

Better Hitting:

1. Pick the right bat:

If the bat is too heavy your bat speed is too slow. You will try to overcompensate for this and swing awkwardly. If the bat is too light you will swing too fast and throw off your timing. When contact is made the ball won't go anywhere and your hands will sting. If the bat is too short you will stub the ball and miss the sweet spot of the bat resulting in weak groundballs. If the bat is too long it's usually too heavy as well and will slow your bat speed down.

So how do you determine the right bat for you?

To pick a bat that is the right length for a 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.

2. Hit the right pitch

Obviously the best pitch is right down the middle with no speed or spin but this rarely happens in a competitive game. Each player has a favourite pitch to hit. Better hitting requires the discipline to wait until you get your pitch. When you do get your pitch keep your eye on the ball and swing normally. Many good hitters wait until two strikes before they give up on this strategy.

Sometimes you have to hit for the team. For example, you may have to lay down a bunt to advance a runner in scoring position or hit a sacrifice fly to score a run. You may want to hit a different pitch in both of these situations. Maybe a drop ball for the bunt and a rise ball for the sac fly. When you do this your teammates and coaches will appreciate you.

3. Stay focussed in the box

When you get in the box to hit do not worry about technique but focus on just making contact with ball. Focus on the pitcher and his delivery. Sometimes pitchers tip their pitches by changing their motion for a type of pitch or by the position of their glove. Watch the pitcher during the game to pick up on pitchers tendencies and pitching patterns. Sometimes a pitcher will always go to a certain pitch in a certain count because they have confidence in that pitch. You can take advantage of this and be aggressive looking for the ball in a certain location. Remember you have the luxury of guessing up until two strikes.

4. Use a proper hitting stance

Stance varies from player to player because of body type and physical tendencies but generally a good stance usually has:

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

5. Use Proper Grip

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.



6. Stride

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 swing sooner.

7. Swing

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.

8. Hand-Eye Coordination

This comes with practice. As the ball is pitched, batters should bring their hands to meet the ball. This will happen automatically with enough repetition.