

BASIC BATTING MECHANICS

The 5 key components to consistent hitting are:

1 Stance

2 Stride

3 Hip / Shoulder Rotation

4 Swing

5 Follow through

To be an effective batter, it is important for you to be aware of the components, of a good hitting action. These physical parts follow each other in a natural fluid and explosive motion, leading to a batting style that can deal with all types of pitches. The text and photos should make you familiar with the terminology used by softball coaches when working on technique.

1 THE STANCE

Softball batting is an explosive action and therefore like other skills ,the starting position or stance is extremely important. Consider the start position of a sprinter and the need for a consistent start position is evident.

There are 7 parts to the stance.

A Location

B Feet

C Body Posture

D Head

E Arms and Shoulders

F Hands

G Grip



(A) LOCATION: The player should stand in the batters box with both feet parallel to the inside line of the box. They should be opposite the plate and close enough to ensure coverage of all the strike zone.



(B) FEET: The feet should be slightly more than shoulder width apart toes crowded in slightly, weight on the balls of the feet. This position should be comfortable. It is important to realize that if the feet are too close together the batter is likely to lose stability when striding. If feet are too far apart hip rotation will be poor and a loss of power will be experienced.

(C) BODY POSTURE: The knees should be bent comfortably (around 10cm from the locked position) with the body weight distributed fairly even but slightly more on the back foot. The batter should be bent slightly at the waist towards the plate.

(D) HEAD: The head should be steady facing the release point of the pitcher (beside the thigh on the throwing side of the pitcher). In other words head turned with chin over and aligned with the front shoulder.

(E) ARMS AND SHOULDERS: the arms should be comfortably away from the body and relaxed. The elbows facing down forming an inverted "V". Arms and shoulders should be relaxed. The lead elbow should have a 90 degree bend.

(F) HANDS: The hands should be placed at the top of the strike zone (slightly higher than the top of the strike zone) and between the centre of the body and the back shoulder.

(G) GRIP: The bat should be held in the fingers, and the player generally should align their middle knuckles. The grip should not be tight (loose hands react faster than tight ones).

Now look at the photos demonstrating the STANCE, then stand in front of a mirror, with a bat and assume the same position.



**Arms away from the body forming an inverted “V” shape with lead elbow bent at about 90 degrees.
Toes slightly crowded in.**

Feet a little more than shoulder width apart.



**Hands away from the body.
Head facing the pitcher.
Bat held at 45 degrees.
Knees slightly bent.**

Feet parallel to batters box.

2 THE STRIDE:

Is a gliding action with the majority of weight over the back leg, the front foot-sliding straight forward towards the pitcher (like stepping on broken glass) The front foot should move only about the width of the foot and placed as square as possible to the line of the batting box.

**Head remains still
Hips and shoulders and hands move together.
The front foot should move only about the width of the foot.
Front leg locks back.**

**Hips and shoulders and hands rotate together.
On completion of the stride the front knee should lock back driving the front hip back. The back leg pivots to drive the back hip forward
The hips and shoulders should remain level**



3 HIP AND SHOULDERS:

As the front foot hits the ground the front leg should drive the hip back, the back leg pivoting to drive the rear hip forward. You should have 60% of your body weight on your rear leg and 40% on the front leg. The shoulders and hands rotate together with the hips. You should be able to repeat this in the mirror.

4 THE SWING:

This phase should be started by the bottom hand on the bat, pulling towards the ball maintaining a bend in the elbow with the rear hand trailing initially, then driving power through the bat with the wrists snapping on contact at the same time as the arms are reaching full extension, to maximize bat speed and power. Your head should remain steady through this action, the chin going from over the front shoulder to over the rear shoulder, so the eyes can track the ball from the pitchers release point, to the contact point in the hitting zone. (It is important not to let the back elbow get in front of the rear hip, as this will make the bat head and rear shoulder drop causing a high percentage of fly balls.)

NOTE: If the lead arm straightens too early this will cause a sweeping action reducing bat speed.



Head remains still
Shoulder over hip over thigh
60% of body weight on back leg.

Front leg braced.



Eyes looking through the contact point of the ball
Hands thrown through the ball

Body weight behind the ball.

5 THE FOLLOW THROUGH.

The correct follow through is a consequence of a good hitting action and providing you hit right through the ball, should occur naturally. If you are using the proper hitting action, you should finish with 60% of your weight over your back leg and your hips and shoulders in line with first and third base. The bat should be resting against your arm, your chin over the rear shoulder eyes looking through where the ball was hit from.

Now look at the photos of the follow through. Again get in front of a mirror and swing the bat. If you are using correct technique you will finish in the same position. Make sure the front leg is braced and the back leg is “L” shaped with your shoulders over hips over rear thigh.



Bat comes to rest against the arm.
Batter should be balanced.
Right shoulder should finish in line with right knee.
Front leg braced.
Back leg with an “L” shape bend.

Rear foot pivoted



Eyes looking through the line of the ball.
Body balanced ready to run
60% of body weight on back leg.

Front leg braced.