The Secrets of Albert Pujols' Swing

by Chris O'Leary

About This Document

This document Is an excerpt from my eBook *The Secrets of Albert Pujols' Swing*. It should contain enough pages to give you a sense of what the full, 650+ page version looks like.

You can purchase the full version of this flipbook by going to ...

http://www.chrisoleary.com/buy/soaps/

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If you happen to come across this flipbook on the Internet or via a friend and find it to be valuable, please understand that it isn't something that I just give away for free.

Instead, I charge \$29.95 for it.

This flipbook is the product of years of work and thousands of dollars of investment on my part. For instance, most of the clips were shot by me over the course of three years (2009-2011) and, on average, I have to go to 10 games to get one really valuable clip. You can purchase a legal, licensed copy of this flipbook at...

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My family and I thank you.

Chris O'Leary February 2014

How to Use This Flipbook

This flipbook is based on the PowerPoint presentation that I use when talking hitting and hitting mechanics.

When I use this slide deck in front of an audience, you will notice that I am constantly rolling backwards and forwards through the slides, pointing out not just the positions and shapes but also the movements. If you want to get the maximum value out of this eBook, you should do the same; you should set this eBook up so that only one page occupies the screen and then page back and forth from page to page, watching the movements.

The easiest way is to download this PDF to your computer and open it using <u>Adobe Reader</u> or some other application that can display PDFs one page at a time. **In Acrobat select View > Read Mode or View > Page Display > Single Page View.**

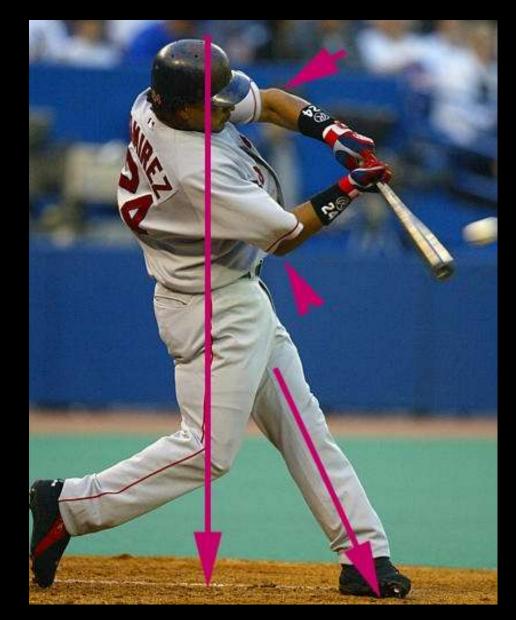
You can then use the right and left – or up and down – arrows on the keyboard to go through the frames of each clip and get a sense of how each movement looks and works.



Acknowledgements

While most of the clips in this flipbook are ones that I shot myself, and many of the observations in this flipbook are ones that I made as a result of my own study, I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge that some of what I learned was due to the efforts of a community of smart, slightly (or more) obsessed parents and coaches. That includes Steve Englishbey, Jim Dixon, Howard Carrier, Jim Booth, BoardMember, MarkH, Jake Patterson, Cannonball, JJA, SSarge, and Ursa Major. I'm proud of what I have contributed to the conversation, but I wouldn't be where I am without their guidance and assistance.

Finally, I never cease to be amazed by how far ahead of his time Ted Williams was with his book *The Science of Hitting*. While not perfect, it sets the standard for accuracy and gave me an extremely high target to aim for.



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Albert Pujols' Statistics at a Glance

Albert Pujols has struggled mightily over the past few years, enough that it's worth reminding people just how amazing his numbers were during his first ten years in the league.

	BA	HRs	OBP	SLG	OPS	oWAR
2001	.329	37	.403	.610	1.013	6.1
2002	.314	34	.394	.561	.955	5.9
2003	.359	43	.439	.667	1.106	8.5
2004	.331	46	.415	.657	1.072	7.7
2005	.330	41	.430	.609	1.039	7.1
2006	.331	49	.431	.671	1.102	6.8
2007	.327	32	.429	.568	.997	5.6
2008	.357	37	.462	.653	1.114	7.4
2009	.327	47	.443	.658	1.101	7.9
2010	.312	42	.414	.596	1.011	6.6

The Secrets of Albert Pujols' Swing

Some would argue that Albert Pujols is a physical and genetic freak – and perhaps a steroidassisted one – and that explains both his ability to hit for power and average and his tremendous success with the St. Louis Cardinals.

They believe that his recent struggles make the case that he no longer is, and most likely never was, a hitter whose swing should be studied and emulated.

I see things differently.

To the question of whether Albert Pujols and his swing are unique, based on my years of experience studying the swings of the greatest hitters and working with high-level hitters, I would respond that I have found that **Albert Pujols' swing is consistent with everything the best hitters do.**

If you compare Albert Pujols' swing to the swings of other great hitters, you will see that his swing is far more similar than different; **Albert Pujols' core hitting mechanics are middle of the road.**









So Why the Decline?

I believe that much of Albert Pujols' recent decline is due to the fact that he has gotten away from the things that made him successful over the years. Yes, Albert Pujols' Plantar Fasciitis isn't helping him, especially lately, but I don't believe that is all that is going on.

Some of this may be due to pride.

Being from St. Louis, I have been studying Albert Pujols' swing since 2005. I started seeing him make changes to his swing well before people started talking about the problems that he was having with his feet. In particular, I saw Albert Pujols make some subtle, but in my experience significant, changes to his stride in early 2011.

It wouldn't surprise me if Albert Pujols made these changes in an effort to increase his power and to earn a larger free-agent contract. However, given how he has hit over the past two years, I would argue that – if he is to return to form – Albert Pujols needs to study and understand his classic swing and why it worked so well, just as people like Andres Torres have.



My Work with Andres Torres

In early 2008, Andres Torres was on his way out of professional baseball.

One day in May 2008, he was Googling around, looking for pictures of Albert Pujols' swing. He knew that Albert Pujols was a great hitter and was trying to figure out what his secret was; how he hit for both power and average.

He came across some pictures of Albert Pujols I had collected and posted and, more importantly, several of my early flipbook analyses of the swing of Albert Pujols.

Andres called me up and started asking me questions about what Pujols did and why. He was confused because, while he couldn't argue with my interpretation of what Pujols was doing in those flipbooks – all he had to do was look at the pictures – my flipbooks showed that



what Albert Pujols did contradicted pretty much everything that Andres had been taught about hitting.

We then spent a year talking hitting and I helped Andres change his swing and his approach. The result was a swing that helped the San Giants win the 2010 World Series.

This flipbook is the latest version of the flipbook that Andres Torres first stumbled across in 2008. The main difference between this flipbook and the earlier versions is that this one is based on more and better clips; clips that are larger, higher resolution, and shot from better angles. It also incorporates what I have learned over the past five years about the most effective way to talk about and teach hitting.



Organization

This flipbook is organized into 5 sections.

Part I: Milestones, Positions, & Shapes A look at the milestones, positions, and shapes of Albert Pujols' classic swing.

Part II: Key Concepts Basic concepts you need to understand.

Part III: Critical Movements

A look at the movements that made Albert Pujols' classic swing so effective and enabled him to hit for power and average.

Part IV: What's Changed

The differences between the swing that Albert Pujols used from 2001-2010 and the swing that he has used for the past 3 years.

Part V: Reasons for Hope

Why there is a chance that Albert Pujols can bounce back.



Part I

Milestones, Positions, and Shapes



The Pitch and the Swing

This clip is from July 30, 2009.

The pitch was a 93MPH sinker middle away.

The result of the swing was a double to right center field.

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Hinge Angle

In Frame 01, Albert Pujols has set an approximately 90 degree angle between his forearms and the barrel of the bat (the red and pink lines). He will then maintain this Hinge Angle through Frame 28. Most good hitters will set this hinge angle at between 80 and 100 degrees. It is more important that this angle is set and then maintained for as long as possible than that this angle is set at exactly 90 degrees. In this frame, Albert Pujols' belt buckle is pointing essentially at the camera (the light blue arrow).

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Keeping the Hips and Shoulders Closed Rather than letting his hips and shoulders leak open as he strides forward, Albert Pujols instead keeps his hips and shoulders closed as he goes into and through toe touch.

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Toe Touch

The toe of Albert Pujols' front foot has just made contact with the ground. The fact that Albert Pujols lands toe-first, instead of flat-footed, is important because that is a key part of how Albert Pujols adjusts to the pitch.

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Hip Rotation and Elbow Slotting Albert Pujols' hips are just starting to rotate as his front heel starts to drop. His back elbow is also just about to start to drop into the slot at his back hip.

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Extension and Power V

Albert Pujols is extending and making the "Power V," but 5 frames <u>after</u> the Point of Contact. The centrifugal force of the bat has overcome the ability of his arms to apply centripetal force, which has caused his hands to fly out toward the pitcher and his arms to make the "Power V." In other words, **extension and the "Power V" are the EFFECT of a powerful swing, not the CAUSE of a powerful swing.** July 30, 2009

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Squishing the Bug

Albert Pujols is finally in the "squishing the bug" position, but well <u>after</u> the Point Of Contact.

Part II

Key Concepts





Contrast Albert Pujols' posture with the locked-leg, standing bolt upright with the feet close together posture that you see on so many baseball diamonds. His weight is...

September 23, 2011 HR to LF 30 FPS

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Rotation



Rotation

Hip Rotation



April 23, 2009 HR to LCF

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Hip Rotation

1

Rather than keeping his hips and shoulders in place and swinging with just his arms, wrists, and hands, Albert Pujols' hips...

April 23, 2009 HR to LCF

Hip Rotation

3

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April 23, 2009 HR to LCF

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Rotation

Shoulder Rotation



April 15, 2010 D to LCF

Shoulder Rotation This clip also shows Albert Pujols' hip rotation quite clearly. Notice how...

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I don't know where Albert Pujols stands with respect to this argument, but this clip shows that his body clearly...

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September 16, 2009 S to LF

Connection



July 31, 2010 S to LF Change-Up

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Watch the relationship between Albert Pujols' hands and his back shoulder. Notice how, rather than just throwing his hands at the ball and leaving his back shoulder behind... July 31, 2010 S to LF Change-Up

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Many people advocate a purely linear hand path. However, if you put a marker on Albert Pujols' hands as he swings, you will see that his hand path starts out somewhat linearly but...

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Slight Uppercut



August 2, 2010 HR to LF

Slight Uppercut

Rather than keeping the barrel above his hands and the ball, Albert Pujols instead lets the barrel fall below his hands and the ball. That lets him match the plane of his swing to the plane of the pitch. The thing to pay attention to is... August 2, 2010 HR to LF

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Ten Frame Swing



Page 86

Ten Frame Swing One of the hardest things about evaluating a swing is doing so objectively. For instance, many people will say that a swing is "long," but it is often unclear exactly what that means.

The term "long swing" often means different things to different people.

One objective measure for judging the length of a swing is to count the number of frames from the planting of the heel and the first movement of the knob to the Point Of Contact.

This standard was first developed in the days of 30 Frames Per Second video, so it was originally known as the Five Frame Swing standard; a good swing is generally five frames from Heel Plant to the Point Of Contact. Now, with the prevalence of 60P video (60 Frames Per Second), it is referred to as the Ten Frame Swing standard.

21

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Part III

Critical Movements



Linear Weight Shift into Rotation



Linear Weight Shift into Rotation While Albert Pujols employs a relatively short stride and a small leg lift, he still manages to achieve a significant linear weight shift. Then, once Albert Pujols' front heel plants, his body...

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Staying Back



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Staying Back

Rather than lunging forward into the ball, while Albert Pujols' back hip and back knee move forward and then around into Heel Plant and then the Point Of Contact, his head...

Page 96

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Part IV

What's Changed



Stride Height



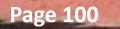
Stride Height

From 2001 through 2010, Albert Pujols used a distinctive, and pretty much unique, stride that I call his Classic Stride.

Given his already wide stance, which he used to improve his ability to cover the lower third of the strike zone, Albert Pujols had to...

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May 3, 2011 Fly Out to RCFWT

September 23, 2011 HR to LF

No Stride

Stride Height

During 2011, Albert Pujols varied his stride. In the first half of the year, he used what I refer to as his Home Run Derby Stride. This is a stride with a relatively large leg lift that, prior to 2011 he had generally only used during the home run derby before the All-Star Game. In the second half of the year, he used a true No Stride like Jim Edmonds'. The major difference between the two types of strides is...

Home Run Derby Stride

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Home Run Derby Stride

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Leading with the Front Toe and Staying Back



April 23, 2009 HR to LCF Fastball

Leading with the Front Toe and Staying Back

By changing from his Classic Stride to his Home Run Derby (HRD) Stride, Albert Pujols gave himself more energy to work with. However, he also...

April 2, 2011 HR to LF Slider

Page 107 Classic Stride

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April 23, 2009 HR to LCF Fastball

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April 2, 2011 HR to LF Slider

Page 109 Classic Stride

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Home Run Derby Stride

Back Foot Stability



June 19, 2011 HR to LFC

Back Foot Stability

If you compare the stability of Albert Pujols' back foot in 2011, when he was hitting well, and 2012 when he was struggling, you can see a significant difference. In the 2011 clip, his foot...

April 14, 2012 D to CF

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Stable Back Foot

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Unstable Back Foot

June 19, 2011 HR to LFC

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April 14, 2012 D to CF

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Stable Back Foot

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Unstable Back Foot

Part V

Reasons for Hope



July 23, 2013 HR to CF

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Reasons for Hope

As has happened a number of times, in mid to late July 2013 Albert Pujols stopped using his Home Run Derby Stride and...

July 23, 2013 HR to CF

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July 23, 2013 HR to CF

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Where to go From Here

This is just one of my flipbooks and it contains excerpts from a few of the many flipbooks and clips that I have in my library. Some of those flipbooks are available for sale individually and all of them are available to those who purchase one or more of my hitting bundles. To see what hitting and other products are available, **including drills that will help you develop the movements that you see in this flipbook,** go to...

http://www.chrisoleary.com/buy/

For more information about the concepts and ideas discussed in this eBook, you can contact me via...

E-mail: thepainguy@gmail.com Phone: 314.494.1324.

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