

# BUNTING

(Emh)

Bunting is another hitting skill that requires a lot of practice. Many games are decided by a single run. One of the best offensive weapons, when you need to score just one run, is the bunt.

I don't like the term "sacrifice bunt" in my mind whenever we bunt; we are bunting for a hit, not just to move a runner.

There are two methods to bunt. The square-around method is the traditional way to sacrifice but, however I've found that it is less effective and harder to execute than the pivot method.

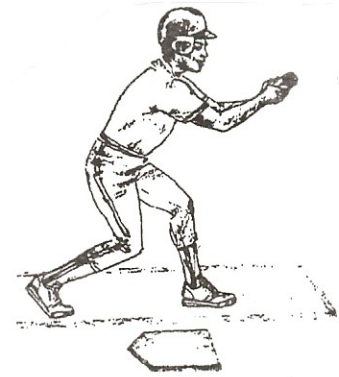
For this reason we will only discuss the pivot method of bunting.

## THE PIVOT METHOD

The pivot method makes it easier to hide your intention to bunt, and helps you get the bat head out in front of the plate. Because you aren't shuffling your feet around, you are also less likely to step out of the batter's box if you use the pivot method.

The hard part is keeping your balance. With practice and the right technique, however, the pivot method becomes much easier and infielders must always be on the lookout for you to lay one down.

For the most part you will start in your regular batting stance. As the pitcher starts his wind up, pivot around on the balls of your feet so that your toes are pointed at the pitcher. Keep your weight forward and your knees bent. To help you maintain your balance, you should stand somewhat flat-footed on your front foot, while you stand on the toes of your back foot.



At the same time, slide your top hand up the bat about halfway to the end. Hold the bat on the side of your index finger, out in front of the plate. Keep your fingers away from the front of the bat, which should be chest-high, at the top of the strike zone, and parallel to the ground.

Keep your arms very relaxed and your elbows in, next to your body, while holding the bat out, away from your body. Sight over the top of the bat and watch the ball right into it.

*Only bunt strikes:* It is much harder to make a good bunt on a pitch out of the strike zone. If the pitch is above the bat you know it's a ball, so don't bunt. If it's below the bat, try to catch the ball with the fat part of the bat by bringing it straight back as the ball hits it, the way you would bring your glove back toward your body when you make a catch.



On low pitches, (pitches which are below the bat, but are above your knees in the strike zone – not in the dirt) bend your knees, and bring your whole body down with the bat to the level of the ball. And always try to bunt the top of the ball with the bottom of the bat. A pop-up on a bunt can easily turn into a double play.

## BUNTING - continued

### WHERE TO BUNT

Once you're able to deaden the ball in front of home plate consistently, you can improve your game by bunting down the first or third baselines.

There are a number of things that determine where you should bunt the ball, but you usually want it to stop about twenty feet from home plate. We won't cover all the possible situations, but below are a few things to keep in mind when you're trying to move the base runners.

***Is the pitcher right-handed?*** Right-handed pitchers tend to finish their follow-through toward the first baseline. If the pitcher you're facing doesn't end up in a good position to field, bunt up the third baseline and you may buy yourself some extra time.

***Is the pitcher Left-handed?*** Left handed pitchers fall off the mound toward the third baseline, but in doing so they have an easier throw to second base. If the pitcher is left-handed, you may want to bunt up the first baseline.