

Here's a quick summary of how one might identify the seven most common pitch types. Just as a note, these guidelines are not universal.

Quick notes on movement: Vertical and Horizontal movement refer to the two-plane difference between where a pitch crossed the front of home plate, versus where a ball without spin would have hypothetically crossed the plate, given information about the initial position and velocity of the pitch. The only force acting on this hypothetical pitch is gravity. Positive horizontal movement means the ball moved to the first base side of home plate, while negative movement means the ball moved in the direction of third base. Positive vertical movement means the ball crossed the plate at a higher location than a hypothetical spin-less pitch, and negative vertical movement means the opposite.

When describing horizontal movement, "arm-side run" and "glove-side cut" are often referenced. This refers to the sign (+/-) of the horizontal movement measure, and is assigned differently depending on the handedness of the pitcher. "Arm-side run" for a right-handed pitcher is denoted with a **negative** horizontal movement number, while "glove-side cut" is **positive**. The opposite is true for left-handed pitchers.

### *Hard Pitches – Medium Spin Rate*

**Four-seam Fastball:** The most common pitch in baseball. In almost all cases, the hardest thrown pitch in a pitcher's repertoire, if they throw one. These pitches generally have the most vertical movement of any pitch type. Depending on the pitcher's delivery and mechanics, this pitch can have a wide range of movement numbers.

**Two-seam Fastball or Sinker:** Can sometimes be a pitcher's primary fastball. Often, is thrown as hard or almost as hard as a four-seam fastball. These fastballs have additional arm-side horizontal movement, and less vertical movement, than a four-seam fastball.

**Cutter or Cut Fastball:** Rarely a pitcher's primary fastball. The key difference is that the pitch generally features less vertical movement, and a small amount of glove-side movement, instead of arm-side movement. While rare cutters can approach regular fastball velocities, most are thrown 3-6 mph slower than their primary fastball.

### *Breaking Pitches – High Spin Rate*

**Slider:** A slider is a relative of a cut fastball. Normally, it has more glove-side horizontal movement, and even less vertical movement than a cutter. It is also normally thrown 7-12 mph slower than a pitcher's primary fastball. For some sliders, vertical movement is a small, negative number – indicating some "drop".

**Curveball:** A curveball has a large absolute amount of movement, specifically lots of negative vertical movement. Curveballs have a wider range of potential velocities, and can be thrown from 10-20 mph slower than the pitcher's primary fastball.

### *Off-speed Pitches – Low Spin Rate*

**Change-up:** Change-ups are relatives of both four- and two-seam fastballs, and normally have a larger amount of arm-side horizontal movement than either pitch. Changeups are normally thrown with less vertical movement than a four-seam fastball. Change-ups can have a wide range of potential velocities – anywhere from 5-15 mph slower than their primary fastball.

**Splitter or Split Fastball:** Splitters are the least common pitch, and most often misclassified pitch. The movement of splitters is often very similar to the movement of change-ups. However, they generally feature lower spin rates, less total movement, and generally end up on the higher end of the change-up velocity range.

Ref: SBingol

Edit: MGanley