

# MOUND MASTERS

Dedicated To The Fine Art of Pitching

April 1, 2010

Welcome to *"Mound Masters"* – a special publication of the EXP Training Academy dedicated to providing information and insight into the "fine art" of baseball pitching. Each edition will feature news items, notes, insights and valuable resources to help players and coaches of all ages in their quest for quality pitching skills. On behalf of the entire EXP family we hope you enjoy!



## 2010 Pitching Goals

What baseball pitching goals do you want to accomplish this year? Here are a few tips to help you plan and achieve your pitching goals this season.

### One Goal At A Time

Start with one goal. Be specific and write it down so you can refer to it daily. As you achieve a goal begin work on additional goals that you've set for yourself.



### Be Realistic

There are no unrealistic goals – only unrealistic time frames. Learning to throw harder for example does not happen overnight. But, if you dedicate yourself to a daily training routine you will achieve the results you desire.

### Long-Term Goals = Short-Term Tasks

Define your long term goals by accomplishing short term tasks (or actions). What tasks can you do today that will help you meet your pitching goals?

### Measure Progress

Measure your progress in meeting your goals daily. Write down things you do well and things you need to improve. Doing this provides a "road map" to follow for making necessary adjustments and documents your progress in achieving your goals.

### Motivation

You should have a "deep desire" to accomplish your goals. Motivate yourself daily to achieve what you desire.

### Mental Images

See yourself attaining your goals. Visualize success! Create mental images of yourself reaping the rewards of your hard work.

### Believe

"Achieving is believing". Believe that no matter what it takes you have the strength, dedication and determination to achieve all your pitching goals this year!

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## Keep It Simple

"To succeed as a pitcher the first thing you have to do is simplify your pitching approach and command a fastball down and away. Work towards accomplishing simple, realistic goals and stop overexerting and trying to out-trick every hitter."

*Leo Mazzone – Famous MLB Pitching Coach – Atlanta Braves*



## Mental Discipline

To succeed, a pitcher must control his thoughts, emotions and actions at all times throughout a game. Pitchers should develop a mental routine that includes a plan for each hitter. The pitcher should always be in control, since the hitter can only react to the pitch being thrown. The pitcher cannot allow any game situation to become a distraction but rather an opportunity to stay under control and confident.

Some examples of distractions that can affect a pitcher mentally are:

- Environment - rain, wind, heat, crowd noise, mound conditions.
- Game situations – a hitter calling time out, base runner that's a stealing threat, umpires, errors, poorly-thrown pitch or hits.

Game situations that affect a pitcher mentally usually result in a loss of concentration and poor performance. The pitcher who works as hard developing mental skills as they do on physical skills will be more successful than those pitchers who do not.

## Baseball Visualization

Visualization is one of our most underused mental skills. It's a mental technique one can easily develop to improve pitching performance by training your mind to see positive results before they happen. Visualization is used more often in athletic situations than most realize.



The best use of visualization in baseball is to understand that your mind is like an instant replay system. It works especially hard after a performance is over - usually replaying negatives. Your mind saves the images that your replay system plays and directs your body to react much the same way the next time you are in a similar situation. "Slumps" tend to last longer when an athlete's instant replay system is saving and replaying negative mental images more than positive images.

The key is to create a positive image bank for your instant replay system to play. Once this happens your body begins to expect the results your mind is projecting. The more positive the image in your mind, the more positive the results your body will experience. You can best utilize your replay system:

- When you have a positive result, replay it multiple times.
- When you have a negative result, replay it with a different ending.

Visualization is a powerful mental technique, but it takes a patience and practice to make it second nature.