

★ CADETS

BASEBALL ACADEMY

How to Grip a Four-Seam Fastball (any age)

Updates:

- 5/08 - Initial page



Top View

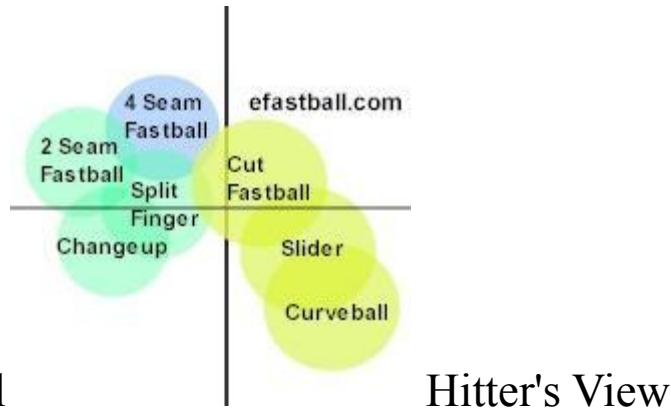


Side



View

What the hitter sees



4 Seam Fastball
Right Handed Pitcher

Hitter's View

AKA

This grip is usually called either a rising fastball or just a fastball. It is also called cross-seam fastball, heater, cheese, hummer and smoke or smoker.

Position the Ball

Cross seams. Turn the ball where the horseshoes (the "U") run sideways. The closed part of the horseshoe points to your thumb and the open part points to the pinky.

Position your fingers

Place your first and second (index and middle) fingers over the cross seam.

Position your thumb

Place your thumb directly under the ball on the smooth part of the baseball (no seam).

Exert Pressure

Get a good grip on the seams with your finger pads.

Squeeze the ball with your thumb pushing against your index *and* middle fingers.

Delivery and Release

Push your middle finger toward the batter. Your hand will pronate (thumb down, inward, clockwise LH, counterclockwise RH) slightly.

This is the opposite rotation of a curveball.

Compared to other grips

This is the fastest pitch because the ball has four seams cutting against the air.

This pitch can be delivered with the most accuracy since it has very little sideways or up/down movement.

This is also a dangerous pitch if pitched below the top of the zone since the ball goes straight.

What the hitter sees

This ball appears to rise. The four-seam fastball is often mislabeled a rising fastball.

The hitter experiences an **optical illusion** because he expects the ball to drop 4-5 inches like a 2 seamer but it stays up longer than other pitches (drops only 2-3 inches).

The seams (and the entire ball) appear to the hitter as a pink blur since the seams are rotating from bottom to top.

Alternate grip

Rotate the ball to the next seam, so the closed part of the horseshoe points to your pinky and the open part points to the thumb.

When to throw

After the 2 seamer, this is the most common pitch thrown in baseball. Some type of fastball is thrown 60% of the time in the majors.

The 4 seamer is the easiest pitch to locate.

It is also the most common pitch to throw **up** in the strike zone since the batter will tend to swing under it, resulting in a popup.

Since this pitch has the least movement, do not throw this around the middle of the strike zone unless you are throwing some serious heat.

What it does (movement)

The ball creates a tight spin and rotates from bottom-to-top as viewed by the hitter.

4 seamers have very little noticeable movement up/down or sideways. The ball will move down and to the right for a right handed pitcher. For a left hand pitcher, it moves down and to the left.

Four seamers typically drop only 2-3 inches from a straight line on release.

Reaction Time

The hitter has roughly 0.40 seconds to hit this pitch.

Typical Speed

This pitch is the fastest pitch of all.

10 and under	40-50 mph
11-12	50-60 mph
13-14	55-75 mph
High School	75-85 mph

College/ Pro

80-95 mph

The average speed of a fastball is 91mph in the majors.

The ball will typically slow down 8-10 mph by the time it reaches the front of the plate. (Note that your home radar gun may stop reading well before the ball reaches the plate because the hitter is in the way.)

Catcher's Sign

Usually the catcher and the pitch caller use one finger (index finger) to call a fastball.

Great Fastball Pitchers

Almost all pitchers throw a fastball. Think Fernando Rodney, Joba Chamberlain, Justin Verlander, Joel Zumaya, Kyle Farnsworth.

Important Infielder Tip

Every fielder must use a four seam fastball grip for the fastest, straightest throw possible