



It's time to throw your body a changeup

different pitches are various workouts that can be manipulated to force your body to grow. Ideally, you want to throw your body a shutout every time you train — you want your body to leave the gym saying, *What the shizzle was that?!* The lower your ERA, the higher your M-U-S-C-L-E.

Let's examine your repertoire and see what we can work into the rotation. Here's a quick list of variables you can use as your changeup(s) to continue to force your body to adapt and help you get control of your game:

» **Time of day you work out:** I'm an early bird because it sets me up to make better choices all day long, but try training at different times to see how you respond best.

» **Rest intervals:** Alter your rest periods between sets based on your goals and objectives. If you want to increase your caloric expenditure, reduce your rest time between sets; if you want to gain weight, take a little more time between sets to conserve your energy.

» **Intensity techniques:** Pre-exhaust your muscles with exercises you would normally use as finishing moves. Perform drop sets and different kinds of pyramids to shock your system into a new level of growth.

» **Movement angles:** Raise the incline higher; drop the decline lower; if you normally do crossovers from the high pulley, try going to the lowest setting. Small adjustments such as these can make a big difference.

The MLB season is 162 games, not including the pre- and postseasons. Grueling. But your "season" is even longer. How can you hope to endure? There are as many ways to change up your workouts as there are fans in the bleachers. You're on the mound and this is your game to control. You don't have to be Johan Santana (widely known as having the nastiest changeup in all of baseball) to get your body to take a different approach to improvement, but getting away from the predictable fastball will have your body guessing and adapting well into extra innings.

CHANGE FOR THE BETTER

If you're experiencing a slump, send in your ace to keep your body on its toes

K NOW WHY MAJOR LEAGUE pitchers throw the changeup? It's designed to throw off the batter's timing. When Pedro Martinez is having a rough time of it, he calls on his changeup, arguably the best of all his pitches, to alter the game in his favor. Eric Gagne, one of the most effective relievers in the game, uses a "Vulcan Grip" changeup to throw off hitters in the clutch. Meanwhile, the batter

thinks something else is coming — usually a fastball — but instead, he gets the changeup and his chances of making contact are greatly reduced. So he adapts. The next time he spots a similar setup and finger position by the pitcher, he sends it downtown. And a great hitter makes adapting his swing to accommodate a variety of challenging pitches look effortless.

Think of your body as the batter and think of the pitch as your workout. The