

8 Basic Hitting Steps Of Rotational Hitting with a slight weight shift

1. Grip

There are two common mistakes you can make gripping the bat. The first is **too much pressure** and the second is **improper holding the bat in your hand (rather than with your fingers)**. Either mistake alone will hinder bat speed, reduce power, and restrict bat control.

To fire the barrel of the bat with fluidity and quickness, the hands must start free of tension

When gripping the bat, relax your fingers. Do not hold the bat with a "death grip." Imagine you are holding a ripe peach. Too much pressure will break the skin and sticky juices will run all over your hands. **While waiting on the pitch allow your fingers to flicker on and off the bat as you wait for the pitch.** Do not worry about the bat slipping out of your hands with a loose grip. Your hands will naturally firm their grip as snap your wrists.

Holding the bat in your palms greatly restricts your capabilities as a hitter. It reduces bat speed and power and diminishes your ability to control the bat.

Burying the handle in your palms restricts movement.

Get your bat and hold it in the middle of your **palms** and swing it several times as if you were snapping your wrists over home plate.

Now place the handle where the **bottom of your fingers and the top of your palms meet.**

Repeat the same exercise and you will feel increased strength and control when flicking the bat.

2. Stance

The hitter's stance is a matter of personal comfort. There are no set guide-lines. However, there is one set rule that all hitters should obey when they finalize their hitting stance: **Your stance should allow for a simple and smooth transition** that will put you in to a strong position to hit the softball. If you are holding your hands or setting your feet a manner that makes it difficult to get into that position, you need to make an adjustment.

A basic or standard hitting stance places your feet just outside your shoulders. Line your feet up square to the pitcher with your weight on the balls of your feet. Flex your knees slightly and bend at the waist. Your shoulders should be aligned square to the pitcher. **Hold your hands about shoulder level, aligned with the inside of your rear shoulder and approximately 4 to 6 inches or 10 to 17cm away from your body.** Your weight should be 50-50 percent prior to loading. **You should have a 2 eye sight of the release point.**

The bat angle should be 45degrees or slightly more.

In your swing the end of your bat should be able to cover the outside of the home plate with an inside out swing.

3. Pre-load

Is a movement that relaxes the body and mind prior to loading the body to explode at the pitch.

It could be opening and closing one or two hands on the bat. It could be using the bat like a fishing rod in a casting action. Moving your hands back to load before swinging the bat. Having a slight turn of the front knee back towards your rear knee. Have your weight 50-50 percent in an athletic stance.

Some hitters have too much preliminary movement and are not ready to hit once the ball is released. This causes them to be late on the pitch or forces them to rush their swing.

4. Stride and load

Like a good golf swing, a proper softball swing employs coiling and uncoiling of the torso. Failure to create this coil results in a swing that inhibits hip and shoulder rotation, and ultimately hinders hand and bat speed. This results in weakly struck hits and balls to the opposite field.

Coil by closing hips 5 to 8 degrees and as you stride move your hands back 5 to 8 cm. with the bat head at a 45 degrees or more angle.

Your weight should be on your back foot 60 percent to 40 percent on the front foot. Do not coil so far that your back elbow goes behind your back. This will cause your back elbow to come down and around your body bringing the bat flat, which results in down up swing.

If you take a long stride your eye level will go down which makes your eyes adjust twice as the ball is on the way. **Take a stride that keeps your eyes almost the same level as when you load.**

5. Start of swing

The longer you can carry your weight on the back leg, the longer you can dictate when you want to go to the ball.

When your front foot lands slightly close, your knee must be flexed before your swing starts from the ground up. The back foot and knee start the hips, shoulders hands and bat.

It is important to make sure you still have a two eye sight of the release point of the pitcher.

6. At contact

It's no use saying to a hitter keep, your eye on the ball, because most of them do just that.

However they just bring the eyes down instead of having the head down. Most hitters relate more to a part of the head, like the NOSE. **Tell young hitters to get the nose down at contact and the head goes down.**

At contact, your back hand should be palm up and your front hand should be palm down.

Your back hip should be exploding forward and your front hip pulling back resulting in torque.

7. Torque *(hands applying forces at the handle in opposing directions)*
To get torque into the swing, which produces bat speed, which in turn give you power, you must straighten your front leg just before contact.

When your leg straightens, it accelerates your hip rotation which pushes your front hip back and the back hip forward. This in turn pushes your back hand forward and pulls your front hand back.

The leg only stays straight for a fraction of a second.

8. Follow through

Rotation of the hips and shoulders and a slight weight shift is a part of every swing.

A full rotation, that is, the front shoulder finishes in the position of the rear shoulder, and the rear shoulder finishes in the position of rear shoulder, a rotation of 180 degrees.

Full rotation, however, seldom occurs when hitting an outside pitch. The key to hitting pitches on the outside of the plate is to rotate the hips less than 90 degrees, and the shoulders less than 180 degrees. For a right hand hitter this is when the belly button ends up facing the right of the pitcher towards second baseman.

The hands must lead the barrel into the impact zone to hit to the opposite field.

Barry Blanchard

HITTING CHECKLIST

NAME:

DATE:

COACH:

Ratings

1 = Poor 2 = below Ave. 3 = Ave. 4 = Above Ave. 5 = Excellent

Category	Rating	Comments
Grip: <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ In fingers✓ Free of tension		
Stance: <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Athletic✓ Width✓ 2 eye sight		
Stride and Load: <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ At the same time✓ Length of Stride✓ Head movement✓ Steps soft		
Start of swing: <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Ground up✓ Hip rotation✓ Knob of bat to ball		
Contact: <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Nose down✓ Palm up palm down✓ Back foot rotation		
Torque: <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Front knee straight✓ Hands snap		
Follow through: <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Back shoulder replaces front shoulder✓ Balance		
Total Points		

CHECKLIST

By Game Breaker Digital Video Analysis System

	Basic Skills	Drills to Adjust Faults
<u>Grip</u>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A proper grip on the bat will result in a palm up and palm down at contact. 2. To fire the barrel of the bat with fluidity and quickness, the hands and body must start free of tension. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Axe handle or bat on ground 2. Casting drill
<u>Stance</u>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The stance should be similar to the ready position of tennis player or a soccer goalie. A slightly crouched position with the weight 50-50 degree. 2. The bat head is 45 degree or more with the hands about shoulder height with a slight cock of the bat. 3. The shoulders are in a fairly straight line with the pitcher. 4. The rear elbow is elevated to or just past 45 degree point 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do anything that keeps your hands relax. Loose muscles are fast muscles 2-4. In front of mirror, check out 2 to 4.
<u>Stride and Load</u>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Your eye level should not go down more than 5 to 7 cm. from when your front foot commences and lands. 2. Take your hands back 5 to 8 cm towards the catcher, at the same time transferring your weight back over your back leg to a 60-40 percent. Make sure you don't lock your left arm as this delays the start of your swing and lengthens it, which diminishes bat speed. 3. Your stride should not be longer than 20cm. and directly to the pitcher. Stride to long and you will lose power and your eye level goes down as the pitch is on its way. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mirror drill or Sun drill 2. Soccer ball drill or Inside-out fence drill 3. Stride drill

	<p>4. Land on the inside of your closed front foot with your weight back 60% - 40%.</p> <p>5. Timing of the stride is a most critical part of the swing. You must time the swing so when your front lands the ball is almost in the hitting zone. The inward motion of the rear leg and the straightening (which lasts a fraction of a second) of the front leg will produce maximum power on the ball. The power of the straight front leg is the same as when a pitcher releases the ball. The power comes from the torque applied by the hips, arm, and the wrist.</p>	<p>5. Timing drill. Watching pitcher from the on deck batters circle.</p>
Start of Swing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When your foot lands almost fully closed on the inside of your big toe, your front knee must be flexed before you swing start from the ground up. 2. The back foot and knee starts the hips, shoulders, hands and bat. 3. It is important to have a two-eye sight of the release point of the pitcher. 4. Make sure you rotate around the axis, not sway your hips to the pitcher. 5. The longer you can keep your weight back the better your chances are of exploding on to the pitch with power. 	<p>1-5 Mirror drill with the bat in your elbows behind your back.</p>
Contact	<p><u>Torque (Body and hands applying forces in opposing direction.)</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Head must be down at contact point. 2. Your left hand should be palm down, and your right hand should be palm up. 3. Your front leg has already straightened, driving your left hip back and you're right hip forward. 4. The left hand pulls back and the right hand pushes forward. 	<p>1. Tracking drill:</p> <p>3. Bat in elbows behind back drill.</p> <p>4. This is torque which generates bat speed.</p>

<u>Follow Through</u>	<p>1. A full rotation, that is, the front shoulder finishes in the position of the rear shoulder, and the rear shoulder finishes in the position of front shoulder, a rotation of 180 degrees.</p> <p>2. Full rotation, however, seldom occurs when hitting an outside pitch.</p>	1. Balance beam drill
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Softball Down Under

Barry Blanchar

DRILLS

Grip	<p>1. Grip axe handle which will give you the correct grip.</p> <p>1. Place bat on ground and stand over it and place both hands down on handle. This should be the correct grip.</p> <p>2. Cast the bat like a fishing rod.</p> <p>2. Opening and closing fingers on the bat up until the stride and load.</p>	
Stance	<p>1-4. <u>Mirror drill</u></p> <p>Practice looking at yourself with a rolled up newspaper in front of a mirror, front on and then side on for all areas of the stance position.</p>	
Stride and Load	<p><u>1-2. Mirror Drill</u></p> <p><u>1. Sun drill.</u> Stand with your back to the sun. Get into your normal stance position and have a friend put their foot on your shadow head. Now you will look toward where the pitcher should be and take a normal swing and follow through. Stay in your finish position and look at where your shadow head has finished. If it has gone down more than 7cm or 2 inches you will have to adjust either your stance or your stride.</p>	

2. Soccer Ball Drill

Grip bat with right hand and put a semi deflated soccer ball on right shoulder against your neck. Bring the bat on to the soccer ball and put your left hand on the bat. In a ready position take your stride and swing the bat. If soccer ball falls towards 1st base you are casting, which means you are straighten your left arm and reducing power from your swing. If the ball falls towards the pitcher then you have executed your swing properly.

2. Fence drill

Facing a fence or wall take your normal stance with the knob of the bat resting against your belly button and the bat head against the fence or wall. That will be the distance you are going to swing the bat and follow through. If you swing correctly you will miss hitting the fence or wall.

If you cast or straighten your left arm then you will hit the fence or wall.
Use an old bat for this drill.

3. Stride drill

Mark on the ground your normal stance position of both feet. Now swing the bat and at the end of your follow through look down and mark how far your front has gone past your mark. If you have gone well over 20cm or 9 inches then you have to adjust your width of your stance or the length of your stride.

4. Timing drill

A simple drill to get your timing right. Practice with your own pitchers at training sessions, or at games in dugout and in the “on deck batting circle”. Looking at pitcher take your stance, then stride as if you are going to swing. Keeping both feet flat on the ground, shift your weight forward over your front foot with bat pointed at

	the pitcher. Next time the pitcher come to the rest position you are ready to drop you're hands down, back up and transferring your weight back.
Contact	<p>The purpose of the tracking drills is to focus on the release of the pitch and gain early information on where and when the ball will reach the plate.</p> <p><u>1. Tracking drills</u> Have a pitcher pitch to a catcher. The hitter will practice the step and load at the same time call either "ball" or "strike", as early as possible. At the same time the batter will track the ball into the catcher's glove and then track the ball from the catcher back to the pitcher.</p> <p><u>1. Tracking drill 2</u> Have a pitcher pitch to a catcher. The hitter will practice the step and load at the same time saying "YES, YES AND THEN NO" if it's not in their strike zone. Hitters must go into the box expecting to hit every pitch.</p> <p><u>3. Rotation drill</u> Bat in elbows behind back. Practice the stride and rotation and finish the swing balance.</p>
Follow through	<p><u>1. Balance beam drill</u> A 6 foot length board, 6 inch wide that a hitter will step on in tennis shoes and dry swing with just the bat. The most important part of the drill is to rotate the back foot to retain balance. After the hitter has got confident from the dry swings, a coach should then toss balls to the hitter.</p>

HITTING PROGRESSION DRILLS

The key to successful hitting is **PRACTICE**. Hitting drills allow the hitters to perform many swings in a short period of time which is important because muscle memory depends on repetition, and each drill helps the hitter to focus on one particular aspect of the swing thereby accelerating the learning.

When a drill is performed, it is critical that each swing is executed to perfection. The drills I show you are just examples that can help your hitters. Use your own imagination and compile others.

HITTING RHYTHM DRILL

Phase 1: hands on hips: Stride only

Phase 2: Stride and do hip rotation with back foot, at the same time maintaining head position throughout pivot.

Phase 3: Using arms only complete the stride-hip rotation and follow through.

Phase 4: With bat continue doing all the above plus remaining balanced at the completion of the swing.

100 Technique swings: Drills should include at least 50 repetitions total.

10 swings- Moderate speeds, work on stride. Consistent short and soft on inside of stride foot

10 swings- Moderate speeds, work on hip rotation and back shoulder replacing the front shoulder on completion of the follow through.

10 swing- Moderate speeds, work on straight front leg on contact point.

10 swings- Moderate speeds, work on quick hands going straight to ball.

10 swings- Moderate speeds, work on still head and eyes.

10 swings-Fast speeds, "outside-in" swing, throwing the bat head out in front.

10 swings-Fast speeds, "inside-out" swing, bat knob to ball.

10 swings-With eyes closed, 5 swings of bat at $\frac{3}{4}$ speed, focusing on the four main areas of the swing.

With eyes closed, 5 swings of the bat in slow motion, focusing on the four main areas of the swing

10 swings- At full speed swing light bat or large end of normal bat focusing on smoothness, rhythm and timing

10 swings- Maximum speed with snap-backs.

Batter Characteristic	Weakness
1. Open Stance	Outside
2. Away from home plate	Outside Low
3. Upright Stance	Outside & Inside Low
4. Long Stride	High Rise-Curve
5. High Bat in load position	Low Drop-Fast
6. Closed Stance	Inside Drop-rise
7. Low Bat	High Rise-Curve
8. Crouch Stance	Inside Drop-Rise
9. Back of Box	Low Drops-Change up
10. Stepping in Bucket	Outside Drop-Rise-Change

Guidelines for pitching patterns

1. Get a strike with your best pitch.
2. Try to get 2 strikes in the first 3 pitches.
3. Use as many variables as possible to work the count to 2 balls and 2 strikes.
4. Use the idea of opposites to set up your final pitch

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WHAT SEPARATES WINNERS FROM LOSERS IN LIFE AND SPORT

When winners want to achieve something in life, they set a goal and persevere.

They put in 100% effort and they don't quit.

They overcome all problems as they focus on their goals.

Of course there are problems. **Nothing in life is perfect.**

Successful people have the perseverance and persistence to keep struggling toward their goal.

The true test of an athlete's character comes when she is literally buried under problems and obstacles, and there seems no possible way to reach the set goals.

The main objective is surviving. If you can find inner strength in tough times, you will come out a winner.

There is a saying, **"Quitting is NOT an option."** When you have a problem, have the courage to face it directly. Figure out what your options are, then solve your problem.

Quitting is for losers.

You can get anything out of life if you just keep trying.

Nothing is impossible if you want it badly enough.

When you get older, you'll look back and today's goals will be only memories

It's one of the saddest feelings in life to think back over the years to what might have been.

Regret leaves you with a big empty feeling in the pit of your stomach.

Don't join the **"WHAT IF, I SHOULD HAVE or I WOULD HAVE"** Club.

It's not where you are that counts; it's where you are going that matters.

Barry Blanchard