

THE SWING

HANDS INSIDE THE BALL

If we have done everything close to correct, we should now be in a pretty good position to ARRIVE ON TIME and hit the ball.

It is time for the hand eye coordination to take over.

- ✓ The hands will initially swing down to the level of the ball (if you are not swinging down, it is not a strike).
- ✓ Think quick to the ball.
- ✓ The bottom hand is the engine, let the bottom hand Pull the bat down to the level of the ball.
- ✓ As the hips rotate, Pull the bat handle down on an "Inside the Ball" path.
- ✓ The back elbow should be rather close to the side, if pulling on an inside path, this should happen normally.

By doing this, the barrel of the bat will drag behind the hands and once on the same level as the ball stay in the hitting zone - giving the batter a larger margin of error if the timing is a little late or early.

- The batter should focus (and practice) on having one Palm Down (bottom hand) and one Palm Up (top hand) during the swing and at contact.

The top hand should not turn over until AFTER contact has been made.

* One way to visualize the "hands inside the ball" swing is to look at the batter's box line running parallel to home plate. Think about pulling your bottom hand down this line with the bat's barrel dragging behind and over the plate to contact.

* Another good way to practice and emphasize this pulling of the bottom hand inside the ball is to place a ball on a tee and position the tee for an inside corner pitch. With the batter standing in a normal position in the box, focus on the batter pulling the bottom hand inside this pitch and hitting the ball on the barrel of the bat.

- As the batter approaches ideal impact, emphasize that the batter is hitting against a "strong front side". This is with a straight to slightly flexed front leg and creates leverage for quick hip rotation and creates resistance for the body to pull the bat head through the zone.



- The head stays steady.

If the information provided by the visual system never changes you will have greater success in contacting the ball. Of course, the ball will move more in the last few feet. This is partially due to it losing speed and having gravity affect its path. This is why hitting is so difficult.

The key is not to have information change (the brain computing where the ball and bat head will meet) as a result of anything the batter does. If information changes because of the talent of the pitcher throwing a moving fastball, or fantastic curve, so be it. Tip your hat. If the hitter keeps his head still, he has a better than average chance to succeed. Trust your hands.

- Extension at ideal impact (Power V)

The key to being a good hitter is being able to hit the ball with authority. If you don't power through the ball, you may as well bunt every time. You have to accelerate through the ball much like a boxer punches through a heavy bag. Contact is important, accelerating through the contact point is imperative.

- ❖ The hands do not roll over.
- ❖ Knee Drive and Hip Rotation against a Strong Front Side powers the bat head through the zone.
- ❖ The player's head looks directly down the 'V', chin down.
- ❖ Some players lift off the rear foot as a result of the tremendous centrifugal force generated by the bat head, transferring even more body weight through contact.
- ❖ You have arrived on time, now accelerate through the pitch to extension (Power V) and drive the ball.



Back Knee Drive, Strong Front Side, One Palm Up, One Palm Down after impact (hands have not rolled over), Head centered over body and really nice Extension through the ball resulting in the Power V.

- Finish the Swing!

Here is where the hands finally roll over. The wrists are required to roll in order to re-direct the forces generated by the swing. This wrist rolling also allows the bat head to decelerate more naturally.

If the wrists were to remain firm it would act as a brake to the bat and the player would lose power and distance.

The famous Charlie Lau theory was to release the top hand to prevent the bat head from decelerating as a result of this resistance. This created more extension in the swing and, according to some experts, more power to the baseball. Problems occur when most young player's release too soon and therefore lose vital control of the bat head's path.

The key points to a good finish:

- ❖ The top hand rolls over.
- ❖ The bottom hand rolls over and the wrist collapses.
- ❖ The hands finish at the shoulder, slightly above or slightly below. The finish is often dependent on the individual and various theories exist. It should be a fairly natural end to the swing.
- ❖ The bat head wraps around the back of the hitter.

The great announcer Vin Scully has a wonderful saying about players that have warning track power; balls that don't quite get over the fence for a homerun. "One more biscuit for breakfast and that baby is gone!" Well, you can find that "one more biscuit" in your finish.

Don't decelerate the bat head after you hit the ball. Continue powering through the ball and let the bat wrap around your back before it stops.

By ingraining the muscle memory into these steps of the swing it will insure that the player executes them in the proper sequence during that short time span. Repetition will mold the steps into a Fundamentally Strong Swing.

- Practice them in stop form one phase at a time: Load - stop, Step to Toe- stop, Drop the Heel, Drive the Back Knee - stop, Hips & Hands to Ideal Impact Position - stop, Extension to Power V- stop, Finish - stop.
- Progress to slow motion movements where the stops have less time in between them. Do this slow motion swing over and over and over in proper sequence. Go back to the stops. Over and over and over. When you find yourself out of synch during BP or Soft Toss, go through your steps in slow motion to remind your body of the proper sequence.
- ✓ Stand in front of a mirror and rehearse your swing in slow motion, understand the swing and the positions you are trying to achieve.
- ✓ Practice your swing every day. Even if it is 20 good practice swings in the backyard, it will build muscle memory.
- ✓ Remember to take your practice swings exactly like you are swinging the bat in a game.
- ✓ The very beginning of the swing is NOT level at all. It is a DOWNWARD movement and only levels out at the point of contact.
- ✓ Short and quick to the ball is far better than long and strong.
- ✓ Short and quick to the ball, extension through the ball.