

Upper Body Mechanics

4 Points of Upper Body Mechanics

- A. Concentrating on seeing the baseball
- B. Good trigger with hands at same time the hitter strides
- C. Development of compact inside out swing directly to ball using all fields
- D. Follow-through position

Visual Tracking of Baseball

- A. Good hitters do not concentrate on seeing whole baseball. They pick out a dot in the center of ball. Example: looking at a clock - don't look at minute and hour hands, but rather where they intersect in the middle.
- B. Good hitters watch pitchers in the bullpen or during warm-up pitches and focus on:

- 1. Release point
 - a. Over the top - lacks sink or run
 - b. $L \frac{3}{4}, \frac{3}{4}$ or side arm - arm side run with potential sink

This determines where they should look prior to release.

- 2. Soft focus around release point - one foot area around release point without looking at ball
- 3. Eyes are level for good depth perception, concentrating on center of ball instead of whole ball.
- 4. At the point of contact the hitter's head should be looking down the back arm.
- 5. Drills during batting practice, "T" work, soft toss - the head is left down over back of shoulder at point of contact, not where ball is going
- 6. Problems - Head flies off front shoulder - hitter hits from memory where he last saw the baseball 8 to 12 feet in front of the plate - with sink, run, or curve, it probably won't be there.

* Humanly impossible to see the ball hit the bat. Goal is to track the ball out of the pitcher's hand and see the bat hit the ball as close to the bat as close as you possibly can.

Visual Tracking Points

1. Visually focus on center of ball
2. Gather information by watching opposing pitchers in bullpen or during warm-ups
3. Focus on release point when the pitcher delivers the ball
4. Eyes down back arm at contact
5. Keep head down and eyes down on point of contact
6. Visual tracking is most important component of successful hitting

Three Points of Tracking a Baseball Out of the Strike Zone

1. Tracking a pitch with weight back
2. Always take a pitch in perfect hitting position in case at last minute you decide it is a good one to swing at
3. Take a pitch and turn head when tracking ball into catcher's mitt

Visual Tracking Drills

1. Batting glove on throwing hand during BP or toss drills
2. Head down back arm and call number of fingers
3. Color ball drill
4. Drop drill - drop ball from bill of hat, then drop ball from neck
5. Two ball side toss - vertical and horizontal
6. Use smaller bat during drills - Fungo or broom handle
7. Use smaller balls during drills

Trigger (hands)

1. Allows you to get the bat going and overcome inertia. Example: two base runners racing to steal second base. One has walking lead, one starts at standstill. One with walking lead will win.
2. Create bat speed - allows hitter to win the race of the bat barrel to the ball
3. Should be 3 to 4 inches past back shoulder - no more

Common Faults with Triggers

1. Bottom hand only works - barrel with wrap around the head
2. Hands away from body - loose control of barrel
3. Too much trigger - lead arm becomes barred out
4. Shoulders only trigger - long swing or hooking around baseball

Lead-ups for Trigger

1. On one knee without bat, hands from front shoulder back
2. On one knee without bat, hands swing from mid-line of body back
3. On one knee without bat, hands from the back shoulder back
4. Standing with bat, step, stride, swing

Upper Body Trigger Drills

1. Step, stride, swing drill - "T"
2. "L" screen drill
3. "Clemente Drill" - one knee, side toss
4. Standing Post Stride - side toss
5. Cords - toe to bottom hand

Inside Out Stroke

1. Want to keep hands close to body and inside baseball with extension at point of contact
2. Very hard to defend because you use entire field
3. After a hitter triggers by taking hands back, the hitter will take hands back down the same channel toward the baseball (knob down)
4. During this action the front arm forms a "V" until the point of contact where the front arm will extend through the baseball
5. Extension before will cause an arm bar or hooking around the baseball causing the swing to be long

Lead Ups

1. ABC swings
2. Fence Drill
 - a. Knob of bat to stomach/barrel on fence
 - b. Back shoulder to fence

Common Problems that Cause a Long Slow Swing

1. Hands away from body
2. Bar on front side
3. Too heavy of bat
4. Hooking around ball - hands outside of ball
5. Top hand rolls over baseball

Drills

1. Rope at 45 degree angle "T" work
2. BP with Fungo/Torpedo bat (long bat)
3. Double "T" work
4. Short bat - Top hand drill
5. Trash cans
6. Back Toss Drill - toss ball inside to outside
7. Cords

Advantages of Inside Out Swing

1. Hit to all fields
2. Difficult to pitch and defend
3. More consistent contact
4. Increases bat speed
5. More power
6. Visually track ball closer to bat

Follow Through Points

1. Low pitch - finish high
2. Middle pitch - finish flat
3. High pitch - finish flat

Drills - "T" Work

1. High T
2. Low T