

BATTING SKILLS
and
TECHNIQUES

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Individuality is the first thing a coach must consider when approaching his players to improve their batting skills. There is no uniform pattern that can be followed with all batters. Perhaps the only common points of concentration that would apply to most batters are the instilling of confidence and relaxation in a batter as he steps into the batter's box.

One of the finer points that warrants consideration is the position of the hands on the bat. A batter should grip the bat as firmly as though he were congratulating a friend for hitting a home run and in much the same manner.

The arms play an important part in hitting as they give the batter leverage to increase his power. Comfortable positioning with the elbows away from the body is important. Along with arm position in importance is shoulder position. The shoulder should be kept level to avoid chopping up or down at a pitched ball.

The proper swing includes a continuous movement of the bat from the beginning to the end of the stroke. It is essential that the bat does not stop or slow down in this movement so that the swing be uninterrupted.

The batter's eyes are an important consideration in improving batting technique. The eyes should follow the ball from the time the pitcher releases it until it is either hit or caught by the catcher.

Position in the batter's box should also be stressed as batter comfort depends upon his stance. Proper placement in the batter's box will allow for greater comfort and give the batter more time to watch and evaluate a pitch. Good weight distribution will induce a more fluid swing. Closely associated with this weight distribution is proper foot movement, which provides for a smooth swing.

Among the devices used to evaluate the batter's stance, wrist action, eye movement and foot movement is the rubber batting tee. This device also can be used to improve the batter's ability to evaluate a pitch.

The metal batting tee provides for greater improvement in judging a pitch as a strike or a ball. This device can also be used to give a coach opportunity to evaluate footwork and wrist action and the batter's ability to hit a ball in a desired direction.

Because light weight balls move in various directions and at varying speeds, the ping-pong gun and balls are a valuable asset to a coach. By using this device, he can better the batter's skill in following a ball and he can improve wrist action in swinging at a pitched ball.

In some instances, the use of striped baseballs enable a batter to improve his ability to follow a pitched ball.

Perhaps, the most widely used device in high school and colleges is the Dudley Pitching Machine, which can be used either indoors or outside. The device allows the coach

to stage a pitcher-batter situation and allow for observation and criticism on the coach's part. The coach can create a game situation and observe the batter's reactions to different pitches and pressures. It also provides for a faster rate of pitching and it allows a batter to practice his batting alone.

The first chapter of this thesis establishes the background of batting and also explains the types and techniques of hitting. Chapter Two introduces devices to improve and for correct hitting and explains the operation of each device and how to use each properly. Chapter Three consists of case histories or personal studies made by the author to illustrate the effectiveness of proper use of the devices. The fourth chapter summarizes the entire work.

To the knowledge of the author there has been no study of this nature ever recorded in any files. It is probably assumed that most batters become proficient only if they watch professional hitters and if the coach points out mistakes. Every baseball handbook points out general patterns that would apply to most batters, but none offer much in the way of corrective actions nor do they suggest any devices for such action. The author feels that this paper will enable coaches to make, have made, or purchase low cost devices to improve batting and correct faults in the most formative years. It also offers suggestions on proper use of these devices. The case histories provide data to support the use of these devices.