

Favorite Hitting Drills

"Half-Time" Baseball

<http://www.hit2win.com/> This is a drill used to teach young hitters to "go with the pitch", "hit behind the runner", and to "use the whole field". The drill uses only 1/2 of the field. Normally it's used for righted-handed dominated teams, so we use the right side of the diamond.

The drill teaches players to hit to the right side. The players compete against each other. They get one run when they safely reach first base on a hit or error. They get two runs if they hit a double which is the best you can do with one swing of the bat. They are out if they fail to reach safely. Any ball hit to the left side of second base is an out.

A coach pitches and players play the right side positions. After the batter reaches 1B or 2B safely and the play is over, the batter comes back to the dugout. Players should keep up with everyone's score and outs. All players play defense and bat.

Each batter is allowed three outs before they go to play defense. When a batter makes his third out he goes to play right field and the defensive players rotate. Gloves are left against the fence behind 1B when the batters come in to hit. The position rotation is from 9 to 8 to 4 to 3. The first baseman comes to bat when a player goes out to play defense. The drill can also be set up with teams competing. When a left-hander comes to the plate, the ball must be "pulled" to score. Batters are allowed to take until they get a pitch in a location that they know can be hit to the right side. This teaches them to read a pitch before reacting.

Top-Hand Drill

The top hand on the grip is the hand that takes the bat to the ball. It is important to develop strength and skill with this hand. To do this we do a one-handed isolation drill. The batter uses just the top hand. Gripping the bat at the top of the grip and using the bat like a tomahawk, the batter tries to get over the top of the ball and hit it into the ground. The batter has a coach or player soft toss the ball above the waist. The batter hits the ball from the top and drives it straight into the ground.

Power Hand Drill

A hitter's power comes from the bottom or pull hand. This drill develops bottom hand strength. The hitter uses only the bottom hand in its regular position near the knob of the bat. The hitter hits a ball into a screen. The coach must make sure that the ball is above the batter's waist. It is best for the ball to be numbers high. The batter steps into the ball and hits it one-handed. Suggested - 25 Swings - 3 Times a week.

Multiple Locations Contact Drill

The hitter is given three pitch locations to practice hitting; inside, away and middle. The ball may be presented to the batter using soft toss or batting tee, or Hitting Stick. On the inside location, the batter must learn to involve the hips and turn on the pitch, pulling it. On the middle pitch the batter hits the ball dead up the middle. On the away pitch, the batter makes sure to take the ball to the opposite field. The coach may want to put spots on the ground showing where the batter attacks each pitch location. The inside pitch is attacked on a spot located in front of the plate. The middle pitch is attacked on a spot located just behind the instep of the hitter's front foot. The away strike is attacked on a spot located just inside of the hitter's back foot. Suggested - 20 At Each Location - 3 Times Weekly.

Two Ball Soft Toss

The hitter learns to concentrate and keep the weight back. The coach tosses two balls. The coach calls top or bottom after the balls are released. The hitter hits the called ball into the fence or screen. This drill can be done from different locations. The coach should also fake toss and change the release points as well as vary the speed of the balls.

Short-Toss BP

One of the best misconceptions in baseball is that to benefit from batting practice the pitcher must be at regular distance and throw game speed. Much more can be accomplished when the pitcher throws from shorter than the regular distance. At this distance the pitcher has better control and more work is accomplished. The ball is thrown at a steady appropriate speed. The speed at this distance should make the batter develop a quicker bat and greater skill.

The coach should never do this drill without an L-screen. In absence of an L-screen, this drill can also be performed with regular or golf-ball sized wiffles.

Visual Hitting Lines

This is a great team drill! Have players line-up in lines at distances safely separating themselves, as if they were doing exercises. The team will then do dry swings together. The coach will be the pitcher. Each player will visualize the ball being released and coming into the strike zone. Different locations are hit and the coach may use verbal commands such as ready, trigger, find, see, hit, finish or freeze.

* The freeze command should be used to freeze the players at the finish position. Check to see if the front foot is correct and slightly closed and the back foot has turned or squashed the bug.

* The players should learn to use general visual focusing when finding a pitchers release point. What this means is that the hitter visually concentrates on an object or spot on the pitchers body such as the letter on his cap. When the pitchers arm comes forward the hitter moves his focus to the arm and finds the ball and release point.

2-Strike 'Wall Ball' Game

This is a great drill that teaches hitters to be aggressive and to hit under pressure. Two teams face off in a 6-inning game with each batter coming into the box with a 2-2 count.

Action is quick and players must be alert both offensively and defensively.

* It develops both offensive and defensive skills. The game is played with 4 players on a team. On defense, a coach pitches and two play infield and two play outfield. The object of the game is to score as many points as a team can before three are out – 'pitcher's hand'. You score by hitting a line-drive or groundball for a single (1 point), double (2 points), and 3 points for a triple. When playing on a walled field, score 2 points for a ball that reaches the wall – no doubles or triples.

Full Count Game

This is a great game simulation drill that teaches hitters to be aggressive and to hit under pressure. Two 6-man teams face off in a 6-inning game with each batter coming into the box with a full count – but no walks can be issued. Action is quick and players must be alert both offensively and defensively. Coaches will pitch and play 1st base. After 3 are out, players change sides.

Step in Drill

One of the most common faults with young hitters is stepping out. This drill is used to combat that bad habit. The coach may use soft-toss or a hitting stick. The hitter sets up to start the drill one step behind where he should be when he hits the ball. The hitter will step toward the plate with the back foot first then the front foot. When the front foot hits the ground the batter will attack the ball. There should be no hesitation. 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.

Improve Your Practice! Improve Your Game!