

## Why does a curve ball appear to "break"?

Four US scientists have won an award for demonstrating why a curve ball in baseball appears to "break", or suddenly change direction, when in reality it follows a trajectory that smoothly and gradually deviates from a straight line.

The key, according to an article in the June 6 issue of **New Scientist** magazine, is that pitches start off in the centre of a batter's field of vision but are picked up more by the brain's peripheral vision system as they approach the plate, and this transition makes the ball appear to change direction.

You can see a demonstration of why this effect occurs by clicking [here](#).

The demonstration, created by Bucknell University psychologist Arthur Shapiro, was voted "Visual Illusion of the Year" by the US Vision Sciences Society.

The discovery and demonstration would apply equally to curve balls thrown in fastpitch softball.



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