

BREAKING DOWN THE SWING

KEY HITTING POSITIONS

1. Grip
2. Stance
3. Negative Move/Toe Touch/Heel Plant (“Trigger-Stride”)
4. Bat Lag
5. Contact
6. Extension/Finish

Grip

- Hold the bat where the fingers meet the palm (not in the palm or in the finger tips)
- Door knocking knuckles should be lined up (or slightly out of line)
- Hold the bat like a baby bird (too loose it’ll fly away ... too tight, you’ll kill it)

Stance

- Good power position
- Feet should be slightly wider than shoulder width apart (keep the knees inside the feet)
- Slight bend in the knees
- Slight bend at the waist
- Two eyes facing the pitcher
- Always be moving
- The only real problem in the stance if it is too wide, too close or too far from the plate
- Bat should rest in the “notch” of the back shoulder
- Elbows should be down in an upside-down “V”
- Shoulders square to the plate
- Front shoulder **slightly** lower than the back shoulder

Negative Move/Toe Touch/Heel Plant (“Trigger-Stride”)

- Done only with the legs (no hands)
- Keep your head inside the back knee, back knee inside the foot (not knee over foot)
- Start your “negative move” when the pitcher starts
- When the pitcher is ready to release, you better be in the proper position to hit
- On your stride, the front foot touches at 45 degrees (we want a firm front side)
- Keep an equal bend in the knees
- Shoulders turn in slightly and down slightly (the end result is a good “attacking” position – like throwing a punch)
- Hands end up in a strong throwing position – even or behind the back elbow
- Weight is 50/50 front leg/back leg
- Head should be over the belly button
- You want your hitters to have “live and independent hands” (this simply means they work separately from the rest of the body)
- Lead back (into your negative move) with the back elbow
- Your top hand will act as if it is hammering a nail sideways
- The bottom hand will act as if it is throwing a Frisbee (or skipping a rock)
- The hands stay inside (or even with) the front elbow (don’t cast)
- Weight moves to a firm front side (don’t collapse the front leg)

Rotation

- Begins anywhere between toe touch and heel plant
- Initiated by the back elbow
- Back knee stays bent until rotation starts (keep weight on the inside of your feet)
- Rotate off your FRONT hip
- Elbows and hands are in line with the stripe of the pant
- Watch the angle of the bat – must maintain the angle (so your wrists stay strong) – you must have something to “release” (wrist snap to the ball)

Bat Lag

- Knob of the ball faces the pitcher / barrel faces the catcher
- Hands in front of your belly button
- Bat head is on the plane of the pitch
- Want bat to be flat on the plane of the pitch to allow for a larger margin for error

DRILL – bunt tennis balls with bat behind your back side (like a suitcase bunt)

-- batter calls out color / number on the ball as well as identifying contact point on the bat

Contact

- Wrists should be straight ... hands are palm up/palm down (strong position)
- The knee, hip, shoulder are vertically stacked (in line)
- The elbows above the hands, hands above the barrel
- Arms should not be fully extended at contact

Extension/Finish

- Point the end (cap) of the bat barrel to the pitcher
- Hit “through” a long zone
- Finish high
- Keep two hands on the bat as long as possible

Swing Thoughts

Stay **over** the ball (bend at the waist)

Stay **inside** the ball (don't cast with the hands)

Stay **through** the ball (on plane with the pitch as long as we can)

Stay **behind** the ball (look to hit it squarely)

Prepare for inside ... adjust to outside

Prepare for high ... adjust to low

Prepare for fast ... adjust to slow

Move slow to fast -- start sooner and slower

Get in sync with the pitcher! (do this in the on-deck circle)

Find a reason NOT to swing (have a “yes-yes-yes-no” mentality)

It's easier to STOP your swing, then to slow it down or pause it and speed it back up

It's better to be early than late