

8L “Light Ball” Concept

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The purpose of this document is to define a feeling to strive for when throwing. In previous documents I have described throwing a ball or bat with an inside-out (overhand or underhand vs. sidearm) motion. A “light ball” feeling upon release creates a “heavy ball” feeling when caught. Plus because the ball will jump off the bat, a “light bat quick hands” feeling upon release also creates a “heavy ball” feeling when caught. In both hitting and throwing the key is the inside-out release where the effort is finished by the big bones and muscles before the release creating the light feeling to strive for when throwing. In other words, with an inside-out swing or pitch, the bat or ball feel light upon release. Release of a ball would be when the arm is fully extended and the ball leaves the pitcher’s hand. Release of a bat would also be when the arm is fully extended and the bat twirls right before contact. In both cases, strive for the light feeling when throwing.

The Opposite – Arm Swing and Wrist Flip

Strive towards a light feeling upon release. The opposite happens when throwing sidearm or across the body. When throwing across the body the emphasis is on arm swing and wrist flip which produces a heavy feeling upon release. When swinging a bat with the focus on using your powerful wrists, the bat feels heavy when you exert that power. When pitching a ball with the emphasis on the wrist snap or flip the ball feels heavy when you exert that power. Plus, when going across the body you are also fighting or not using gravity. So when throwing sidearm (whether throwing a change-up or fastball), strive for a heavy ball feeling when throwing.

Bend the Arm to Extend the Arm

The faster you throw, the lighter the feeling. When we extend the arm as we throw, the work is done early by the large bones and muscles. By the time the arm is fully extended the work is finished. Plus, that light feeling is easy on the arm. So, strive for that light feeling at the end of the pitch (swing), and the follow through will be easy on your body. Before we can extend an arm, it must be bent. It can be extended, bent and extended; or bent, extended, bent and extended; but it must be bent and extended before release. When bending and extending, whether throwing a change-up or fastball, strive for the light feeling upon release.

Spin the ball early

The slower you throw or the better the changeup, the lighter the feeling. When we extend the arm as we throw, the work is done early by the large bones and muscles. Like throwing a chest pass in basketball, the work including the spin is created early. A change-up is created by doing everything exactly the same as the fastball, but pull the trigger about 90 degrees early so the thumb will still be on the ball and the arm will have to be flung toward the target. In the change-up the extension after you pull the trigger (while the arm is being flung) increases spin instead of speed. You still get that light feeling, and the better the changeup, the lighter the feeling.

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Transfer the energy to the ball

In pitching or hitting you are transferring energy. Like a wave it is moving through your body. The idea is to transfer that energy to the ball, not just to your hand. When you have that light feeling at the end of the process, you have done a good job of transferring that energy to the ball. After you learn what it feels like, you can focus on recreating that feeling of lightness on every pitch to get it just right.

Summary: The “Light Ball” Concept

The purpose of this document is to define a feeling to strive for when throwing. In previous documents I have described throwing a ball or bat with an inside-out (overhand or underhand vs. sidearm) motion. A “light ball” feeling upon release creates a “heavy ball” feeling when caught. Plus because the ball will jump off the bat, a “light bat” and “quick hands” feeling upon release also creates a “heavy ball” feeling when caught. In both hitting and throwing the key is the inside-out release where the effort is finished by the big bones and muscles before the release creating the light feeling to strive for when throwing. In other words, with an inside-out swing or pitch, the bat or ball feel light upon release. Release of a ball would be when the arm is fully extended and the ball leaves the pitcher’s hand. Release of a bat would also be when the arm is fully extended and the bat twirls right before contact. Transfer the energy to the ball. Spin the ball early. Bend the arm to extend the arm, and avoid the opposite. In both hitting and pitching, strive for the light feeling when throwing.