Softball Pitching Mechanics

1. **Stance:**
   Take a stance on the rubber with your feet a shoe width apart plus one inch. This will normally be around 5 to 6 inches apart. Make sure your pivot points are lined up, front shoestring directly above the front top edge of the rubber and the toe of your left foot should just be touching the top of the back of the rubber. Ball and glove are apart and the majority of weight is felt on your right quad and the ball of your pivot (lead) foot at this point.

2. **Weight back:**
   As you start your weight back to your heel of your left foot, raise your right toe and bend your right knee slightly. Hands can go above the head here or in front of the chest or even to the side of the body (not extremely important) but ball and glove will come together here.

3. **Transfer:**
   As you lean forward to start your forward momentum, you will feel the weight again shift to the ball of your front foot. Keep that knee bent until the center of your body weight comes forward of the pivot points of your front foot. Your pivot foot can have a brief cheat “slide” here to achieve a 45-degree angle and get a better push off on the ball of your foot. Glove and ball will come down below the belt line and shoulders will also drop slightly.

4. **Drive:**
   With your weight on the forward momentum and your pivot foot at a 45-degree angle start your drive off the mound with a strong push off with your foot, calf, quad, etc… of your right leg. Shoulders will drive out at a 60 –70 degree angle and glove and ball will swing out directly in front of the body (right in front of your eyes). Rear leg will lift off the ground and come forward.

5. **K:**
   Stride begins here and ball is separated from the glove in front of the body and pitching arm is long (extended) and loose (not stiff and tight) and starts windmill over the head. Right now the pitcher resembles the letter K and her hips are open. Her glove is pointed straight out to her target and her hips are wide open with her left hip directly under her left armpit. Her pitching bicep should be right next to her right ear.

6. **Stride:**
   Many different theories on the length of the stride but generally it should be the same as the height of the pitcher. For example, Jennie Finch is about 6’ tall and her stride is 72 “. A good technique is to have the girl lay on the ground with their heel touching the mound, their back in the dirt and her head facing home plate. Draw a line where her head ends and use that mark as her stride length. Stride must also be straight on the power line to the catcher’s mitt.
7. Downswing:
At the beginning of the downswing is where the wrist changes a little and when the arm
is in the 3:00 position the ball should be facing second base. Again the arm is still long
and loose and hips are still open. The glove hand begins to come down into the pitchers
left hip area. Downswing should be quick and beat the hip to release point.

_Between the downswing and the landing is where “you should get your groove on”. That
means lots of hip drive (not turn) to the target._

8. Landing:
Upon landing both feet should be at 45-degree angles on the power line and the hips are
still open getting ready for the explosive release. Remember, pitching is from the side
just like hitting, throwing, golfing, etc…(Ericksen). The landing should be on the front
side (hip) with the left knee slightly flexed (locked knees can cause back trouble). At this
point the pitcher’s head/chin should be directly over their belly button.

9. Release:
Pitching arm is still long and loose. The forearm (not the wrist) brushes the hip and the
release point should also be at the belly or front side and not behind the right hip. The
wrist snap explodes and releases the ball towards the target (immediately after landing)
and the hips close slightly. The difference in timing from the landing to release is like
quickly clapping two times with the first clap the landing and the second the release.

10. Follow through and Drag:
After release the pitching hand cups up towards the bicep and the elbow points toward
the target. This it the “text book” release thought of as “finishing your pitch as you’re
eating your favorite food”. Encouraged more is a _natural_ arm follow through as long as
it's in line with the target. Stay balanced through out whole motion (i.e on power line
with tall straight upper body). Pivot foot begins to drag on the inside toe of the shoe and
continues a half moon shape onto a figure 4 with the right knee driving itself into the
back of the left calf (for a right handed-pitcher).

_Keep an eye out for:_

- Fast, fluid arm circle – no hesitations.
- Long and Loose – no tightness or bent elbow
- The pivot foot staying in contact with the ground until the stride foot lands.
- Arm circle is natural and on vertical plane of the plate
- Wrist is not to far away from the hip upon release and the ball is snapped not
  pushed or flipped.
- A good recoil to generate an explosive start (i.e. weight transfer)
- The body momentum that’s going forward before the arm starts its circle forward.
- The stride knee is slightly bent for a crisp and sharp landing without injuring the lower back.
- A good formed “K”. Glove hand should be aimed towards target.
- Release point still has long, loose extension and is at/near the belly.
- Chicken Winging
- Release across the body