

Hitting Tips

What size bat should I get?

You should swing the biggest bat that you are totally comfortable with. You should be able to swing fully and yet control the bat totally. If the bat keeps pulling you at the end of the swing, or you have to use your body to get it started, it is too big. Try a bat in the real world before buying one in the store. The team or a friend may have a bat you can borrow in the size you are considering. Here are some general guidelines on length:

Player Age	Bat Length	or...	Player Height	Bat Length
5-7	24" - 26"		5' - 5'2"	31"
8-9	26" - 28"		5'2" - 5'4"	32"
10-11	28" - 30"		5'5" - 5'10"	33"
11-12	30" - 32"		5'10"+	34"
13-14	31" - 32"			
15-16	32" - 33"			
17+	34"			

Or you can use both height and weight to get bat size. These are general guidelines – not hard and fast rules.

Your Weigh (lbs.)	Your Height in Inches									
	36-40	41-44	45-48	49-52	53-56	57-60	61-64	65-68	69-72	73+
	Bat Length (in inches)									
<60	26	27	28	29	29					
61-70	27	27	28	29	30	30				
71-80		28	28	29	30	30	31			
81-90		28	29	29	30	30	31	32		
91-100		28	29	30	30	31	31	32		
101-110		29	29	30	30	31	31	32		
111-120		29	29	30	30	31	31	32		
121-130		29	29	30	30	31	32	33	33	
131-140		29	30	30	31	31	32	33	33	
141-150			30	30	31	31	32	33	33	
151-160			30	31	31	32	32	33	33	33
161-170				31	31	32	32	33	33	34
171-180						32	33	33	34	34
180+							33	33	34	34

How can I be a better hitter?

1. Practice
2. Watch good hitters hit (then copy them)
3. Try to do what your coach tells you to do
4. Learn the science and mechanics of hitting

What are some of the basic mechanics?

1. Throw your hands at the ball – wherever your hands go, the bat must follow. Worry less about swinging the bat. Your hands must dominate the swing.
2. Stay balanced – Do not hurl your whole body at the ball. Control your body and let the hands and bat do the work.
3. Loose grip in the base of your fingers – Get the bat out of the palm of your hand but not all the way into your fingertips. Keep it relaxed.
4. Keep the barrel back – Let your hands and the knob the bat go forward, with the barrel coming around at the end.
5. Start slow/finish fast – Don't try to go from a frozen batting stance to full speed all at once. This makes it very difficult to control the bat. Get yourself going slowly and when you are sure your hands are headed for the ball, then let the bat come around.
6. Load – a little backward motion at the beginning of the swing is a good thing. It helps you control the forward motion.
7. Get extended – hit the ball out front with extended arms. The extra leverage dramatically increases bat speed and high bat speed=long distance bombs.

What are some common myths and mistakes?

1. *Squishing the bug* – Nobody who hits well does this. Grinding your back foot into the ground at the beginning of the swing only hurts the swing. A hitter's back leg does turn, but it happens at the end of the swing, not the beginning.
2. *Throwing the barrel of the bat at the ball* – You want the barrel to stay back. If it comes away from your body too soon, it will pull your hands with it.
3. *Throwing your hips before bringing the hands forward* – Do this and you will have transferred a lot of weight before even hitting the ball. Don't use a twisting motion in your body to get the hands out front.
4. *The baseball swing is different from the softball swing* – No it isn't. It's all about bringing maximum bat energy to the spot you want and the mechanics are the same.
5. *So then why are softball pitchers always striking out baseball players on TV?* – Because baseball players are used to their pitch coming from 20 feet further away than it does on a softball field and because that pitch comes from higher up. Baseball players and softball players can hit the other pitching just fine when they practice it.
6. *I just struck out/grounded out/flied out so I must stink at this game* – Ridiculous! This is a game of failure and hitting a softball is a really hard thing to do. It is also a game of luck. Even the best players fail more often than they succeed. If it were easy, you wouldn't need to do all this practice and clinics and so on...and it wouldn't be as rewarding when you finally succeed.
7. *I just spent \$250 on a bat. Now I'll make the all-star team* – Sorry but you need to worry more about being a good hitter than the technology in your bat. Softball players (in this league!) were hitting home runs long before they started putting carbon fiber in bats and using computers to design them.