

If there is a runner, or runners, it is a balk when:

1. **"Start and stop" (to the plate)** If you, while touching the rubber, make any motion naturally associated with your pitch and fail to make such delivery, it's a balk. Many times a beginner pitcher will take his signs from the catcher then begin his motion, forget what he was doing and then stop his motion. This is a balk. Be sure to teach your pitchers that if they ever become confused to, quickly step off the back of the rubber, separate their hands and start over
2. **"Start and stop" (to a base)** If you, while touching the rubber, start to throw to first base and fail to complete the throw, it's a balk. Sometimes when a coach calls for a pick-off attempt the pitcher will do so too soon, only to find the runner still on the bag or the first baseman not paying attention. When this occurs he must at least lob the ball to 1b to avoid a balk call. (If the pitcher steps off the back of the rubber he does not have to throw over.)
3. **"Breaking the plane"** If you swing your free foot past the "back" edge of the rubber, you cannot throw to anywhere except 2nd base and to the plate. With a "two umpire system" the umpire is positioned behind the mound every time there is a runner at 1b or 3b and cannot always tell if the pitcher breaks this "plane" or not. Another point is that it is legal for the pitcher to break this plane with his "knee" and throw to a base, just not his "foot".
4. **"Step directly to the base"** If you, while touching the rubber, fail to step directly toward a base before throwing to that base, it's a balk. In other words he cannot step home and then throw over to 1b and vice versa. However, with a "two umpire system" the umpire is positioned behind the mound with a runner at 1b or 3b and cannot tell if a pitcher steps "directly" at 1b. As a rule left handed pitchers are allowed to step half way between 1b and home. (45° angle) Right handed pitchers are allowed a "spin move"(where the cleats are a fraction of an inch above the ground) but his left foot must travel to 1b during this and his feet must spin before he throws. His second best move is when he steps off the back of the rubber and then steps and throws to 1b. It is important to note that the

pitcher does not have to step off the back of the rubber before he throws to a base.

5. **"Unoccupied base"** If you, while touching the rubber, throw or begin to throw to an unoccupied base, except for the purpose of making a play, it's a balk. The only time a pitcher can throw to an unoccupied base is during a steal or an appeal. It is important to note that with a runner on first and second base the pitcher may make a complete turn, without hesitating toward first, and throw to second.

6. **"Quick pitch"** If you, in the umpires opinion, "quick pitch" the batter before he is reasonably set in the batter's box, it's a balk. With runners on base the penalty is a balk; with no runners on base, it is a ball.

7. **"Not facing the batter"** If you deliver the ball to the batter without facing him, it's a balk. This sounds silly, but this is a good rule.

8. **"Not toeing the rubber"** If you make any motion naturally associated with your pitch while you are not touching the rubber, it's a balk. This prevents the hidden ball trick.

9. **"Delay of game"** If you, in the umpires opinion, unnecessarily delay the game, it's a balk.

10. **"Fake a throw"**. If you, without having the ball, fake a throw while standing on, near or straddling the rubber, it's a balk.

11. **"Separating the hands"** If you, after coming set, remove one hand from the ball other than to throw it, it's a balk.

12. **"Dropping the ball"** If you, while touching the rubber, accidentally or intentionally drop the ball, it's a balk

13. **"Intentional walk"** If you, while giving an intentional base on balls, pitch when the catcher is not in the catcher's box, it's a balk. It should be noted what the definition of a pitch is. In an umpire's view the first movement of a pitcher is considered a pitch. So when his leg goes up the catcher may leave the catcher's box.

14. "No pause" If you, fail to come to a complete stop in the set position, it's a balk. Note that the BCA rules state that the entire pitcher's glove must be below the pitcher's chin in the "paused" position. It is also important to note that the pitcher does not have to come to a complete stop before a pick-off attempt, only before he throws to the plate.

15. The pitcher straddles the rubber without the ball is a balk.

- **A pitcher can fake a throw to 2b without it being called a balk (as long as there is a runner there).**