

Hitting Part 6a: Start With The Hands



Skills: The Hitter's Hands & Arms During Swing

Beginning your swing with your hands produces quickness, patience and an ability to direct your bat to drive the ball to all parts of the field.

- From your stance, load to proper launch (*swing*) position, as discussed in "*Hitting Parts 1-5*";
- Eyes level & focused on ball; Head steady; Body balanced & ready to react to pitch;
- Make decision to swing (*head tells hands "yes" or "no"*);
- If head says "*no*" to hands ... look ball back into catcher's mitt, while remaining in your loaded position as if you were going to swing at the ball;
- If head says "*yes*" to hands ... throw hands (*knob of bat*) toward ball with both hands working together as "*one hand*";
- Throwing or "*Firing*" your hands quickly to the ball makes your elbows and wrists "snap to the ball, which makes the barrel of the bat "launch through the ball;
- Front arm elbow, forearm and "*karate-chopping*" part of hand should "go to the ball (*this is your "going hand"*);
- Top hand on bat should be "thrown to the ball (*like hammering a nail*) at the exact same time as bottom hand is "going to the ball (*this is your "throwing hand*);
- Goin' & Throwin'* must occur at the same time if the bat barrel is to "*snap*" or "*fire*" through the ball (*producing a compact, quick & explosive swing*):
 - If bottom hand is dominant, bat is pulled through hitting zone;
 - If top hand is dominant, bat is pushed through the hitting zone;
 - Both of these swing faults produce longer, slower & weaker swings, along with more pop-ups, flyballs, groundballs, misses and outs.
- Hands should go down toward the ball @ 45° angle, taking the barrel of the bat into the hitting zone, on a level plain through the ball, like an axe chopping down a tree:
- Remember, you are NOT swinging to the ball, but rather, through the ball.

Drills: The Hitter's Hands & Arms During Swing

Drill #1 – The One Knee Tee Drill: *{Helps you focus on the hands & arms of the swing by removing the hips, legs & feet.}*

Take a tee and set it in front of your body, in line with your front hip. Kneel on backside knee, while extending stride leg straight out in front on an angle to the ground (*to keep it from being hit on the swing*). Push the stem down as far as possible (*or remove it*), positioning the ball on the tee below your waist. Start with head slightly inside or over back knee with hands & arms in launch position (*You will already be in your loaded, launch position and "paused or frozen" there, so you will not need to "go back" again, before you "throw or fire" your hands*). From your "*paused/frozen*" launch position, throw (*fire*) hands directly down to ball at 45° angle, taking the barrel through the ball, and following-through with the bat, high and above front shoulder (*not flat and below shoulder*). Repeat several times from the same starting position. After working on hands & arms starting in the "*paused/frozen*", launch position, add a "*load*" to this drill by starting with your head in the middle of your body; shifting weight back where head stops slightly inside or over back knee; and properly taking hands slightly up & back. Then, swing through the ball as you did in the first part of this drill. Reload and repeat. This drill can also be done while sitting on a bucket and as a soft-toss drill with a partner tossing low, waist-high feeds.

Drill # 2 – Goin' & Throwin' Swings:

- ("*Going Arm*" Swings) Using a tee for this drill, grip a bat with your front-side "*going hand*" (*choking up on a regular-sized bat or using a short or "sawed-off" bat*). Place your backside "*throwing hand*" across your chest and on inside of front-side shoulder. Work on "*going to the ball*" with the knob of the bat, "*karate-chopping*" part of your hand, forearm and elbow, swinging through the ball (*palm-down at contact*), finishing with hand & bat high, above front shoulder. Take 15-20 swings with your "*going arm*".
- ("*Throwing Arm*" Swings) Next, grip the same bat with your backside "*throwing hand*". Place your front-side "*going hand*" across your chest and on inside of backside shoulder. Work on "*throwing*" the knob of the bat and "*karate-chopping*" part of your hand to the ball, snapping & whipping the barrel through the ball (*palm up at contact*), finishing with hand & bat high, above front shoulder. Take 15-20 swings with your "*throwing arm*".
- ("*Goin' & Throwin'* Swings) Finally, take 15 to 20 swings on a tee with both the *goin' & throwin'* working together at the exact same time, using the proper hand & arm swing mechanics, mentioned in the above *Skills* section.

Life Lessons: The Right Direction

The swing in baseball, involves taking your hands in **the right direction** ... to the ball; through the ball; and with a high finish. When you do this with quickness, strength, timing, accuracy and consistency, there is a better chance of getting a great hitting result – a hard-hit ball, to all parts of the field. In other words, you end up with a higher batting average and on-base percentage. **In life**, it's important to be going in **the right direction**, too. Not only with your hands, but also, with your entire body, soul & spirit. God's "*Game Plan For Life*", the Bible, says that **the right direction** is to God; through God (Jesus); and finishing "up high", in heaven with God, for all eternity. Now that's a great result! The Good News is that everyone who commits their life to Christ "*bats 1000*", spiritually speaking, because God's Word says: "*Jesus is the Way, the Truth & the Life. No one comes to God, the Father (in Heaven), except through Jesus*" (**John 14:6**). It also says, "*Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, will be saved*" (**Romans 10:9-13**). If you have not yet given your life to God, then why not do it today? All you have to do is "Go to God, through Jesus (*who is God*), and you will spend eternity with Him, in Heaven." You can't finish higher than that!

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