

ALL - STAR  
BASEBALL  
AND  
SOFTBALL  
HITTING  
DRILLS

By Mister Baseball

# INTRODUCTION

Here in this e-book you will find some of the best hitting drills that will help you become a much better hitter – both for baseball and softball.

Many of these hitting drills have been used by countless players from little league through the college level that will help to improve hand –eye movement, grip, follow through, and batting stance besides helping players to have a quicker, stronger swing when practiced consistently.

The key here, of course, is to practice these drills over and over again with consistency. It is only through much consistent practice that these drills will help anyone – regardless of hitting ability- to see dramatic results.

We here at Mister Baseball are about helping baseball and softball players from all ages and abilities not only succeed in the basics of the game, but to excel to their highest potential.

*Here's to more base hits!*

Mister Baseball

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### **THE SHORTEN YOUR SWING FOR POWER DRILL**

This drill is used to shorten-up a hitters swing. If the batter is too long to the ball or has that A to B to C swing that is considered a slow-pitch softball swing, drills can be used to make the hitter shorten up.

1. The batter sets up with his hands 8 to 10 inches from the fence with the fence behind the batter.
2. The fence should run parallel with the batters back foot. If the batter casts the hands backwards or loops the bat, he will hit the fence or barrier.

### **ROLL YOUR BATS FOR POWER DRILL**

Purpose: To increase bat control and to develop hand, wrist and forearm strength.

Equipment: A bat for each player.

Procedure:

1. The player assumes a stance with their hips facing an imaginary pitcher, swings the bat, starting the swing just prior to the wrist roll.
2. They roll the bat forward and backward, completing a full swing by touching both shoulders with the bat. They should execute the swing using only the forearms and wrists. They repeat the process as quickly as possible, until time has expired or a designated number of repetitions have been completed. The drill can also be done with the player beginning in their normal batting stance.

Coaching Points:

Remind the player to keep their wrist and hands relaxed through out the drill.

Emphasize performing the drill as quickly as possible without sacrificing proper techniques.

Players should feel a torso stretch (hips are open to the pitcher, but the arms are still back) prior to the swing. This will enable them to "feel" keeping the front side closed to pitcher as long as possible.

## **SEE YOUR SHADOW DRILL**

Purpose: To determine the degree of head movement in the baseball swing.

We all know how hard it is to hit a baseball. Every hitting instructor worth his salt acknowledges the importance of a steady head during the swing. The reason is simple: The eyes are the source of information for the body. The information we see (the approaching pitch) must be as accurate as possible in order for us to put an accurate swing on the pitch. If we have excessive head movement then the information we receive will be distorted and therefore an accurate barrel to the incoming pitch will be nearly impossible to achieve.

A good analogy for head movement is this; Pretend that your head is a camera, your body is the tripod and your eyes are the lens! Ideally, we want to 'take pictures' of the pitch as it approaches the plate. If the camera (head) is moving all over the place, the lens (eyes) will take a blurry picture. Keep a steady head and rotate the body under the head during the swing.

Of course, a key point here is that if the player is constantly over-swinging (swinging with all of his/her might) at every pitch, more than likely he/she will have excessive head movement. It is extremely difficult to control head movement during a baseball swing if the player is exerting 100% effort on every swing. What I like to emphasize is for the player to put a smooth swing (perhaps 85% effort) on the ball, concentrating on rotating the body under a steady head. This smooth swing should result in a much more accurate barrel and decidedly less head movement.

So how do you achieve the necessary muscle memory for you to produce this type of swing on a regular basis? Your shadow knows!

1. Step out into your backyard and stand so that the sun is directly at your back.
2. Look on the ground and your shadow should be down there looking back at you. Place an XLR8 Practice Baseball (or a golf ball) on the ground.
3. Grab your bat and get in your stance.
4. Position yourself so that the ball is centered in the shadow of your head .

5. Now take a few swings and determine how far your head is moving by watching where the shadow ends up.
6. Ideally, if you were executing a step-by-step swing (see the six steps to a sweet swing drill), the ball should remain in the center of your head's shadow (or very close to it) through the first five steps.
7. As you finish the sixth step (the follow through) the shadow should move in front of the ball slightly.
8. Progress from slow, methodical, step by step swings to a swing resembling a slow motion film.
9. Continue to increase the speed of the swing until you reach about an 85% effort. These should be powerful, controlled, accurate barrel swings that emphasize the body rotating under the head.

If you are having difficulty in monitoring the position of your shadow during the swing, then enlist the assistance of someone to help keep track of the head movement.

10. For added difficulty have your assistant soft toss XLR8 Practice Balls to you!
11. Now, it becomes extremely important to have an accurate barrel because the target is smaller than an actual baseball.
12. Keeping the head steady will increase the accuracy of the barrel to the ball.
13. Incidentally, you will find that you will have to exert some effort to get the barrel to the ball before it leaves the 'hitting zone'.
14. Concentrate on that 'sweet swing'. The 'sweet swing' that has some power but is also controlled and accurate. This is the swing you want to groove. The swing you want to take to the batter's box with you in every game. You won't get it by wishing for it. You have to work at it.

Consistent use of this drill will transform you into a better hitter. Remember, if you aren't doing your work, your shadow knows!

### **STEP, STEP, HIT! DRILL**

One of the most common faults with young hitters is stepping out. This drill is used to COMBAT THAT BAD HABIT.

1. The hitter sets up to start the drill one step behind where he should be when he hits the ball.
2. The hitter will step toward the plate with the back foot first then the front foot.
3. When the front foot hits the ground the batter will attack the ball. There should be no hesitation.
4. Step, step, HIT! The hitter will develop the habit of stepping into the ball when he attacks it.

His momentum is going toward the plate during this drill so it is very difficult for the hitter to step out.

### **KNEE-HANDS BATTING DRILL**

Purpose: To improve proper hitting mechanics To increase hand, wrist and forearm strength.

Equipment: A swift stick, whiffle balls and a batting tee

Procedure:

1. The batting T is placed approximately 10 feet from the net. The player assumes a stance with he back knee on the ground and their front foot flat on the ground, creating approximately a 90-degree angle with their foot leg.
2. A whiffle ball is place on the tee and the hitter grips the swift stick in their back hand and swings through the ball.
3. This drill is repeated for a designated period of time and then the hitter switches the swift stick to their front hand and repeats the drill again.
4. This drill can also be done with tennis balls.
5. Once the player has the mechanics master, they can use a bat and baseballs/softballs. This drill can also be done off a soft toss. This drill should be performed for a prescribed period of time or a designated number of repetitions.

Coaching Points:



Emphasize performing the drill quickly without sacrificing proper techniques.

Emphasize the body remaining "tall", unlocking the shoulder, elbow and wrist in that order upon hitting the ball.

## **BASEBALL/SOFTBALL HAND-EYE VISION DRILLS**

### **Hitting Drills**

#### **Colored Horseshoe of Baseball**

1. This drill is used to warm up the eyes for live pitching.
2. Color the ball between the inside seams and have the pitcher throw a variety of pitches from the mound or 60 feet 6 inches.
3. In this drill, the batter picks up the spin as quickly as possible, calls out the pitch, and watches the ball into the catcher's mitt.
4. If the batter has trouble identifying the pitch before he throws it, this helps the batter pick up the type of pitch if they don't recognize it at the release point. (Don't hit the ball, just call it in flight.)

#### **Colored Baseballs**

1. Use 2-3 colored baseballs:  
-----Red = Take  
-----White = Hit Away  
-----Green = Drag
2. The batter must react to the color of the ball as soon as he/she recognizes the color.
3. The drill can be used with live pitching or soft toss.

#### **Soft Toss/Self Toss**

1. Use Practice balls and toss the balls to yourself, hitting to all fields.
2. The following drills or wrinkles to these drills can be added to make the task of hitting much more difficult and force better concentration by the

batter.

3. Use a Training Bat, or bat smaller than your regular bat.
4. The tosser calls the field (right, left, center) he/she wants the ball hit as soon as the ball is about to be tossed. If the batter hits the ball to the wrong field or pops the ball up, the players switch positions. The batter can take pitches or the tosser can call for the batter to take a pitch. If the batter swings on a take call, he's out and the players switch.
5. The batter closes his/her eyes and opens them when the tosser calls "open." The batter can take pitches or the tosser can hold the ball. If the player swings and no ball is thrown or pops the ball up the players switch.

### **THE QUICK RELEASE DRILL**

This drill teaches the player to pick up the pitch at the release point and to keep his/her head down on the swing.

1. The batter calls out the number of fingers, 1-5, that the pitcher throws at the batter, swings and again calls out the number of fingers that a coach has flashed after the bat passes the plate.

2. The coach flashing the numbers stands 5-6 feet in front of the outside corner of the plate.

3. The drill can be made more difficult by having the pitcher use a ball and show pitches to the hitter without releasing the ball.

4. The hitter would make the visual shift to the plate and hit a ball off a tee after calling out the pitch.

To make the drill even harder, replace the single tee with a double tee, placing the inside tee (higher) about 3-4 feet in front of the inside corner and the second tee (lower) equal to the front point of the outside corner.

5. The batter is now forced to see the ball at the release point and react to the

pitch (FB, Curve, etc.) If the pitcher show fastball, the batter must turn and pull the ball off the inside tee. If the batter reads off speed pitch, the batter must drive the ball to right field off the outside tee. (Reverse the tees for a left-handed batter.)

### **BASIC HAND-EYE VISION DRILLS**

1. Hold a pencil at arm's length. Focus on the pencil's number and move the pencil toward you.
2. When the number begins to blur, extend your arm and begin again.
3. Then, hold one pencil in each hand one as close to your face as possible without the number blurring, and the other at arm's length.
4. Focus first on the near pencil (you may notice the distant pencil blurring into two images).
5. Then stare at the far pencil. Alternate your focus, gradually increasing your speed.
6. Do each exercise for five minutes, rest five minutes and repeat.
7. Put press-on letters on a Wiffle ball, then hang the ball by a string in a doorway.
8. Twist the string and, while the ball turns, identify as many letters as possible.
9. Perform for three minutes, rest three minutes and repeat.

### **BUNT PEPPER DRILL**

This is a great drill to develop bunting skills.

1. The drill involves 5 players in each group.
2. The players may use the pivot or square around bunt technique.
3. The batter must bunt the ball to each of the four fielders.

4. The hitter bunts one to each and then takes the left fielders (facing the batter) place.
5. The right fielder comes to bat and the other move over one place.
6. The coach should emphasize that the batters bunt the ball softly to the fielders.
7. The bat should be keep at a 45 degree angle and the batter should change height by bending the knees.
8. Fielders should catch the ground ball, bare-handed, out front, then square the feet around and throw the next strike to the hitter. This makes a great warmup drill for the beginning of practice.

Defensive skills should also be stressed.

### **DOUBLE TEE (INSIDE/OUTSIDE) PITCH LOCATION DRILL**

Purpose: To develop the proper mechanics necessary to hit a pitch in any location and to all fields.

Equipment: A bat, softballs, two batting tees (or a double tee) and a net.

Procedure:

1. The batting tees are positioned with one high and inside and the other low and outside.
2. The hitter assumes their normal batting stance at an appropriate distance from the first tee. On command, they execute the proper swing necessary to pull through the high-inside pitch and quickly returns to the ready position. As soon as he or she is ready, they hit the low-outside ball to the opposite field, adjusting their swing accordingly. The tee position can be altered at the coach's discretion (high-outside, inside-belt high, outside-belt high, etc.). This drill should be performed for a prescribed period of time or a designated number of repetitions.

Coaching Points:

Emphasize concentrating on pitch location.

Emphasize using the proper techniques.

The drill should be preformed daily in the early part of the season.

All elements of the swing should be critiqued.

### **WEIGHT BACK DRILL**

1. The batter stands about 20 feet away from the pitcher.
2. The pitcher takes a tennis ball and bounces the ball so that the ball ends up in the strike zone.
3. With bouncing the balls the hitter will tend to jump out on his or her front foot.

This drill will allow he or she to stay back in the load and keep his or her weight back so that they can explode on the ball. This drill really works because not only will it keep their weight back, it allows them to see it come out of the pitchers hand just like they were pitching an off speed pitch.

### **THE “COUNT IS FULL”GAME DRILL**

This is a great game simulation drill that teaches hitters to be aggressive and to hit under pressure.

1. Two teams face off in a 7 inning game with each batter coming into the box with a full count.
2. Action is quick and players must be alert both offensively and defensively.
3. The count may also be changed to 2-2 and each team can be given one out to start the inning.

### **UPPER BODY POWER HITTING DRILL**

Purpose: To isolate and work on the hip rotation and upper body mechanics.

Equipment: A bat, balls, tee and a net

Procedure:

1. The player steps to the stop where the front foot would be after the stride and starts in that position.
2. They swing and concentrate on the pivot, hip rotation and movement of the upper body. They drive the front shoulder to the outside corner of the plate. They keep the head down and looks inside the tee after contact. The goal is to hit a hard line drive off the tee. This drill should be performed for a prescribed period of time or a designated number of repetitions.

Variation: Put a target on a fence (a square of tape or a paper plate) for players to attempt to hit. They should avoid lifting their heads to watch the flight of the ball. They start 10 feet from the fence. As the players move further back, it becomes more difficult for them to hit the target because the degree of error has increased.

Coaching Points:

Emphasizing keeping their head down and not watching the flight path of the ball.

Emphasize using the upper body and hips, not the lower body.

Emphasize using proper techniques.

### **THE HIT THE WALL BALL DRILL**

This is a great off season skill building activity. It develops both offensive and defensive skills.

1. The game is played with 3 players on a team.
2. On defense, one pitches and two play defense.
3. The object of the game is to be the first team to score 21.
4. You score by hitting a linedrive or ball in the air that hits the wall in a designated or target area.
5. The target area is normally a 6x12 rectangle that is attached to the wall or fence. The target may be larger if space so allows.

The rules for the game are as follows:

- A. Each team gets three outs per inning.

- B.** Outs are hit balls caught before they hit the wall or floor.
- C.** Foul tips, foul balls, and swing without contact are outs.
- D.** Each player gets one swing of the bat. Something must happen, if the ball is a strike.
- E.** The batter decides if a ball is a strike.
- F.** Ground balls are not outs. They serve to keep the inning alive. You do not get a run for ground balls.
- G.** Flyballs that go above the target are outs.
- H.** Balls may be batted down by defenders to prevent a score. However, batted balls that touch the target before they touch the floor are scored as a run.

The winning team must win by two. A tournament bracket is drawn and teams play for the championship. Coaches and parents are encouraged to play on teams. Each team may use only one bat. The bat never touches the ground or floor until the inning is over.

### **THE BATTING BALANCE BEAM DRILL**

Here's a drill you may find useful.

1. Construct a batting beam with pieces of 2" x 4"s.
2. The main piece should be about 4' long.
3. Two cross pieces about 18" should be nailed about 16" from each end of main piece.
4. Have player stand on this during soft toss.
5. The player should remain on beam throughout swing.

The beam encourages the batter to be on the balls of the her feet and to maintain a balanced swing. It also helps the batter to take their timing step straight to the pitcher. The players don't like this beam at first, but it does help.

### **THE “SUPER”BARRIER DRILL**

1. Have the batter stand one bat length from a barrier (I prefer a net to prevent damage to the bat, but you can use a fence).
2. Have THEM take her normal swing.
- 3.If HE OR SHE hits the barrier, they are unlocking their elbows before their shoulders and getting wide on the swing.

### **THE “SUPER” REAR BARRIER DRILL:**

- 1.Place a barrier directly behind the batter and have them take their normal swing.
- 2.If the bat hits the barrier, they are dropping her hands.
- 3.You can use this barrier even when you are using a pitching machine or live pitching for instant feedback to the batter that he or she is dropping their hands.



