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## product news

### See the ball – hit the ball. Vizual Edge.

Easier said than done for most high school, college and professional baseball players let alone little leaguers.

Through the latest technology, however, improving eye-hand coordination is just a matter of sitting at your computer.

Chicago-area ophthalmologist and Lasik specialist Dr. Barry L. Seiller runs the Visual Fitness Institute in north-west suburban Vernon Hills. Dr. Seiller and his partner Kathy Puchalski developed the Vizual Edge Performance Trainer™, which is designed with a CD-ROM for use on a laptop, to allow for the comprehensive evaluation and training of visual skills. Many athletes liken Vizual Edge to playing a video game on their computer, but with a great more to gain.

"After working with Vizual Edge, hitters become more comfortable at the plate, recognizing the spin of a curve ball, or the speed of a fastball, swinging at just the right time," said Dr. Seiller. "It's about enhancing the player's performance on the field."

Baseball experts are quick to concur.

According to former San Diego Padres manager and Milwaukee Brewers Player Personnel Director Greg Riddoch, who now manages the Padres rookie league team and is their mental skills coach, "Vizual Edge training allows the batter to pick the ball up right out of the pitcher's hand, versus having to wait well after the release. At the velocity that pitchers throw, those extra feet are critical."

"One of the most important things for a hitter is his vision," said University of Tennessee Assistant Baseball Coach Nathan Headley, who employs Vizual Edge for his team. "Athletes spend so much time in the weight room getting bigger, stronger and quicker, without realizing they can also train their eyes."

Nate's brother Chase, a former star at Tennessee, is a starting outfielder for the Padres and has been using the program for 3 years.

Before one thinks this is just hearsay, there is scientific proof. A recent study conducted by a research team of professors from Texas A&M-Corpus Christi's Kinesiology Department demonstrated the correlation between improved hitting performance and vision training.

The study, headed by Dr. Frank Spaniol, was a follow-up to an investigation conducted by Dr. Spaniol with the Cincinnati Reds and Milwaukee Brewers. Using the Vizual Edge Performance Trainer™, Dr. Spaniol tested the Texas A&M-Corpus Christi baseball players, ultimately proving that visual skills can be evaluated and trained.

"It really makes little sense to waste valuable training time working on something if it doesn't translate into improved on-field performance," said Dr. Spaniol, a former Division I college baseball player and coach. "There was significant improvement in the hitting performance of our baseball players after enhancing their visual skills (via Vizual Edge)."

Although Dr. Spaniol's research centered on hitters, there's a wealth of other benefits on the baseball diamond from Vizual Edge training.

"Pitchers can locate their spots better," said Headley. "Balls hit in the gap are easier to pick up for outfielders, and infielders can make more skilled plays by seeing the ball off the bat quicker. Even base runners benefit through training their eyes."

Dr. Seiller works closely with Major League Baseball teams, as well as col-

lege squads. The innovative technology is currently being used in the minor league system of the Milwaukee Brewers, Kansas City Royals, Houston Astros and Seattle Mariners. In addition, the Detroit Tigers, San Diego Padres, Oakland A's and Cincinnati Reds are all in discussions to bring Vizual Edge on board in seeking ways to provide an edge for their players.

Baseball teams from Vanderbilt University, University of Memphis and Western Kentucky,



along with Tennessee, also use this breakthrough technology, as well as high schools and little leaguers.

"So many of our younger athletes have all of the mechanics, the size and strength, but still something is missing for them to excel in baseball," said Dr. Seiller. "I am convinced that what's missing is based on training their visual skills."

Having perfect vision, though, doesn't necessarily translate into hitting .400 in baseball. Even those players, who might have 20/20 vision in the doctor's chair, might still go 0 for 20 at the plate.

"It's all about how you use your eyesight," Dr. Seiller commented.

Dr. Seiller added, "Baseball is the perfect sport for this type of training, because it's all about quick reactions and making instantaneous decisions."

Beyond baseball, the technology has been used by softball pitchers, hitters and fielders, hockey, lacrosse and soccer goalies, quarterbacks and wide receivers in football, tennis players, synchronized divers and even Olympic luge, bobsled and skeleton

athletes.

"Our technology is really designed for any athlete in a sport that requires quick reactions," said Dr. Seiller.

Vizual Edge goes far beyond the fields of play for student-athletes. The technology has been incorporated to help students enhance their reading skills.

Whether it's in the classroom or standing in the batter's box, Vizual Edge provides performance enhancement.

So, you're playing for the high school regional championship, the score is tied in extra innings and you have the winning run on third with two outs. The count is 1-2 and the pitcher winds up and lets loose. Is it a 90-mile-per-hour fastball, a curve ball or change-up? Making the proper split-second decision could be the difference between prolonging the extra inning game and hoisting the trophy up high.

For further information on the Vizual Edge Performance Trainer™, go to [www.vizualedge.com](http://www.vizualedge.com) or call 847-816-3131.

