

There are six ways to have a strike added to the count of balls and strikes, as follows:

- 1) The batter swings at the ball and misses (including a bunt attempt),
- 2) The batter strikes the ball with the bat and hits a foul ball with less than 2 strikes (or bunts foul even with 2 strikes),
- 3) The batter swings at the ball and a foul tip results (even with two strikes),
- 4) The batter does not take batter's position within 10 seconds after being directed to do so by umpire (strike and dead ball, no pitch needs to be thrown),
- 5) The batter illegally leaves the batter's box between pitches after a warning from the umpire (no pitch needs to be thrown),
- 6) And, a legal pitch enters the strike zone and is not swung at, or is prevented from entering the strike zone by the batter other than by a swing.

In order to understand number six above, the strike zone needs to be defined. The strike zone is a 7-sided three dimensional geometric figure. It is defined as the space over home plate between the batter's arm pits (top of strike zone) and the top of the batter's knees (bottom of strike zone) when the batter assumes a natural batting stance. (Other rule sets have similar but slightly different definitions of this 7-sided geometric figure.) The strike zone has five vertical sides and two horizontal sides.

When a legally pitched ball (without having first bounced and without ever touching home plate) touches any part of the strike zone, it is a strike. (Other rule sets have slightly different requirements of the ball touching the strike zone.)

A legally pitched ball that touches only a corner of the strike zone (within the height limitations) has touched the strike zone and is thus a strike.

A legally pitched ball that touches only the front of the strike zone (within the width of the strike zone) then drops lower has touched the strike zone and is thus a strike.

A legally pitched ball that rises up and touches only the rearmost point of the strike zone has touched the strike zone and is thus a strike.

Some strike zone myths:

Myth: The strike zone moves forward and backwards with the position of the batter in the batter's box.

Reality: Home plate does not move and neither does the strike zone.

Myth: The front edge of home plate is where a ball/strike is to be judged.

Reality: The strike zone is a three dimensional figure. If the ball touches ANY part of the strike zone it is a strike.

Myth: If the pitched ball touches the batter then the batter gets first base.

Reality: If the ball is swung at or it is in the strike zone it is a strike. The batter is not awarded first base. The batter's body does not belong in the strike zone. (Other rule sets have similar but slightly different requirements.)

Myth: The height of the strike zone is fixed.

Reality: The top and bottom of the strike zone are a function of the batter when the batter assumes a natural stance.