

.PDF



# ESSENTIAL SOFTBALL

## HITTING DRILLS

15 Fundamental Drills  
for Youth Softball

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# INTRODUCTION

When it comes to hitting, one word can make all the difference – repetition. Simply put, repetition is the key to hitting. With that said, the repetition needs to be watched carefully so that players don't develop any bad habits.

All the practice in the world won't do any good if the players are practicing bad hitting form. It's up to you to spot their deficiencies and help them improve. The drills included in this book will help you in your efforts.

Here are some final tips for hitting drills (at any level):

- In the early stages of teaching batting, proper instruction is also important. Learning the basics: stance, swing, and follow through.
- Hitting requires patience and practice. Teach contact and correct form before you allow young softball players to swing hard at the ball. This will benefit their game for many years to come.

Now let's get started!

# DRILL #1 – EYE ON THE SPOT

**Skill Level: Beginner**

**Purpose:**

Gets kids to aim for a smaller target. Children typically see the ball as a target that needs to be hit. When they aim for a bigger target, they have a larger room for error. When they focus on a smaller target, they naturally assume a smaller margin for error. This drill helps them build confidence in hitting the ball, and also develops muscle memory when they are swinging.

**Setup:**

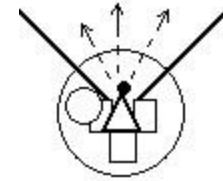
Set up a tee that is about waist height for the player. Put a dime size dot on the backside of the ball, just above the halfway circumference of the ball. Always place the ball with the spot facing toward the backstop.

**Execution:**

1. This drill is designed to get players to keep their eye on a certain spot on the ball.
2. Once they focus on a target smaller than the ball itself, they can swing at the spot using the fundamentals they have been taught to this point.

**Coaching Tips:**

- Make sure players eyes are on the spot and that they use good hitting fundamentals.



Players learn to focus in on a smaller target when batting.

## DRILL #2 – COLORED BALL TOSS

### Skill Level: Intermediate

### Purpose:

Players work on pitch selection and reaction time.

### Setup:

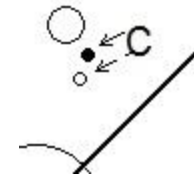
Two different colored softballs and a net or fence.

### Execution:

1. Coach tosses two balls to batter and calls the color that should be hit.
2. Batter focuses in on the correct ball and puts a good swing on it – driving the ball into the fence or net.

### Coaching Tips:

- Once you've done this drill a few times and the players are used to it, you can add in fake tosses and change height and speed of the balls to further test the batter.



Batters hit whatever colored ball the coach calls.

## DRILL #3 – CONTACT AND FREEZE

**Skill Level: Intermediate**

**Purpose:**

Batters work on reaction time and on taking particular types of swings.

**Setup:**

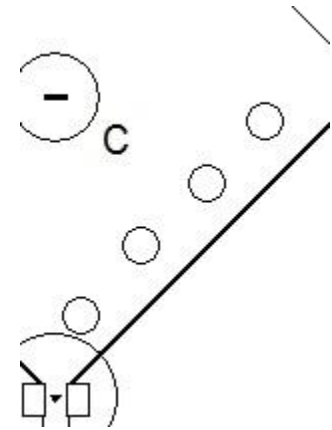
Batters line up with enough room in-between them to comfortably swing. Coach stands in front of the batters.

**Execution:**

1. Coach calls out a certain pitch (for example, low and outside, inside high, down the middle, curve, slider, etc.) and batters immediately take the appropriate swing and freeze where they would make contact with the ball.
2. Coach observes the swings and ending bat position and makes corrections if necessary.

**Coaching Tips:**

- To make this drill more competitive, if a player takes the wrong swing, they must drop for five pushups. If they mess up a second time they are out of the game.



Batters practice reaction time and swing mechanics in this drill.

## DRILL #4 – HOLD YOUR SHIRT

**Skill Level: Advanced**

**Purpose:**

Often time batters over extended themselves when they try to hit the ball. This drill helps prevent that by teaching players to keep their hands in the proper position in relation to the ball.

**Setup:**

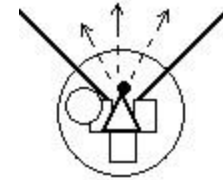
A tee, batters (with helmets) and the players should be wearing a loose shirt (one can be provided for players in this drill).

**Execution:**

1. A batter sets up next to the tee with the ball on top.
2. They grab their shirt and wrap it around the handle of the bat and get into the ready position to hit the ball, this begins helping to keep the hands in line.
3. When the player goes to swing, while holding their shirt, they release the shirt upon contact with the ball.
4. If the contact point is solid, by holding the shirt, they will learn the proper proportion to have between the ball and the hands.

**Coaching Tips:**

- Look that players are holding onto the shirt and not releasing it until contact is made.



This drill helps players understand that they get the best contact and the most power if their hands stay at a certain distance from the contact point.

## DRILL #5 – FOLLOW THROUGH DRILL

**Skill Level: Advanced**

**Purpose:**

Players learn to follow through properly when batting. The follow through is important to get the most fluid and powerful swing.

**Setup:**

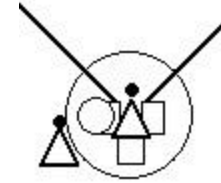
You need a tee for the batter to hit from, and you need a ball set up (either on a tee or other apparatus) that will be along the proper follow through plane of the batter.

**Execution:**

1. When a batter swings through the ball, they will maintain their swing plane through the drill and first hit the ball on the tee in front of them, and then on the tee in their proper follow through plane.
2. If a player is not hitting the second ball then the coach must help them achieve the appropriate swing plane.

**Coaching Tips:**

- This is also a great drill to experiment with different swing planes and swing directions when teaching opposite field hitting.



Players work on keeping their swing plane level so that they can follow-through properly and maintain power in their swing.

## DRILL #6 – INSIDE/OUTSIDE HITTING DRILL

**Skill Level:** Advanced

**Purpose:**

This is a great drill that is going to help players hit both inside and outside pitches with the same stride and form.

**Setup:**

This is a pure hitter's drill, as you just have a batter and two tees to work with.

**Execution:**

1. The hitter will stand at the plate and he or she will take their typical stance.
2. With one tee on the inside of the plate and one on the outside of the plate, the batter will take turns attempting to hit the ball on the inside tee, then the outside tee
3. The batter should take the same stride towards the ball on both swings.

**Coaching Tips:**

- Place the inside tee toward the front of the strike zone, which will encourage players to make contact out in front and pull the ball
- Place the outside tee toward the back of the strike zone, which will encourage hitters to catch the ball deep and send it to the opposite field
- It is important that the player stand at the plate the same way no matter what type of pitch they expect to receive.
- In order to make this drill a little different, you can make the height of the tee a little different, so it simulates pitches coming from different places in the strike zone.



Players try to hit both balls at the same time.

## DRILL #7 – PEPPER WITH BAT

**Skill Level: Advanced**

**Purpose:**

Helps players develop bat control and a short, quick swing.

**Setup:**

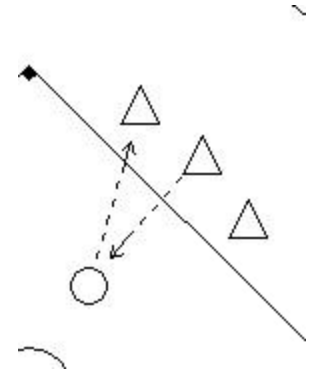
Have the batter stand approximately 15 to 20 feet from three fielders, who are standing 2-5 feet apart from each other.

**Execution:**

1. Fielder throws the ball to the batter.
2. Batter uses a short, quick, downward swing to hit the ball back to the fielders.
3. Batter should try to hit the inside pitch to the left fielder, the middle pitch to the middle fielder and the right pitch to the right fielder.
4. Fielder catches the ball and throws it back to the batter to hit again.

**Coaching Tips:**

- To increase the difficulty of this drill, add another softball so that two are in play – this will help keep the fielders and hitter at full focus.



The batter hits the ball using a quick, controlled to three fielders in this rapid-paced drill.

## DRILL #8 – TWO-HAND BAT

**Skill Level: Advanced**

**Purpose:**

Emphasizes the use of the top hand when batting.

**Setup:**

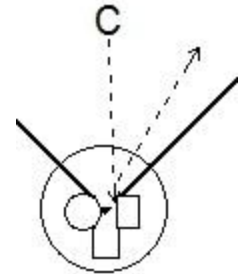
Coach (behind a screen) throws to batter at home plate, in batting cage or near fence or net.

**Execution:**

1. Coach throws the ball to the outside part of the plate.
2. Batter swings and attempts to hit the ball to the opposite field.

**Coaching Tips:**

- Make sure the batter is keeping the top hand on the bat and is emphasizing that hand during the swing.



Batters concentrate on hitting the ball to the opposite field.

## DRILL #9 – HIGH/LOW HITTING

**Skill Level:** Advanced

**Purpose:**

Players practice reacting to where the pitch is and then putting a good swing on the ball.

**Setup:**

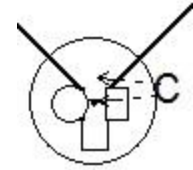
Two balls, a batter (with helmet) and the coach. It is best to do this drill against the backstop or into a batting net.

**Execution:**

1. The player lines up facing the batting cage or the backstop, about 15 feet away.
2. The coach will kneel down (at a safe distance), but close enough to toss the balls for the Player.
3. The coach will toss up two balls, one right after the other. The coach will toss a high one, then a low one, and then shout which one he wants the hitter to hit.
4. The hitter must then hit the ball that is called.

**Coaching Tips:**

- This is one of the more advanced drills for batting, but it is a great one to help a player learn quick reaction. Watch for good form and that the batter has his eyes on the ball when swinging.



Batters work on reacting to where the ball is pitched and then getting a good swing.

## DRILL #10 – FUNGO HITTING

**Skill Level:** Advanced

**Purpose:**

Helps batters practice all of the following: hand action, weight shift, downward swing and follow-through. Fielders also get work on fielding ground balls.

**Setup:**

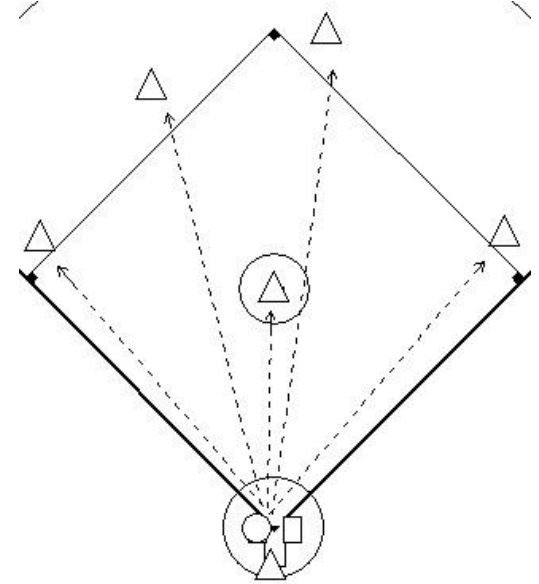
You need a batter and a complete infield.

**Execution:**

1. Batter steps up to the plate and hits ground balls to each of the infield positions.

**Coaching Tips:**

- Make sure batter is taking a good, short, downward swing and is hitting the top half of the softball.



Batter works on bat control and on hitting ground balls in this drill that also provides infielders with fielding practice.

## DRILL #11 – TENNIS BALL DRILL

**Skill Level:** Advanced

**Purpose:**

Helps batters improve their timing and trigger.

**Setup:**

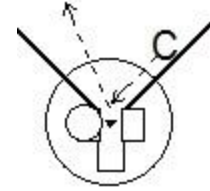
Coach (or fellow player) stands 6 feet to the side and 3 feet in front of the batter.

**Execution:**

1. Coach bounces a tennis ball into the strike zone.
2. Batter waits for the ball to reach its height apex and then swings and hits the ball.

**Coaching Tips:**

- Watch that the batter is sitting back and waiting for the ball to reach its height and then loads, triggers and swings – driving the ball into the net or out into the field.



Batters work on timing and trigger in this hitting drill.

## DRILL #12 – STICK BALL

**Skill Level: Advanced**

**Purpose:**

Helps batters improve their focus and swing.

**Setup:**

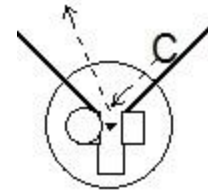
You need a batter, a small plastic ball or Wiffle ball, a coach or teammate to throw the ball and a thin Wiffle ball bat or a broomstick or hit stick.

**Execution:**

1. Coach triggers the batter to cock and load by dropping hand.
2. Coach then tosses the ball into strike zone.
3. Batter swings and hits the ball.

**Coaching Tips:**

- The smaller the ball and the thinner the bat the better as this drill is all about focus and concentration.
- At first, batters should swing at about 80-90 percent of their normal bat speed to work on form but can increase as they get more familiar with the drill.



Focus, concentration and good hitting form are essential in this batting drill that uses a thin bat and small ball.

## DRILL #13 – BALL DROP DRILL

**Skill Level: Advanced**

**Purpose:**

A great drill for improving hand speed.

**Setup:**

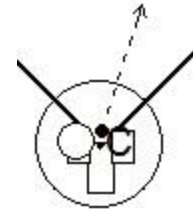
Batter, ball and a coach or partner. You may also need a chair or ladder.

**Execution:**

1. Batter assumes normal stance.
2. Coach stands to the side with ball held at shoulder height.
3. Batter says “drop.”
4. Coach drops ball (pulling arm up and away).
5. Batter swings and hits the ball.

**Coaching Tips:**

- The coach or partner can also stand on a chair or a ladder to make the drop more challenging for the batter.



Batters improve their hand speed and timing in the Ball Drop Drill.

## DRILL #14 – BLIND TEE DRILL

**Skill Level:** Advanced

**Purpose:**

A fun drill that emphasizes concentration and muscle memory.

**Setup:**

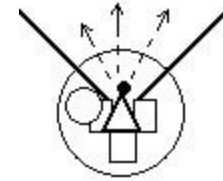
Batter, balls, batting tee and a blindfold.

**Execution:**

1. Batter hits 5-10 balls off the tee normally.
2. Then batter blindfolds herself and hits 5-10 more relying on her concentration and muscle memory.
3. Then repeat the process.

**Coaching Tips:**

- To make it even more fun for your players, you can group players into two teams and the team with the most hits wins reward or the team with the least hits gets a punishment.



Players hit off the tee both normally and while blindfolded in this drill.

## DRILL #15 – WEIGHT HITTING

**Skill Level:** Advanced

**Purpose:**

Batters create muscle memory while strengthening their bottom hand.

**Setup:**

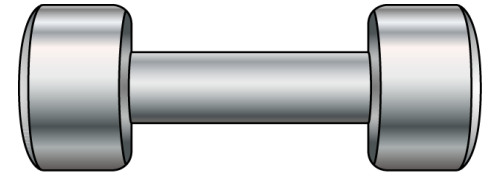
Batter and a five-pound dumbbell.

**Execution:**

1. Batter grips the dumbbell as if she was gripping a bat.
2. Batter goes through batting motion while swinging the dumbbell.
3. Swing should be slow and with good form.
4. Do five sets of five reps.

**Coaching Tips:**

- Dumbbell should follow a straight line from back shoulder to front. As with any strength training, form is important.



Batters strengthen their bottom hand in this weight training drill.

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