

## **Pitching Tip #7 - Four-Seam Fastball**

Strike one is the best pitch in baseball. The four-seam fastball is the easiest pitch to control in baseball. So it follows that for all pitchers the four-seam fastball should be relied on and perfected.

For younger players this is the pitch that should be thrown over and over to develop the arm strength necessary to experiment with other types of pitches and become successful at higher levels. To throw the four-seam fastball correctly, the ball should be gripped so that two fingers (pointer and index fingers) cross the two seams that form the "horseshoe" of the baseball. The fingers should not be too far apart or the pitcher will lose velocity. The ball should be held lightly in the fingers as if the pitcher was holding an egg. The thumb should be underneath the ball. If the pitcher is getting side-to-side movement when throwing the four-seamer, check the thumb placement first. If the thumb is "creeping" up the side of the ball, make sure the pitcher moves it back underneath. The four-seam fastball should travel straight.

As pitchers begin to throw harder it will seem to rise or hop as the ball approaches homeplate. Because the four-seam grip allows for maximum control, it is the grip that should be used by all fielders when making throws during the course of a game.

## **Pitching Tip #8 - Two-Seam Fastball**

The two-seam fastball is designed to create movement. For a right-handed pitcher, the pitch should move in toward a right-handed batter and away from a lefty. Instead of holding the ball across the seams, the pitcher holds the two-seam fastball with the seams.

The mechanics of this pitch are exactly the same as with the four-seam fastball. Pitchers should be careful not to come around the ball or turn it over. The pitch should be thrown with a natural motion and delivery, allowing the rotation of the seams to take over and to cause the ball to move.

By John Habyan