



### Batting and Hitting

Batting/Hitting skills allow a team to get runners on base and get in position to score runs. The ability to visually track a pitched ball (hand-eye coordination) while also demonstrating correct timing of swinging the bat, will hopefully result in good contact between bat and ball.

For right-handed batters the right hand will be gripping the bat near the knob, with the left hand immediately above (stacked on top) the left hand.)

For left-handed batters the left- hand will be gripping the bat near the knob, with the right hand immediately above (stacked on top) the left hand.)

Before proper grip, stance, and swing can be achieved, it's important to know some basic bat facts. As a coach, you need to make sure that your athletes are using bats that are the appropriate size and weight for their ability.

**Grip**



**Stance**



### Teaching Points – Demonstrate the proper batting/hitting stance

1. The batter does not have to “line up the knuckles” when gripping the bat, but if he/she decides to do this; the knuckles that should be lined up are the knocking knuckles (the knuckles that a player would use to knock on a door). Lining up the knuckles is a personal preference and should not be insisted on by the coach.
2. The strength to which the athlete grips the bat should not be any tighter than a comfortable handshake.
3. Make sure the batter is not using too heavy or too long of a bat. To check this, have your batter swing the bat first with his/her top hand keeping the elbow at 90 degrees against his/her body. Then check the bottom hand, again keeping the elbow close to the body. If he/she can't keep the bat level when swinging one handed like this then the bat is too heavy.
4. To ensure good plate coverage with the swing, have the player reach across the plate with their bat. There should be at least two inches of the bat extended over the plate.
5. If a player's elbows are up it will cause the hitter to have a slow and upper cut swing thus making it almost impossible to hit the ball.



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### **Teaching Points – Demonstrate the proper batting/hitting swing**

1. The hands are kept relaxed and should bring the bat into the hitting area in the fastest and most direct route. This will happen by the hitter pulling the bat across his/her chest with his/her bottom hand and the top hand driving the bat forward. The handle of the bat should stay out of the strike zone.
2. Demonstrate the proper swing.
3. Suggest the athlete use a count of four to keep a rhythm to the swing: one, step; two, lead with elbow; three, extend arms and roll hands at point of contact; four, swing all the way through. Following swing, batter should not be off balance.
4. Have athlete practice swing all the way through.
5. Have athlete practice swing in front of a mirror, without the bat.
6. For training purposes you may have your athlete swing a legal weighted training softball bat to strengthen arm, shoulder and torso muscles.

### **Advanced Batting and Hitting**

The ability of the batter to be able to choose where he/she wants to hit the ball, based on the runners' positions, the gaps in the field, and the type of pitch being pitched.

NOTE: A hitter should always be aggressive, but should not try to “pull” every pitch. Being able to “go with the pitch” allows the batter to hit to:

- ♦ open areas
- ♦ down foul lines
- ♦ between fielders
- ♦ behind runners
- ♦ unprepared fielders

### **Outside Pitch Drill (for Opposite field Hits)**

- Pitcher has bucket of balls – 10 -15 pitches per batter
- Batter gets in ready position in batter's box at home plate
- Pitcher aims for the outside side of home plate for all pitches
- Batter intentionally attempts to hit ball to opposite field
- (Right handed batters aim for Right field, left handed batters aim for Left field)
- Encourage the batter to wait a little longer before making contact with the ball.
- They may need to back away from the plate a little, or even open up their batting stance
- A slight step towards the opposite field may be needed for desired results
- Avoid stepping on home plate as this would be an out in a game
- Eventually, the batter should be able to hit the ball accurately and with force to the opposite field if they are able to wait for the pitch to come in.
- Start with center field as the target, and slowly move the target of aim further and further to the right side of the field.



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**Pull Hits**

- Pitcher has bucket of balls – 10 -15 pitches per batter
- Batter gets in ready position in batter's box at home plate
- Pitcher aims for the inside side of home plate for all pitches
- Batter intentionally attempts to hit ball to the same side of home plate where their feet are. Right-handed batters are attempting to pull the ball down the 3<sup>rd</sup> base line
- Left-handed batters are trying to pull the ball down the first base line.
- Encourage the batter to go after the ball, getting their bat around quickly with a strong follow-through
- (If they are fouling off balls, then they will need to wait a little longer to make contact)

**Going-with-the Pitch Drill**

- Pitcher has bucket of balls – 10-20 pitches per batter
- Batter gets in ready position in batter's box at home plate
- Pitcher varies all pitches – some inside, some outside
- Batter attempts to hit ball to the field of choice, based on the position of the pitch
- Inside – pull hit
- Middle – up the center hit
- Outside – opposite field hit