

Hitting Part 6b: Hips Fire With Hands



Skills: The Hitter's Hips, Legs, Knees, & Feet During Swing

A hitter's hips should rotate explosively when the hands are being thrown to the ball, producing the power needed to drive the baseball.

- 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;
- Use the hands & arms swing mechanics, as discussed in the previous lesson, “*Hitting Part 6a: Start With The Hands*”
- A millisecond after your hands take the knob of the bat to the ball, the hips rotate (*uncoil*), explosively toward the pitcher as the back knee begins to drive down & forward
- toward the front knee and the back foot rotates heel over toes;
- Stride leg locks to form a strong front side (*like a braking system*) for the hips to rotate against;
- At contact, front foot will be slightly closed (*rotating partially during swing*); front knee straight (*locked*); back knee close to front knee; back thigh straight forming classic “*L*” position with back side; and back foot heel off ground;
- Finish swing in good balance with both knees and belly button facing the pitcher.

Drills: The Hitter's Hips, Legs, Knees, & Feet During Swing

Drill #1 – Hips & Feet Rotation Drill: *{This drill focuses on the importance of explosive hips, powerful leg drive and balance from start to finish}* Take the barrel of a bat and place it in your backside hand. Put bat behind your back on your tailbone and grab the handle with your front-side hand (*both palms should be facing forward*). Get in your best athletic stance as described in “*Hitting Part 1: From The Hips Down*”. Push your back hip forward with the barrel of the bat while spinning on your back foot and taking your back knee aggressively down and forward near your front knee. Your back foot heel should end up over your toes; your front foot should spin slightly (*half as much as your back foot*); back leg should form the classic “*L*” position; and both your knees & belly button should be facing the pitcher, ending with good balance. Repeat this over and over until explosive hip rotation, powerful leg drive, and good balance becomes a natural part of your swing (*15 to 20 per day*). You can add a stride to this drill after you master the no-stride version of the drill.

Drill #2 – Front Hip Soft Toss Drill: *{This drill is best done inside a batting cage}*

Both the hitter and coach (*or hitting partner*) set up in traditional soft toss positions (*make sure the “feeder” is off to the side & slightly in front of the hitter to allow for angled feeds to the hitter*). The feeder with a stiff wrist fires the ball, underhand at the hitter's front hip, making sure there is NO arc on the toss. The hitter must be careful NOT to “*open up*” the front-side of his body (*toes, knee, hip & shoulder*) before taking his hands to the ball. The hitter should try to get “*inside the ball*” by taking his hands across his chest (*again ... before opening up any part of his front-side*), and hitting the ball out in front of his body before it hits his hip. The hips will need to “*fire*” or rotate explosively a millisecond after the hands go to the ball, while the back foot spins heel over toes. The goal of this drill is to train the hitter to keep the front-side closed as long as possible to produce a powerful, uncoiling of the hips; quick hands inside the ball; a bat barrel that whips through the ball on the “*sweet spot*” of the bat; and a strong set of legs on every swing. If this drill is done correctly, the ball should be hit directly into the net, about 5 feet in front of the hitter's body, as if it was severely pulled into the dugout. Obviously, this isn't where we want to hit the ball in a game, but it is a great drill for developing powerful hips & legs, along with quick & aggressive hands. Use this drill regularly as part of your soft toss routine (*15-20 swings*).

Life Lessons: God's Power

In baseball, fans love to see the “*long ball*” ... hitter's that display “*power*”. In order for this to happen, many things have to take place during the swing: a “*quiet*” head; level eyes that track the ball into the hitting zone; strong & quick hands; explosive hips; strong legs; a balanced follow-through; and perfect timing. Wow, that's a tall order! However, with much practice and repetitive training, a hitter can become more consistent in hitting the ball with “*power*”.

In life, a person can draw upon their own strength through “*will power*” or the “*power of positive thinking*” or other kinds of “*self-initiated power*”, but this kind of “*self-power*” falls short of producing the consistent result of what our life should look like – a life that pleases and honors our Creator, and that powerfully impacts others for God's “eternal” Kingdom. If you want your life to have this kind of “*lasting power*”, then give your life to Jesus as Lord & Savior and tap into “*God's power*” everyday through His Holy Spirit: “*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you*” (**Acts 1:8 NIV**). In addition, be encouraged by this truth: “*For this reason I raised you up: so that I may display My power in you, and that My name may be proclaimed in all the earth.*” (**Romans 9:17 HCSB**). Finally, live out the principles found in **Galatians 5:16-26**, and watch God bring “*power*” to your life and “*impact on others*” through your life.

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