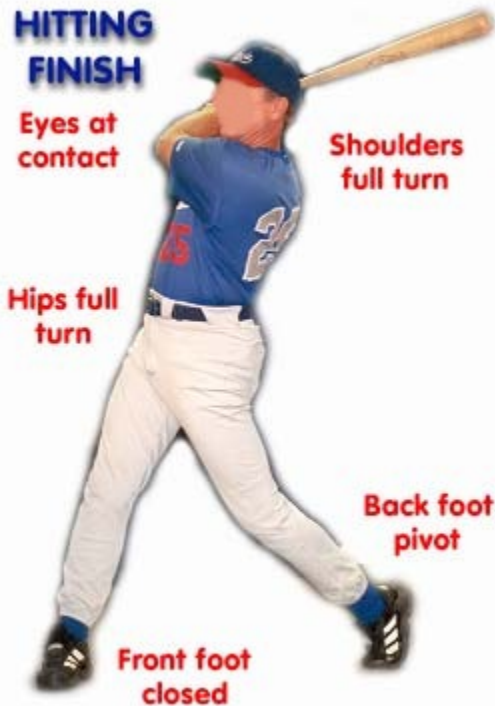


Teaching Hitting



The key to hitting is balance. Without good balance, your players will not be able to maximize the explosive power of the lower half (hips) and will have difficulty controlling their body and the bat as they are swinging. Every time your players swing a bat (outside of game situations) they should freeze - on balance -and hold their finish for three seconds. This will help create muscle memory and outstanding balance.

1. Teach Finish

Place players in their hitting finish as shown at right by having them take a slow-motion swing and freeze. Have them repeat the following terms while holding their finish:

- Front foot closed (front foot remains closed)
- Back foot pivot (back foot pivots 90 degrees as result of hip explosion)
- Shoulder full turn (back shoulder is fully turned)
- Eyes at contact (eyes remain focused at point of contact)

While repeating terms, players make necessary corrections.



2. Teach Objective (Contact Position)

Place players in objective/contact position as shown at left and have them repeat the following terms:

- Front foot closed
- Back foot pivot
- Belly button to pitcher (belly button pointed toward pitcher)
- Hands extended (hands extended toward pitcher from belly button)
- Bat barrel above hands (bat barrel held above hands)
- Eyes at contact

While repeating terms, players make necessary corrections.



3. Teach Trigger or “load” from Objective (Preparation to Swing)

Explain the trigger. It is a slow rotation slightly inward and away from the pitcher which never stops and allows the hips to load in preparation to start the swing at any time. The purposes of the trigger are to time the pitch and to break inertia to get started. There are four hinges to the trigger: front ankle, front knee, front hip and front shoulder. The trigger starts with the hitter raising the front heel slightly and turning the front ankle and knee slightly inward. It is important to emphasize to your players that the trigger is a rotation, and not a swaying of the weight backward.

Place players in the objective/contact position and command the following:

- Hands in - players bring hands in toward belly button about 4-5 inches away from body
- Back foot down - players "un-pivot" back foot
- Triiiiiiggggerrr - players slowly return to stance and slightly beyond

Obviously, your players will not start in their objective during a game, but will instead trigger from their stance. You will teach them to trigger from their stance after you have taught the stance.



4. Teach Stance

Place players in the objective/contact position and command the following:

- Hands in
- Back foot down
- Triiiiiggggerrrr
- Freeze - players freeze after triggering

After freezing upon completion of the trigger, have players point their front shoulder toward the pitcher.

The proper stance is shown at left. Have players repeat the following terms for the stance:

- Toes (toes pointed straight toward home plate)
- Spread (feet spread twice shoulders width for optimum balance)
- Flex (flexed at ankles and knees with weight on balls of feet)
- Waist (slightly bent toward home plate - gets weight on balls of feet)
- Shoulder (front shoulder at pitcher, slightly lower than back shoulder)
- Eyes (level and focused on pitcher)
- Grip (door knocking knuckles lined up, with hands):
 - UP - hands at top of strike zone
 - IN - hands 4-5 inches away from body (too far away creates arm swing)
 - BACK - hands back - even or slightly beyond back shoulder
- Elbows down (elbows pointed down but comfortably away from body)
- Bat angle 45 (bat barrel at 45-degree angle over shoulder)
- 60/40 (60 % of weight on back foot, 40% on front foot)

While repeating terms, players make necessary corrections.