



Strike Zone Trainer (ASZT) with 5x5 Catch Net & Premium Focus Mat (5X5CNPFM) plus Focus Tunnel (EFT)

Softball Pitcher Training

Control Training:

1. Start with the 5x5 catch net and premium focus mat (CNPFM) behind home plate with a pitcher 8-10 feet in front of the circle and throw 10-15 pitches. The focus mat is 42" in diameter and should be hit with every pitch at this distance. If not, then move closer to the CNPFM or add the Focus Tunnel (EFT) 10-15 feet from the catch net until the pitcher hits the focus mat a minimum of 10 consecutive times. Target is the center of the mat. Use this as a warmup prior to taking the circle for training.



2. From the circle, use the same setup with the EFT and CNPFM. The center of the mat is the target and EFT distance from the target can be adjusted based on where it feels most comfortable for that player to position it. The EFT can also be adjusted left or right if working on certain pitches or inner/outer parts of the zone. Mat should be hit greater than 90% of the time with this set up.



3. Next, add the Strike Zone Trainer (ASZT) WITHOUT visual indicator sticks in front of home plate while still using the EFT and CNPFM. Target is still the center of the mat. Throw no more than 3 pitches in a row in the now visible mat area which will be a 32" diameter space now since the ASZT has been added. Throw a pitch into the net inside the ASZT frame or just outside of the frame for a ball. Balls need to be thrown, but the pitcher should control them. During training sessions, we recommend that pitchers never throw more than three strikes in a row. Avoid repetitive training to provide a real-time interactive experience, like the feel of a game. The EFT can be removed after the pitcher shows that she can control the zone with this setup. At least 85% success is expected here.



4. Once a pitcher shows she can successfully control the zone above, add 4 long



visual indicators to the top and bottom rubber pieces to create a square when visible from the circle. Target is still the center of the square or mat. By adding the visual indicator sticks your brain will complete the square image to create a magnified focus space to throw through. Throw no more than 3 strikes in a row and control your balls that are thrown outside the square. EFT can be used as needed based on results controlling the zone.

5. Place (2) long visual indicator sticks in the center rubber pieces and (4) short



sticks in the upper and lower corners so a rectangular shaped strike zone can be prompted to pitch through. Incorporate the EFT frequently to enhance the space being pitched through. Again, the pitcher should command all her pitches, this means strikes or intentional balls. Never intentionally throw more than 3 strikes in a row within the target zone. At least 75% success is expected here.

Command Training:

6. Once a player has shown that she has control within the general strike zone (75% or greater), it is time to work on command. Be creative with the visual indicator sticks. Use them to make smaller focus zones on a regular basis depending on the training situation. Creating smaller focus zones to hit will challenge the pitcher but it is necessary to improve her command. Only use 2-4 visual indicator sticks in various quadrants of the strike zone. The sticks should be positioned for pitches on the corner of the plate to a few balls off the plate horizontally or top and bottom of the zone vertically. Mastering these borderline strike pitches can lead to more outs and swings and misses. Commanding these pitches elevates a pitcher's game beyond simply filling the strike zone with hittable pitches. Again, add the EFT as needed to assist with spatial clarity.

7. Add the 3 single visual indicator sticks attached to the black bungee to the top and bottom of the Strike Zone Trainer, so they are positioned vertically covering the core strike zone over home plate. This will allow the pitcher to work on chase pitches by avoiding the core strike zone area. You can add additional visual indicator sticks to the rubber pieces around the frame as desired to form the pitching zones you would like to target.



8. Competitive bullpens are recommended using the Strike Zone Trainer with visual indicator sticks. Assign “outs” to all sticks that form the rectangular strike zone and “hits” to the 3 vertical sticks covering the core strike zone. You can remove or add sticks to make it more or less difficult. Pitches hitting the black bungee holding the 3 vertical visual indicators or the white circular bungee inside the net are considered foul balls. Any pitches that hit the net, frame or outside the frame are considered balls. Pitchers can compete against the trainer itself or other pitchers.



Working with a Catcher:

9. The EFT can be used in conjunction with a catcher during bullpen sessions. To enhance a large space around the control zone and catcher, place the EFT 10-15 feet from the catcher. The EFT can also be used behind the catcher for general focus reinforcement for the pitcher during live at bats. We do not recommend using the Strike Zone Trainer with a catcher as balls can deflect off the trainer and hit the catcher.

By following these basic training principles outlined in the User's Instructions, pitchers can achieve significant improvements in both control and command. V-Flex training pieces provide enhanced spatial information by neurologically magnifying the strike zone. As a result, pitchers gain greater clarity and precision. This innovative approach makes it easier to consistently hit targets: improving control, command and confidence in the circle. For additional information about V-Flex training please visit our website at www.vflexsports.com.