

# FastpitchCoaching Hitting Video 9 – On-field Teaching Outline

## The Fake Bunt and Slap

### TEACHING THE TEAM

1. Line up your team members -- with helmets and bats, in three rows, staggered.
2. The coach should explain the strategy and set expectations with the players before teaching them how to execute it. Say the following to your players while you or another coach demonstrates:

The fake bunt and slap is a seldom used but fun and easy way to get a base hit, by surprising the defense. It consists of turning the body and setting the hands and bat as though to execute a sacrifice bunt, then at the last instant, pulling the bat back and slapping the ball instead.

The fake turn for a bunt must be realistic.

The fake makes the shortstop and second baseman start to move to cover their assigned bases.

The slap should be a ground ball directed at the shortstop or second base position.

Slapping the ball means hitting a ground ball with the intention of moving any runners over, as well as making it to first base safely.

3. Call out instructions as you demonstrate the fundamental movements. Then have players try the motion you just demonstrated.
4. Tell left-handed players to reverse the coach's instructions where appropriate.

### FUNDAMENTALS

The fake bunt and slap involves the turn toward the pitcher, the pull back of the hands, and the slap swing. (Coach demonstrates, then players try it. Do this for each of the following steps.)

Set up in the batter's box in the position you normally do for a sacrifice bunt. As the pitcher starts her delivery motion, snap into the bunt position and hold it for about a second or a little more. "This gives the infield time to react as if you are bunting. It has to look exactly like your regular bunt turn. Do this by visualizing the bunt and telling yourself you intend to bunt."

As the pitcher releases the ball, pull the bat back quickly by pulling your hands up to your back shoulder. Do not turn your shoulders, hips, or knees back as you do this. “Your shoulder will turn back slightly on its own, but if you consciously turn it, you’ll turn your body back, which takes too much time.”

As you pull the bat to your shoulder, quickly slide both hands together in your normal batting grip, except about 2-3 inches from the knob. (If your team uses my handshake grip when hitting, by all means use it at this point.)

Start the swing by firing your hands directly toward the pitcher, without dropping them from the shoulder as you start firing. “This allows you to stay over the ball.”

Try to hit a ground ball, but do not chop down on the ball to get it. Instead, stay over the ball by keeping your hands above the path of the ball, letting the bat head dip a bit. You will quickly feel how to drive through the ball with power, while getting the ground ball by avoiding turning your hips.

Swing hard at the ball, extending both hands directly toward the pitcher.

“Avoid finishing early, which means letting your hands start to circle around your body before contact. Also avoid flipping the bat around with your hands. We want a big, long, straight motion with both hands, through contact. You should always have both elbows bent at contact.

Details to teach at a later practice, or when practicing with an individual player, or for you to use for problem-solving, as appropriate for your team’s age group:

1. “When you turn to fake the bunt, your hips should not turn any farther than pointing toward the second baseman, shortstop for lefties.” Keep your hips turned to the front as you pull your hands back to your shoulder.
2. After your elbows, hands and arms start to fire forward, your hips and shoulders will turn a little, but let the elbows, hands and arms lead the hips and shoulders.”
3. “If the pitch is over the outer half of the plate, you should hit a grounder to where the second baseman originally set up, so make contact when the ball is across from your front foot, and hold your shoulders back so at contact, they are facing that direction.

4. If the pitch is over the inside half of the plate, you should hit a grounder to where the shortstop originally set up, so make contact when the ball is just in front of your front foot, and let your shoulders turn to face that direction at contact.”

## DEALING WITH THE PITCH

If the pitch is in the lower portion of the strike zone, do the Lean.

If you decide to take the pitch, simply pull the bat back toward your shoulder. If the pitch is coming at you, simply turn your whole body away from the pitch as you are pulling the bat back toward your shoulder.

## PRACTICING NOTES

Practice the movements without a ball at first, then use a tee, then front toss, machine pitch if available, and eventually live pitching.

When moving to each of these five methods, be sure the players are hitting at a consistently proper contact point, and at contact, their (1) head and eyes are on the ball; (2) elbows are bent; (3) shoulders are facing the direction they want the ball to go; (4) hands are positioned 2-3 inches from the knob; (5) both hands are moving toward the pitcher; (6) body is staying level and maintaining good posture.

Have your players stay relaxed until contact.

Practice at slow or medium speed while building good habits. Don't be in a hurry to challenge your players with high speed pitches.