

Hitting

Bottom to top Stance

1. Feet should line up (not too open or closed)
2. Toes pointed in slightly (no duck feet) knees slightly bent in an athletic position.
3. Hands should be held high with ear as a landmark
4. Grip the bat so knocking knuckles line up
5. Chin should start on front shoulder and land on back shoulder with eyes on sweet spot at contact. Shoulder to shoulder is a common phrase I have used and taping a set of eyes on Bat to show them a reference point of where your eyes should be on contact.

The Swing

1. Load
 - a. Weight transfer to the back foot (both big toes are key) this also called a negative movement.
 - b. Front knee buckles in slightly (slight pigeon toe helps with this)
 - c. Hands push back away from ear but no bat wrap
2. Step
 - a. Get that foot down! A small step is easier to stay on time. The step should be like stepping on thin ice landing on toe touch no weight transfer has happened yet.
3. Squish

- a. Refers to back foot squishing a bug but focus is really on hip rotation. Belly button toward the pitcher. As back foot is squishing bug the front foot planting the heel.

4. Swing

- a. Front heel plant is the start of the actual swing because this starts weight transfer and you are now committed to swing. As heel plant happens you will start to make connection. This is basically your back elbow slamming into your rib cage. This leads to extension where the hitter's arms are fully extended out front forming a "V". Only the hands are out front at this point the bat is lagging behind the hands ready to be whipped through to contact. These three steps are happening very fast and one right after the other and are summed up by saying, "Heel plant-connection to extension with bat lag"

5. Follow through with authority! Hands will be high at the end.

We acknowledge that every swing will and should have subtle differences while the major fundamental will remain consistent. Balance, Stretch, hip rotation, contact with both eyes on the ball, on time in relationship to contact and hitting situation, length of follow through and lastly explosive finish.

Base running

1. Get out of the box fast and low
2. Run Through first base if a play is being made on you or round it. NEVER STOP ON TOP OF A BASE.
3. A lead off starts on release of the ball. I like the rocking lead at first and second. Third can be a shorter quicker baseball style lead to avoid straying too far and it is quicker back to third to tag up.

4. You should take a lead like a yo yo. Get off to where you look like you are going to be picked off but the key is you are bouncing back as the ball is “Not being hit” so when the catcher throws you are safe easy. If the ball is hit you never bounce back and your aggressive lead just turns into a sprint to the next base without ever stopping your momentum.
5. Start your lead by rocking with the pitcher and take that first step when her hand is at the top of the circle. Getting called once a game for leaving early is just teaching them to not be late. Getting called twice in same game means they had too much sugar!
6. Do not leave second early because you are right in the ump's line of sight. Do not push it unless you are stealing. Getting called out for an early leave when you are not stealing is a bad out.
7. Runner on 3 with less than two outs and ball hit in the air AT ALL (fair or foul) get back and tag. Way too many runs get left on third by not tagging.
8. Stay aggressive at the younger ages so they learn how to play at higher speed, so they can be aggressive at the older ages. As they get older they do not get much faster than they are at 12u but the arm strength and defensive confidence improves so softball I.Q. needs to evolve for

the coaches as well as the players to learn what they can and can't get away with at each age group.

9. Situational base running is an endless topic so the bottom line is stay aggressive.
10. Understand the look back rule. Ball in circle means you have to commit to one base or the other immediately unless the pitcher pulls the ball out of her glove and makes a play on you then game on and you can play chicken with her all you want.

Understand obstruction and how to make contact, not avoid it, **without** causing injury. At the same time contact is made learn how to look to ump to see if he has the obstruction call then go next base no matter where the ball is. Defensively watch out for your players so they do not become spectators of the game and stand in the baseline inviting an obstruction play.

11. Teach sliding with eggs in their hands so they don't put their hands down. Teach pop up slide, hook slide and dive slide by 13 years old I have seen amazing dive slides made to avoid a tag. Teach them not to just slide into tag.
12. Never plow the catcher!

Hitting Drills

Belly fence drill,

Power balls, wiffles front toss, toss from behind and side toss. Golf ball size wiffles or (seeds or lima beans) , quick toss drill, numbers or colors on tennis balls.

Never hit a real ball or power ball into chain link fence, home or away.

Tee drills in out up down. Put ball on tee a certain way for added focus. Stop swing at ball to work on path to ball with hands

Throw bat from second base to center (be careful)

5 5 5 top- bottom- both

Bat behind back or held to tummy to work on hips.

Bunt from knee peeking over bat with bat 9 inches from nose.

Feel it your core when you bunt.

Happy Gilmore drill.

