball!



# 10 Softball Throwing Mistakes

## Mistake Five Not long-tossing

### *Long Toss Works.*

Many softball players throw with the dreaded “low elbow.” This is what people refer to when they use the derogatory term *throwing like a girl*.

I know many girls who throw harder than boys their age, and I love playing a part in that. But the reality is, I see more girls than boys throw with a low elbow. I believe this is partly because girls don't often long toss - it's not a typical part of softball practice.

Throwing at an uphill angle (not actually up a hill) teaches the elbow to climb higher as it accelerates, as well as forcing the hips and core to extend upward and forward. All three of these factors help teach the elbow to stay high while throwing.

Mixing long-toss into one's routine is a good idea in moderation. It can help create a more powerful arm, in addition to challenging a player to throw the ball farther.

Distance is a free radar gun, and challenging oneself to throw farther is a great way to keep practice engaging.



# 10 Softball Throwing Mistakes

## Mistake Six Only throwing a softball

### *Softballs Are Enormous.*

I often use lightweight softballs and baseballs to teach girls new throwing mechanics. There are a few reasons I do this:

#### **1. Softballs are big and heavy.**

A softball weighs 6.7-7.2 ounces and is 12" in circumference. They're heavy and hard to grip, even with large hands.

#### **2. The arm can pick up a new pattern more quickly with a smaller, lighter ball.**

Many of the mechanical problems I see - such as a low elbow - instantly improve with a baseball.

Playing catch or long-tossing with a baseball or a 10" softball ball can be a good teaching tool. Especially with young girls, they can learn and improve using a baseball, then revert back to the softball. When they go back to the softball, the mechanical changes often stick or at the very least, improve. Try it!



# 10 Softball Throwing Mistakes

## Mistake Seven **Passing up strength training**

### *Strength is a Game Changer.*

At my academy we train a lot of female athletes. The young women we work with make huge improvements in all aspects of their game.

Most softball players who join our strength training program are initially unable to do a single quality pushup, and only 5% can do a single chin-up or a quality front squat.

The muscles most chiefly involved in the throw are the rotator cuff (acceleration and deceleration), the back (deceleration), the core (acceleration) and the hips (mechanics and acceleration).

I've seen girls add 10 or more miles per hour in a single year because they committed to both practicing their mechanical drills at home, and hitting the weights hard every single week. You throw with your whole body, so it's not just about throwing technique.

Not all strength programs are the same, however. Find a reputable strength coach in your area, or talk to me about how I can help.



# 10 Softball Throwing Mistakes

## Mistake Eight Throwing too gently

### *Throw the Ball Like You Mean It!*

I can usually coach a girl into throwing 2-3 miles per hour harder without making a single mechanical change. How, you ask?

Getting her to *throw angry*.

Most softball players come to me with a follow through that looks like they're throwing a dart at worst, a water-balloon at best. They simply stop their arm's acceleration way, way short.

A proper follow-through extends all the way down and across the body, finishing with the fingertips grazing the back of the rib cage.

Anything less than this means that the player is taking her foot off the gas too soon, and slowing down her arm during a time when it should still be accelerating.

The hardest throwers leave nothing on the table. They don't throw darts; they throw missiles. Don't be nice - *throw angry!*



# 10 Softball Throwing Mistakes

## Mistake Nine Not following a throwing routine

### *Routine Is EVERYTHING*

“What do you do before a game?” I ask.  
“I warm up,” she replies.  
“How do you warm up? What drills do you do?”  
Well, I do wrist flips then we just kinda play catch.”

I have basically this exact conversation with every player I meet.

**I then teach them to play catch like this:**

*Lawnmower Drill: 6 Throws*

*Square-Hips Drill: 6 Throws*

*Rocker Drill: 6 Throws*

*Swing Shuffle: 6 Throws*

*Crow-hops (pretending they fielded a ball): 10-30 throws*

Every time girls that I work with touch a softball, they get better - no exceptions. If they're making a throw that doesn't help them improve some aspect of their mechanics or footwork, they're wasting their time, my time, and their parents' money.

### *Routine Is a Road to a Scholarship.*

The players I work with see me for only a tiny fraction of the time they touch a softball. If they're going to make longterm progress, they need these two factors:

- 1. Willingness to do drills at home**
- 2. Willingless to implement a throwing routine every time they touch a softball.**

Think about how many times you'll play catch this year: six times a week all summer and fall, plus practices in the winter, plus lessons and showcases. I've done the math: *it's about 10,000 throws per year.*

If a player does 12 lessons with me, thats about 1000 throws under my supervision. That leaves 9,000 she'll make on her own. She can easily undo everything we worked together to build, or she can make huge progress if she does her drills for those 9,000. If she'll earn a scholarship one day, her routine will be the reason.

# 10 Softball Throwing Mistakes

## Mistake Ten Settling for old drills

### *A Few Great Drills*

Drills isolate certain parts of the throwing motion and help us improve it, which we then fold back into the motion better than it was before.

But, reverting back to old habits is very easy, as we covered in mistake #9. Use these drills as part of an everyday practice plan.

#### #1. Hop-Pause

This drill helps delay the hand-break, which we discussed in mistake #4.

#### #2. Front Side Punches

This drill helps improve the action of the hips and front side, teaching the hips and core to work together to increase velocity.

#### #3. Rocker Drill

This is a great throwing routine drill good for 30-50ft distances. Use it every day - this is my favorite longterm drill.

### *Drills List*

#### *1. Hop-Pause*

[\*Click Here to Watch\*](#)

#### *2. Front Side Punches*

[\*Click Here to Watch\*](#)

#### *3. Rocker Drill*

[\*Click Here to Watch\*](#)

# *I Can Teach You to Throw Harder.*

## Sign Up For My Throwing Course Today.

### *You CAN Throw Harder.*

The reality is that there aren't many instructors out there who teach softball overhand throwing mechanics.

And, many of the ones that do are just re-teaching the outdated, ineffective drills they were taught as young players. A lot has changed in velocity training. The way I see it, you have three choices:

#### **1. Take this Guide and Use it!**

I give over 1000 lessons per year at my facility in Bloomington, Illinois, and many of the things I've learned since we opened in 2010 are in this eBook. But, you have to act! Go out and make a change!

#### **2. Work with Me in Person**

If you can make the drive, I'd suggest coming to see me at Warbird Academy. I can get you up to speed in no time!

#### **3. Enroll in My Online Course: [She's Got a Cannon!](#)**

## Enroll Today in My Course *She's Got a Cannon!*

- Learn how to analyze and improve your mechanics
- Learn how to choose and perform the best throwing drills
- Create a throwing routine that *works*
- Improve your throwing velocity faster than you ever thought possible

**CLICK HERE TO ENROLL NOW**

-or visit [courses.danblewett.com](https://courses.danblewett.com)-

*Don't Delay. Learn to Throw Harder*

More Playing Time. More Positions. More Memories.

**SHE'S GOT**



**A CANNON**

**I'M READY TO THROW HARDER!**



## About The Author

# DAN BLEWETT

I had a great run. After six great seasons as a professional pitcher, I hung up my cleats to coach baseball and softball players full-time.

One of my favorite things about coaching softball players is the confidence they gain. Countless girls come to me only able to play first or second base, and it's a privilege that I can give them the tools to play anywhere on the field. Arm strength opens doors.

I write a lot about baseball - it's *my* sport, after all - but I have a lot of great softball softball content available on my website, in addition to [my full softball throwing course](#).

In the meantime, check out my podcast, [Dear Baseball Gods](#), and connect with me on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [Facebook](#). I'd love to hear from you - shoot me an email and stay in touch.