

On-field Teaching Outline for Fastpitch Coaching Hitting Video #6 Swing to a Contact Point Using the Tee

Teaching the Team

For this lesson, your team members will be taking swings only while standing at a tee, typically hitting a ball into a net. As usual, each should wear a helmet. Have the tee set up just in front of a throw-down home plate, with the tee set so the ball is positioned as a down-the-middle pitch.

Have the players line up side by side, facing you. They should maintain their position in this line throughout the lesson.

Have all the players warm up together with drills you've already learned in prior practices -- Hip Turns, Karate Drills, Short Punches, and Long Punches.

A knowledgeable coach who has learned how to execute our swing should watch each player take every swing during the practice where you take the players through this lesson for the first time. To avoid having players standing around too much, teach at most only half the team at a time -- fewer than half is better. Set up two tees, each with a throw-down home plate and a net to hit into.

Call out instructions as you demonstrate the movements. After each instruction, have two batters step up to the tees. Have the first one execute a Long Punch, then put a ball on her tee, then have her swing as you watch. After the swing, provide any suggestions. Then allow the batter one more Long Punch and swing. Repeat for the second batter. Meanwhile, the third batter should step up to the tee just used by the first batter.

Keep it moving and do not expect them to do everything right. Do expect to repeat this lesson at multiple practices.

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Instructions (numbered)

Have players take a turn at the tee after each numbered instruction. After each swing, ask them if they were thinking about the fundamental you described to them.

1. When hitting a ball off of a tee, keep your eyes on the ball but think about one or two fundamental motions. Do not think about hitting the ball, because it will distract you from working on your swing fundamentals. (Coach chooses a fundamental motion and tells the players. For example...) "For the first swing, think about your hip turn as you swing".
2. Keep your eyes on the ball but never try to put the bat onto the ball or aim for a portion of the ball.
3. As you execute the hip turn, your hands and arms should stay above the ball and near your chest.
4. Keep your elbows bent as the bat starts, as it comes around, and as it makes contact with the ball.
5. The bat should *contact the ball* 4-6 inches in front of the front foot when the pitch is over the inside half of the plate. (Coach move the tees to this position.)
6. The bat should *contact the ball* 4 inches behind the front foot when the pitch is over the outside half of the plate. (Coach move the tees to this position.)
7. The player's hands should travel straight ahead for all pitches. They should begin that way when the elbows start to slide forward, and continue straight ahead just past contact. They should not reach out at an outside strike, nor be pulled in for an inside strike. (Coach watch batter's hands from catcher's view.)

In most cases the coach should stop at this point the first time this lesson is taught so as not to throw too many new concepts at the team in one practice. At the second or third time teaching this lesson, go more quickly through instructions 1 through 7 and continue on through the following instructions. Every team has different learning speeds. Your reasonable judgment should work out fine.

8. Use **the Lean** to help reach strikes below the waist and over the outside third of the plate. The batter lets her front hip slide out from under her shoulders near the end of the hip turn, just before contact. Teach your team using Long Punches before trying it with a tee. Remind them to keep their elbows bent through contact to maintain both power and control. (In later practices, practice the Lean by hitting off a tee set at the knee and just barely outside the strike zone.)
9. Hitting the inside strike requires a quicker, more aggressive swing. To do this (typically referred to as "swinging harder") simply **Fire** your *hips* faster than normal while extending your *bottom hand* more strongly through contact. (Coach watch batter from catcher's view to *be sure batter does not pull her body up out of her stance or back off the plate* as she swings at an inside pitch.)
10. The batter should have her eyes on the ball until contact occurs. Practice keeping your head down for a second after contact by seeing the top of the tee after the ball leaves it, rather than following the ball as it leaves the tee.