

6 Keywords to Proper Hitting

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1. Stance

Everyone's batting stance varies (open, neutral or closed), however, all stances require a general "athletic stance". An "athletic stance" consists of your feet being slightly more than shoulder width apart, feet pointing forward, weight on the balls of your feet, a slight bend at the knees and waist.

2. Rhythm

Once you have obtained your stance and you must go through your rhythm. Rhythm is a certain aspect that you do prior to the pitcher beginning their wind-up. Some hitters will swing the bat back and forth a few times, others may bring their bat to regular point of contact. There needs to be a certain aspect that makes you feel confident, relaxed and ready to achieve the set position.

3. Set

The set position is obtained when the pitcher is ready to begin his/her wind-up. Your bat will be raised to your back shoulder area pointing upward (do not point it straight back, down or wrap it around your head).

Your back elbow can be up or down. If your preference is up, the highest it should be is parallel with your shoulder. If your preference is down, it should not be tight against your body. Your front elbow will always point down and it should be at least a few inches from your body.

Your weight should be evenly distributed (50% / 50%) on the balls of your feet (not your "tippy toes" or flat footed).

Your eyes must be at level and chin should be looking over your front shoulder. Don't peek or tilt your head.

Remember to have some relaxed movement (eg. Slight bat or hip movement, some players squeeze and release their grip around the bat) in your set position so you do not become rigid and tense while waiting for the ball to be released.

4. Trigger and Step

The trigger and step takes place when the pitcher is at his/her release point. The trigger involves your front foot coming off the ground and your front knee turning slightly inward. This action causes you to load up your backside. Your shoulders should not turn from where they are in the set position, *dot on shoulder. Your front foot steps toward the pitcher (3-6 inches) from where it was in the stance/ set position and must remain exactly the same at the point of contact.

5. Point of Contact

There are a few essential aspects that you must do in order to reach the point of contact with the most bat control speed.

Once you have achieved your trigger and step position, your first movement involves rotating on the ball of your back foot, as if you are squishing a bug. Your front foot remains closed & your back leg should be bent, with 70-80% of your weight "sitting" on it. Having your back leg straight will force your weight forward, which you want to avoid.

For a right-handed hitter, if you were to draw a straight line from the middle of their head to the ground it would go through their head and chest, down their right leg and through their right kneecap to the ground.

You will find that your upper body rotates naturally as you rotate your back foot. Once you have begun to rotate your back foot (keep your front foot closed & weight back) your bat must take a direct line to the ball as if you are "chopping with your bat" into the side of a tree. You want to avoid a looping swing as it will decrease your bat speed.

At the point of contact your arms should be slightly bent and away from your body, not fully extended and reaching.

6. Extension/ Follow-Through

Your extension involves your bat pointing at the pitcher, arms fully extended. Your follow-through can be one or two handed, personal preference.

One of the best ways to improve your swing is to practice hitting off a "T". Hitting off a "T" only takes 1 person. 1"T", 1 ball & 1 bat. Working with a partner also allows you to correct each other.