

# FUNDAMENTALS OF UMPIRING

**Think Ahead**- Umpires must know their responsibilities and priorities before every pitch. This can be a rather daunting task when you consider there are hundreds of things that can happen on every pitch and the average person can only focus on a few things at a time. Therefore to help even the odds, umpires just like players must be aware of the game situation and know what the likely plays are before they happen. Being surprised is the worst thing that can happen to an umpire.

**Pause, Read and React**- When a fly ball is hit the base umpire must determine whether or not he should go out on the ball. In order to make this decision the base umpire uses a procedure called “pause, read and react.” The base umpire will hesitate while taking his eye off the ball (pause) and focus his attention on the reactions of outfielders (read). The outfielders reactions will then tell the base umpire whether he should go out on the ball (react).

**Angle vs. Distance**- Every time an umpire makes a call he is at a certain angle and distance from the play. For instance plays at first base- The base umpire should be 10-15 feet away from first base and at a 90° angle from the throw. Whenever possible angle and distance should be maintained. However when it is not possible angle is more important than distance.

**Hustle don't Hurry**- As an umpire hustling to get into position to make a call is a must. However, hustling to the point of hurrying is disastrous. You must allow yourself time to read the play before you react even if that means giving up distance. It only takes a few steps to gain an angle on the play so don't be in a hurry to go somewhere until you know where to go.

**Practice, practice, practice**- You don't need a field to practice your trade. Plate mechanics and timing, safe and out calls can be practiced in front of a mirror. Practice 3-5 minutes a day for a month before the season (more if it's your first time or if you are changing a mechanic).