

ULTIMATE PITCH RECOGNITION GUIDE

Did you know?

There are 216 stitches on a baseball. The first and the last are hidden.



ARE YOU RECOGNIZING PITCHES EFFECTIVELY?

The process of recognizing fast-balls and secondary pitches is not as complicating than most hitters think.

The process of picking up a spherical object from a distance of roughly 60 feet traveling close to 90 mph is no easy feat. It becomes even harder when you have to recognize secondary pitches as you become a better hitter and start hitting advanced pitching. Increasing your pitch recognition will be a valuable asset to your adjustments to becoming an elite hitter.

You'll be able to recognize pitches sooner, give yourself more time to react to pitches, and have a better understanding of the strike-zone.

So let's dive right in with the basic process of pitch recognition.



ROTATION

Each pitch will have their own unique rotational aspects regardless of movement. By being able to recognize the differences in rotation between a fast-ball and curve-ball for example will help you to make quicker adjustments. The goal is to be able to do this on an instinctual level. So it would behoove you as a hitter to become a pitch recognition-ing maniac so that you can make split second decisions on a pitch and attack the pitches that you're looking for without taking too much time!

Let's begin with the Fast-Ball

FAST-BALL

There are two types of fast-balls. One thrown across the seams. (Four seam fast-ball) and one thrown along the seams.(two seam fast-ball).

Both of these pitches are very different, but share one important trait. They spin from the bottom up as they get closer to the plate. As the ball leaves the pitcher's finger tips, the ball is forced to spin backwards towards the pitcher.

One thing to also notice while attempting to pick up the rotation is to become aware of the color of the ball. With a four seam, the ball tends to be **darker** since you are seeing all four seams.

This is where the pitch is different compared to the two seam.

TWO SEAM FAST-BALL

The two seam has a **lighter** tint since only two of the seams tend to rotate. An important thing to understand is that the effectiveness of a two seam fast-ball is in the movement of the pitch.

With a right-handed pitcher, a two seam will move in on a right-handed hitter forcing him to get jammed on a pitch that looks down the middle or take a pitch on the outer half that looks like a ball off the plate.

Vice-versa for left-handed hitters and pitchers.

Most left handed pitchers naturally have some sort of movement with their fast-ball.

Be prepared for effective movement by doing your homework and making sure you know in what situations he throws this in.

CURVE-BALL

When thrown properly the curve-ball spins in the opposite direction of the fast-ball.

Downward spin is generated when the pitcher snaps with his wrists forcing the ball to roll over the finger instead of off the finger. If you look closely you'll notice that the spin is a **lighter** tint than even the two-seam and has a tendency to look like it **pops out of the pitcher's hand** before making its way into the strike-zone.

This is a great way to pick up the pitch early as well. Notice the lighter spin and illusion that it's popping out of the pitchers hand.

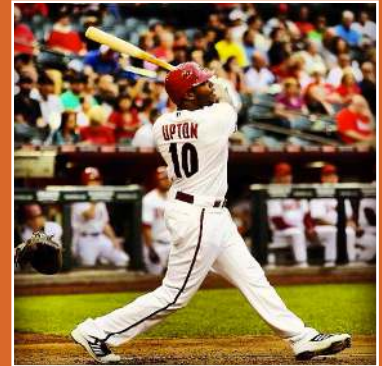
SLIDER

The challenge with the slider is that the slider is normally thrown from different angles depending on the arm slot of the pitcher. The main difference between the slider and the curve-ball is the slider will have a tighter spin with faster revolutions while having a more challenging "last minute" movement.

The slider is made to look like a fast-ball coming out of the pitcher's hand while "dropping off the table" as it gets to the point of contact.

The slider can be an absolutely devastating pitch if thrown correctly.

WHAT'S YOUR GRADE?



I hated sliders!

I always preferred to hit the curve-ball instead of a slider.

It took me some time to learn the patience and discipline to hit a slider effectively!

STAY BACK!



Never ever!

I never hit secondary pitches early in the count unless:

1. I was sitting on that pitch
2. It was an absolute hanger. But even that was a rare occurrence!

It has been said that with the slider, because of the tight, downward, cross-seam spin, there is a small dot that forms where all four of the seams meet--so make sure you look for that!

Also, remember that the slider moves faster than the curve-ball, but slower than the fast-ball. It's effectiveness is in its deception which is why *learning to see the ball up*, which you will learn to do from The Hitting Machine Academy, will be very effective.

CHANGE-UP

A good change-up will always be thrown off of the fast-ball motion. If not, making the adjustment to hitting this pitch isn't as difficult.

If it is done effectively, a good fast-ball change-up combination can be the most difficult pitch to hit hands down! There are two basic variations on the change-up. The "circle-change" is when the pitcher grips the ball while encircling it with the thumb and forefinger. As the pitcher pulls down with the pitch, the same spin that is created with the fast-ball occurs.

Majority of change-ups are thrown on the outer half of the plate, away from the hitter.

The only time I would ever recommend pulling a change-up is when it is left "up in the zone". Other wise, change-ups need to be hit up the middle to avoid rolling over or missing the pitch all together.

NOT PICKING UP THE SEAMS?

Some players just don't have the visual acuity to pick up rotation and the tint of the ball as consistently as other hitters.

That's perfectly fine!

If you're having trouble picking up rotation early enough the next step is to **look location.**

A lot of times you can tell what pitch it is by becoming aware of the location of the pitch coupled with the game's situation.

Remember, majority of pitches are secondary pitches with

runners in scoring position. A good approach could be to look for something middle away to drive in the gap for example.

The key is to be relaxed and allow your body to relax. The truth is, your body is a lot smarter than what you probably give it credit for.

Allow your instincts to compensate for any struggles you have with picking up the rotations of the pitch and you'll find yourself hitting pitches even in locations that



Can't pick up the seams?

you normally have trouble making good, clean, solid contact with.

I was never good at picking up pitches from arm slots or the angle or the wrist which is why I didn't discuss it here. I mostly relied on the color and rotation tint of each pitch and allow the situation of the game to dictate how my body reacted to each pitch.....one pitch at a time!

GO GET EM!