

Basics of Hitting

STAGES OF THE SWING

1. Grip
2. Stance and Balance
3. Load
4. Stride
5. Swing
6. Contact Point
7. Finish

GRIPPING THE BAT

- For a right handed batter, the left hand should be above the knob of the bat and the right hand should be above the left.
- For a left handed batter, the right hand should be above the knob of the bat and the left hand should be above the right.
- There should be no space between the hands on the grip of the bat.
- To grip the bat in the proper position in the hands, players should lay the bat handle at top of the palm where the fingers and palm meet, rather than in the deep in the palm.
- The bat should be held at a 45 degree angle roughly six inches above the back shoulder.
- The back elbow should be down and relaxed.
- The grip, hands, and upper body should remain relaxed and not tense.

STANCE AND BALANCE

- The fundamental basis of batting mechanics is balance. Without balance, a productive swing is not achievable.
- Feet should be slightly wider than shoulder width apart, in a comfortable position for the hitter.
- Feet should also be aligned so that the toes are parallel to the side of the batter's box.
- Knees and waist should be slightly bent, so that the hitter is in an athletic position with their weight on the balls of their feet.
- Before starting the swing, the hitter's weight should be evenly distributed on both feet, and shoulders should be level.
- If a player's stance is too wide, they will lose power generated from their lower body.
- If a player's stance is too narrow, they will become unbalanced throughout the swing.
- In the batter's box, players should stand close enough to home plate to be able to cover the outside corner of the plate while swinging.

LOAD

- To load in anticipation for a pitch, the player should shift most of their weight onto their back foot.
- The hands should also shift slightly back away from the ear, but should remain at the same level, not dropping or raising.
- This shift in weight may cause the shoulders to rotate as well. This movement is acceptable as long as it is a very slight rotation.
- Head and eyes stay focused on the pitcher.

STRIDE

- After the load has occurred, the player can trigger the start of their swing by taking a small stride.
- The stride should be a small step forward with the player's front foot. Make sure the front foot remains aligned with the back foot, and the player does not step towards or away from the plate.
- When striding, the player's knees should stay slightly bent so that they are in an athletic position, and their weight should remain on the balls of their feet.
- The hands should remain in the load position during the stride, and there should be minimal movement of the head, shoulders, and arms.

SWING

- Once the front foot has completed the stride, the swing can begin.
- The swing begins as the back hip rotates to drive the hands through the zone.
- As the back hip is rotating towards the ball, the back foot will pivot.
- The front foot should remain stationary as a brace for the swing, but allows the hips to rotate.
- The hands are pulled through the zone to hit the ball on a level plane.
- The hands and bat should go straight to the ball, creating a short swing. A short swing allows for quicker bat speed and better control of the bat, versus a long swing that slows down the hands.
- Shoulders should remain level throughout the swing.
- The player's weight should transfer from back foot to middle of the body.

CONTACT POINT

- The player's head should remain fixed with eyes on the ball at all times.

- The contact point is the location in the swing in which the ball is hit.
- There are three main contact points:
 - Inside-This contact point is roughly one to two feet in front of the inside half of the plate. A pitch in this location should be hit to the pull-side of the field for the hitter or back up the middle of the field.
 - Middle-This contact point is roughly six inches in front of the middle of the plate. A pitch in this location should be hit back up the middle of the field.
 - Outside-This contact point is even with the plate on the outside half of the plate. A pitch in this location should be hit to the opposite field for the hitter.

FINISH

- Once the player has made contact with the ball, they should finish their swing.
- The finish of the swing allows for all of the force generated to be used.
- The hands should continue around the front side of the body with arms extended.
- Both hands should remain gripping the bat.
- The hips and torso should continue to rotate to allow the hands to follow through.
- The head and eyes should still be focused on the point of contact.
- The player should be balanced throughout the entire finish. If they are unbalanced, check their stance to see if they are too wide or too narrow.