

Wayzata Baseball



Hitting and Baserunning



Philosophy:

Different coaches have different approaches to hitting. It is difficult to say that one is more correct than another. Some hitting styles teach high average and no power, while others teach "go for the fence with every swing." There needs to be a balance. This packet will develop a short, compact, fast swing that still provides power upon contact.

Coaches should also not attempt to teach hitting with a cookie-cutter approach. Hitting, like pitching, is an individual art and players should be allowed to adjust their swing to fit their ability. The difference is that players need to be open to new ideas. Not all players can swing like Gary Sheffield, therefore, coaches will steer players away from that style. Coaches should teach a style of swing that will give players a chance to be successful as often as possible. The following information will prepare a player to be a well-balanced hitter.

Choosing a bat:

Selecting a bat is a very important in preparing a hitter for success. The biggest mistake players (and parents) make is buying a bat that is too big. The size and weight of the bat depends on the hitter's ability to have control and speed. Some of the smaller players can handle a bigger bat than someone who is bigger than they are.

High School players often use a bat in the range of 31-34 inches and 29-31 ounces. Before you reach for that 34 inch 31 ounce bat, keep this in mind: both Barry Bonds (power) and Tony Gwynn (average) use a 32 inch 29 ounce bat. The lighter the bat a player uses, the quicker the swing. You will not be giving up any power. Either a 33-30 or a 32-29 is recommended.

Hitting is a Four-step Process:

Hitting can be extremely complicated or it can be very simple. This packet will attempt to make it simple. The following four steps will be discussed:

- 1. Stance**
- 2. Stride**
- 3. Pivot**
- 4. Swing**

1. Stance

Where to stand in the box

Standing towards the back of the box will give hitters the longest look possible at each pitch. Most professional players have their back foot on the back line of the batter's box. While it is not necessary for high school players to be this far back, they should be towards the back third of the box.

In these pictures, you can see that the back foot is behind the back edge of the plate:

If a batter stands too far to the front, there is less reaction time.

You will also see that the batter is standing in the middle of the box. By standing too far away, batters will not be able to reach the outside pitch without lunging. By standing too close to the plate, batters will be constantly jammed by any pitch down the middle or inside.



Lower Half

The lower half of a hitter is no different than a linebacker in football or a free-throw shooter in basketball.

- Feet should be slightly wider than shoulder-length apart (the guy in the picture on the left is probably too close together)
- Feet should be in a straight line to the pitcher
- Knees should have a slight bend (the "athletic position")
- Weight should be on the toes and not on the heels
- Body weight positioning: 50% back foot, 50% front foot

Some hitters like to have their feet in a slightly open or closed stance. This is acceptable provided the hitter can get to the correct position at the point of contact on time for any pitch. Many high school hitters can

not do this. They may be able to time up the fastball, but not the off-speed. This will be addressed again with stride.

Here is what a good lower half looks like:



Here is what a bad lower half looks like:



The two pictures on the right are examples of a stance that is too wide and a stance that is not in a direct line to the pitcher (open stance).

Hands and Elbows

- hands should be at or just above the back shoulder
- hands should be just behind the back ear.

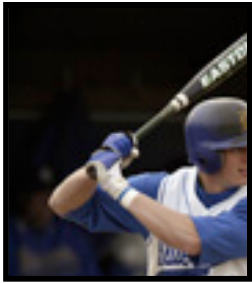
The easiest way to achieve this position is to rest the bat on your back shoulder and simply raise the bat straight up about 4-6 inches.

By starting with the hands too far forward, batters will lose some their power. Hands that are too high will have a tendency to drop prior to the swing which creates a looping swing. If the hands start too low, batters will have a hard time getting them back up to the correct contact position on time.

- elbows should be just below the hands

When a batter swings with a high elbow, the first thing they do is put their elbow down. Why not start there? Also, batters may overcorrect their elbow position and drop their elbow too far causing their bat to loop through the zone.

Here is what good hands and elbows looks like:



Here is what bad hands and elbows look like:



Notice the picture on the left: hands are in the window between the back shoulder and ear and the back elbow is below the hands

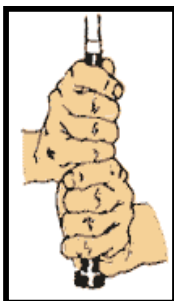
Notice the pictures on the right: hands are too far forward and back elbow is too high (and hands too low in 2nd picture)

As discussed before, it is possible to be successful with a high elbow as long as you can get to the correct contact position on time (which pros can do).

Grip and bat positioning:

Batters tend to over grip the bat in their hands. The bat should be held in the fingers and not in the palms. Holding the bat in the fingers will provide a stronger grip and better bat control.

Here is what a good grip looks like:



Here is what a bad grip looks like:



Notice the picture on the left: knuckles used for knocking are lined up

Notice the picture on the right: knuckles not lined up (can cause elbow to go up too)

When holding the bat, the knob should be pointing at the opposite batter's box in a 45 degree angle. This is a natural position.

Here is what good bat position looks like:



Here is what bad bat position looks like:

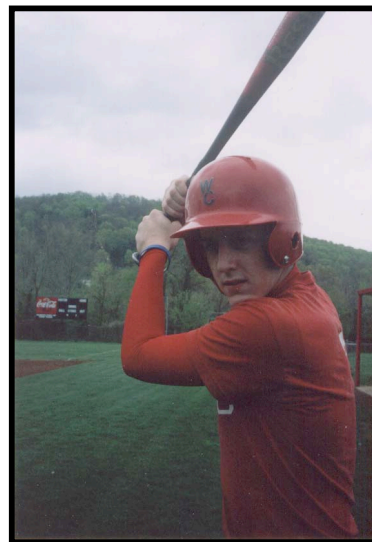


Notice the pictures on the left: good bat angle

Notice the pictures on the rights: bad bat angle and bat wrap

Wrapping the bat causes a longer swing which also means a slower swing (takes longer to get to contact point).

Overall Good Stance:



Both of these stances are pretty good. Although neither is using the correct grip and the batter on the right is close to having his hands too high, they are good examples of what a well-balanced hitting stance should look like.

2. Stride

During stride, only two areas should be moving. The lead foot will take a short step forward while the hands will move slightly backwards.

Stride Foot:

- should be a short step
- lead with the heel
- straight towards the pitcher; starting open or closed will make this more difficult to do
- landing on the toes
- weight stays back (60% back foot-40% front foot)

Some coaches refer to the stride as “testing the ice.” This means that as the lead foot goes forward, the batter’s body weight should stay back. By leading with the heel, this will allow the batter to keep the front hip closed a second longer. Some batters rotate hips too soon. Early hip rotation can cause batters to lose power and create an arm-bar with the lead arm.

Here is what good stride looks like:



Here is what bad stride looks like:



Notice the pictures on the left: stride is straight and short, lead with the heel, and stay on your toes

Notice the pictures on the right: stride kick too high, weight is moving forward

Hands Load:

As the stride foot moves forward, the hands should move 4-6 inches straight back towards the backstop. This is called the load or trigger. The load will help hitters to stay back longer and provide more power on the swing.

Be sure that the load does not raise or lower the hands. They should stay at the same elevation.

Coaches who use the high average philosophy will teach batters to skip or minimize this step as much as possible. However, this will also reduce power for most high school players who lack the forearm strength to still drive the ball deep.

Be careful that when you load you do not wrap the bat behind your head. This will cause you to have a longer and consequently slower swing. As long as the barrel does not go further forward than the top of the helmet it is ok.

Here is a good example of distance for hand loading. Notice the knob of the bat is still facing the opposite batter's box.



These hands are too far back and too low!

Stride recap: the stride should be a small step forward, avoiding the high leg kick. Step straight towards the pitcher and lead with the heel. When loading the hands, take them straight back without wrapping the bat around the head. The load should only be about 4-6 inches.

3. Pivot

Pivot is used to release the hips and allow the batter to finish the swing with a proper follow through. Before all of that can happen however, the batter must pivot his back foot.

Pivoting means rotating the back foot so that the bottom of the shoe is pointed back towards the catcher. The toes should still be on or very near the ground with the heel off of the ground.

Here is what good pivot looks like:



Here is what bad pivot looks like:



Notice the pictures on the left: toes still in contact with the ground for better balance, heel is up off the ground, backside of leg creates an "L" shape

Notice the pictures on the right: neither batter is pivoting, hips can not rotate fully, no backside "L"

The reason pivoting is considered the third step in hitting is because the back foot pivots just after the stride foot hits the ground (there is about a split-second difference).

4. Swing

Swing is the final stage in hitting which includes follow through and finish. The swing should begin **AFTER** the stride is down. **HITTERS MUST NOT STRIDE AND SWING AT THE SAME TIME! THESE SHOULD BE TWO SEPARATE MOVEMENTS.** Stride, then swing.

Important points in the swing (just after the stride hits the ground):

- do not drop hands during stride; creates a loop
- lead with the hands; do not lock out elbows until after contact
- hands should go straight to the ball
- hips should rotate with the hands; otherwise creates an arm-bar
- keep head down even after contact; “see the contact”
- follow through should be high and above the lead shoulder (which should now be in back)
- weight transfers forward only slightly (maybe 55% back – 45% front)

Here are some examples of a poor swing:



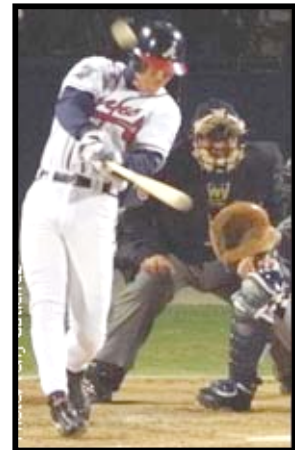
Notice: the first batter has her hands too low. This will often create a looping swing. The second batter is leading with the hips and not the hands, this creates an arm-bar (a long slow swing). The third batter is lunging forward and not keeping his weight back. The final batter is not following through high above the rear shoulder.

Here are some examples of a good swing:



Notice: the first batter is starting with hands high while the second batter is leading with his hands. The third batter is getting to extension after contact with weight still back. The last two pictures show good follow through and finish.

**Don't forget to keep your head down.
Maintain eye contact.**



Putting it altogether:

In a game, batters will need to put all four of these together with the right timing in order to be successful.

Hitting is about timing (pitching is about disrupting that timing). The biggest mistake hitters make is striding during the swing. These



should be two separate movements. In order to have

correct timing, hitters should stride and load when the pitcher shows the ball in his window. The window is the area above his throwing shoulder.

By striding and loading at this time, hitters will be in a position to hit any pitch in any location. Hitters that stride and swing at the same time will not be able to stay back on off-speed or outside pitches. When this happens it looks like this:



Notice: In both of these pictures, the batters have already committed to their swing before the ball has

reached them. They are now forced to reach out for the ball, and hit off of their front foot. This happened because they took their stride at the same time they started their swing.

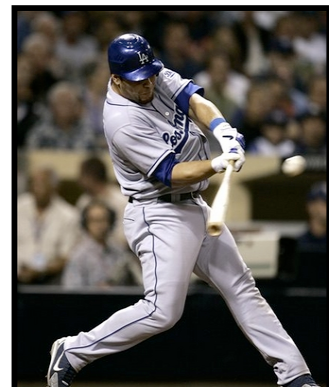
See the last page for a hitter's checklist on stance, stride, pivot, swing.

Ready-Swing: To practice correct timing, hitters should use the ready-swing drill.

1. Stance
2. Ready (stride and load at same time)
3. Swing (pivot and swing at same time)

With someone throwing wiffle-balls to you, get into the "ready" position as the pitcher shows the ball in his window and before he lets go. Then, as the ball reaches you – swing. The swing should be an explosion of energy forward. Do not double stride. This will take some practice.

Notice:



Stance

Ready

Swing

The ready-swing timing will allow you to adjust to any pitch in any location. Of course the key is to pick up speed, location, and spin out of a pitcher's hand as quickly as possible.

If a hitter can read off-speed or outside location out of the pitcher's hand, the ready-swing timing will allow him to stay back without committing too soon. That way he can still have solid contact. Otherwise he will be reaching out on his front foot.

Fast Contact vs. Slow: When a batter reads fastball out of the pitcher's hand, the timing is normal (ready,swing). However, if the batter reads off-speed out of the pitcher's hand, he must stay back and wait for the pitch to reach him (ready.....swing). Batters will only be able to do both at any time if they have already established their stride and load before the pitch is thrown.

In, Out, and Middle Contact:

There are three basic strike zones: middle, in, and out. Where the pitch is thrown will determine the location of contact.

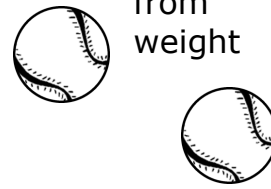
For a right-handed batter:

Middle: Contact on pitches in the middle of zone, should be made at a 90 degree angle. This will allow the hitter to drive the ball back up the middle of the field.

In: Contact on pitches in the inside zone, should be made just in front of the plate. This will allow the hitter to pull the pull to the left side.



Out: Contact on pitches in the outside zone should be made towards the back of the plate. This will keep the batter reaching out front and will help them to keep their back. Batters will be able to drive the ball to the opposite field.



Everything is reversed for lefties.

Hitters Need a Plan of Attack:

Hitters should always have a plan when they enter the batter's box. This plan will depend on both the hitter's abilities and the situation of the game at the time. Hitters who do not have a plan are more likely to swing at bad pitches and let the good ones go by. This will also erase the need for guessing. Hitters should never guess what pitch is coming.

"A hitter without a plan is just swinging in the wind."

Hitter's Plan Based on Abilities: Hitters must know their abilities and stick with their strengths. If you are not a good curveball hitter, then you should look for the fastball until you are forced to swing at a curve (0-2, 1-2, 2-2, 3-2 counts). Too many hitters are swinging at first-pitch and 1-0 curveballs when it is ok to take a first-pitch curveball for a strike. Just because a pitch is over the plate does not mean you have to swing. Be patient. Pitchers will make a mistake.

In addition, hitting fastballs on the outside corner may not be your strength. Look for a fastball either middle or in until you have to swing outside (unless you are a good outside fastball hitter).

Example Hitter's Plan: "I am a good fastball hitter. I will look for a fastball either middle or in that I can drive. Until I get down in the count (0-1, 0-2, 1-2, 2-2, 3-2), I will not swing at anything else." And then, stick with the plan!



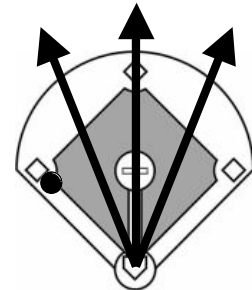
If a pitcher makes a great pitch on the outside corner for a strike, hitters should tip their cap and get ready for the next pitch. If the pitcher hits that spot again, then you will have to adjust to the third pitch. Most high school pitchers can not repeat a pitch in the same spot three times in a row (especially off-speed pitches). Be patient.

Hitter's Plan Based on the Situation: A hitter's plan will also depend on the situation. If you are at the plate with a runner on third and less than two outs, you should look for a pitch up in the zone. It will be easier to drive the ball into the outfield. Even if it is caught, the runner on third can tag up. You did your job. Swinging at pitches low in the zone will only produce groundballs and pop-ups. This does not help.

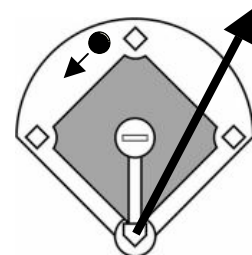
With a runner on first and less than two outs, hitters should look for something middle or out. By doing this, hitters can swing late and hit behind the runner allowing them to advance to either second or third.

With a right-handed hitter and a runner on first, the first baseman will be holding the runner and the second baseman is closer to second in case of a steal. With an outside pitch, hitters can hit behind the runner to a wide open right side of the infield. However, if hitters swing at something inside, then it is an easy double play. Know the situation, what you want to happen, and look for a pitch that will help you accomplish that outcome.

Example Hitter's Situational Plan: "With a runner on third (second and third or bases loaded), I am looking for something up in the zone that I can drive into the outfield. Until I get behind in the count (0-2, 1-2, 2-2, 3-2), I will not swing at anything else."



Or: If you are a good outside hitter, "With a runner on second (or first and second), I am looking for something on the outside corner that I can hit to the right side." Or "I'm looking for a pitch early in the count to drive into the outfield."



Two Strike Counts: Anytime you have two strikes, there is a simple plan of attack. The plan: set up for the fastball and adjust to the off-speed. "Adjusting" is only possible if hitters have already finished their stride before they start their swing. If you are striding and swinging at the same time, you will not be able to stay back on the off-speed.

Do not judge yourself based on the result of the at-bat. Did we fail if we hit a line drive right at someone? Did we achieve success if we blooped a ball into shallow right field?

Beyond a hitter's plan, the goal should always be to hit the ball hard somewhere. If we hit the ball hard (even if we are out) we were successful.

Bunting:

Bunting is often considered the lost art of baseball. Many teams rely on big hits to move runners around. Hitters should still be able and willing to lay down a bunt when needed. There are four major kinds of bunts.

1. Sacrifice: Hitters who sacrifice bunt must acknowledge that they are giving themselves up to advance another runner. Coaches give hitters the sacrifice bunt knowing that the hitter will most likely be out. If the hitter makes it to first safely that is only a bonus. The ultimate objective is to advance the runner(s) on base.

- Move up in the box
- Stay in the box until the bunt is down
- Square early enough to give yourself time to set up
- Pivot on back foot (just like swing)
- Keep feet in a relative straight line to the pitcher
- Top hand slides about half way down the barrel of the bat
- Top hand stays behind the barrel so as not to expose the fingers
- Bottom hand can slide towards the middle of the grip (optional)
- Bat starts at the top of the strike zone
- Barrel should be at or above the hands – never dip your barrel
- Bend at the knees to reach the low pitch
- Bunt the ball out in front of the body – reach out for the ball

Notice: All three pictures are good examples. Note feet in line, knees bent, bat at the top of the strike zone and barrel above the hands, and top hand has slid down the barrel with the fingers protected.

Here are some bad examples:





Notice: Do not completely face the pitcher. High school pitchers throw hard enough that it will be difficult to get out of the way. Some pitchers are taught to purposely throw at hitters who square to bunt. The second hitter has his barrel too vertical. To bunt the ball, the barrel will have to drop down into the strike zone and most hitters will go too far and drop the barrel below the hands. Just like picture #3.

To bunt to either baseline, the bat must be held at an angle that will create the direction you want the ball to travel.

For Righties (the opposite will be true for lefties): To bunt to first base, push the knob of the bat out towards third to create the angle that will hit the ball towards first. To bunt to third, bring the knob of the bat closer to the body which will create the angle that will hit the ball towards third. See below:



The angle of this bat will result in the ball being hit towards first.

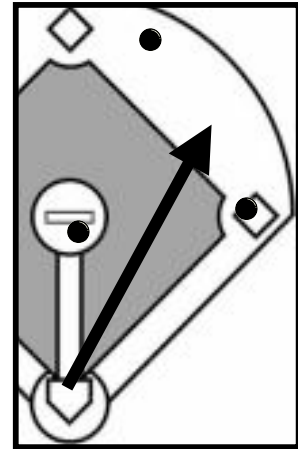


This lefty will bunt the ball towards third because of the angle of the bat he has created. But remember to keep the barrel up.

2. Push-Bunt: The push bunt is an attempt to both move up the runner on first and reach first safely. The push bunt is a hard hit bunt that is aimed towards where the second baseman is standing (not second base itself). This can be done either left or right handed hitter.

The goal is to bunt the ball hard enough to get past both the pitcher and the first baseman so that the second baseman has to field the ball. It is then a race between the batter and the pitcher to reach first. The ball should reach the front part of the dirt in front of the second baseman. It also works best if the pitcher is left-handed.

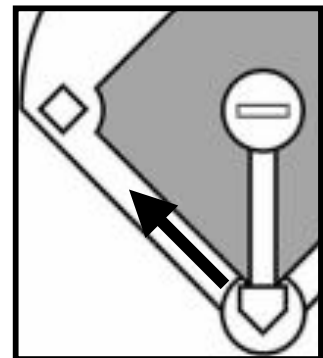
Notice: the batter is moving slightly towards the ball at the point of contact to both hit the ball hard and to give him a running head start.



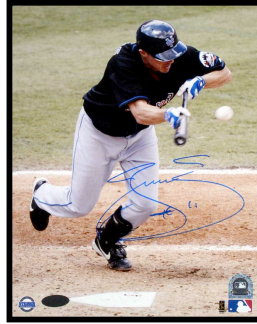
3. Drag Bunt: The drag is an attempt to bunt for a single with or without a runner on base. The ball should be bunted to the third base line. This makes a longer throw for the fielder. The biggest key for drag bunting is to create a bat angle that will bunt the ball as close to the line as possible. **A drag bunt should be "perfect or foul."** This means the ball should either travel as close to the line as possible or be foul. The worst thing a hitter can do on a drag is bunt directly back to the pitcher.

Right-handed batter

- drop step the back foot so that your feet are in a line towards first base. This will put you into a perfect position to start running.
- pull the knob of the bat into your body and keep the barrel out in front of your body
- keep the barrel slightly up
- don't be afraid to bunt the ball with a little power in order to get the ball down the line away from the catcher



Notice: be sure to create an angle that will bunt the ball as close to the line as possible. The third picture shows a good location for a drag bunt.



Left-handed batter

- the front foot should take a small step towards the pitcher to create a better angle on the field to work with
- the back foot should also take a small step (after the front foot) forward so that your body is more square towards the pitcher
- **make sure the lead foot is not moving towards first before the ball is bunted**
- push the knob of the bat out (keep the barrel in) so that an angle is created to bunt the ball down the third base line
- keep the barrel slightly up
- don't be afraid to bunt the ball with a little power in order to get the ball down the line away from the catcher



4. Suicide Squeeze and Safety Squeeze: the suicide squeeze means the batter has to bunt the ball no matter where the pitch is thrown (just like a hit-and-run). Even if it is a bad pitch, the batter must make contact in order to protect the runner on third that is coming home on the pitch.

A safety squeeze means that the batter will only bunt strikes and the runner on third will only break for home if it is a bunt that he can easily score on. The safety squeeze should be bunted like a sacrifice. For either the safety or the suicide squeeze, the ball should be bunted anywhere other than towards the pitcher.

If the pitch is not a strike: For any bunt, other than the suicide squeeze, the batter should only be bunting strikes. Obviously, if the pitch is not a strike, the batter should pull the bat back.



Base-running:

Anytime you are on base, you should run with your head up. Always keep your eyes on the ball, where the fielders are set up, and what the third base coach is telling you to do.

The most important parts of base-running include:

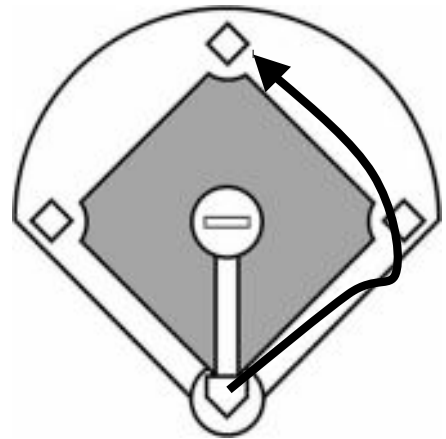
- rounding the first base
- getting a lead (and a secondary lead)
- stealing
- sliding (both back to the bag on a pick and when advancing)
- tagging up

Rounding first base: As the runner is reaching first base, he should be searching the field for the location of the ball. This will help determine whether or not the runner should try to reach second base.

Notice: the runner is looking for the ball on his way to first



If advancing to second on a base hit, the runner should take a small curve into foul territory in order to turn without having to slow down. This will also help the runner take a more direct path to second base.



With a runner on second and a base hit to the outfield, the batter should take a hard turn towards second. This may cause the cut-off man to cut the ball, thereby allowing the runner from second to score easily.

Be sure to hit first with the right foot so that the left foot can head directly towards second.

Notice: hitting first base with the right foot allows you to get a better turn towards second base



Taking leads: make sure you are on the base while getting signs, and always keep your eyes on the pitcher and the ball once you are off the base.

Initial lead: no matter what base a runner is at, the initial leads are the same. Start with both feet on the base. After receiving the signs, take a left-right-left-shuffle-shuffle series of steps towards the next base. At this point, a runner may either move more off the base, or closer to the base depending on his abilities. Keep your eye on the pitcher.

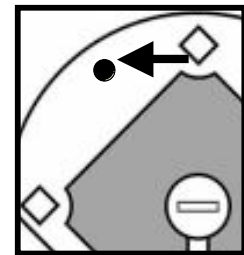
Get your hands off of your knees →



Differences on initial lead:

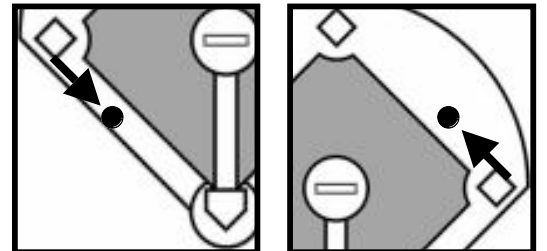
Second base

- take a lead that is deeper in the hole towards the shortstop
- this will create the illusion that you are closer to second, thus allowing you to take a slightly bigger lead
- it will also create a better angle for rounding third



Third base

- stay in foul territory
- the lead at third can be slightly bigger than the other two bases
- few teams have a designed pick-off play at third
- but don't get picked off



Secondary leads: the purpose of a secondary lead is to decrease the distance between the initial base and the next one. The secondary lead is taken when the pitcher commits to pitching the ball home. Watch out for the quick pick from a righty, or the left-handed move.

First and Second base

- shuffle-shuffle (another third shuffle?)
- keep body square to home
- once catcher has the ball – get back!



The secondary lead at second base can be much larger than at first base, simply because of the distance of throw for the catcher on a pick-off.

Third base

- square shoulders to home
- walk towards home in an athletic position (walking is very key)
- do not shuffle, do not jog, do not run and stop
- right foot should plant just after the catcher receives the ball

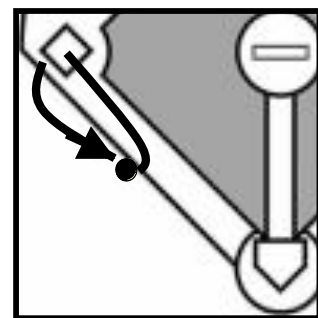
By moving towards home at a controlled pace, the runner can either break for the plate on a ground ball or retreat to third if the catcher has the ball.

Too many runners stop their forward progress before the catcher receives the ball. When the ball is put in play the runner must start their forward motion again. Some runners either freeze and don't go, or break for home and get thrown out by a half step.

Keeping forward motion at the point of bat contact will give the runner the advantage of forward motion when they break for home.



When retreating back to the bag (catcher has the ball or when tagging up), return to third directly on the third base line. This will block the catcher's pick to third. But don't walk back, return quickly.



Stealing: There are two basic types of steal. They are the straight steal and the delay steal.

Straight Steal (including the hit-and-run)

- get a good aggressive lead
- make sure the right-handed pitcher has committed to the plate
- throw your left hand towards second as your hips begin to turn
- look in for the ball after three hard steps

If stealing against a lefty on first movement, the runner should break as soon as the pitcher lifts his right foot. Watch out for the snap pick (pitcher steps off with the left foot and snaps the ball to first).

Delay Steal

- get a good aggressive lead
- get a secondary lead as the pitcher pitches the ball (shuffle-shuffle-shuffle); keep your body square to home to sell that you are staying
- after the third shuffle break for the bag

The goal is to catch the defense off guard. The catcher will be slow to release and no one will be covering second base. This is a good way to steal your average runner.



Notice: the runner stays square to home before breaking on a delay steal

Aggressive runners (with decent speed) will watch for the pitch down in the zone. If a runner reads that the pitch will be low and will most likely hit the dirt, it is a good time to steal on their own. It is very hard for a catcher to block the ball and come up throwing to either second or third base. Also look for catcher's signs indicating an off-speed pitch.

Sliding: There are two major types of slides with variations of each. They are the head-first slide and the feet-first slide. Both serve a very specific purpose.

First of all, a runner should **never slide at first base** unless the throw has pulled the first baseman off of the bag and he is trying to apply a tag. It is proven that sliding is slower than running through the bag.

Head-first Slide

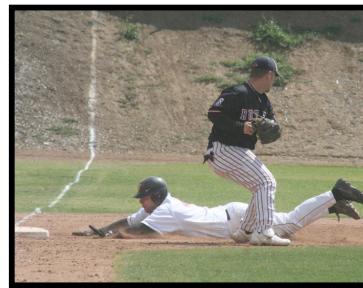
First Base (on a pick-off)

- a good lead will require you to slide to order to get back (if you can return standing up, your lead is too short)
- slide to the back side of the bag
- touch first base with your right hand



All Other Bases

- can either slide directly or around tag head-first
- some runners make a fist with their hand in order to protect their fingers
- never slide head-first directly into home; it is ok to slide around the catcher head-first (2nd picture)



Feet-first Slide

Normal Slide

- tuck one leg under the lead to make a figure four
- slide on the tucked leg (underneath)
- lead foot hits the base
- hand on tucked leg side is down for a brace
- lead leg side hand is up in the air



Hook Slide (usually at home)

- slide to the side of the plate that the catcher is not on
- bottom leg is extended straight
- top leg is bent like you are jumping a hurdle
- top leg hit the bag as you pass to the side



Feet-first with the Hand

- usually when the catcher is up the line or to either side
- use the figure four tuck
- back hand will reach out for plate as the runner passes home



If given a choice, most coaches will recommend always using the feet-first slide because it is generally safer. However there are times where a head-first slide with good technique is necessary.

Tagging up: how a runner tags up depends on what base they are at and whether or not there are runners in front of them

First Base

- runner advance half way to second base on a fly ball
- depending on the depth of the fly ball the runner will either go more than half way or less
- also depends on the arm strength of the outfielder and the speed of the runner

Second Base

- tag up on any ball that is deep in center field
- tag up on any ball that is not shallow in right field
- the runner should see the outfielder make the catch instead of waiting for the coach to yell "go"
- on all other fly balls the runner will be half way
- when half way, turn your body so that you are facing the outfielder who is making the catch (instead of looking over your shoulder)

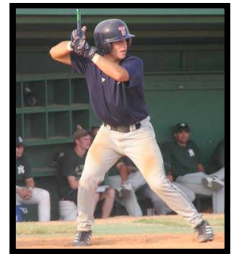
Third Base

- retreat to the bag in order to tag up
- most runner will place their left foot on the bag in order to see the outfielder make the catch (right foot is fine if it makes the runner more comfortable)
- the runner should see the outfielder make the catch instead of waiting for the coach to yell "go"
- on any shallow fly ball the runner should bluff a tag up with three hard steps (outfielder may throw the ball away)

Hitter's Swing Checklist:

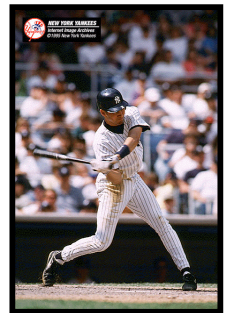
Stance:

- ☐ feet are slightly wider than shoulder length apart
- ☐ feet are in a straight line to the pitcher
- ☐ knees are bent in an athletic position
- ☐ weight is evenly distributed between the front and back feet
- ☐ hands are holding the bat with the correct knuckles lined up
- ☐ hands are in the window above the back shoulder and behind the back ear
- ☐ back elbow is at or below the hands
- ☐ both eyes are looking at the pitcher
- ☐ be relaxed



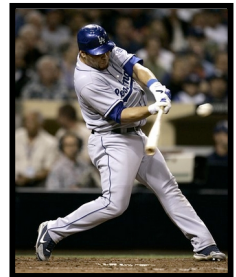
Stride:

- ☐ weight shifts back to a 60% back foot, 40% front foot balance
- ☐ hands shift straight back approximately 4-6 inches
- ☐ lead foot strides forward approximately 4-6 inches
- ☐ stride is finished before the pitcher has released the ball



Pivot:

- ☐ back foot pivots so that the toes are still on the ground
- ☐ the heel should be off of the ground and facing straight back
- ☐ batter retains good balance



Swing:

- ☐ hands start at the load position
- ☐ lead with the hands and the knob of the bat
- ☐ hips rotate as the hands move forward
- ☐ weight should be 55% back foot, 45% front foot
- ☐ contact is made with a slight bend in both arms
- ☐ extension is achieved after contact is made
- ☐ hands should finish high above the lead shoulder (which is now behind you)
- ☐ balance is maintained throughout the entire swing

