

Hitting Segments - What to Accomplish

Mechanics:

- Staying athletic with weight in middle during rotation (creating shape of triangle throughout the entirety of swing)
- Hands staying with the backside (preferably around or slightly above shoulder)
- Palm up/palm down at contact - barrel will naturally stay lower than hands
- Hands staying with backside (helping with knob towards ball/pitcher - don't overemphasize "knob to ball" as it could promote handsy swing)
- Keeping chest slightly over zone through rotation - keeps eyes in a quiet spot and allows shoulders to replace themselves when rotating
- Hips then hands (still working together!)
- When striding, trying to keep our shoulders in a downhill position (back shoulder slightly higher than front shoulder)
- BIGGEST POINT: Staying GROUNDED in our swing and utilizing the ground when rotating to generate power as we swing the bat! We should feel our back leg generating momentum towards the pitcher/ground as it keeps our hips in our legs!

Drills for Mechanics

- High Tee: Working on short path to ball
- One knee side toss: working short path to ball
- Bat Squeeze: Squeeze a smaller bat in between your feet while just loading from the hips up. Works on promoting what being GROUNDED feels like
- Torque Drill: Getting into a stride/grounded position with hands ready to hit, rotate the back hip towards plate by a couple inches, release the barrel with hips and hands. Promotes working on coiling and uncoiling the body
- Stride and Hold Drill: Load and stride into a our "power" position and hold for 1-2 seconds. Without reloading, swing from power position. Promotes feeling what our "power" position is and how to rotate our swing without any rhythm....yet!
- PVC Shoulder: hold a PVC pipe along the line of your shoulders while staying over the slightly over zone when starting out. Load and stride into power position while feeling the PVC pipe start downhill. Upon rotation, keep head clear and rotate shoulders to allow PVC pipe to stay on the baseball (on tee). Promotes shoulders and barrel staying parallel to baseball at contact!
- Babe Ruth Drill: Start by standing with feet shoulder width apart and hands starting around back hip. Stride into our power position with the hands traveling up to our back shoulder (key should be feeling it in our scap while shoulders stay downhill). Hold for for 1 sec then swing. Work your way to swinging full speed, but do NOT use this as a drill that takes LOTS of swings as it could create bad habits!

Rhythm and Timing

- We should be thinking about “dancing” with the pitcher and getting on time with him!
- We have TWO phases of our rhythm - from leg lift to separation of hands, then from foot strike and release. The first phase should be our time start loading our body while the second phase should be our time to getting ready to hit and make a decision!
- Some hitters can get away with getting foot down early and waiting. We lose power at times, but give ourselves higher chances of contact (could be a good 2-strike adjustment for hitters!), others stay in the back hip with hands at ready position as the ball is being thrown.
- Contact and timing is around our front foot region. Pitch is inner third, we catch the ball in front of eyes and front foot. Pitch is middle third, contact is around our front foot, and pitch around the outer third, we catch the ball behind our front foot!

Drills for Rhythm and Timing

- Two Tee Drill: Set tees up (one on inside, one on outside), when hitter loads, his partner will say either “inside” or “outside”
- Pendulum Drill: Hitter starts with the bat hanging off fingers below waist and swinging the bat back and forth. The hitter will then swing the bat back into loading position when tossed pulls their hand back to toss.
- Sway Drill: Hitter gets into a wider than normal position and sways hips from front foot to back foot (making a swaying motion back and forth). Hitter will load into backside when tossed pulls hands back or thrower separates hands.
- Stride Drill (off front flips): Hitter starts shoulder width apart with hands in front of eyes. Hitter will stride and pull hands back when tossed brings their hand forward as they’re tossing the ball. More advanced is when thrower begins bringing the ball above the shoulder when throwing.

Approach and Pitch Recognition

- Approaches can be a game plan before the AB occurs, or we can have a game plan for each count/situation.
- Examples of Approaches can be looking FB away and reacting inside. FB early over middle 75% of plate while going to corners in 1-strike counts and zoning out for 2-strikes. If we are jumpy in box, we could look change up instead to stay over plate longer (more advanced and need to have good eyes and quick hands, can’t get beat on FB).
- Seeing pitches early is crucial - Soft Focus to Fine Focus is key, this means letting eyes relax during the pitcher’s motion and then finding the release point to see ball early! Seeing fat wrist and skinny wrist as well as knowing counts will help decipher pitches early. Fat Wrist - normally FB or CH while Skinny Wrist is Slider/CB. For breaking pitches, we need to see hump early out of hand and read dot - tight dot leads to sharper breaks while bigger dots lead to slower, loopier breaks. See off-speed up in the zone in count later counts is helpful to doing damage. If off-speed starts late and low, it’s going to stay low!

Drills for Approaches and Pitch Recognition

- Bullpen reads and Live ABs
- Two Tees (same from Rhythm and Timing): Use this drill to generate approach to look away and react in. If we look inside, we tend to open hips and shoulders early and we lose the outside portion of plate. Stay calm and controlled while looking away!
- Line Drill for Off-Speed: Have a line on a screen (hitter at plate with ball on tee). Thrower behind screen will throw off-speed pitch to screen. If ball is above the line, that indicates the off-speed is up in zone and we do damage. If ball is below line the line then we take. This is to work on seeing pitches early!
- Two Machine Drill: Set up machines next to each other, one off-speed and one FB. Having hitters choose what ball they're hitting that time and they hunt for that pitch. Coach holds two baseballs up and then pretend to put both in while just putting one ball in. Promotes calm and controlled body movements while developing pitch recognition through an approach!
- FPFB - You get one pitch each round. If it's off-speed, you take. if you swing, you're out! If they take, they get another pitch, looking FB. However, if it's a FB and we do damage, the hitter gets three more swings as an incentive!