

Hitting Part 3: Load To Launch



Skills: The Hitter's Load

You Gotta "Go Back", "Stay Back", "Track The Ball", "React To The Ball", And "Attack The Ball", In Order To "Jack The Ball"

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| <input type="checkbox"/> From proper stance, hands, arms & head positioning ... start load back toward catcher; | <input type="checkbox"/> Elbows stay at 45° angle to ground (<i>DO NOT raise back elbow</i>); |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Start load approximately when pitcher separates his hands; | <input type="checkbox"/> Head moves from center of body to inside back leg; |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Knees, hips, hands & head move slow & controlled together; | <input type="checkbox"/> Hands are tilted (<i>cocked</i>) and arms & weight loaded to "throw" the bat with quickness & power; |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hands move from inside back shoulder to outside of back foot; | <input type="checkbox"/> Head positioned to see ball clearly with both eyes; |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hands move back & up 4 to 6 inches from top of back shoulder to back ear; | <input type="checkbox"/> Feet, knees, hips & shoulders remain squared to plate throughout load with a slight front-side inward turn to coil hips as stride-leg begins to lift; |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hands move together as one to prevent "bat wrap"; | <input type="checkbox"/> Load to strongest, most quick launch (<i>swing</i>) position. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Knob of bat should not point past the catcher's mitt or bat will "wrap" around head; | |

Load Commands

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Load to Launch• Load to Explode• Smooth & Steady | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Slow & Controlled• Sway To Swing• Sway To Spin | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Go Back, Stay Back, Track & Attack | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• You Gotta Go Back Before You Go Forward |
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Drills: The Hitter's Load

Drill #1 – The Weight Shift Drill: Get into your best athletic stance. Put your hands together and let arms hang directly in front of body. Shift weight back toward catcher with knees, hips, shoulders, hands & head moving together. Hands & Head move from center of body to inside of back leg near upper thigh. After pausing momentarily, shift your weight back toward the pitcher in a slow, controlled manner, being careful not to go any further forward than the middle of your body with hands and head (*don't rock back too far with weight ending up over front leg; keep weight centered*). This drill is to help develop a smooth, compact load with your body parts moving as one unit. Repeat this rhythmic exercise 10 to 15 times before you take swings on a tee, as often as needed, until it becomes natural & consistent.

Drill #2 – The Lift & Load Drill: {Part 2 of a 4-part drill called *The Lift, Load, Land & Launch Drill*}

(The Lift) While in your best hitting stance, pick up bat with proper grip and rest barrel on top of back shoulder with elbows touching sides. Hands centered in front of chest with bat knob pointing toward plate at 45°. Slowly & smoothly lift bat off shoulder (*like a slow elevator*), keeping the bat angled at 45°, until hands are 8" to 10" away from body and inside back shoulder. (*This should be a slight up & back, angled lift.*) The thumb on your top hand should be somewhat level with top of back shoulder; Middle of bat parallel with back ear; Barrel of bat behind your back shoulder and NOT "wrapped" around head; Both arms bent at 90° angles; Elbows comfortably pointing toward ground at 45° and level with each other; Shoulders level with each other; Wrists, elbows and shoulders positioned to move together as one unit when loading back to launch position. You should now be in your most relaxed, comfortable pre-load position with your hands, arms, & legs.

(The Load) Now, shift weight back toward catcher as in the above *Weight Shift Drill*, with head stopping inside of back leg. Move hands back from inside back shoulder to outside back foot and up 4 to 6 inches with top hand going from top of back shoulder to somewhat level with back ear. Move hands back together as "*one large hand*" to avoid "*bat wrap*". Don't let knob of bat go past catcher's mitt. **DO NOT** lift front or stride leg at this time (*it will be added to this drill as part 3 when the stride is covered*). This drill is simply to help develop a smooth and rhythmic movement of your knees, hips, shoulders, hands, arms & head, as you load to your launch or swing position. Pause for two seconds to "*feel*" your launch position. Then slowly reverse everything back to where you started in the pre-load position. Continue to do this several times to develop a controlled, consistent, and natural load movement.

Life Lessons: Sin's Heavy Load

In baseball, it's important to have proper balance and weight distribution when it comes to hitting, pitching, fielding, catching, throwing, & baserunning. Pretty much every aspect of the game! These two critical ingredients can work *for* us or *against* us. For example, as a hitter, loading and keeping the weight on the backside is essential to driving the ball with both power and quickness during the swing. If the weight shifts to the front leg too early, the hitter loses the ability to get his legs and hips into the swing effectively, producing a weaker, slower and unproductive hitting result.

In life, the weight of sin can be a huge hindrance to effective & productive living for God. When sin's heavy load weighs us down, we cannot be all that God has created us to be for Him. We can't produce Godly fruit. We get all entangled in the sin and our spiritual growth and Christian influence is hindered. We are not as powerful, and our impact on others is like a "weakly hit groundball" – not very effective. Even worse, our impact may be like a "swing-and-a-miss" – not effective at all. So, if you want to be powerful, effective and productive for God in life, follow the advice given in **Hebrews 12: 1 & 2** "... let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily hinders our progress. And let us run with endurance the race that God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus ..."

Written by Ron Hobar © 2009