



Mental Preparation

Sarah Pauly Q&A

Q: How do you get mentally prepared for a game?

A: Everyone has a different way to get prepared for a game; for me it's all about my routine. I do the same thing before every game. Many of these things are physical, but by performing the routines and drills that I know are successful for me, I get in a mentally strong frame of mind.

I do certain stretches that I know will help get me loose and I make sure I am in the right mindset before stepping on the field or in the bullpen that day.

My pregame warm-up is the same and has been the same since I was 12 years old. I throw a few easy overhanded and then start from about 25 feet with my slingshot drill; then I move back a few feet and do my parallel powerline drill; after that I throw a few easy pitches off the mound.

Next I warm up all my spins from about $\frac{1}{2}$ distance and then throw each movement pitch in a couple rounds off the mound.

As I am warming up I visualize that specific pitch and where I am going to place it, how it's going to move, and whether or not I need to throw it for a strike or for a miss. When I am throwing off the mound I don't get

discouraged if my drop ball is too low or too far inside or outside because I know that those locations are going to be key on a 0-2 count. If one or two of my pitches felt off or were not as perfectly placed as I had wanted I re-do those at the end. I always ask my catcher for feedback since they are the masterminds after all! Always acknowledge your catcher; they hardly get any credit for your performance. It's important to have a comfort zone between pitcher and catcher. A pitcher would be nothing without a catcher and a catcher would be nothing without a pitcher.

Things I don't do: I don't let outside distractions take me away from my pregame ritual. If friends or family are at the game they will wait until after the game for our hugs and conversation. Lots of people will wander over to the bullpen during my warm-up. I stay focused on the task at hand--- getting physically and mentally ready for the game. Including my warm-up time and game time it is only 2 ½ hours of concentration and dedication...I don't think that is too much to ask of an elite athlete.

I don't stay out late the night before a game I'm pitching in and it is important for me to eat right the night before and the day of a game.

Again, I have my favorite foods that help me physically and mentally feel great.

I have a routine that works for me so I stick with it. It is important for an athlete to find the routine that works for them. Their mental state of mind will be better and their physical performance will be better.