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# Ultimate Hitting Drills

Welcome to Ultimate Hitting Drills! In this book, we are going to begin with a brief introduction to hitting basics, then review 56 time-proven drills to increase your hitter's bat speed, power and mechanics.

Each drill is marked with one of a degree of difficulty, then explained with step by step instructions. You'll learn how to set up and execute the drill, as well as some specific coaching tips and variations to use with your team.

There are 10 basic rules that should be followed at all times, which will ensure you have a safe, productive workout and will help you ultimately achieve your goal of becoming a better hitter.

1. **Concentrate** –Do the drill with a purpose!
2. **Perform at Game Speed** –There's no point in practicing at 80%. Prepare yourself for game situations by practicing like it's a game situation.
3. **Be Safe** – Check around, make sure to give the heads up if there's anyone else on the field, wear helmets when appropriate and double check equipment to make sure it's not falling apart.
4. **Don't Overdo It** – Make sure to take breaks to give your body a chance to heal, and to avoid the bad habits that come with practicing through exhaustion.
5. **Maintain Control** – Don't swing or pitch wildly.
6. **Follow the Degree of Difficulty** – Start off with the easier degree of difficulties on the drills, then move up once you've become comfortable.
7. **Don't Be Afraid to Improvise** – If you don't have a certain material required for a drill, or you have an idea on how to improve it for yourself, go for it!
8. **Target Your Weaknesses** – The best way to becoming a great hitter is to find out what your weaknesses are, and make them your strengths. So ask your coach what you need to work on, and get after it!
9. **Use the 10-5 Approach** – Do 10 repetitions to complete the drill, then five dry swings or soft toss to help transfer over the principles of the drill to your regular swing.
10. **Follow the 3 Keys To Success** - Be consistent, work with a plan, and most important of all -**Enjoy Yourself!**

**Now let's get started!**

# Hitting 101

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What is it that makes some batters so consistent and others so frustrated at the plate? There are four major secrets to better hitting, outlined in this report for your convenience. As a coach, you will spend a large portion of your time working with batters with many different habits they have acquired from different coaches. Remember that consistency is key and that with a few pointers, most batters can improve mightily in a short amount of time.

From picking the right bat to preparing mentally for the rigors of batting, this report details the secrets that professional coaches and players swear by. Some seem simple and you might second-guess their usefulness. However, every tip provided here has been tested by players and coaches and shown to help improve power, aim, concentration, and overall batting ability. Get ready! It's time for the four biggest secrets in hitting.

## Pick the Right Bat

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Simply choosing the right bat for a player can make a huge difference in how they swing and what kind of results they get. The bat determines the velocity of the swing, the strength of the impact with the ball and how far the ball will go. It also controls the aim of the ball and affects the beginning of the batter's sprint to first base. Because the bat affects so many aspects of the game, having the right bat is essential.

### **Length**

There are two main characteristics to look for with a bat: length and weight. A bat that is too short will not allow the batter to hit all the balls in their strike zone, even if the batter knows they should be able to reach it. It might cause them to reach for the ball, which throws off their stance, rhythm, and ability to get behind the ball with real power.

A bat that is too long is often also too heavy. This will make the swing slower and the motion clumsier. A bat that is too long also puts the batter at danger for hitting the ball with the wrong section of the bat, making the ball go in a different direction than intended.

To pick a bat that is the right length for the player, batters should stand in the middle of the batter's box and place the bat against the inside corner of home plate. The knob of the bat should come to the batter's palm. If the bat is too short, it will only reach to the fingers. If the bat is too long, it will go up to their wrist and beyond.

### **Weight**

A bat's weight is extremely important to the overall swing and success of the bat. For example, think of the past baseball scandals where major league players have been caught with cork in their bats to make them lighter and easier to swing. There is a reason these things are illegal in the game—they give the batter an unfair advantage by giving them a bat light enough to swing extremely hard, which gives the batter a higher chance of hitting a home run because of the added power behind the ball.

Normal bats are 8-10 ounces less in weight than their length in inches. So, for example, a bat that is 30 inches long will probably weight about 20 ounces. A bat that is too heavy will slow down the swing and make it very difficult for batters to maintain proper form during the stance and swing. Starting with improper form only leads to improper form in swinging, which reduces the chances for a well-hit ball that will result in a base hit.

A bat that is too light will cause batters to swing too fast, which also affects rhythm and keeps the batter from doing their job. A light bat also sometimes causes the shoulders to get ahead of the hips. In an effective swing, the hips should lead the rest of the body. If the shoulders get around too quickly, the swing will not have proper power, as much of the batter's power comes from the action of the hips, which lead the lower body.

### **Aluminum vs. Wood**

The composition of the bat is also worth noting and discussing. Depending on league or association rules, your batters may not have a choice in what type of bat they choose. However, for other teams, this will be a matter of serious consideration.

Aluminum bats are the newest technology in hitting and have changed the way many batters do business. They do not require the same kind of perfect mechanics that a wood bat requires because they are lighter and have a different location of balance, which can lead to poor technique if not taught properly.

The main difference between an aluminum bat and a wood one is the weight. Aluminum bats are much lighter than wood bats and can be a big help in letting batters swing faster and hit the ball farther.

Because the aluminum bat is lighter, players can make last minute adjustments to the swing better than they can with a wood bat. Once a wood bat gets going, it is hard to make adjustments, while an aluminum bat allows this freedom. An aluminum bat is also easier to get moving because of its reduced weight, so players can take more time deciding whether or not to swing, and if so, how to swing.



However, a wood bat has the potential to hit the ball farther because of its density and weight. A wood bat moving at the same speed as an aluminum bat will hit the ball harder because of its composition.

For some, aluminum bats are better because they are generally easier to swing. This does not mean they are lighter; while most are lighter, some heavier aluminum bats are easier to swing than their lighter wood counterparts simply because of how the weight is distributed within the bat. The closer the center of mass is to the handle, the easier the bat will be to swing. In general, the center of mass is much higher in aluminum bats than wood bats.

Wood bats also absorb more of the power of the ball, leaving less to be projected forward as the ball leaves the bat. Aluminum bats have what some call the “trampoline effect,” where the ball hits the bat and is thrown back out like a trampoline spring compressing and releasing.

### **Follow Regulations**

With aluminum bats becoming more popular and allowing batters to hit faster, longer balls, many associations and leagues have developed rules regarding the use of aluminum bats. Make sure that you and your players are aware of all rules governing your team’s play so that you do not cause a problem by using the wrong bat.

For most high schools, the length-to-weight ratio determines a bat’s usability. The length-to-weight ratio is determined by taking the length, such as 32 inches, and subtracting the weight, such as 29 ounces. In this example, the length-to-weight ratio is a -3. Negative three is the common accepted ratio for high school play.

Anything with a -4 ratio or higher is simply too light for play in high school or equivalent teams. Batters with the ability to swing that fast and that hard pose a risk to other players. Be sure to know the proper ratio for your players based on their age, height, and weight, so that you can find the proper bat for them.

### **Try Out Bats**

No player is going to know right away which bat is best for them. Comfort is more important than almost anything else when choosing a bat, and both players and coaches should recognize the necessity of trying out several bats before choosing a favorite.

Just as hockey players would not choose just any pair of skates, batters cannot pick up just any bat. It must feel right in weight, size, and during the swing. Players should do whatever they can to simulate a real swing so that they will know what bat they are most comfortable with.

## Learn Which Pitches to Hit

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All batters have pitches that are historically better for them to hit than others. An important part of becoming a better hitter is to learn what works for the batter, and coaches play a huge role in working with players to define those pitches.

The first way to define what pitches to hit is to figure out what pitches make the batter most comfortable. Some appreciate the straight-forwardness of the fastball. Others appreciate the quickness of the curveball. Rotate players through every pitch so they know what makes them comfortable and what makes them uncomfortable.

Once players have their favorite pitches in mind, work with them to develop the patience necessary to hit those pitches and only those pitches. Learning patience while in the batter's box is extremely hard, because batters naturally want to take a swing at what is coming toward them, even if they know logically it is not the best pitch they are going to get. Instead, prepare players for this reality by drilling them in practice with a variety of pitches until they can recognize and wait for the pitches that really work best for them.

### **Recognizing Strikes**

A broader theme connected to learning what pitches to hit are recognizing strikes when they come and only swinging at those. When players are new to the game or are trying to compensate for some other shortcoming, they will often reach for balls that might be hittable but should be let go. The same idea of patience is important here because without it, players will chase after every pitch that looks good—even when you as a coach know that it is a poor pitch.

The best way for batters to know what pitches to hit at is simply through practice. There should be days when pitchers are told to switch things up and try to confuse the batter, so that they get practice reading pitches and making decisions about which ones to hit. There should also be days where the pitchers strive to only throw strikes, and players must determine which of those strikes are the best ones to hit.

### **Batting for the Good of the Team**

Sometimes, even a strike is not the right pitch to swing at. Depending on what the team needs, a player should or should not swing at balls where they know what the probable outcome will be. If a player knows that she generally hits a long, high ball on a certain pitch, but the team needs a grounder, she should not hit.

This also requires the coach and batter to know how to get the hit they want. Perhaps the perfect pitch will never come, but the batter can compensate by adjusting her hold on the bat. With preparation and help from the coach, batters can know when and how to adjust their swing to get the hit they need.

### **Read the Pitcher**

One of the first things a batter should do before a game begins is to watch the opposing pitcher and get a feel for her pitching style. Because all pitchers are different, your team's opponent may have certain characteristics about her that set her apart from other pitchers. Look for her tendencies, her strengths, her weaknesses, and her habits.

When watching a pitcher, both the coach and batter should search for anything that gives away which pitch the pitcher is going to throw. Watch the way she throws and detect any changes in her stance, grip on the ball, or preparation that might indicate how she is going to throw. Knowing these tiny characteristics about a pitcher is sometimes all it takes to win a game.

### **Be Prepared for the Good Pitches**

The times a batter will have a perfect pitch thrown to them are few and far between. For this reason, a batter must be ready to aggressively go after a ball they believe is perfect for what hit they need and their personal hitting strengths. Aggression is essential in batting because players need to believe that they can successfully hit the ball they are being pitched.

Preparation for the good pitches comes first in practice. Coaches must help develop confidence in their players, which is discussed later in tip 4, Prepare Mentally.

Coaches can help batters prepare for good pitches by building their confidence in practice. If you encourage players to hit the balls they think they can hit, you show them that you trust their judgment. If you congratulate them when they have a good appearance at the plate, you show that you recognize and appreciate their good technique and hard work.

By teaching players when and where to hit a ball, as well as helping build their confidence during practice and in games, you will soon find that your players are ready to jump all over good pitches when they come. Those players with less encouragement and support hesitate more at good pitches and are not prepared to meet the challenge with confidence and the aggression necessary.

### **Stay Focused in the Box**

While in the batter's box, players should be thinking of nothing more than connecting with the ball and doing their job properly. All thoughts of technique and preparation should be gone,

because the player has focused on this during practice to the point that all motions come like second nature.

The batter should also keep her focus on the pitcher. Once in place, the batter should look only at the pitcher, so as to better read what pitch is coming and how to hit it. Finding a central focus point like the pitcher also helps batters tune out the noise and other distractions threatening to take the player's focus from the ball.

## Perfect the Mechanics

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### Stance

The beginnings of perfect mechanics are the components of the stance. The following descriptions are the ideals for a batting stance and should be the goal of every batter:

- Weight over the balls of the feet; never over the heels
- Knees bent
- Shoulders level
- Hands a comfortable distance away from the back shoulder; often this is 10-12 inches from the shoulder, though it is up to the batter's preference

### Hip Placement and Movement

As the batter begins the swing, the hips come into play for the first time. The lower body, especially the hips, is extremely important in hitting. Though they may not seem connected, the hips play a major role in the power and distance of a hit, because they create the necessary torque to drive the ball.

When the batter starts the swing, the hips should turn in a bit, toward the catcher. The hands pull back toward the back shoulder and start the pre-launch torque that drives the body through the rest of the swing.

As the arms rotate through the swing, the hips should also rotate. Since they have inverted toward the catcher during the pre-swing, they will now more easily lead the body through the swing itself.

By starting the movement at the hips and letting it drive up the body through the arms, batters ensure that they put the most possible power behind the bat. If the hips follow the arms or do

not turn at all, the batter will have a much more difficult time producing the kind of hit they desire.

### **Pre-Swing**

There are several important movements that happen during the pre-swing. We have already discussed the inverted movement of the hips. At this point, the following things also need to happen:

- Front shoulder and chin tuck in
- Hands pull back
- Eyes should be toward the pitcher, with the head turned instead of keeping it straight down
- Hold the bat at a 45 degree angle to avoid any unnecessary movement

While in the stance, players should stand slightly farther apart than shoulder width. This allows players to keep their weight centered and lower into the ground, giving the player a wider base from which to pull power from the lower body.

### **Grip**

Having a proper grip is essential for maintaining a smooth, consistent swing. Batters should line up their middle knuckles on the bat so that their hands are in the steadiest position possible. If the knuckles are not in this stabilizing position, the bat has a tendency to jump in the hands as batters turn their wrists over as they finish the swing.

### **Stride**

Each player has a preference about how big or small of a stride to take on the swing. Batters should do what is most comfortable for them, provided that they do not step on the line of the batter's box, as this will cause them to be called out.

When helping players determine how big of a stride to take, encourage them to experiment. A shorter stride is usually better than a longer one for control purposes, because it keeps the player over their body and does not allow things to get out of rhythm. As speed is a necessary part of batting, a short stride is desirable because it helps batters move to their next element, the swing, sooner.

As the batter is about to bring their hands forward to start the swinging motion, the striding leg should come forward toward the pitcher. The stride should be toward the area in front of home plate to help the batter get into better position.

## **Swing**

During the swing, there are also small adjustments that players can make to ensure that they get the best swing possible. When working on mechanics, even the smallest details count.

Throughout the swing, players should keep their back elbow up and close to the body. This allows the hands and the barrel of the bat to swing through completely. Finally, and perhaps most importantly when going through the swing, is to keep the head still. Keeping the head still ensures that you keep proper balance throughout the swing, which is otherwise hard to do because the batter is moving nearly every other part to connect with the ball.

Maintaining a still head also helps with creating a rhythm. If the batter's body has one still part that does not move or change during the swing, that batter will have a better idea of what part of their swing needs work or what part is not synchronized with the rest of the body. Whether in practice or in play, keeping a steady head is extremely important.

As the ball is pitched, batters should bring their hands to meet the ball. This mental picture will help players get the bat in contact with the ball in exactly the right place. At the same time that batters are bringing their hands to the ball, they should be keeping those hands level and still, so that the bat slices through the air on an even plane. A swing with any type of loop or wiggle can cause a dangerous pop-up, which can be detrimental to the team.

## **Run Drills**

Just because a batter has been batting for years does not mean that they will maintain good form. In fact, more experience can lead to poor form because players become complacent and pay less attention to their form than when they were first learning it.

Every so often, at the discretion of the coach, players should go back and work on hitting basics. This means starting from a tee, using a whiffle ball. While some players may grumble about starting at such a fundamental level, you must show them the importance of being able to hit a whiffle ball off a tee, perfectly, every time. If players cannot hit a ball where they want it to go when it is sitting right in front of them, how are they going to be able to hit a ball moving toward them at 50 miles an hour or more?

When players hit a whiffle ball correctly from a tee, it acts like a knuckleball. When players hit it incorrectly, it spins uncontrollably and goes awry. Because of the air going through the ball, players will be able to see their mistakes easier and make adjustments as necessary.

After players become comfortable again with hitting from a tee, remove the tee and have them practice with regular pitches again. They will notice a difference in the way they hold themselves and approach the ball, and you will a difference in their effectiveness.

## Prepare Mentally

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### **Patience**

Hitting is very much a mental game. Without adequate preparation, even minor errors or changes in routine can severely affect a batter and their ability to deliver a hit.

The most important mental preparation a player can undertake is learning patience. Patience comes into every part of batting. It is required to know which pitches are the best ones to hit. It is required to know at what moment the bat should swing, and it should teach the body to wait until that moment arrives. Patience is also necessary to wear the pitcher down by letting them know that the batter is exactly where they want to be and that they are willing to wait until they get the perfect pitch.

### **Mental Resilience**

Mental resilience is another essential quality. Players can get out of their rhythm easily and need a way to regain their focus and calm while in the batter's box. Encourage players to develop a routine that helps them block out everything but their focus on the ball. Any of these strategies work when helping players develop mental toughness:

- Stepping out of the batter's box
- Deep breathing
- Repeating a positive word or phrase
- Visualizing the perfect hit
- Creating tunnel vision on the pitcher

Regardless of what they choose, all players should have a routine that helps them get back in the game. Give players adequate time to decide what works for them. If you see your batters over-thinking their batting or otherwise losing concentration, encourage them to dive into their routine.

Mental preparation is a very private and personal thing and should be developed independently. However, you can help players by creating game-like situations in practice to

test players' resilience during tough situations. Set expectations in practice that players are to take it as seriously as a game, and work with them through various scenarios that may arise.

### **Scope out the Other Team**

Mental preparation includes cataloging everything a player can think about the team they are about to face. As the other team warms up, the smart batter will notice:

- Right-handedness or left-handedness of the pitcher and infielders
- Who has a strong arm
- What weaknesses or tendencies the pitcher has
- The quickness of the defense
- The communication between the pitcher and the catcher
- The conditions on the field, including the type of backstop and how it will affect a ball that hits it

All these tendencies of the other team seem small when viewed individually, but together, they provide a valuable picture about the rhythm and function of the team. By gathering all this information, batters can identify weaknesses, find out where is best to aim the ball based on the strengths of the defense, and use their advantages, whether that is speed, ability to read the pitch, or power-hitting.

As a coach, you should teach your team to look for these qualities and any others you can identify in the other team. Mark them yourself and share them with the team as appropriate to help them prepare a mental game against the opponent. Together, you can develop a comprehensive view of the team and how to beat them.

### **Develop a Plan**

Every batter should walk up to the plate with a plan for how they are going to achieve their goal. The goal should be defined before the batter gets up to bat, and it should depend on the situation on the field.

For example, just because a batter can hit with lots of power does not mean that such a hit will be most helpful. If there is a runner on third and less than 2 outs, a fly ball might be helpful. If the player simply needs to get on base, a grounder or other well-placed line drive may be best. This, of course, depends on the situation your team faces and the specific talents of the player coming up to bat.



Once you and your batter have determined what their goal will be in hitting, they should develop a plan for achieving that goal. If a batter walks to the box with no idea of how they need to hit or what type of hit they want, the results can be opposite of what your team needs. To best prepare your players mentally, you should arm them with as much information as possible.

Developing a plan also helps players build confidence, which is the next and final section of preparing mentally. By helping players get a clear vision of their hit, you arm them with the confidence to achieve that goal. Simply having that knowledge of what needs to be done and how to do it will give your players a belief that they can achieve it. Positive thinking, as we will see, goes a long way to successful batting.

### **Maintain Confidence**

To be successful, batters need to walk up to the plate believing that they will be successful. However, this belief begins long before the batter ever sees the batter's box. It starts in practice, continues in the warm-up, and is fully realized in the game.

Confidence is the belief that a player can achieve what they set out to achieve. To help your players develop the necessary confidence to hit only those pitches worth hitting, teach them to follow their instincts in practice and in games. Avoid second-guessing them or cutting them down when an experiment fails.

Also during practice, make an effort to use positive reinforcement and as much positive language as possible. Players need to know that you support them and believe in them, because your opinion as a coach is very important to them. If you show them that you believe in them, their ability to believe in themselves will be greatly increased.

Confidence continues in the warm-up for a game. Part of building confidence is knowing as much about your opponent as possible, so that when a player steps up to bat, they know something about the team and what to expect. While your team will never know its opponent as well as you would like, you can help them learn what to look for and how it affects the other team so that they have an idea of how the team will play.

Also during the warm-up should come more positive language. Help your team think positively, talk positively, and increase their confidence by leading by example. Let every player know that you are counting on them and that you are certain they can deliver, and they will believe it themselves.

## Conclusion

Now you know the four secrets to better hitting: pick the right bat, learn the right pitch to hit, perfect the mechanics, and prepare mentally. Through the simple suggestions provided here, you have learned to more effectively prepare your team for competitions. You should now be able to:

- Recognize the proper bat for your players
- Distinguish between the benefits of a wood bat versus an aluminum bat
- Understand the importance of patience in batting
- Teach players to wait for the perfect pitch before swinging
- Identify technique problems and perfect the swing mechanics
- Instill confidence in your players to help them prepare mentally

These tips and the other inside information contained in this report should give you a guide to take back to your team. By watching closely, reacting positively, and working hard, you and your team can improve efficiency, increase consistency, eliminate poor technique, and improve strength and power!

## Part 2 - Mechanical Drills

### 2 Hand Toss to the Net Drill

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**Difficulty Level:** Easy

**Setup:** For this drill you'll need a couple softballs and a bat.

**Execution:** Put the bat on the ground, and pick up a softball with two hands. Hold the softball as if it were a bat, and get into your batting stance. Go through your swing exactly as you would if you were holding a bat, releasing the ball where your contact point would be. After 5-10 reps, pick up your bat, and execute five swings, focusing on using that same feeling of throwing your hands forward through each swing.

**Coaching Tips:** You should be doing this drill in front of either a net or a wall if possible so that you have somewhere to aim when you're throwing. If dead center is 12 o'clock, you should be aiming to throw the ball anywhere in between 12 and 2.

**Variations:** For an extremely difficult variation of this drill, have a partner toss some balls in front of you and try to hit the ball with the one you're throwing out of your hands. Attempts where you actually hit the ball will be few and far between, but either way the drill will be tremendous for your hand eye coordination.

### PVC Pipe Swings Drill

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**Difficulty Level:** Intermediate

**Setup:** A thin length of PVC pipe that you can find at any home hardware store, as well as a regular bat.

**Execution:** Get into batting stance, holding the PVC pipe as a bat. Now execute five swings from you batting stance, focusing on batting speed, then switch back to your regular bat, and execute five more swings.

**Coaching Tips:** When swinging the PVC pipe, your goal should be to make a loud whooshing sound on every swing. However, you don't want the noise to begin at the back end of your swing, because that will indicate that you're extending your arms too early. The sound of the

wind should be starting just around the contact position, keeping your hands tight and accelerating through where the ball would be.

## Walking Soft Toss Drill

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**Difficulty Level:** Intermediate

**Setup:** You'll need a partner, a couple softballs, and a bat.

**Execution:** Get into stance in front of the plate, then take two steps backward. Now holding the bat in front take your first step to the plate – this should be the back foot of your stance, and is also your partners queue to toss the ball. Now take your second step, in rhythm, and move right into your swing, connecting with the ball. After 5-10 swings, get back into your normal batting stance.

**Coaching Tips:** It should all be one smooth motion, much like a crow hop when throwing from the outfield. This also doubles as a great power hitting drill, as it really teaches you how to get your whole body into the swing.

## 3 Sounds Drill

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**Difficulty Level:** Intermediate

**Setup:** If you've got a heavy punching bag perfect, but a small garbage can or any kind of object roughly one and a half feet tall that you can fit in between your legs will do. You'll also need a bat, a couple of softballs, and a partner.

**Execution:** The goal of this drill is to synchronize the three sounds of your swing – your back knee hitting the punching bag on the ground, your chin hitting your back shoulder, and your bat hitting the ball. While only one of these is going make any kind of real audible sound, the goal remains the same. To simplify the drill, get into a stance where you have already taken your stride, so that the only leg movement you need to worry about is rotating that back leg. After 10 swings, remove the object between your legs, get into normal batting stance, and execute five normal swings.

**Coaching Tips:** You can do this as a soft toss or even just a dry swing drill, but starting off with the dry swing until you get the technique down is probably a good idea. To really get that back leg moving, you need to focus on swiveling the hips – don't just bend your knee forward and change your swing for the sake of the drill.

## Blow the Hands Away Drill

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**Difficulty Level:** Easy

**Setup:** You'll need a partner, a couple softballs, and a bat.

**Execution:** The goal here is to coordinate your breathing with your swing, inhaling as the ball approaches, then exhaling forcefully as you make contact with the ball – much like the way a weight lifter will exhale on each rep, or a tennis player will with each swing. Execute 10 reps with this exaggerated breathing, then go back to five more with your normal swing.

**Coaching Tips:** This is a great exercise for getting rid of tension, loosening up your swing. You'll notice that even after going back to your normal swing, it will be tough for you not to use the same principles as you did on your previous ten reps – even if your breathing may not be so loud and exaggerated.

## Maximum Power Start Drill

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**Difficulty Level:** Easy

**Setup:** You just need a partner, a couple softballs, and a bat.

**Execution:** The focus here is on getting a great start to your swing – for both speed, and power. There are five things that you need to focus on: snapping the front knee, pivoting the back foot, pulling your hands down, seeing the ball hit the bat, and blowing your hands away from you. Since this is something you should be trying to do on every swing, just do 15 swings focusing on these five principles.

**Coaching Tips:** Think of each of the five things as being worth 20% of your power. If you only do three, you're only swinging with 60% of your power. Also, this is a versatile drill, and like the previous, you can do as a soft toss drill or any other number of way – but until you get the principles down pat, you should just be doing dry swings.

## Head and Hand Cross Drill

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**Difficulty Level:** Intermediate

**Setup:** For this drill you need a partner, a couple softballs, and a bat.

**Execution:** Here we're going to focus on getting the proper head movement during a swing. As your hands begin to move forward in your swing, and your torso begins to rotate, force your neck to rotate in the opposite direction, with your chin and back shoulder meeting as you connect with the ball. For this drill we want to exaggerate the movement, not even trying to see where the ball is going. Repeat for 10 reps, then switch back to your normal swing for another five.

**Coaching Tips:** If the front shoulder and the chin are working together, going in the same direction, the swing will be much longer and slower. But if you can focus on rotating your chin into the back shoulder, you'll immediately notice how much shorter and quicker your swing becomes.

## Scramble Up Drill

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**Difficulty Level:** Intermediate

**Setup:** You'll need a partner, a couple softballs, a bat, a tee and a stopwatch.

**Execution:** Take your bat, and place it knob up just behind the tee, and put a softball in the tee. Now get face down on the ground next to your bat, and on the command of your partner, explode upwards, grab your bat, and swing at the tee as fast as you can. Your partner will time you from her command until you connect with the ball. The goal is to improve your time on every attempt, until you have consecutive attempts where you can't improve your time.

**Coaching Tips:** The focus here is not on mechanics, but on shortening up your swing and forcing your whole body to move as quickly as possible from start to finish.

## Inside-Outside Command Drill

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**Difficulty Level:** Intermediate

**Setup:** Get two tees, two softballs, a partner, and a bat for this drill.

**Execution:** Setup both tees in your strike zone with softballs in them. One should be positioned on the inside of the plate, and the other on the outside. You'll need to adjust for height as well so that when you swing, you're not connecting with both balls. Your partner will call out either inside or outside, at which point you need to swing and hit at the corresponding ball as fast as you can. After 10 reps, go back to your regular swing, and give it five more reps.

**Coaching Tips:** If you've got a stopwatch on hand, you can measure reaction times and try to improve on each swing to add an extra layer to the drill.

## Bat Back & Stop Drills

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**Difficulty Level:** Easy

**Setup:** You'll need a partner, a couple softballs, and a bat.

**Execution:** This is a two part drill. For your first five swings, you're swinging all the way through to the back of your swing as fast as you can, focusing less on making good contact on the ball, and more on getting to the end of your swing. For the next five swings, you're still going to swing as fast as you can, but instead this time try to stop the bat immediately after you make contact with the ball. After you're done with that, go back to your regular swing, and go through five swings like that.

**Coaching Tips:** Make sure you don't start slowing your swing down to make it easier to stop, as that kills the whole point of the drill. Yes, your momentum will carry you a fair bit past the point of contact but that's fine, much like how if you're not making great contact with your first five swings it's fine.

## Dry Swing Sounds Drill

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**Difficulty Level:** Intermediate

**Setup:** If you don't have a PVC pipe, you can improvise at home for this drill. You can just tape a fly swatter or a tennis racquet to the end of your bat to get the same desired effect.

**Execution:** The focus here is on creating that sound of your bat cutting through the air on your swing, so regardless of whether you've got a PVC pipe, or just a fly swatter/tennis racquet taped to your bat, you're going to focus on swinging as hard and fast as you can. After 10 swings, switch back to your normal bat for five more, transferring over those same principles from the previous 10.

**Coaching Tips:** There are lots of other objects you can use, the point is that you just need something that you can swing, that's roughly the same weight as a bat, but is different enough aerodynamically that when swung fast enough, it will make that whooshing sound through the air.

**Variations:** The towel drill is another variation in which you tape one end of a small towel to your bat. Now with the towel draped over the bat face, swing through, and see if you can hear that snap from the towel.

## Inside Reaction Drill

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**Difficulty Level:** Intermediate

**Setup:** For this drill you need a partner, a couple softballs, a bat, and a pitcher's screen.

**Execution:** Your partner behind the pitcher's screen is going to throw you a couple flips away and off the plate that you need to try and hit out to opposite field. But randomly peppered in will be tight inside balls, that you need to turn and react on, trying to pull hit them. Do 10 reps, with at least three inside balls mixed in per set.

**Coaching Tips:** Vary the speeds of your pitches as much as you can as well, and try to make sure that the inside pitches always have a little bit of heat on them, forcing the batter to swing through fast.



# Inside Jam Drill

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**Difficulty Level:** Advanced

**Setup:** Here you'll have to use a pitcher's screen for your partner, a couple softballs, and a bat.

**Execution:** The goal here for your partner is to try and jam you, throwing pitches hard and inside and making it tough for you to catch up. You can do five to ten pitch sets, with breaks in between, and a five pitch set of regular pitches after to transfer over those same principles to a regular swing.

**Coaching Tips:** You're not going to catch up with your hands – the only way you'll be able to catch up with these pitches is by really turning that pivot foot and rotating your hips while keeping your hands tight to the body.

**Variations:** To make it even more difficult, throw balls right at the batter at around hip level. You don't want to throw these hard, just right at or even slightly behind the batter. The batter will be focusing on turning hard, hitting the pitches foul, directly behind them.

## Part 3 - Power Hitting Drills

### Tubing Drill

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**Difficulty Level:** Easy

**Setup:** For this drill, you'll need a regular bat, a broken bat handle, a resistance band, and to do a bit of handy work. Take the broken bat handle and drill a hole through the top. Then tie the tubing or resistance band through the hole, and tie the other end through a fence.

**Execution:** Get into your batting stance, perpendicular to the fence. Grab the handle, and pull forward as you rotate your hips, extending out to the point of contact, then back to your starting position. After 10 reps, pick up a normal bat, get in the exact same stance, and repeat 10 dry swings.

**Coaching Tips:** The farther you are from the fence, the higher the resistance will be, so start close, and work your way out as you get more comfortable.

**Variations:** If you don't want to go through the whole process of drilling a hole through a bat, you can just tie a resistance band to a fence and just hold the other end with your hands. If you choose to do so, the technique will be slightly different. Hold the resistance band at roughly waist level, rotating your hips forward with your arms in tight, then extending them forward explosively.

You can also try going through your swinging motion with just your lead arm holding onto the bat for an added challenge, or, take the normal bat and hold it behind your back with both arms, so that it's sandwiched between the cradles of your elbow and your back. Here you'll stand parallel to the fence, rotating your back shoulder forward.

### Tubing Arm Extension Drill

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**Difficulty Level:** Easy

**Setup:** For this drill, you'll need a resistance band or some form of tubing, as well as a bat, and a couple of softballs and a partner if possible.

**Execution:** Loop the resistance band around your back and under your arms, then grab an end of it with each hand. Mimic holding a bat in tight to your chest, and focus on extending your arms forward as if making contact with an imaginary ball just out in front of you. Then put the resistance band down, and go through 5 swings with a normal bat.

**Coaching Tips:** If you ever find it too easy or too hard, just adjust your hand position on the band – up tighter to make it more difficult, and down lower to make it easier.

**Variations:** You can also isolate one arm for an added degree of difficulty. Just loop the resistance band around your back shoulder, then grab it with your front hand, and repeat the drill as normal.

## Medicine Ball Swing

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**Difficulty Level:** Easy

**Setup:** All you need for this drill is a medicine ball, a bat and some open space. If you can, get a partner to soft toss a couple of balls to you at the end of each set, but if not, dry swings work fine as well.

**Execution:** Get into your batting stance, holding the medicine ball in the same position you would hold the bat. Now turn through, swinging the ball to the ground out in front of you in a straight line. If you have a partner, after completing 10 reps, have them throw you five soft tosses after to drill this in the muscle memory.

**Coaching Tips:** Make sure you're not pushing the ball – your elbow should be in front of the ball, and your hand underneath it, to best replicate the swinging motion. It's also important to rotate the hips and body before swinging the ball, keeping it close to the chest and not extending your arms out until the end of the swinging motion.

**Variations:** Rotate all the way through swinging the ball behind you instead of in front. For example if you're a right handed batter, and your left foot represents your north, you should be rotating all the way through, throwing the ball west.

## PVC Pipe Twists

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**Difficulty Level:** Intermediate

**Setup:** One of the great tools for a power hitter is the PVC pipe – a weighted plastic pipe about 10 feet long that you can find at any home depot for less than 10\$. If you're strong enough you can use a barbell instead for this drill, but I would suggest investing in one as they pay themselves off in no-time. You'll also need a couple of balls, a bat, and a partner if possible.

**Execution:** Rest the pipe on the back of your shoulders, holding it behind your neck with your hands. Get into a wide athletic stance. Now rotate your upper body back and forth alternatively bringing each arm as close to 12 o'clock as you feel comfortable with. Complete 10 reps, and then get five soft toss hits in, or if you don't have a partner, five dry swings will do as well.

**Coaching Tips:** The focus is on the upper body, so you should not be having any movement in your hips or legs as you rotate. If you're having trouble isolating the upper body, try bending your knees a little more for increased lower body stability.

**Variations:** The two variations of this drill are all about changing the pace. You can try rotating forward slowly and then exploding back to your starting position, or you can just rotate back and forth as fast as you possibly can (under control).

## PVC Pipe Walking Lunge & Twist

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**Difficulty Level:** Intermediate

**Setup:** All you'll need is a length of PVC pipe.

**Execution:** Rest the pipe on the top of the back of your shoulders holding it with both hands once again. Now you'll do a lunge forward, extending one leg forward and dropping down until your front leg is bent at about a 90 degree angle, and your back leg's knee is at roughly a 90 degree angle, with your knee an inch or so off the ground. Then rotate your upper body, bringing the arm opposite the leg that's extended to the front, then square your shoulders back up. So with your left foot forward, you would rotate the right arm, and vice versa.

This is one repetition. For your next repetition, depending on the amount of space available, you can either step back to your original position and then lunge with your opposite leg, or

simply continue moving forward, taking the next lunge with the opposite leg. Complete 5-10 reps.

**Coaching Tips:** You should focus on keeping your lower body as still as possible during the rotations, isolating the upper body completely. Also, try to stay in a direct line with your lunges, and avoid having your front knee go past your toes – aim for those 90 degree angles.

## PVC Pipe Swings

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**Difficulty Level:** Intermediate

**Setup:** Just a PVC pipe and a regular bat.

**Execution:** Get into your batting stance, holding the PVC pipe as your bat. Now swing the pipe as you would a bat, following all the way through. After five swings, change directions and do five swings from the lefty stance (or righty if you're left handed). Once you've completed all 10 swings, go back to your regular bat, and complete 5 swings from your natural batting stance.

**Coaching Tips:** Make sure you're swinging hard – you should hear the wind whoosh over the bat on every swing. Also make sure to keep in mind that the longer and heavier the pipe, the harder this drill will be, so start off with a smaller, lighter one and work your way up.

**Variations:** One great variation that will get a great burn going in the forearms, is the Power V. Stand in a square, athletic stance holding the pipe with both hands directly in front of you at waist level. Now you want to trace a V in the air with the end of the pipe, first going up in one direction, then back down to the starting position, then back up in the opposite direction. Do this 10 times, then switch the position of your hands and do another 10 reps.

## PVC Pipe Hand Twists

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**Difficulty Level:** Easy

**Setup:** You'll just need a short length of PVC pipe, with a small enough diameter that you could hold it comfortably with one hand, as well as a partner and a regular bat.

**Execution:** Have your partner stand in front of you holding the pipe out straight with one hand. Now grab the pipe with two hands and begin rotating it in one direction. Go for 30 seconds, then step away and go through five dry swings.

**Coaching Tips:** If you're finding 30 seconds too hard or too easy, have your partner adjust the difficulty of the drill by tightening or loosening their grip on the pipe.

## Self Serve Power Drill

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**Difficulty Level:** Intermediate

**Setup:** Here all you'll need is a couple softballs and a bat.

**Execution:** For this drill get simply get into batting stance with a ball in one hand and a bat in the other. Now toss the ball in the air up into your strike zone, and swing away, focusing on speed and power, imagining hitting the ball deep into center field.

**Coaching Tips:** Try switching up your toss hand. Most people are more comfortable tossing with the back hand, which is the exact reason why you should try throwing it with the other.

## Ankle Weight Drill

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**Difficulty Level:** Easy

**Setup:** A bat, as well as an ankle weight.

**Execution:** Put an ankle weight on your back foot, then go through 10 repetitions of one of these six hitting drill types.

1. **Dry Swings** – The simplest type. Just get into stance, and swing the bat, focusing on speed and mechanics.
2. **Tee Drills** – Hitting off the tee. The tee should be setup so that the ball is just inside your front foot after your stride.
3. **Soft Toss** – Here you'll have a partner setup down on one knee off to an angle on the opposite side of the field of the batter. Now loft soft toss into the hitting zone for the batter to hit out into the field.

- 4. Flips** – Setup the pitchers screen about 20 feet in front of the batter, and have your partner stand behind, flipping balls into your hitting zone from there.
- 5. Batting Practice** – Throw from behind the screen, using a normal pitching motion, showing the batter a variety of speeds and locations.
- 6. Batting Machine** – Using the batting machine, make sure not to only work one spot – move inside and outside to work all areas of the plate, and if you’ve got a machine that throws pitches other than fastballs, make sure to take advantage of that as well.

Finally, take off the weight, and do 5 more repetitions.

**Coaching Tips:** Focus on an explosive pivot off that ankle, getting as much torque as you can out of it.

## Sand Bag Drill

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**Difficulty Level:** Easy

**Setup:** A large bag of sand and a bat.

**Execution:** Put the bag in front of your back ankle, then go through 10 swing repetitions, focusing on hitting the bag as hard as you can with your ankle as you pivot and explode forward.

**Coaching Tips:** Try to synchronize the three sounds of the swing – the ankle hitting the bag, the ball hitting the bat, and the chin hitting the shoulder to maximize the effectiveness of this drill.

## Long Bat Drill

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**Difficulty Level:** Intermediate

**Setup:** Find a bat that’s much longer than the bat you would regularly use.

**Execution:** To hit the ball on the sweet spot using the long bat, you’ll be forced to keep your hands tight and inside. Do 10 repetitions with the long bat, then switch back to your regular bat.

**Coaching Tips:** Don't cheat and just choke up on the bat! It will be tough to get used to but the gains will be enormous with your normal bat if you can force yourself to stay inside with the long bat.

## Basketball Drill

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**Difficulty Level:** Intermediate

**Setup:** Get a basketball, a tee, and a plunger from home.

**Execution:** Put the plunger inside the tee, and rest the basketball on top of the plunger. Execute 10 swings, then switch back to a regular softball, and give it another five swings.

**Coaching Tips:** Watch the ball's rotation after you swing through – you can watch the lines and get a great idea of whether you're topping over or hitting under just by the way the ball comes off the tee.

## Deflated Basketball Drill

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**Difficulty Level:** Intermediate

**Setup:** A deflated basketball and a partner.

**Execution:** Here we're going to have our partner toss us the basketball, focusing on pushing it away and hitting it dead center. Give it 10 regular swings before switching back to the regular softball for another five reps.

**Coaching Tips:** You don't want to use an inflated basketball for the tosses, because it can deflect off the bat and hit the batter or the tosser. Also, keep an eye out on rotation for a good indicator of where you're hitting the ball.



## Weighted Bat Drill

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**Difficulty Level:** Easy

**Setup:** You'll need a weight for your bat. If you've got a weight for the bottom of your bat, use it, but if not, you can always attach a wrist or ankle weight.

**Execution:** With a weight on the bottom of your bat, just underneath your hands, go through 10 swings, then switch to a regular bat for five swings to finish off the drill.

**Coaching Tips:** You should feel the weight balancing the bat out, forcing you to swing a little bit faster, and improving your hitting strength.

## Tire Drills

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**Difficulty Level:** Intermediate

**Setup:** For this drill you'll need a tire set on a swing. To make the drill more effective, you can also draw a couple white spots on the outside of the tire, one high, one low, and one in the middle to give you something to aim at.

**Execution:** If you've got a partner, have them pull the swing back, then let it careen over in your direction. As soon as that white spot enters your strike zone, let loose with a swing. If you don't have a partner, just push the swing out to get it started and continue from there. Same rules as always apply – 10 swings on the tire, then five repetitions of whatever of the six basic drills are most easily accessible.

**Coaching Tips:** If you've got a partner, you can simulate different pitches by having them curve the ball inside or outside.

## Punching Bag Drill

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**Difficulty Level:** Intermediate

**Setup:** For this drill you'll need a heavy punching bag that you would find in a boxing gym.

**Execution:** Get into stance and focus on exploding into contact position on the bag. This is similar to the tire drill, however the bag is much heavier, and you won't be able to swing through – but just hitting it will make your muscles much stronger, much like when a boxer works the heavy bag. Go for 10 reps, then switch back over to five regular swings.

**Coaching Tips:** Focus on syncing up your movements – you should make contact, rotate your back ankle, and hit your chin on your back shoulder at the same time.

**Variations:** Another great way to use the punching bag is to get a little bit closer and just focus on driving the knob of your bat into the bag.

## One Arm Drill

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**Difficulty Level:** Advanced

**Setup:** Use a much smaller bat than you would regularly use, or a broken bat that you've taken the barrel off of.

**Execution:** Hold the bat with one arm, keeping your other hand held tight up against your chest. Now go through five swings with your front arm, and switch the bat to your back arm for another five swings. Next, grab your regular bat (with two hands), and go through five normal swings, using both arms together as a unit.

**Coaching Tips:** This is a great way to balance out the strength in your arms. For example if you want to improve really pulling through with your front arm, you can focus more on the front than the back.

**Variations:** Using your front hand, you can improve on finishing your swing by trying out this drill with a closed stance. Whereas if you want to improve your ability to drag through the ball better, use your back arm and open up your stance.

## Heavy Bat Drill

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**Difficulty Level:** Intermediate

**Setup:** You'll need a heavy training bat, or a flat donut for the end of your bat.

**Execution:** Using the heavy bat, go through 10 swings, then switch back to your regular bat for five more swings.

**Coaching Tips:** Don't try to jump right into top speed – focus on accelerating through the ball.

## Weighted Vest Drill

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**Difficulty Level:** Easy

**Setup:** For this drill all you'll need is a weighted vest.

**Execution:** Put the vest on, then execute 10 swings before taking it off and going through five regular swings.

**Coaching Tips:** This drill is great because not only does it increase your strength, but offers you feedback on your swing. If you have a problem with straightening up through your swing, the weight will discourage you from standing up.

## Wrist Weight Drill

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**Difficulty Level:** Intermediate

**Setup:** Two wrist weights is all the extra equipment you'll need for this drill.

**Execution:** Equip the wrist weights, and practice 10 swings, focusing on keeping your hands tight to the body. Then take the weights off and go through 5 normal swings.

**Coaching Tips:** The farther away you hold your hands from your body, the tougher this drill will be for you. This drill is a great measuring stick, because the more fundamentally sound your swing is, the easier this drill will be.

## Heavy Ball Drill

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**Difficulty Level:** Intermediate

**Setup:** You'll need a couple heavy softballs, which you can either order on the internet, or create them yourself. To make your softball heavier just soak it in water for an extended period of time.

**Execution:** Get into stance, and focus on pushing through the heavier balls on each swing. Repeat 10 times, then switch back to normal balls for five more swings.

**Coaching Tips:** This drill is better suited to being done in a field rather than a batting cage or against a net so that you can focus on really driving the ball deep into the outfield.

## Isometric Drill

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**Difficulty Level:** Easy

**Setup:** Just a bat and a partner, or a wall or pole of some kind if you're alone.

**Execution:** Extend out into contact position, and hold the bat there as your partner pushes against it. If you're alone, you can just hold the ball up against a wall or some other inanimate object. Hold for 10 seconds then relax.

**Coaching Tips:** Make sure to work on different angles and everywhere from the beginning to the end of your swing.

## Sled Drill

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**Difficulty Level:** Intermediate

**Setup:** For this drill you'll need some kind of weight, whether that's a weight plate from the gym or simply just a tire, and anything in between. You'll also need a rope which you can tie to the end of your bat and around the weight.

**Execution:** Get in stance with the weight as far behind you as it will go, and then swing through, focusing on rotating your body to drag the weight forward. Then place the weight back at its original position, or move forward until the rope is taut again, and repeat for a total of 10 times. Then remove the rope and execute five normal swings.

**Coaching Tips:** Focus on building up the speed, starting off slowly and accelerating through the end of your swing as that momentum continues to build up.

## Wood Bat Drill

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**Difficulty Level:** Easy

**Setup:** Use a wood bat for this drill.

**Execution:** Simply execute 10 swings with the wooden bat, then switch back over to your aluminum (if that's what you use normally) for five more swings.

**Coaching Tips:** If you use an aluminum bat, practicing with a wood bat is great for your swing for two reasons. Because the center of gravity on a wood bat is much higher, even if you're using a bat that weighs an identical amount, it's going to be harder for you to swing, building up that strength. Also, using the wood bat gives you instant feedback on every swing, if you don't hit the ball right on the barrel area, you'll feel the sting on your hands, or the bat might even break.

## Part 4 - Bat Speed Drills

### Stopwatch Drill

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**Difficulty Level:** Easy

**Setup:** You'll need a stopwatch, a bat, and a partner.

**Execution:** With your partner holding the stopwatch, get into your stance, and swing the bat as fast as you can. As soon as you begin your first swing, your partner will start the stopwatch, and will wait until you've rewound and swung five times to stop it again. Record the time, and then on your next set, try to be faster than the last time.

**Coaching Tips:** Since we're just focusing on bat speed here, you don't need to explode off your back foot on each swing, just swing forward, rewind your swing back to its original position, and swing forward again.

### 5 Ball Soft Toss Drill

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**Difficulty Level:** Intermediate

**Setup:** Here you need five softballs and a partner to toss them to you, as well as your bat.

**Execution:** This drill is very similar to the stopwatch drill, but just with the inclusion of a softball. Once you're ready, have your partner toss you the first ball, and swing through as fast as you can. Then as soon as you've rewound your swing back to the beginning, your partner will throw another, and continue like that for five tosses, focusing on keeping the pace as fast as possible.

**Coaching Tips:** Your feet should not move from their original position, meaning you should not be striding or rotating the back ankle. Also keep in mind that you should not be waving the bat back and forth or over your head wildly – don't helicopter the bat over your head. Swing, and do your best to retrace the exact same path that your bat traveled on going forwards, going backwards.

### Light Bat Drill

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**Difficulty Level:** Easy

**Setup:** You'll need a bat that's lighter than what you would use normally, as well as your regular bat.

**Execution:** Using your whole body, execute 10 swings with the light bat, focusing on accelerating through the ball and keeping your bat speed as high as possible. Once you've completed that set, switch back to your normal bat and complete five more swings, focusing on transferring the feeling of swinging the light bat into your swing with the normal bat.

**Coaching Tips:** Remember, if you find yourself wheezing a bit after the first set, don't rush into the next one, take a couple seconds and catch your breath so that you can focus on swinging as fast as possible with the normal bat as well.

## Rapid Fire Soft Toss

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**Difficulty Level:** Intermediate

**Setup:** Here you need a partner, five softballs, and a bat.

**Execution:** This is a lot like the 5 ball soft toss drill, except that instead of isolating the hands, you should use your whole body in every swing. Have your partner toss you the five balls in succession as fast as you can while staying under control.

**Coaching Tips:** For this drill, you can do whatever it is you need to do to get back to your starting position as fast as possible whether that's helicoptering or something else that you feel more comfortable with. Just remember to keep your balance and stay in control.

## Drop Ball Drill

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**Difficulty Level:** Intermediate

**Setup:** For this drill you'll need a partner, a couple softballs, and a bat.

**Execution:** Have your partner stand on the opposite side of the plate of you, holding a softball directly above the strike zone. Now your partner will drop the ball, and your job is to react and swing as fast as possible to get your bat on it. Go through five reps to complete a set.

**Coaching Tips:** To adjust the difficulty of this drill, have your partner hold the ball higher to make it easier, or lower to make it tougher.

**Variations:** One variation, called the extreme ball drill, involves the same basic idea of the drop ball drill, but using a smaller ball and/or a bat with a much smaller diameter.

## Tee Stopwatch Drill

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**Difficulty Level:** Easy

**Setup:** For this drill you need a tee, a partner, a stopwatch, a softball, and a bat.

**Execution:** Place the ball on the tee and get in your stance, with your partner ready to time you with the stopwatch. For this drill you'll be focusing on swinging through the ball on the tee as fast as you can, with your partner starting the stopwatch as soon as you begin your swing, and stopping it at the end of your swing, or when the ball hits the net if you're practicing in front of one. After each swing, ask your partner for the time, and try to beat it on the next swing.

**Coaching Tips:** As soon as your time gets worst on consecutive swings, take a breather for a couple minutes and come back and try again.

## Timed Dry Swings Drill

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**Difficulty Level:** Advanced

**Setup:** For this drill you'll need a bat, a partner, and a stopwatch.

**Execution:** Using the same technique from the stopwatch drill, isolating the upper body and retracing your swings, have your partner set the stopwatch for 10 seconds. Assume your batting stance, and as soon as you start to move, your partner should start the watch. Your goal is to fit in as many swings as you can in that time frame, take a break, and then try to beat that number the next time.

**Coaching Tips:** Start off with a lower time like 10 seconds, but once you get comfortable, try going for 20 and 30 seconds, and make it your goal to extrapolate your number of swings from 10 seconds out to those longer numbers. One thing about this drill, is that you don't want to be



doing it during the season, as it can be exhausting, so wait until the offseason to get cracking on this one.

## 2 Tee Partner Drill

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**Difficulty Level:** Easy

**Setup:** For this drill to work best, you'll need a partner to compete against, as well as a third person. You'll also need two tees, two balls, and two bats.

**Execution:** This is a really fun competitive drill. Line the tees up with enough distance in between them that you can both swing at the same time safely. Get into stance at the tee, and on the command of the third person, you will both swing, racing to see who can connect their bat with the ball first.

**Coaching Tips:** If you've got multiple players this drill is great because you can play it as a king of the hill type scenario, with the winner of each race staying on for the next challenger.

## Single Tee Partner Drill

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**Difficulty Level:** Easy

**Setup:** Here we need just one tee, and one ball but two plastic wiffle ball bats – one for you, and one for your partner. You'll also need a third person again to shout out the go command.

**Execution:** Here you'll actually need one partner to be left handed and the other right handed for the drill to work. Have both players line up, facing each other at the same tee. Now on the third person's command, the players will swing, racing each other to see who can connect with the ball first.

**Coaching Tips:** This might be the most fun drill in the whole package! Nothing makes players better like competition, and standing right across from each other can be the extra motivation for a lot of players to break through any bat speed barriers they might have had before.

## Reaction Soft Toss Drill

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**Difficulty Level:** Intermediate

**Setup:** For this drill you'll need a partner, a couple softballs, and a bat.

**Execution:** Get into your batting stance, but then extend your hands forward, so that they are roughly over your front foot, with the bat held straight up, perpendicular to the ground. Now with your partner in position for a soft toss, keep your eyes on her hands. As soon as the ball leaves her hands, bring the bat back to the beginning of your swing and explode back forward, through the ball. After five reps, switch back to a regular batting stance for five more reps, focusing on transferring over the same principles from the drill.

**Coaching Tips:** If you're having trouble reacting in time, ask your partner throw the tosses with a little bit more loft on them to make the drill easier.

## Standing Bat Drill

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**Difficulty Level:** Intermediate

**Setup:** Here you'll need two regular softball bats.

**Execution:** Place one of the bats down in the middle of the plate, with the knob up in the air and the tip down on the ground. Now get into stance, holding your bat, and swing as fast as you can, to see if the wind created by your bat swing can knock over the standing bat. Give it 10 reps for one set and then give it a break.

**Coaching Tips:** Be careful! You don't want to swing too close to the bat and connect with the knob. If you're having trouble getting the bat to fall – don't worry about it, most of the time it's not going to happen, but the drill is very effective because it makes for a great bat speed goal.

## Power Pack

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**Difficulty Level:** Intermediate

**Setup:** You need three kinds of bats. Your standard bat, a heavy bat, and a light bat.

**Execution:** To start off you'll use your heavy bat, and knock off five swings with that one. Next, you switch to the light bat, and execute five more swings. Then, to finish the drill off, you'll do five more swings with your regular bat.

**Coaching Tips:** You can do this as either a soft toss drill, or even just with dry swings. Regardless of how you do the drill, make sure that you're focusing with all three bats on swinging as fast as you possibly can.

## Hard Underhand Flips Drill

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**Difficulty Level:** Intermediate

**Setup:** For this drill you'll need a pitchers screen to protect your partner, five softballs, and a bat.

**Execution:** Your partner is going to set up the pitchers screen fairly close to home plate. Next they're going to throw five hard underhand flips over the strike zone. After one set, take a break, and repeat another set. Do this a total of three times.

**Coaching Tips:** The screen should be set up close enough that it's fairly difficult for the batter to swing and make contact with the ball. Also, this is not a rapid fire drill – take a beat in between each flip for the batter to recover.

**Variations:** To make it a little more difficult, you can switch over to overhand flips. Now you don't want your partner to be blowing the ball past you, but they should be thrown with a little bit of oomph. For a third variation, move the screen back a little bit farther, somewhere between where you would flip the ball from and where you would run batting practice from, and have your partner really try to blow the ball past you, forcing an even quicker reaction.

## Eyes Closed Reaction Drill

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**Difficulty Level:** Advanced

**Setup:** You'll need a partner, a couple softballs, and a bat.

**Execution:** Get into batting stance at the plate, with your partner either off to the side for a soft toss, or behind the pitcher's screen in front. Now you're going to close your eyes, and your

partner is going to throw the ball. Right after your partner throws the ball, she'll yell out "ball!" and you will then open your eyes, locate the ball, swing through and make contact. Repeat ten times to complete a set.

**Coaching Tips:** Make sure to vary up the ball locations so that the batter can't just lock in on one area over the plate. Also, play around with the timing of when you call out "ball!" to make it easier or more difficult on the batter.

## Fast Rewind Drill

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**Difficulty Level:** Intermediate

**Setup:** You'll need a partner, a couple softballs, and a bat.

**Execution:** This drill can be done with either a pitcher's screen or just as a soft toss drill. Either way, the focus will be on rewinding your swing as quickly as you can immediately on completion of the follow through. Focus on small sets, with five reps at a time maximum so that you can focus on that explosion back to your original position with as much speed as possible.

**Coaching Tips:** Much like a plyometric drill, the focus here is on a controlled explosive movement, training the fast twitch muscle fibers in your arms to fire off as fast as possible.

## Rear Toss Drill

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**Difficulty Level:** Advanced

**Setup:** You'll need a partner, a couple softballs, and a bat.

**Execution:** Have your partner stand a couple feet behind you, and get into batting stance. Now your partner is going to throw some soft tosses into your strike zone from behind you, and you need to keep your eyes on the ball and swing fast and hard, trying to hit them deep out to center field. Go through 10 reps of this drill before switching back to regular tosses for five more reps.

**Coaching Tips:** This is a great drill for both bat speed and hand eye coordination, as it forces the batter to really key in on the ball. There isn't much room for error, as the ball will only be hittable for a very short amount of time.

## Slash Drill

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**Difficulty Level:** Intermediate

**Setup:** You'll need a pitcher's screen for your partner, a couple softballs, and a bat.

**Execution:** Get into bunting position at the plate. Now your partner is going to toss you some balls, and as soon as the ball is tossed, pull back into your swinging position and explode back forward with your swing, trying to get the bat back as far as you can without letting the ball drop. Go through 10 reps, then switch back to your normal batting stance for five normal reps.

**Coaching Tips:** If you're coach asked you to slash in a game, you would be looking to hit a slow grounder up the line, but here we're focusing on bat speed, so you're going to really pull back and explode forward, trying to drive the ball hard and deep.

## Radar Drill

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**Difficulty Level:** Easy

**Setup:** For this drill you'll need radar that measures bat speed and a bat. You can find a radar on the internet or at some sports specialty stores.

**Execution:** This is a fairly simple drill. Set the radar up in a position where it can read your swing, and let loose. Go five swings per set, doing your best to beat your speed on the last swing each time.

**Coaching Tips:** Having a partner record all your speeds is a great way to measure improvements in bat speed over a period of time. For example before beginning this drill package, you can try three sets of this drill and record all of your times. A month later, after working hard on your bat speed, you can come back to this drill and get the reward of physically seeing your bat speed improvement.

# Tennis Ball Fence Drill

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**Difficulty Level:** Intermediate

**Setup:** You'll need a tee, a couple tennis balls, and a bat.

**Execution:** Set up the tee nice and close to the fence, roughly four feet away. Now swing through, with your goal being to hit the ball hard enough that it will either get stuck or even blow right through the fence. After 10 reps reposition the tee so it's no longer facing the fence, put a normal softball on, and see how far and fast you can hit it.

**Coaching Tips:** You may not have any luck in getting tennis balls stuck, but having the mental goal of attempting to do so can be great at forcing you to swing even harder and faster.

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