

## Focus on the Feet and Shoulder Positions

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The purpose of this document is to define important feet and shoulder relationships when throwing. Previous documents have defined [using the shoulders as a unit](#), throwing [pitches that feel the same](#) from various release points, and [throwing off both feet](#). This one will define the feet and shoulder position relationships for each of those release points. For example: when throwing a low release pitch off the front foot, we want to delay the opening of the chest until we get to that front foot. So, we push off the rubber from the toe with the shoulders coming together. We want them all the way together when we land on the heel of the front foot where we immediately begin to open the shoulders. Like this, each type of pitch then can be described with a focus on the important feet (heel or toe) and shoulder (opening or closing) relationships. Also, each type of pitch has only one target height (high, low or on the hands). A feet and shoulder position focus makes the transition between target areas natural and easy.

## Types of Pitches

This document will define those important feet shoulder relationships for each type of pitch. I believe these relationships make it easy to switch between the various release points and their target areas. Remember, release points and target areas go together to create late breaking apparent movement. Also, using all the types of pitches will make it much easier to spin the ball for real movement. See my friend Jimmy Moore's [Pitching Smart Strike Zone System](#) to understand where to throw the ball (with apparent and real movement). I developed my system by watching Jimmy pitch. He naturally used all of these types of pitches: low and high releases of both the front and back feet. Front foot pitches are pitches where the shoulders begin to open or close when the front foot touches the ground, and we release off the front foot. Back foot pitches are pitches where the shoulders open or close as we push (using the pitching rubber) off the back foot, and we release off the back foot. By the way, it is just like hitting off the front or back foot. To get to the front foot, we do the opposite thing off the back foot that we will be doing off the front foot: toe to heel when we are going to open the shoulders off the front foot and heel to toe (for example: the heel causing a hitch in the swing) when we are going to close the shoulders off the front foot. We will use release points to name these four types of pitches. The lowest release point is off the front foot opening the chest. The highest release point is also off the front foot, but closing the chest. The second lowest release point is off the back foot opening the chest and the third lowest second highest release point is off the back foot closing the chest.

## Release Point One – The Lowest – Front Foot Pull Out

Pitch Type One Release Point One is listed first because it is the best release point to throw from early in the count. The ball breaks straight up or down, with the most spin for real movement and with the best apparent movement for a low pitch. The rise from this release point can be thrown right down the middle, is the lowest possible strike to hit, forcing the batter to swing down at the pitch to hit it, and keeping the ball in the ball park. The drop from this release point appears to rise and then drop, can be

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thrown right down the middle, and also keeps the ball in the ballpark. A change off each of these pitches and all pitches is just putting your thumb on a seam and releasing the ball from the thumb, “a thumber”. By the way, “thumbers” keep their thumb on the ball till the release. To get to the heel of the front foot, push off the toe of the back foot with the chest coming in, then when the heel lands the chest comes out. In other words, push in and then pull out.

### **Release Point Two – Back Foot Pull Out**

You always pull from a lower position than you push, so the second lowest release point is pulling off the back foot. Hiding the ball from the batter, there is a small push motion at the beginning of the windup, but the whole windup and release are done off the back foot. Windup from toe to heel keeping the weight on the outside or back of the pitching rubber foot or back foot, and then pull the chest out as you rotate off that heel or outside of the foot, extending the arm and releasing the ball.

### **Release Point Three – Back Foot Push In**

You always push from a higher position than you pull, so the third lowest release point is pushing off the back foot. Hiding the ball from the batter, to open the shoulders there is a little pull motion in the windup, and the whole windup and release are done off the back foot. Windup from heel to toe putting the weight on the inside or front of the pitching rubber foot or back foot, and then push the chest in as you pivot off that foot, extending the arm and releasing the ball.

### **Release Point Four – The Highest – Front Foot Push In**

Pitch Type Four Release Point Four is listed last because it is a special release point. It is used for high rise balls that pop late and out of the zone and for those high drops that come from in nowhere to get the final strike. The ball breaks straight up or down, with the most spin for real movement and with the best apparent movement for a high pitch. The rise from this release point can be thrown right down the middle, looks like the highest possible strike to hit, and forces the batter to swing down to hit it. The strike drop from this release point appears to come out of nowhere, can be thrown right down the middle, and above the hands it also keeps the ball in the ballpark. Also coming out of nowhere, the change drop from release point four has the best chance to be called a strike.

### **Back Foot Pitches**

When done properly, back foot pitches curve more than front foot pitches. In general, throw curves at the hands in the strike zone or low and out of the strike zone. Normally, if they hit the outside corner they are right down the middle where the batter makes contact and easy for the opposite side batter to hook with a hook type swing (if he knows how, and most left side hitters do). So back foot pitches spin the best, have the best apparent movement when attacking the thigh to hand level or middle height of the strike zone. That means releasing the rise towards the thigh and the drop towards the hands, leaving room for the pitch to move seeming to break late and still having a lot of room to be a strike.

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### Summary: Focus on the Feet and Shoulders

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