

Hitting Drills

Wall Swing (U-10s and Up players)

Stand facing a fence gauging the proper distance by placing the knob of the bat against the belly button and the end of the bat against the wall or fence. With a normal stance and stride, and without moving back from the wall or fence, the hitter takes her normal swing. This drill emphasizes that the hitter must rotate her hips ahead of her hands and pulls the knob of the bat through the hitting zone before extending the arms in front of home plate. Hitting the wall or fence with the bat means hitter is sweeping (i.e., extending the arms too soon). **The key to making this successful is that the players do not move away from the fence or line up against a section of the fence that is bent or not straight. It must be explained that the “end game” for this drill is to promote a tight, inside-out swing. We further recommend that 10U’s working on a compact swing try this drill using the sides of a batting cage that uses netting and no chain link fence. That way, if they hit the net, it does little damage to bats or hands/wrists.**

Hip Turn- (all age groups)

Place hands behind the back of the players. Have the hitter take a normal batting stance. Have players swing using the hips swing first to have the player drive through the swing. Upon completion of the swing the players front foot should be at a **90** degree angle and the back foot should have pivoted so that the players shoe laces and belly button are pointed towards the pitcher. Her hips and shoulders should be square to the pitcher.

Knob of Bat to Tee

Place a ball on the tee. Set up properly with stance and hands. Take the knob of the bat to the ball on the tee, hit the ball with the knob, and then follow through with the swing. This emphasizes proper hand movement and a short compact swing. This drill promotes a compact swing best used for linear hitting. OK to keep as a choice for those who prefer this method of hitting.

Inside-Outside Double Tee

Hitter sets up in normal stance in front of double tee. Place ball in center position on tee, waist level. Place second tee on either of the outside positions, raised to a position just above the waist. Take normal stance. Attempt to hit the ball with a level or slightly upward swing without hitting the second tee. If a player “casts” her arms, she will make contact with the outside tee. Objective of drill is to promote an inside-out swing while actually making contact with a ball.

Soft Toss

Coach takes a position in front and to the side of the hitter. Using any of various size whiffle balls, or lite flight softballs ball out in front of the hitter towards the front shoulder waist high, using little arc, and observe mechanics. Soft toss teaches and reinforces the proper mechanics of the swing. Make sure your batters are 1.) pivoting correctly, 2.) rotating their hips with an explosion toward the ball 3.) unlocking their shoulders, elbows and wrists in sequence while throwing their hands straight to the ball (watch for hands dropping and

correct this). 4.) Watching the ball all the way to the "bat" and continuing to watch the "contact point" after the "ball" has been hit. The proper stance is essential. It should be balanced, eyes level, bat in launch position (not rapped behind the head), knees slightly bent, slight bend at the waist and door-knocking knuckles lined up. **Coach should toss toward the player's front shoulder, waist high. (Toss to different parts of the strike zone to advanced players.) Coach should observe proper starting stance (even balance of weight, at least shoulder width apart), proper pivot of back foot and drive of knee toward pitcher, proper position of front leg, observe compactness of swing, especially watching for players who are "casting" their arms. Drill best done with lite flite softballs.**

Hands to The Ball

Have the batter set up approximately 3ft. from a fence in her batting stance just as she would at the plate. With one exception, have her bat resting on her shoulder. The coach then tosses a ball up to her, the batter must then attempt to hit the ball with only the butt (End cap on the handle) of the bat. **NO SWINGING ALLOWED!** Toss the ball in various locations (High, Low, Inside, Outside, etc.). **Coaches, the emphasis on this drill is to promote a compact, inside-out swing.**

Balls and Strike Drill

Have the pitchers throw pitches and the batters stand in the batters box just watching the ball into the glove and call balls and strikes. You'll be amazed at what batters think are balls. The best thing for good eyes are just seeing live pitching...lots of it, even if it is just being a batter while your pitcher is doing a workout. You can learn to read different pitches, and the pitcher gets better practice when there is a batter in the box. **Coaches, the goal of this drill is to have batter watch ball all the way into the catcher's glove. This promotes watching the ball all the way into the hitting and strike zone.**

Two Ball Soft Toss (10U and up)

Get two different color whiffle balls (say red & white) or mark half of the balls with a different color dot. Works better with whiffle baseballs or even golf whiffle balls. Its easier to toss smaller balls plus helps hitters in focus and coordination. Toss the two balls at the same time (from same hand) and ask the player to hit one of them, either red or white. This helps players to coordinate, focus and react to hit the correct color ball. **Coaches, players using this drill should have good rotational hitting skills prior to participation.**

Pick a Number

Take 3 or 4 balls, write a number on each ball. Have the player step in to the batters box and receive the pitches. The player's job is to see the ball well enough to tell you which number is on the pitched ball prior to swinging at the ball.

Grasp Bat Drill

Players assume a ready-to-hit batting stance with bat. Coach stands behind player and grasps barrel of bat and on command, tells the player to swing. Player should attempt to execute a full, normal, hard swing. Coach hangs on to barrel of bat and **does not let go!!!** The barrel of the bat should not ever leave the coach's hands during this drill! If executed

properly, the players' hands will automatically be forced to take an inside out path because the coach, hanging on to the bat, does not allow the bat head to move forward. The player is forced to "pull" the coach and it is this pulling action that forces the players hands and arms into the first portion of an inside-out swing. Player should execute 15 – 20 of these "swings" at each practice. The purpose of this drill is to help players visualize/"feel" an inside out swing.

Bat-to-Shoulder Drill

Players assume a ready-to-hit stance with bat. On command, players trigger, then swing, except instead of executing a full swing, player keeps hands and arms close to the body and tries to stop swing with bat touching outside edge of right shoulder (right handed hitters). When player stops swing, she should have completed a full pivot with back foot; shoelaces should be facing pitcher. Her hips and shoulders should be square to the pitcher and bat should be touching shoulder. The objective of this drill is to promote a compact, inside-out swing.

Live Hitting

Lastly.....NOTHING BEATS LIVE HITTING!! The best hitters do a lot of live hitting (coaches or players pitching to players at game speed.)