

7 Keys to Throwing a Quality Change Up

The Change Up. The easiest pitch to learn and the hardest pitch to master. It is also the most effective pitch in baseball, but the most underutilized.

It isn't a tool in the arsenal that draws the eyes of friends and foes. Nobody likes to see the radar gun read something low. There is nothing flashy about it.

Below are 7 tips on how to throw an effective change up and why this pitch implemented correctly can be a huge asset to your arsenal.

1). Mimic fastball actions.

- Fastball arm speed.

- Same grip pressure as fastball.

- Ex. 0–10 Scale. 10 is highest grip pressure and 0 is lightest. If your fastball grip is 7 then make your change up grip 7.
- Keep thumb location the same as fastball. Don't move the thumb up with the change up grip.



2). Throw the change up with the intent of getting weak contact from the hitter. Don't throw the pitch with the intent of getting a swing and miss. When a pitcher tries to throw the pitch and get a swing and miss they more times then not try to be so perfect with that pitch. This leads to the player pushing/aiming the pitch and not throwing it with confidence.

3). Try to locate the pitch in the low portion of the strike zone.

Think anywhere from 5 inches up and below the lowest portion of the strike zone. This gives you a 10in X 17in section to throw into. Much higher chance of getting weak contact in this portion of the zone. Anything higher than this zone is considered a hanging change up that gets hit hard and anything lower doesn't threaten the hitter enough and he won't engage his swing.

4). Science behind throwing a good change up.

- A hitter must make his mind up if he is swinging, what pitch he is swinging at, and where he is swinging at it when the ball is roughly half way to the plate. A good change up should initially look like a fastball out of the pitchers hand. It should look like a fastball halfway to the plate. It isn't until the pitch gets roughly 2/3's of the way to the plate that it starts to slow down and act different. If this is the case this will make it very hard on the hitter to make a swing path adjustment at this time.

5). Throw this pitch in fastball dominant counts.

- In counts such as 0-0, 1-0, 1-1, 2-0, 2-1, and 3-1, hitters will be very aggressive and are looking for fastballs. Use the aggression of the hitter against them and throw a pitch that looks just like a fastball.

6). Make sure to have more emphasis of your middle finger and ring finger behind the baseball than your pointer. Sometimes players make the mistake of still allowing the pointer finger to have pressure behind the ball. This doesn't give the pitch that late difference in speed that you want.

7). Don't over grip or choke the baseball. At no point should the baseball have contact with your palm. The very deepest the ball should go into your grip is the calluses.

Hopefully this helps you in your efforts of commanding a great change up. It is a game changing pitch that makes your other pitches that much better.

David Birkby