



## National Player & Coach Development Pathway

# ROOKIE SOX

Under 13, 6 x Week Pitching Programme


Emphasis for all young pitchers should focus on balance, rhythm and good mechanics.



## Pitching Checklist

Emphasis for all young pitchers should focus on balance, rhythm and good mechanics.

The checklist below is a guide for the local pitching instructor.

Dynamic stretching		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Routines over 15 - 20m – Player's take turns providing a different exercise each training.</li> <li>- Dynamic stretches require movement, such as running, jumping or kicking.</li> </ul>		
U13 Pitcher	Key Coaching Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Players who have a <b>Go for It</b> attitude and have natural rhythm with arm/leg stride coordination the best suited to pitch.</li> </ul>
Warm Up	Get up a sweat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dynamic stretching. Please refer to the back of the document.</li> </ul>
Throw overhand & take ground balls	Get up a sweat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dynamic stretching</li> </ul>
Pitching warm up	Take your time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gradually build up to top speed</li> </ul>
Mechanics & Velocity	Grip on seam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 3-4 Fingers on Letter C seam or backwards C</li> <li>- Feel the seam</li> </ul>
<b>Set Up</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stand on the mound with hands apart and feet a comfortable shoulder width apart</li> <li>- Put hands together with arms resting on the body</li> <li>- Pause for a 2 second count</li> <li>- Breathe</li> <li>- Breathe in and blow out longer</li> </ul>	



### Pitching Rules for the set up

#### Hands apart

- Once the batter has stepped up to the plate, the pitcher must firstly stand on the mound with both hands apart
- Hands together: Then the hands are put together and the pitcher must pause for a minimum of 2 seconds and no longer than 5 seconds

#### Step & pitch

- The next move is to step forward and pitch

### Use Both Arms



- Relaxed arm swing in form of a reversed letter C out in front of body , arms back to body in ready position to begin pitch

### Stay Tall



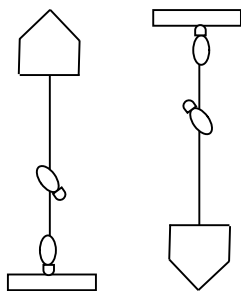
- The pitcher will bend to start the pitch but once the arms are out in front of the body the torso should be upright and remain upright until after the follow through
- Push off hard from the mound
- Body is upright when stride foot contacts with ground

**Up & Close**

- Pitching arm circle to rotate in straight line with bicep brushing near ear and palm/ball to rotate outwards at the top of arm circle.

**Letter K**

- At the top of the upswing the shoulders have turned and the body has opened
- The body and arms have formed the Letter K
- Pivot foot laces are facing foul line.

**Power Line**

- Step on a direct line toward home plate with the stride foot landing on imaginary line to catcher at 1-2 o'clock (RHP), 10-11 o'clock (LHP).
- This is called the power line
- The landing foot helps to open and close the hips better. It also keeps flex in the knee, which is a safer option

<p><b>Fast Arm</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fast downswing from the 12 o'clock position</li> <li>- A fast arm should be consistent, in coordination with the body</li> <li>- The arm should be quicker at the bottom of the motion</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Fast Spin</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use the fingers and wrist to create a fast spin and keep the pitching arm fast at the bottom of the motion</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Stride &amp; Follow Through</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stride the back leg in behind the front leg quickly to add more power to the pitch</li> <li>- The back toe of the back foot should be pointing into the ground</li> <li>- Allow the pitching arm to follow through up to the chest.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Movement</b></p>	<p>Fastball</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Throw hard &amp; begin to recognise the spin</li> </ul>
<p><b>Control</b></p>	<p>Big zone /consistent release point</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Try elastic through middle drill to test body awareness (refer to Week 3 "control")</li> </ul>
<p><b>Mental Approach</b></p>	<p>Encourage</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Encourage to "Go for It"</li> </ul>

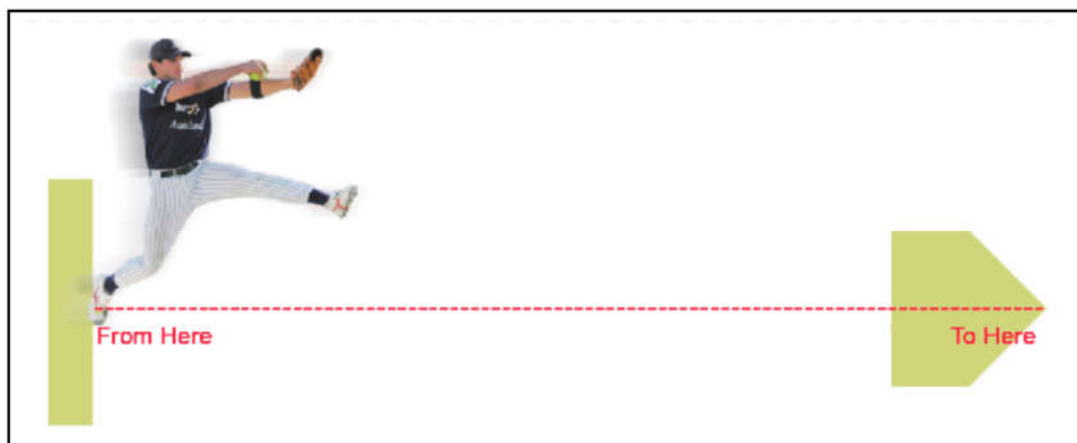
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|--|--|---|
|  |  | - Confidence is an absolute key to pitching success |
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## Week #1

Pitching instructor will need: home plate, quality ball, measuring tape, pitching plate or line marked on ground, catcher, softball, written checklist.

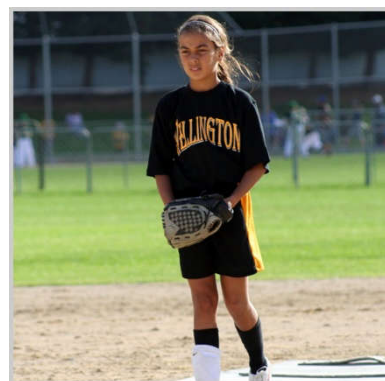
### Start with:

1. Introduce players to 3 minute jog and choose 5 dynamic stretches for the players to do.
2. Start with overhand throwing for 3 minutes then fielding.
  - a. 10 x ground balls
3. Talk about grip and check the players grip. Make sure their fingers are on the seam.
4. Have the pitcher warm up pitching nice & easy gradually building up to top speed.
5. Once pitcher is pitching at full speed put down a home plate and measure the distance.
  - a. U13 Boys= 12 metres
  - b. U13 Girls = 11 metres
  - c. Make sure pitcher is aware that the distance is measured from the back point of the home plate to the front of the pitching plate.
6. Allow the pitcher to pitch 10x pitches from this distance.



**Checklist:**

- Tell the pitcher that you have a checklist to tick off and you now want them to pitch another 10-15x pitches.
- Tick off the next 9 points on the pitching checklist starting with “Use both arms”.
- Tell the pitcher which of the points they are doing really well.
- Spend some extra time showing the pitcher the points which you cannot tick for them on the checklist.
- Follow the checklist in the order it is written.

**U13 Week #1 Homework:**

1. Give the pitcher a copy of the checklist and let them tell you which ones they need to work on over the next week.
2. Ask them to pitch 3 x during the week for approx. 20-30 minutes and to return to the next practice with the checklist.



## Week #2

Pitching instructor will need: home plate, quality ball, measuring tape, pitching plate or line marked on ground, catcher, softball, written checklist.

### Start with:

- Warm up as per week #1 with a 3 min jog, 6 x dynamic exercises, overhand throwing and fielding so that the player has worked up a sweat.
- Check their grip – on the seam?
- Gradually warm up pitching to top speed.
- Home plate & distance measured.

### Set up & relax:

- Pitcher does set up & breathing x 10 pitches.

### Checklist:

- Ask the pitcher to tell you which points on the checklist they have been working on during the last week.
- Tick off the checklist and see if the pitcher has shown any improvement on the ones they did for homework.
- Talk to the pitcher and help them achieve some of the 9 points on the checklist. It will take longer than one week to achieve everything so don't expect immediate results.
- Praise them for their effort.

### Use your legs:

- Make sure the pitcher is using their legs to push off the mound aggressively. Really encourage them to use their legs. Pitch 10x pitches where leg power is the focus.



### Spin recognition:

- Ask the pitcher to pitch another 6 -10 pitches and ask them to try to see which way the ball is spinning.
- Show the pitcher the spin for a drop, a rise and a curve.
- Explain to the pitcher that getting the skill of different spins starts with firstly recognising which way their ball is spinning.



U13 Week #2 Homework:



1. Start noticing the spin on the ball – which way is it spinning? Anything like the drop, rise or curve or maybe it's a spiral spin?
2. Take the checklist home and continue to work on the points that you do well and the ones you don't do so well.
3. Use your legs to power off the mound.

## Week #3

Pitching instructor will need: home plate, quality ball, measuring tape, pitching plate or line marked on ground, catcher, softball, a length of elastic and two extra people to hold the elastic, written checklist.

Start with the same as week 1 & 2 with the full warm up routine:

- Home plate & measure distance.
- Set up & relax - Pitcher does set up & breathing x 10 pitches.

Spin recognition:

Ask the pitcher how they got on with the homework of looking at the spin. Which way is their ball spinning?

- Pitch another x10 pitches and check the spin together.

How about the homework of using the legs?

- Pitch x10 pitches and power off the mound.

Checklist:

- Pitch another x10 pitches and tick off on the checklist that the pitcher is working on the points on the list but don't spend too much time talking about the pitching mechanics checklist.

Control:

- Ask the pitcher to pitch x4 hard strikes – How many did they get?
- To check the players body awareness, you will need a length of elastic. The body awareness of vertical strikes (plate width + ball width either side) from the ground surface to above the head height of the, "given" hitter.
- Hold the length of elastic in front of the home plate at belly button height (need 2 x people to holding each end of the elastic).
- Ask the pitcher to pitch under the elastic x 4
- Then ask the pitcher to pitch above the elastic x4
- How many out of 4 did they get?



U13 Week #3 Homework:

1. Pitch 3 x this week for 20-30 minutes.
2. Continue to look at the spin. Could put a piece of black tape around the ball so as to more easily recognise the spin.



3. Do the elastic drill with imaginary elastic. How many do you get out of 4?

## Week #4

Pitching instructor will need: home plate, quality ball, measuring tape, pitching plate or line marked on ground, catcher, softball, a length of elastic and two extra people to hold the elastic.

- Warm up same as previous weeks.
- Gradually pitching to top speed.
- Get the pitcher to measure distance and follow the set up & relax for x20 pitches.

### Spin recognition:

- Ask the pitcher which way their ball is spinning.
- Decide with the pitcher which spin their pitch is most similar to drop or risey curve?
- If it's a drop, then use the Letter C or backwards C grip.
- If their spin is more similar to a curvey rise, then show them the letter U or letter n grip.
- Make sure you don't complicate the grip and emphasise pushing the fingers against the seam to really feel and use the seam.

### Fast spin:

- Emphasise how important it is to get the ball spinning as quickly as possible.
- The fingers are the last thing to touch the ball, so really use them to push against the seam.



### Checklist:

- Discuss with the pitcher if they are indeed doing everything on the checklist.
- Go through a few pitches and demonstrate how you want the pitcher to be.

### Control:

- Do the elastic drill x 4 below and x4 above. How many under and how many over?

### U13 Week #4 Homework:



1. Pitch 3 x during the week for 20-30 minutes.
2. Spin recognition & fast spin, getting use to the grip and feeling the seam.

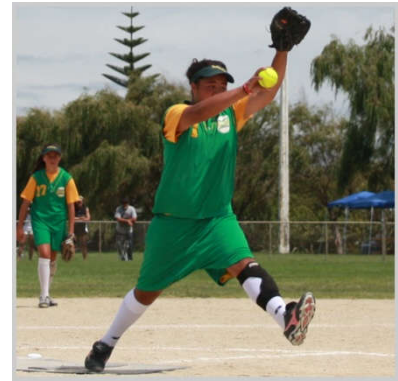
## Week #5

Watch the player pitching in a game.

If this isn't possible then have the pitcher pitch live to a batter of the same age group, but it is more preferable to see them in a game situation.

Critique the pitcher on the following points:

1. How does the pitcher cope with the set up rules of the game?
2. Are they doing the conscious breathing? Are they taking their time between pitches?
3. What's their body language like? Posture tall or slumped?
4. What's the pitcher's attitude like? Happy & confident or moody & lacking in confidence?
5. Are they pitching hard or are they careful? Do they look the part?



## Week #6

Pitching instructor will need: home plate, quality ball, measuring tape, pitching plate or line marked on ground, catcher, softball, a length of elastic and two extra people to hold the elastic, written checklist.

1. Warm up same as previous weeks
2. Gradually pitching to top speed
3. Get the pitcher to measure distance and follow the set up & relax for x20 pitches

Give the pitcher an overall summary of their 6 week experience:

1. Tick off the game critiquing questions which you can write on the back of the checklist.
2. Tick off the checklist.
3. Undertake the elastic test. How many out of 4 pitches do they get under the elastic & over the elastic?
4. Record the elastic test on the back of the checklist.
5. Check that they have an understanding of spin recognition and ascertain if they will be a dominant drop or rise ball pitcher. Make sure they are comfortable with the grip.
6. Praise the pitcher for their effort over the last 6 weeks.



## Dynamic Stretches

Dynamic stretching is good for waking up muscles, to get them ready to work hard. This involves moving your limbs through the full range of motion that they will be used in during activity.

### Effective Dynamic Stretching

- Always do 5-10 minutes of aerobic exercise before starting dynamic stretching
- Maintain tension in the lower abdominals to protect your lower back and to control movement of your trunk
- Keep your knees in line with your toes to protect your knees
- Do not force the movement or lose control of the movement

Gradually increase the range of the movement over a series of repetitions as you loosen up.

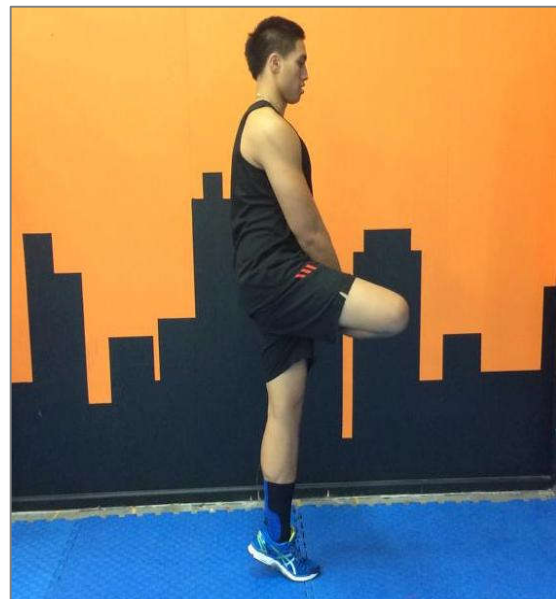
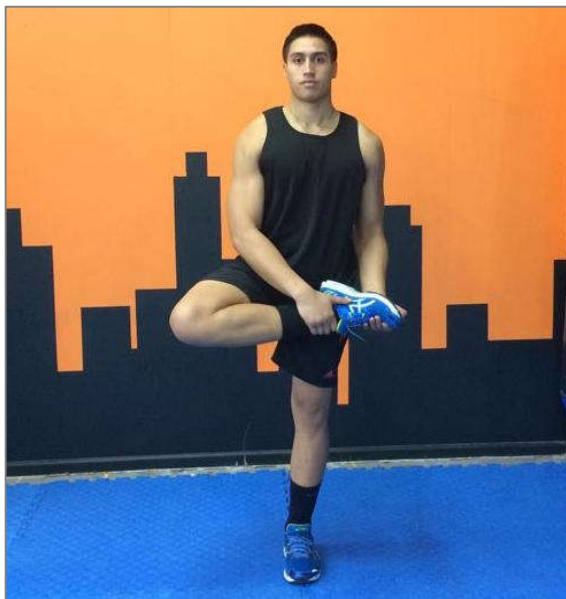
You can add these exercises in your warmup too if you choose – Jog, high knees, butt kicks, side steps stretching arms out, backward jog, straight leg kick, high skips, etc

Make sure you don't over stretch, listen to your body and know your limits.

### 1. Figure four

Lift one foot towards the other thigh. Grasp ankle and heel and pull up at the same time as tippee toe. A few steps in between. Back straight, head and chest up.

Target: Glutes and legs.



## 2. Tin soldiers

Stand on the balls of feet, kick one foot forward and touch toes with opposite hand. Alternate as you move forward.

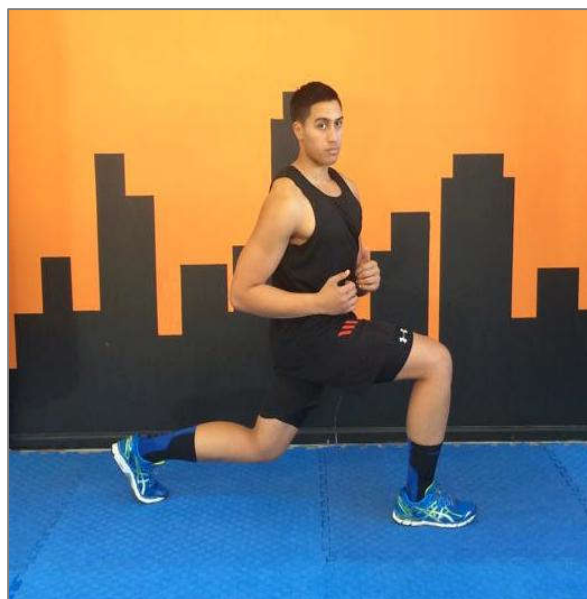
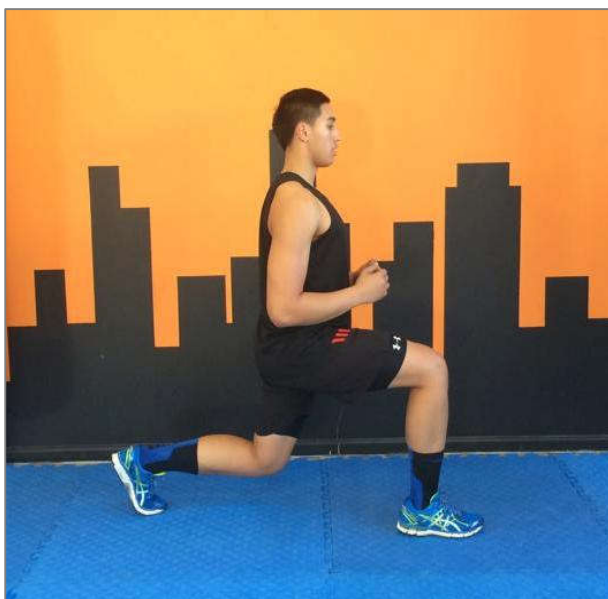
Target – Glutes and hamstrings.



## 3. Lunge twist

Walking forward lunge, knee behind toes, then twist torso away from extended leg then the other way. Make sure we have control of balance and core.

Target – hip flexors, core and back.





#### 4. Knee hug

Pulling your knee into your chest at the same time as tippee toe. A few steps in between.

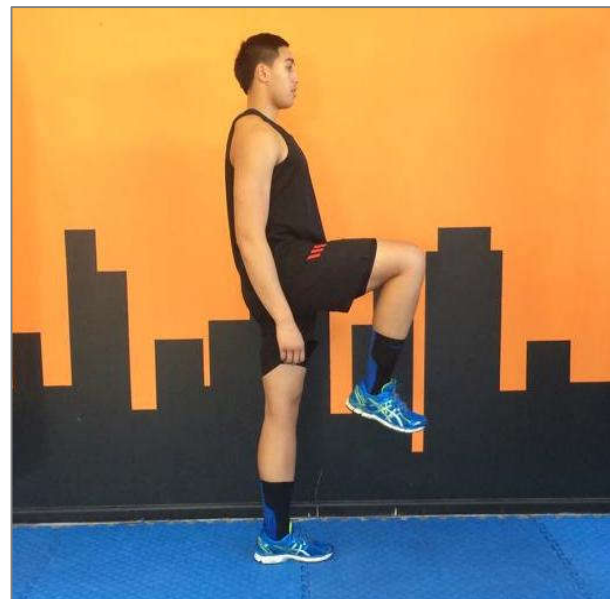
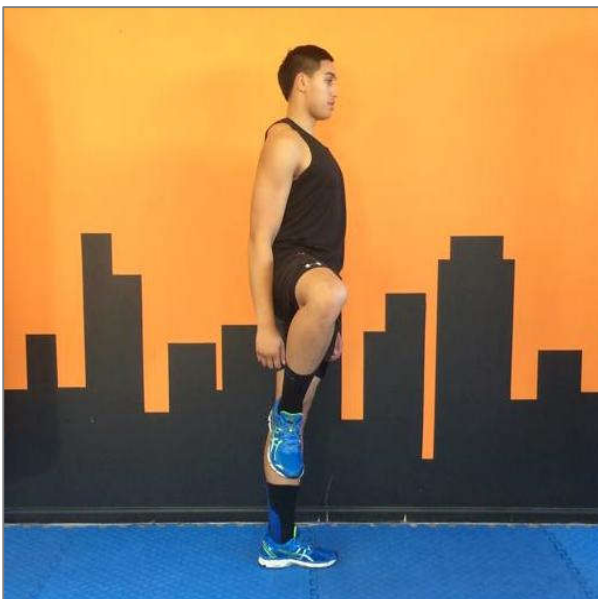
Target - Glutes.



#### 5. Hip flexor

Walking forwards rotate you hips from outer to in, with a few steps in between. Also do it backwards, in to out.

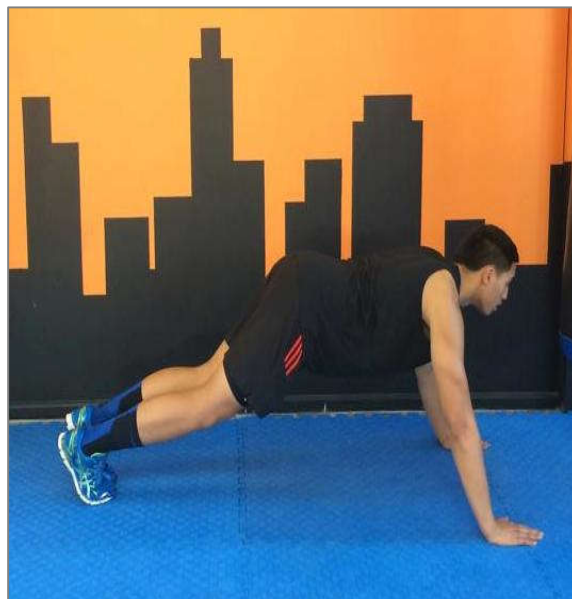
Target – Hip flexors.



## 6. Hand walk

Fold forwards and walk your hands out. Then bring your feet up to follow.

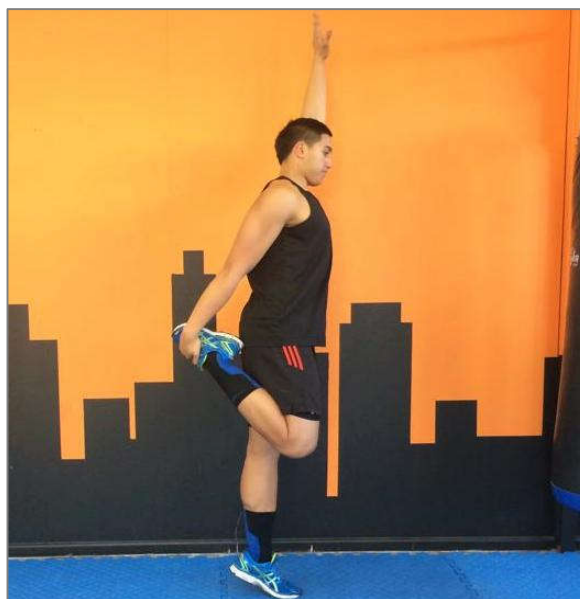
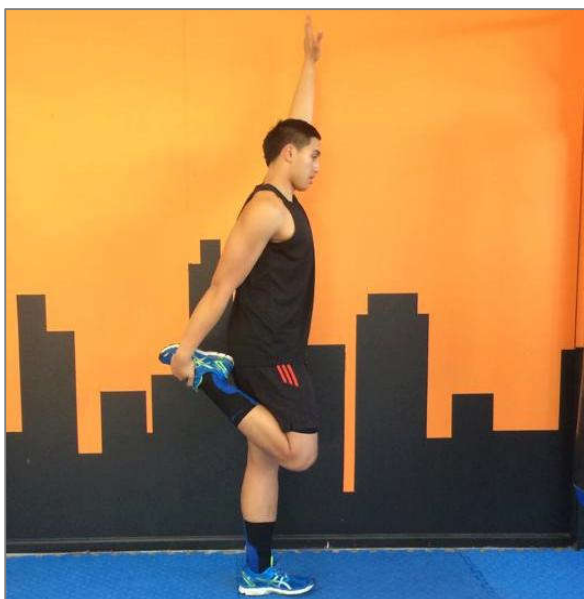
Target - Hamstrings and back.



## 7. Quad Stretch

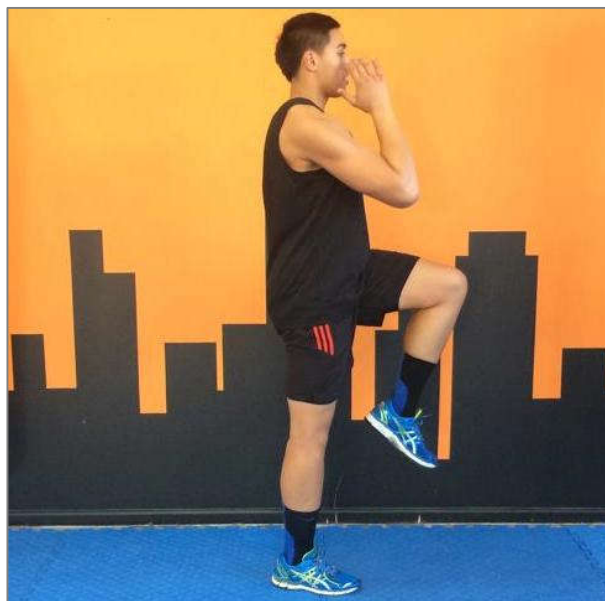
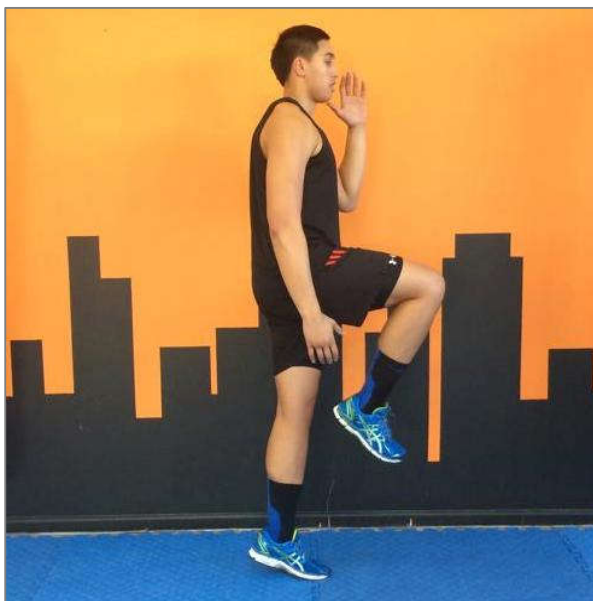
Hold foot up behind butt and reach to the sky with the other hand and tippee toe. Few steps between.

Target – Quads and calves.



## 8. Hip Skips

Drive arms with high knees with skip.



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