

# HITTING

(Emg)

## IT ALL STARTS WITH THE PROPER BAT FOR YOU!

*See "Equipment" (bats) for how to select the proper bat.*

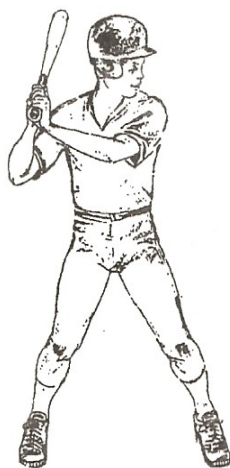
### THE GRIP

Wrap your bottom hand – the one nearest to the pitcher as you stand at the plate – around the bat just above the knob of the bat. Now bring your top hand up underneath and wrap your fingers around the bat in the opposite direction. The bat should rest in your hand where your fingers meet your palm. If you hold the bat too far out toward your fingertips, or jam it back against your palm, you won't be able to control it. Your batting average and power will suffer.

Hold the bat firmly, but don't tense up. You'll hit better if you're relaxed and comfortable when you grip the bat.



### THE STANCE



Step into the batter's box and set your back foot parallel with the back line.

Your front foot should be just forward of your shoulder. Your knees should be bent with your weight divided equally between both feet.

Point your front shoulder right at the pitcher and tilt your upper body forward a little.

Turn your head so you're looking at the pitcher over your shoulder with both eyes.

Your head should be straight, not tilted. If you're not seeing the pitcher with both eyes, your front



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Bring your hands, which are holding the bat in the proper grip, up above and behind your back shoulder. *Point your elbows down at the ground.* Tilt the bat back and over your shoulder a little. Don't flex your muscles or lock your elbows and knees. Be relaxed, loose, and alert, not tense.

### Special Topic: A Normal, Open, or Closed Stance?

A book can be written on this topic alone. Very briefly, however, open and closed stances can help somewhat in hitting outside or inside pitches and/or be a corrective measure if you are continually swinging under the ball.

## THE STRIDE

As the pitcher winds up, shift your weight backward, to your back foot. At the same time, move your front foot forward about four to six inches. Point it toward the field between the first and second baseman.

A short stride is important because it helps you keep your weight on your back foot and your head in the right place throughout your swing. It also can prevent you from swinging under the ball.

As you do this, cock your hands by turning your front shoulder toward the plate slightly. Your hands should move straight back when you do this; don't raise or lower them.

Your hands, hips, and the bat are now ready to move forward and hit the ball.

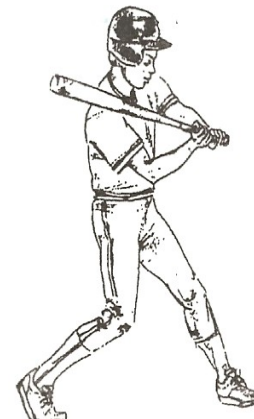


## THE SWING

When you decide to swing at the pitch, bring your hands forward toward the plate. The bat, of course, will come with them.

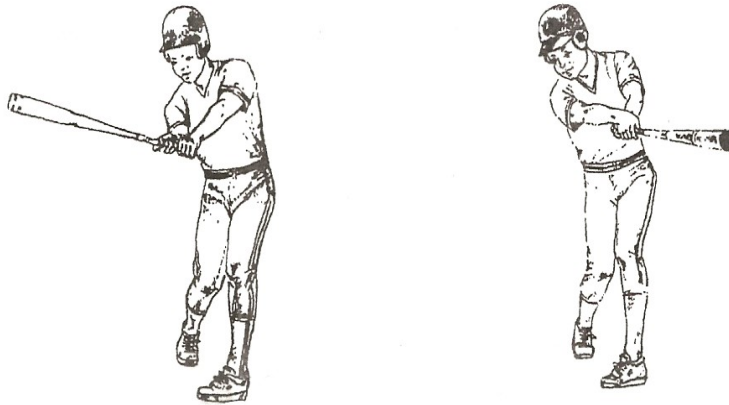
Shift your weight forward to your front foot. Your whole body will rotate so you face the pitcher. Turn and push from your back foot. It should twist and point out toward the field as you swing.

Your hips should rotate right along with your hands. The knob of the bat should stay in front of your hips, almost as if it was attached to your belt buckle.



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Keep your eyes on the ball and watch it all the way in. Even though you can't see the ball hit the bat, you have to try. Your head should start as you watch the pitcher, close to your front shoulder. After your follow-through, your head should be close to your back shoulder. Yet throughout your swing your head should be still. No matter how much your body moves, any movement of your head will make it much harder to hit the ball.

As your hands reach the plate, throw them at the ball. The bat will come forward and swing into the ball in front of the plate. As you make contact your bottom hand should be facing down, your top hand facing up.

### A Special Practice Tip

One of the best ways to practice your hitting mechanics is to hit off a tee.....Seven- and eight-year old Little Leaguers play their games using a batting tee, but most of the best big league hitters spend a lot of time hitting off a tee, too. When you practice hitting using a tee, you don't have to think about whether a pitch is a ball or a strike, so you're better able to concentrate on doing all the little things that make for a good cut.

Set the tee just in front of the plate – you want to hit the ball before it reaches you – and place the ball on top of the tee hose. You're now ready to practice hitting the way the best hitters do: off a tee.

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