



East Haven Little League Coaching Guide

V3.0 2010

Overview

This manual is to be used as a guideline with helpful tips and suggestions. The major focus of this document is to highlight the importance of practice and the role repetitive instruction has in teaching our youth. Also, I hope this can shed light on the fact that by making baseball fun, the kids will continue to want to play. Without the kid's interest and desire to learn and excel at baseball, coaching becomes merely a job.

Practice, practice, practice, practice

There is no substitute for playing. If nobody is available to hit you ground balls, find a wall and practice fielding off the wall. If nobody is available to throw you batting practice, use a hitting tee and a rolled up pair of socks to help you work on every part of your swing and can be done anywhere. Put on your headphones and enjoy working on your swing.

Muscle Memory

Playing baseball is neurological...it is muscle memory. By doing the proper drills, you will condition your body to react properly in a game.

The Game MUST be fun!

Have fun. Baseball is a game.
There is no reason you can't improve while having fun

The country is full of good coaches. What it takes to win is a bunch of **interested players.**

-Don Coryell

The principle is competing against yourself. It's about **self-improvement**, about being better than you were the day before.

- Steve Young



The Coaching Perspective

- **Learn the game - *practice matters***
- **Hustle - *how you practice is how you play***
- **Be competitive - *play to win***
- **Respect and support each other - *the golden rule***
- **Respect yourself - *no foul language or personal remarks***
- **Play with poise - *the game DOES start over with every pitch***
- **Enjoy the game - *and have fun being a part of it***
- **Take pride in what you do - *never be content with mediocrity***
- **Baseball is a team sport but demands individual effort**

The Importance of Hustle

Hustle is what determines the winners from the losers and the players from the athletes. Hustle catches the attention of coaches. A coach may take a player who hustles over one who is more talented, because that person is more valuable as a team player. It does not require any talent to hustle. Run on and off the field. Run out all ground balls and pop-ups. Hustle will set a player apart.



Three items of prime importance to be effective as a coach, making for a more successful team: *(not to be confused with winning)*

A) Require respect

Kids sense a pushover, and will take advantage and walk all over you. You'll get no drills done, no practices will be productive, games will be sloppy. The key is to set the ground rules right at the start, preferably in writing. Point out what you expect from your team, and what they can expect from you. And stick to it. Just like you must follow through with your threats of punishment with your own kids when they push it too far, you must be gentle but firm with a team.

B) Be prepared

Like a good scout, a good coach is prepared. That means you come to practices with a specific plan as to what you will be working on that day, right down to the drills and stations.

Always have your equipment, plenty of practice balls, as well as first aid, an ice chest with chilled soft blue ice (for bumps and bruises) and even a cooler of ice water for hot days (give water breaks).

For game days, have your line-up and fielding rotations figured out the night before and charted on paper. Have a few alternatives in case some kids don't show, or get hurt. There's nothing more annoying than a team taking the field with seven players as the coach scrambles madly to figure out who played three innings, who played all game yesterday, who sits, who replaces who....while everyone stands around and waits.

C) Communicate with parents

The parents can make coaching a joy or a chore. Distribute a roster with phone numbers. Assign duties, such as snacks, field maintenance, etc. Let them know your game and practice schedules, enforce pick-up times (you're not a baby-sitter), and have them voice concerns to you, not behind your back.



Things to look out for as a baseball coach

- 1) You need their attention. Focus on drills that keep everyone busy. Stay away from wasting practice time on activities where one player gets an occasional repetition while the rest of the team stands around in small groups chatting.
- 2) Study your players and understand their talents. Some kids will evolve slower than others. That being said, some kids won't be ready for the infield while other will be. Safety is a concern. Do NOT feel pressured to place all kids in all positions. Through practice and growth you will know when they are ready, despite what some parents may think. Make them aware of your vision.
- 3) Must teach certain aspects of baseball much earlier than when that talent will be used. Teaching sliding the practice before the first game where there may indeed be a need for it is detrimental. Failing to practice sliding at practice will not only leave your team unprepared for sliding but may in fact put your kids in harm's way.
- 4) Communicate! Communicate! Communicate! Prepare yourself as a coach and put a plan in place. Include all parents on your vision. Listen to what they have to say, but stand firm on your beliefs as a coach. Be able to evolve as a coach. This means being an effective listener and not being afraid to be wrong.
- 5) Be critical AND supportive! Know how to criticize your players in a way that makes them WANT to succeed, not in a way that makes them feel that they will never get it right. A player's confidence is everything. The more confident he/she is, the faster they will learn and the less they will fall victim to fear. Baseball is a game of **CONCENTRATION** and **CONFIDENCE**. Think of that when determining creative ways to get the best out of your players.
- 6) Allow players to independently evolve. We all need to progress on our own sometimes and that means making a few mistakes to get the full picture. Let these players make mistakes. This is where it will teach them self-reliance and team awareness. When they realize that the team suffers when they make a mistake allows them to take the matter a little more seriously.

-Destroying player confidence by telling them all the things they are doing "wrong." **It takes ten seconds to destroy a kid's confidence by telling him what's "wrong"** with his swing. It takes 10,000 (literally) closely-supervised "correct" swings to change his swing. If you do not have time to closely supervise 10,000 of his swings, and you absolutely do not have that time, do not tell a player what's "wrong" with his swing. Fact is, he probably would not hit any better if you did "correct" his swing. I did the 10,000 swings myself and it appeared to me that I hit a little worse after I switched from swing the "wrong" way to swinging



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the "right" way, although I did get compliments on how good looking my swing was afterward. That and a dime...

-Trying to control runners at all times rather than letting them make their own, faster, and often better decisions.

-Ignorance of the many dangers in baseball and the easy ways to prevent injuries. For example, never encourage a youth player to "take one for the team." About three or four youth players are killed every year when they are hit by normal pitches traveling 40 to 50 miles per hour. They suffer fatal ventricular fibrillation or asystole (heart muscle contracts improperly). This is a health problem caused by the unique physiology of children's bodies. Baseball is also the main cause of eye injuries among children. Would you believe 35,000 youth-baseball eye injuries a year!? That's about one for every eight teams per season. And almost every coach thinks the one that occurred on his team was a "freak accident."

-Giving prestigious positions out on the basis of nepotism rather than ability and team need.

-Not changing your approach to batting when a batter gets two strikes. Just saying "Ya gotta protect," is not enough.

-Failing to practice the pitcher-cover-first play.

-Failing to emphasize baserunning, which is by far the most coachable aspect of baseball.

-Drafting a team according to tryout performance rather than last year's score books.

-Failing to learn the 22 often-misunderstood rules.

-Tolerating lateness, absenteeism, back talk, and other misbehavior.

-Trying to teach too much to tee-batters.

-Failure to teach players where to go when the ball is not hit to them and failure to insist that they go there. Pitchers and outfielders, especially, tend to go "off duty" whenever a ball is hit somewhere other than to them.

-Letting players do "AT&T" tags ("Reach out and touch someone") instead of putting the tag on the ground next to the base.

-Coaching as if you were preparing your players for the Major Leagues. 73% of kids quit youth sports by age 13. Only about one kid per youth team will ever play



high-school baseball. You will coach one future Major Leaguer about every 641 seasons.

-Firing players up before or during a game. That's football, not baseball.

-Failure to recognize the many differences between TV baseball and youth baseball in terms of fielding percentages, walk percentages, field conditions, equipment, and so forth. If you ever do "around-the-horn," you do not understand the fielding percentage difference between youth teams and higher level teams. "Around-the-horn" has about a 3% success rate in some levels of youth baseball.

-Letting batters use bats that are much too heavy.

-Hitting fungoes to left and right fielders. Game hits to those fields curve outward; fungoes do not.

-Talking way too much and relying far too much on verbal descriptions of how to do everything. Show is much better than tell when it comes to baseball. While reading UCLA basketball coach John Wooden's autobiography, *They Call Me Coach*, I came across a great quote: "Young people need models, not critics." Time and again in *Youth Baseball Coaching*, I said, "Don't teach it. Model it."

-Being too timid about baserunning. Letting timid runners remain timid.

-Letting pitchers pitch from on top of the rubber. They are supposed to stand in front of it.

I could go on. In my book, I said that 98% of youth baseball coaches are incompetent. That is, they do not have any positive effect on their team's performance. Furthermore, about 75% actually hurt their team's performance by encouraging bad technique and by lowering players' confidence with criticism. Baseball is the worst coached youth sport of all. Youth soccer coaches are better than youth baseball coaches, even though most never played the game. The main problem is that most youth coaches do not understand the true nature of baseball. It is very different from other sports and other activities of normal everyday life and requires a very different approach.



7 C's of Coaching Credibility

Many coaches make the mistake of assuming that because they have the title of Coach, they automatically have the respect of their athletes and others in the youth sport environment. In fact, this respect must be earned. Establishing and maintaining credibility is a vital aspect of gaining respect. Dr. Greg Dale, an AAASP certified sport psychology consultant at Duke University has developed a model called the 7 Cs of coaching credibility. They are:

● **Character:** the coach must have high ethical principles. Coaches must be willing to do what is right, regardless of the consequences.

● **Competent:** coaches should have the technical knowledge of the sport that is appropriate for the level at which they are coaching. Coaches should be innovative, not just rely on old, worn out coaching techniques and strategies. Coaches must remember that they are human and be willing to admit it when they have made mistakes.

● **Committed:** coaches must believe in the vision-the goals that the team and the youth sport program want to accomplish. Coaches must have a passion for the sport and for doing what is best for the athletes. Coaches must be willing to put in the time. Even though most youth sport coaches are volunteers, you have made the commitment to the program and the kids and must follow through on this.

● **Caring:** care about your athletes on and off the field. You are a part of their lives, at least for a while, and must let them know that you care about them as people, not just as athletes on your team.

● **Confidence Builder:** coaches should help the athletes set high but realistic expectations and then help the athletes achieve them. Think about how you interact with your athletes. You cannot break them down during practice and then expect them to perform with confidence in competition.

● **Communicator:** be proactive-fix the small problems before they become big problems. Learn to be a good listener-you expect your athletes to listen to you, listen to them!

● **Consistent:** athletes are much more comfortable when they know what to expect from their coach. Treat every member of the team the same way-don't play favorites, don't single out any one athlete for criticism. Note that being consistent does not mean being rigid, you should practice flexible consistency.



Your two biggest concerns when coaching kids at the
lower levels (**pre-teen**) should be :

A) **Make the experience fun**

That means fun for the kids and fun for you too. If everyone is having a good time, you're doing something right.

B) **Teach the game**

There is a multitude of books on the finer points of coaching, teaching skills, drills, etc. Take the time to read these or other resource material.

but first,

you must know how to teach.

One rule of thumb when talking to a young player one-on-one (*as simple as this sounds*) is to not stand over him and talk down to him.

Bend over so you're face level with him, or even kneel down, so he is even with you or a little above. It's amazing how this will prevent intimidation, and rivet his attention.

Keep in mind that your highest goal at this level is to instill a love for the game in your players, so they'll want to continue playing for years to come.



A Basic Practice Plan

Warm Up (5 minutes). This is especially important in developing long-term physical fitness awareness for your players and greatly reduces the risk of injury to your players. If your team is like most, the kids will 'wander' onto the practice field. Do low impact 'games' with them while waiting for everyone to show. When the warm-up 'officially' begins, first demonstrate the exercise and then begin the exercise. Be sure to explain the exercise in words the players can understand. Sometimes you will have to teach them new words for this to work. Be sure that you participate with them, because the players will learn quickest by example. And if you can, get the parents to participate as well!

Team Talk (2 minutes, 1 minute to get them quiet!) Have a brief Team Talk with them and let them know what you want to accomplish today and what you expect of them today. Keep it simple and in words they can understand.

Skill Development (40 minutes). Begin skill development drills and exercises. Spend the first 10 minutes improving skills taught in previous practices. You will need to focus on the less-talented players at this time to help them improve at a quicker pace. Consider providing these players a 'mentor', another player that can show them good execution of the skill. This mentoring approach also keeps more players busy and 'engaged' providing more fun and participation.

After the review, begin introducing a new skill 'game' or regimen. You should strive to introduce one new skill, or a variation or refinement of a skill at every practice session. This may require a brief Team Talk with the players to provide a foundation of words or expectations. First explain the skill, then with other assistants, if necessary, demonstrate the skill using proper technique. Then turn the players loose to try it themselves.

Once they begin the skill development exercise, try to keep further instruction and refinement to a minimum, and spend your time one-on-one with the players. Having other volunteers and coaches manage the 'team' allows you to spend some 'quality time' with each player while they are striving to learn. If you have an exceptional player or two, place them in a mentoring position with another player.

Play (20 minutes). Play a modified game or small-sided game / scrimmage. This will increase the likelihood that the skills you have just introduced or have previously introduced have real-world (read game-time) implications. Here are a few tips to ensure a successful (read fun and educational) scrimmage:

- This should be a reward scenario. If the skills section of practice went well, then proceed to scrimmage. If not – no reward. Players love the scrimmage and will work hard at the skills part to get to this.



- Use different scrimmage scenarios to highlight different aspects of real-game situations.
- Play for a pre-determined amount of time, not until a scrimmage team reaches a certain score.
- Focus on only one or two rules or skills at a time. Trying to teach too many skills / rules at a time can be overwhelming for most players.

Team Talk (5 minutes, 2 minutes to get them quiet!). This provides time for the players to cool-down and reflect on their recent accomplishments. It also provides a time for you to repeat today's instructions and to communicate with your players

A sample agenda on the closing Team Talk could include the following:

- Ask the players to tell the team what they learned today. Try to refrain from using "Yes" or "No" questions. Don't force a player to make provide an answer to your questions. He may be too tired or mentally drained to answer your question. If they give you an inattentive answer, simply acknowledge their answer with a nod, smile or "that's interesting" and move on to the next player.
- Talk to the team about a particular rule or situation that may have happened in practice or the last game. For instance, "Johnny was called out at second in our scrimmage. Can anybody explain why? " (Running outside of the baseline, tagged out, or force out).
- Ask the players what they would like to do in the next practice. This will give you a good pulse on what part of the game is the most fun, and will let you use this in between "less fun" activities.
- If your team is old enough or if you choose to use the "mentoring" practice, assign some players to be officials, assistants or mentors for the next practice. This creates enthusiasm for practice for these players, and is especially useful with less enthusiastic players.
- If you're going to give the players 'homework', now would be the time to do so. Give them very specific instructions on skills and rules they should practice and learn. For younger children you should provide this information as note cards or flash cards. Then see how many of them completed last week's homework. Test them with simple questions.
- Summarize your discussion and repeat the important teachings of the day. With younger kids a small 'reward' can help keep the players' attention. (Bubble gum, etc . . .)
- Make a game out of wrapping up the practice. Have the players' pack up the equipment, balls, retrieve the bases or cones, etc . . .



PRACTICE

Before we start the actual baseball stuff, here are a couple of notes about practice....

Since this is where all the instruction is going to occur, let's make sure we get all of our players to practice on time. Carpool, vanpool, any kind of pool....

Once there, let the coaches do their thing. We always encouraged our parents to stay and watch practice. As a matter of fact...volunteer to help out. There is always something to do that can help the coaches out. It might be just filling up the water jug or hitting fly balls to the outfielders. Believe it or not...your kids will enjoy your participating too.

If the coach says practice is over in 2 hours....be there to pick your child up. Chances are the coach has a life too.(Although I know personally a few coaches and managers whose lives revolves around Little League)

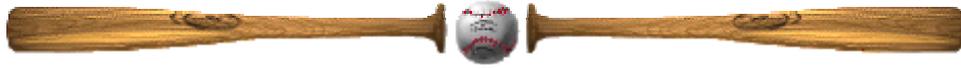
Follow the drills starting below, have patience, and you will be rewarded with a fine bunch of ballplayers who just might surprise you and their fans with their abilities. Remember to use praise as well as discipline. Something some coaches forget about.



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STARTING PRACTICE

- Always have each player run a lap to loosen the legs first.
- All players should stretch both legs & arms before throwing.
- All players should spend the first 10 minutes or so warming up just having a catch. Start with half of the team on the 1st or 3rd baseline spread out between home plate and the base. The other half of the team is opposite them about even with pitchers mound. Even at this distance, don't forget to emphasize the basics of throwing.
- Once their arms get loose, those on the field can start to widen the distance until they have reached the dirt part of the infield. That's about the maximum warm-up distance.
- There is no need to throw the ball 70 MPH at this time, just get loose. No sore arms will occur during practice or later in the season if each practice begins with a warm-up. Organize this also so that each time the players warm up in practice (or before a game) the routine will be the same.
- After about 10 minutes, the players arms and legs should be loose, go right into the practice routine.
- Each practice should teach the basics and keep reinforcing them. You remember how hard it is at home to get our kids to listen and learn. Repetition of the basics builds strong baseball fundamentals.
- Don't be afraid to get the parents involved, either. Almost anyone can hit fly balls to the outfielders while the infielders get a workout.



FIELDING

- Basic Fielding Position.
- Glove should be on the ground and glove and opposite hand should form a basket to receive the ball. No ball has ever gone through the glove, only underneath it.
- The player can not just bend from the waist and expect to field a ground ball. Rear end should not be up in the air. If knees are flexed properly, the butt will be down.
- Now for about 10-15 minutes hit continuous ground balls to each line. As each player fields the ball he returns it to the catcher and goes to the end of the line. In the time period indicated each player will field quite a number of ground balls.
- Now at the end of the time limit, switch the lines from 2nd to shortstop etc. This gives each coach a chance to evaluate all the players and also allows each player some more fielding chances.
- Any missed played balls must be retrieved by the player who missed it, by hustling after it.
- When ever you are running the players through a drill like this remind them of other practice techniques. For instance after the player fields the ball be sure his throwing motion is correct or that he is throwing at the catchers chest.

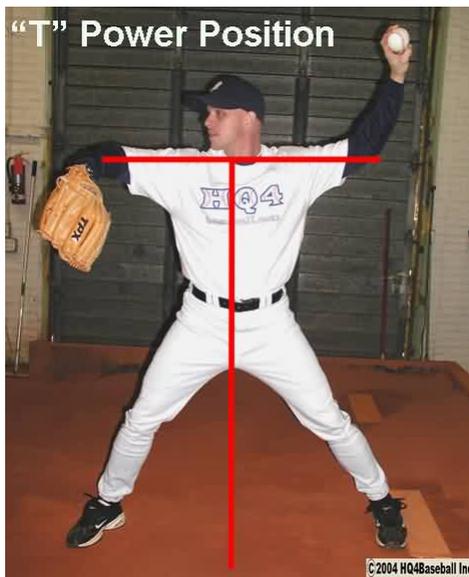


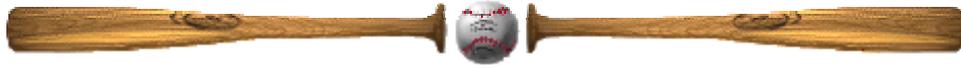
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THROWING

Need to teach how to hold the baseball





BASE RUNNING

Running the bases is something we do at every practice. At the first few practices it works as a conditioning drill as well.

Here are some Base Running basics that also work well as part of your daily practice routine. We always end our practice with at least some base running drills.

1st Drill

1. Ball is hit in the infield.
 2. Start this drill at home plate. All the players in a line going back from home plate but facing first base. Only the front player in the batters box.
 3. One coach at home plate and the other down at first base to encourage the runners to run hard.
 4. Runner should run at top speed completely through the base.
 5. Any attempt to slide, jump or leap to the base actually slows the runner down.
 6. Don't be afraid to run this drill a couple of times during earlier practices. Especially if a few of the guys don't hustle.
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2nd Drill

1. Ball hit goes through the infield.
 2. Prior to reaching 1st base, the runner should widen his path so that when he touches 1st base he is headed straight to 2nd base. (Called "***Rounding the Base***")
 3. As runner rounds 1st base he should be picking up the ball and the fielder. If fielder misplays the ball runner looking will advance. Runner just happy with a single and celebrating with base coach will not be ready to advance and will also have "interesting" conversation with the manager upon his return to the dugout.
 4. Runner should take a wide enough turn so that if a play is made back to 1st base, he would have to dive back.
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3rd Drill

1. Taking a lead off of the base. (1st, 2nd or 3rd base)
2. Once the pitch reaches home plate, the runner should lead off the base as if he were going to steal.(Must be Aggressive) If there is a play back to that base the only way the runner should get back is to dive back!
3. Teach dive back by having runners first standing on 1st base and taking a lead. Draw a line in the dirt where each runner must lead off to and then let the players adjust based on their size, etc. The face should always be turned away from the throw. Throw from catcher to 1st, runner would be looking towards right field. This way an errant throw would not strike the runner in the face.
4. As soon as the players have mastered this then incorporate it with rounding 1st base on a hit through the infield.

I can't emphasize enough the value of aggressive base running. It has won a lot of Little League games for a lot of managers. The up side of these drills is that each player witnesses how the other players do it and learn by example and they also love to get their clothes dirty. The down side.....Mom has to wash the dirty practice clothes.



HITTING

DRILLS FOR HITTING PRACTICE

Frequently a parent will ask how to help his child become a better ballplayer. I always reply, "Pitch to him so he can get more batting practice." Of all the drills on the basics of playing baseball, the drill that receives the least time *per player* is hitting, and the reason is understandable. If you have only one backstop and field, you can have only one batter hitting at a time, and if you give each player on a 15-player roster 5 minutes of hitting practice, you will consume an hour and 15 minutes of practice time, during which time the other 14 players are idle.

Compare that to a parent pitching for an hour; the child will get 12 times the amount of practice in hitting that's available in an average team practice. I have a bucket of balls available to lend to a parent willing to devote the extra time. The parent merely pitches them to the child, and then they will take a break as they retrieve the balls and start the sequence over again.



Tee Drill

Tee Drill

Purpose

Learn how to drive through the ball, and consistently hit line drives

Equipment:

Bats, baseballs, Hitting Tee, Backstop

Procedure

- Place a ball on a tee about 10 -20 feet in front of the backstop
- Have players pair up; one feeds (sets the ball on the tee) and the other hits
- Have the hitter hit line drives into the backstop.

Key Points

- Adjusting the tee to different heights simulates hitting low and high pitches.
- If a player hits under the ball, he or she will hit the top of the backstop.
- If a player hits on top of the ball, he or she will hit a ground ball that rolls into or hits low on the backstop.



Pepper Drill

Pepper Drill

Purpose

To have hitters develop better bat control and a short, quick swing. Batter can also practice bunting in pepper to improve bunting skills. Fielders work on short toss and fielding ground balls.

Equipment:

Bats, baseballs

Procedure

- Have the player hitting stand approximately 20 feet away from three fielders, who position themselves two feet apart.
- The player should hit the ball using a short, quick, downward stroke. And hit the ball sharply with one or two hops (ground balls) to the fielders.
- A fielder fields the ball and quickly tosses a half to three-quarter speed pitch back to be hit.
- The hitter should hit the ball where it is pitched.
- Preferably use four players in this drill and not more than five.

Key Points

- Emphasize hitting inside pitches
- Have batters hit the pitches in the middle to the fielder directly in front of them.
- Outside pitches should go to the fielder to the right (for a right-handed batter).
- To make the drill more difficult, have the players use two baseballs at once. This keeps the hitter constantly ready to swing and fielders always heads-up.



The Inside Outside Drill

The Inside Outside Drill

Purpose

This drill helps a player work on hitting inside and outside pitches while keeping his stride the same.

Equipment:

Bat and helmet; 2 Batting Tees; Baseballs

Procedure

- Set one tee up in front of the plate on the inside to simulate an inside pitch.
- Place the other tee in the middle of the plate on the outside to simulate an outside pitch.
- The tee for the inside pitch should be set lower than the outside tee.
- Place two balls on the tees
- Have the player take his stride and call out inside or outside as he completes his stride

Key Points

- The player will then have to swing and hit the appropriate ball.
- By calling the location out after the stride, you have eliminated the hitter from cheating during the stride.



Top & Bottom Hand Isolation Drill

Top & Bottom Hand Isolation Drill

Purpose

By isolating each hand you are training the hands individually to work together.

Equipment:

Bat, Baseballs, Backstop

Procedure

- Have players pair up; one feeds (soft toss) and the other hits
- Player kneels opposite batter with a bucket of balls
- Player softly tosses balls into hitting zone of batter
- Batter is using a shorter bat or is choking up on his own bat.
- Batter swings with only one hand, alternating hands

Key Points

- I liken this drill to using a dumbbell in the weight room.
- By isolating each hand you are training the hands individually to work together.
- drill helps people that are described as being dominant with a particular hand
- It also is a step in the process of achieving correct muscle memory



Soft Toss Drill

Soft Toss Drill

Purpose

Works on Eye hand coordination - More batting reps

Equipment:

Bats, baseballs, Backstop

Procedure

- Have players pair up; one feeds (soft toss) and the other hits
- Player kneels opposite batter with a bucket of balls
- Player softly tosses balls into hitting zone of batter
- Have the hitter hit line drives into the backstop.

Key Points

- Live hitting with out the need of a batting tunnel or field
- If a player hits under the ball, he or she will hit the top of the backstop.
- If a player hits on top of the ball, he or she will hit a ground ball that rolls into or hits low on the backstop.



Golf Whiffle Ball Drill

Golf Whiffle Ball Drill

Purpose

Works on Eye hand coordination - see the ball

Equipment:

Stickball bat or Broom Handle, golf whiffle balls

Procedure

- Have players pair up; one feeds (soft or fast toss) and the other hits
- Player softly tosses balls into hitting zone of batter or fast toss
- Have the hitter hit line drives into the backstop.

Key Points

- Smaller diameter ball and bat makes for great coordination drill
- If a player hits under the ball, he or she will hit the top of the backstop.
- If a player hits on top of the ball, he or she will hit a ground ball that rolls into or hits low on the backstop.



Up The Middle Drill

Up The Middle Drill

Purpose

Many hitting problems can occur from a player not being able to wait for the ball. By trying to hit the ball up the middle the hitter is forced to stay back and balanced.

Equipment:

L-Sreen or other type of screen for protection while throwing; Baseballs; Bat and helmet

Procedure

- Throw batting practice pitches to the hitter.
- Hitter tries to hit the ball back to the screen.

Key Points

- the main hitting station of batting practice may begin with the hitter hitting 2 balls the opposite way.
- 2 up the middle, then swing away.
- Try adding on an extra swing for each successful hit the other way and up the middle.
- A hitter can then get an extra 4 swings by successfully handling the bat.



Tennis Ball Drill

Tennis Ball Drill

Purpose

Eye hand coordination,

Equipment:

Bat, Tennis Balls

Procedure

- Have players pair up; one feeds (soft toss) and the other hits
- Player can feed tennis balls to batter soft toss style or bouncing
- The batter takes a normal swing and follows-through right through the ball
- Have the hitter hit line drives into the backstop.

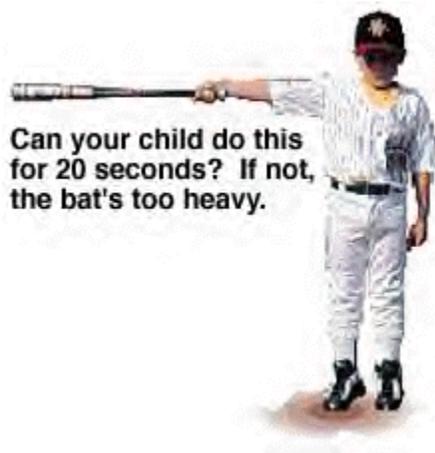
Key Points

- Bouncing balls are more challenging
- You can also do a walking toss where the player walks along with the batter and bounces the balls to the hitter. Very challenging



Hitting Basics

- Know the situation (count, score, runners, outs) and what it calls for.
- Be aggressive, the hitter should load and stride on every pitch and be up there thinking **hit, hit, hit**, so that he/she is ready to explode with the hips and hands if it is a strike.
- If the pitch is not a strike don't swing.
- Have no fear





Batting Chart 1

Below is a rough guide for bat selection. It is simply a place to start and depends not only on the size of the player but the level of competition (better pitching may require a lighter bat). It is better to err on the light side rather than the heavy side. Today's power hitters in the major leagues use lighter bats than power hitters of yesterday

Age	Weight Minimum	Weight Maximum	Length Minimum	Length Maximum	Barrel Size
6-7	17 Ounces	19 Ounces	24 Inches	28 Inches	2 ¼
8	19 Ounces	21 Ounces	27 Inches	30 Inches	2 ¼
9	20 Ounces	23 Ounces	28 Inches	30 Inches	2 ¼
10	20 Ounces	23 Ounces	28 Inches	31 Inches	2 ¼
11	21 Ounces	24 Ounces	29 Inches	31 Inches	2 ¼
12	23 Ounces	25 Ounces	30 Inches	33 Inches	2 ¼
13-14	23 Ounces	28 Ounces	30 Inches	33 Inches	2 ¼ to 2 ¾
15 +	24 Ounces	30 Ounces	30 Inches	34 Inches	2 ¾

While charts determine proper size bat, which take players' height and weight into consideration.

While these two factors are important, other characteristics are missing. The bat length, weight, barrel size, grip, brand, and whether the player likes to choke up on the bat are all important factors when determining whether a bat has a good feel in the players hand.



Batting Chart 2

Height	3'-3'4"	3'5"-3'8"	3'9"-4'	4'1"-4'4"	4'5"-4'8"	4'9"-5'	5'1"-5'4"	5'5"-5'8"	5'9"-6'	6'1"-over
under 60	26"	27"	28"	29"	29"					
61-70	27"	27"	28"	29"	30"	30"				
71-80		28"	28"	29"	30"	30"	31"			
81-90		28"	29"	29"	30"	30"	31"	32"		
91-100		28"	29"	30"	30"	31"	31"	32"		
101-110		29"	29"	30"	30"	31"	31"	32"		
111-120		29"	29"	30"	30"	31"	31"	32"		
121-130		29"	30"	30"	30"	31"	32"	33"	33"	
131-140		29"	30"	30"	31"	31"	32"	33"	33"	
141-150			30"	30"	31"	31"	32"	33"	33"	
151-160			30"	31"	31"	32"	32"	33"	33"	33"
161-170				31"	31"	32"	32"	33"	33"	34"
171-180						32"	33"	33"	34"	34"
171-180							33"	33"	34"	34"



Grip

The grip on the bat should be comfortable in the hand, ideally the middle knuckles on each hand would line up. This helps in executing the proper swing. The grip should be fairly loose up until you 'load' particularly with your top hand. Don't choke the bat with such a tight grip that it tenses up all the muscles in your arms and shoulders.



Stance

The term "*batting stance*" refers to the position of the body and bat while awaiting a pitch.

Step into the batter's box with your body facing home plate. Usually for younger players the Parallel or Squared stance is recommended. This means that the batter has both feet equal distance from home plate.

The batter's feet should start a little more than shoulder width apart.





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The batter should be close enough to the plate that he can comfortably reach down and touch the outside edge of the plate with his bat. This will insure that he can reach the outside pitch as well.

At this point weight should be equally balanced between the front and back legs.

- Both hips and shoulders should be parallel to the ground.
- Batter should have a slight bend in the knees.
- Hands should be just off the back shoulder with the bat angled at about 45 degrees.



Hold your hands somewhere between the letters on your uniform front and your shoulders.

Your elbows should be away from your body
(as shown below).





Swing

Getting The Barrel To The Ball

The batter should swing the barrel of the bat directly at the ball and should try to hit the ball with the sweet spot on the bat. The sweet spot is generally the area between 2 and 6 inches from the top end of the bat.

The batter's arms should be extended right before contact is made with the baseball.

- The bat should be on the same plane as the baseball when contact is made.

Turning The Hips

If lower body strength and bat speed are to be maximized, it is essential that the hips be turned during the swing.

In order to turn the hips during the swing, the hitter should pivot on the ball of the back foot.

Keeping The Eyes On The Ball

Hitters should keep their eyes on the baseball until contact is made.

The hitter's head should not follow the body when it turns.



The batter should turn his head enough that he can see the ball with both eyes. The "**IKE** to **MIKE**" method should be taught. The batter's front shoulder, toward the pitcher, is "**IKE**", and his back shoulder is "**MIKE**". The batter should start with his chin on "**IKE**". During the swing the head does not move. The body rotates and the shoulders switch places with the head finishing on "**MIKE**". The batter should keep his eyes on the ball and should be taught to "track" the ball from the pitcher's hand to the bat.

Tee Ball Coaching Sites

<http://www.coachtips.com/>
how to coach tee ball

<http://www.insanebooks.com/>
how to coach tee ball without going insane



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<http://www.coachteeball.com/>

<http://www.tee-ball-drills.com/oi/coaching-tee-ball-2.html>

<http://www.teeballusa.org>

<http://www.teeball-to-a-tee.com/>

http://www.myba.org/calripken_tball.htm

<http://www.t-ballcoaching.com/>

All these sites offer different perspectives on coaching baseball at the earliest level. Some of these sites are links to books written on Tee Ball coaching.

Little League Coaching Sites

<http://www.decatursports.com/drills/base/johns.htm>

<http://www.youthbaseballcoaching.com/drills.html>

<http://www.angelfire.com/sports/brookside/baseballskills.htm>

<http://www.wheretheplay.com/>

<http://www.y-coach.com/60baseball.htm>