

ECG Fundamentals

ECG interpretation is a difficult skill that requires deliberate practice to gain mastery. A formulaic method for interpretation minimizes missed diagnoses and provides a strategy for dealing with ECGs when the diagnosis is not immediately apparent. Below are two example interpretation strategies

Rule of Fours

Four Initial Features

History/Clinical Picture

Rate

Rhythm

Axis

“Standard”

Rate

Rhythm

Axis

Intervals

Hypertrophy

Ischemia

Four Waves

P Waves

Q/R/S Waves

T Waves

U Waves

Four Interval (or segments)

PR Interval

QRS Width

ST Segment

QT Interval

Rule of Fours adapted from Gerard Fennessy ([@doctorgerard](#)) and [Life in the Fast Lane](#)

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Example Case

39yF with no PMHx with chest pain.

HR: 95 BP: 160/110 RR: 18 O2 Sat: 96%

