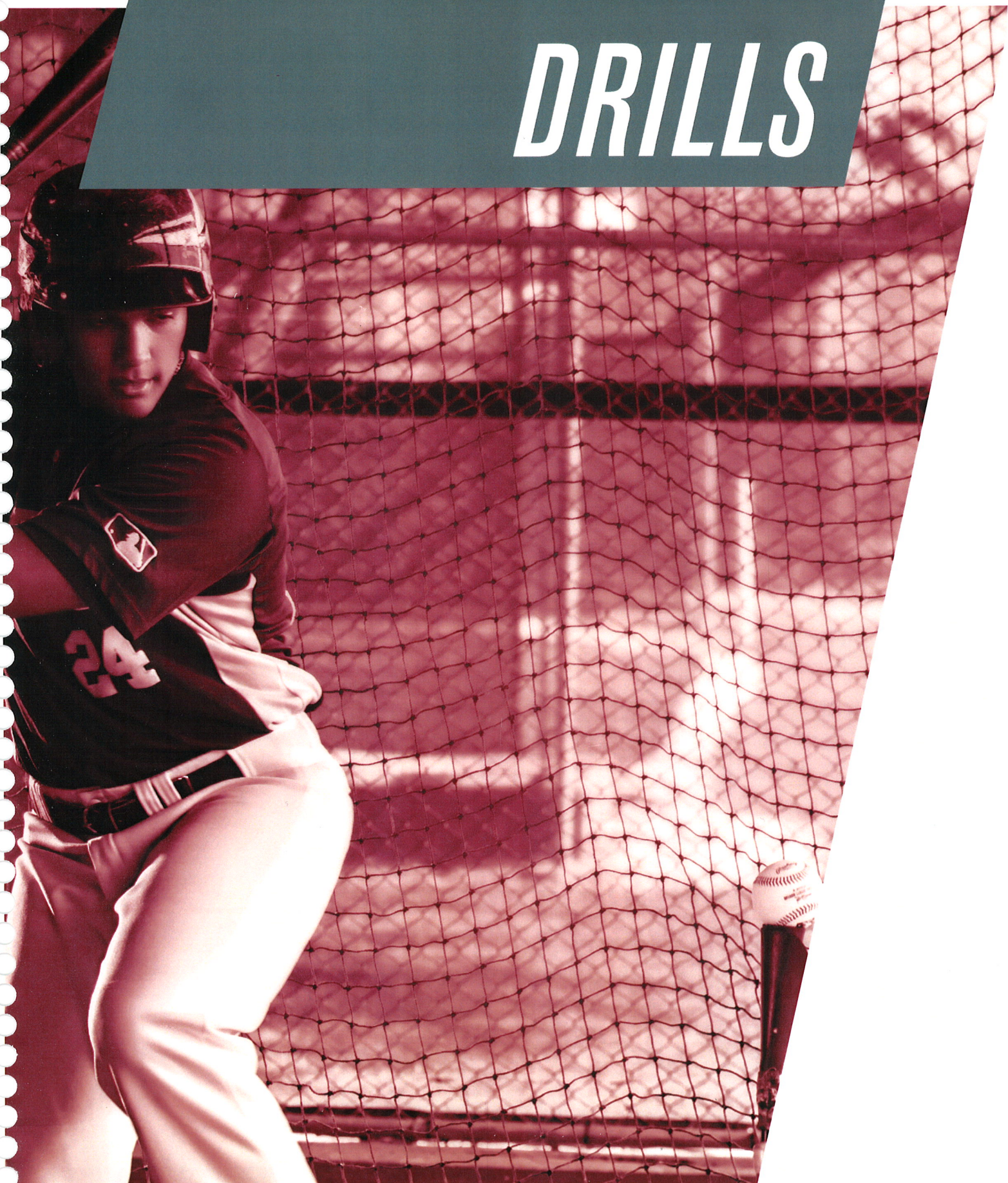


DRILLS



DRILLS

This manual contains various recommendations about the importance of a safe practice environment when coordinating or supervising a practice. The manual also includes drills and practice plans for every position and various baseball scenarios. If these exercises are done efficiently and with the necessary repetitions, players will have the opportunity to develop their tools and skills.

IMPORTANCE OF DRILLS:

Muscle memory is extremely important for any athlete attempting to acquire a new skill or improve their level of play. In addition baseball fundamentals such as pitching, hitting, and base running, are activities that require other free movements. Successful baseball players must be able to react quickly to game situations, often with minimal reaction time. (For example, a batter has just 0.09 seconds to see that the pitch hurling at him is a 90-mph fastball).

Since athletes must react quickly, it is important that they teach their muscles to react quickly and automatically. Muscle memory is the result of educating the muscles how to react to specific activities. Athletes must execute countless repetitions to acquire effective muscle memory. Once an athlete reacts freely, and without methodical, systematic, or deliberate thought, he has acquired muscle memory. (For example, pitching always requires some deliberate thought, such as how to pitch to a particular batter or where to locate the pitch, but muscle memory enables the mechanical aspects, such as the throwing grip, arm action, and release to occur without specific thought).

Coaches should attempt to break down complex movements and fundamentals into simpler ones. With practice of each component of a complex movement, the body begins to develop muscle memory, and both muscle memory and a player's skills improve with repetitions. Often, athletes in top physical condition still need to execute methodical and systematic thought to achieve their potential; work with these athletes so that they establish muscle memory and movements become easier for them.

To ensure skill acquisition, players should be relaxed and concentrated. Ensure this state of mind in your players. Coaches are responsible for monitoring the quality of repetitions, as only quality repetitions will contribute to the development of muscle memory.

EXERCISE / DRILL CLASSIFICATION:

Drills are classified by the objective, the number of players involved, and the specialization of the exercise. There are drills that focus on skill development and enhancement for a variety of positions (these drills often focus on increasing speed or improving defensive skills). Other drills focus on correcting bad habits. There are also drills classified by those who execute the action (e.g. catchers).

BATTING DRILL

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of these drills is to correct mechanical problems and to teach players how hit the ball effectively and with power. Remember that a hitter's mental approach will be a big part of translating what happens during drills into the game.

Strength and conditioning, especially of the shoulders and legs, is vital for hitters. A hitter's physique will help to dictate what type of hitter he will be (line drives and ground-balls or fly balls).

In young hitters (ages 13-14), the combination of age and physical conditioning will determine how many repetitions a player should execute in every drill. Be sure to keep track of repetitions and set goals according to the problems they are attempting to fix.

For young players, coaches must understand and be aware of a hitter's abilities. The coach must be able to review and explain mechanics so that the players can grasp the concepts at a young age.

In all of the following drills, both the sequences and mental adjustments will dictate a hitter's success as it translates to vision, balance, timing, rhythm, and the sequence of a swing.

Using proper drills that address a hitter's weaknesses while also addressing a hitter's mental approach can lead to considerable improvement in a short period of time.

GENERAL POINTS

Before beginning the drill, be sure to cover these general points:

- **EQUIPMENT SETUP:** Make sure the equipment is ready before explaining the drill.
- **EXPLANATION OF THE DRILL:** Every hitter should understand the plan and instructions.
- **WARM UP:** Tight muscles can lead to injuries. Make sure hitters have warmed before the drill.
- **PATIENCE:** Patience is vital to the creation of great hitters. Be patient with your players.

HITTING DRILL (BP01)

DRILL: BATTING PRACTICE

OBJECTIVE

- Develop power and bat speed
- Practice balance and hand-eye coordination
- Learn to keep body balance through hitting mechanic.

EQUIPMENT

- 100 baseballs (suggested)
- Baseball bats
- Tape
- Protective screen

SET UP

- 4 batters
- 6 players who help retrieve the balls
- 1 pitcher (the coach can be the pitcher)
- 1 coach

EXECUTION

- It can be completed on a field or in a batting cage.
- Batting practice is recommend to take place more than three times a week.
- The number of swings will depend on the players' ages. The more physically and mentally mature, the more pitches they can hit.

HITTING DRILL (BP02)

BATTING PRACTICE WITH A SCREEN

OBJECTIVE

- Develop bat speed
- Optimize contact with the ball
- Practice hand-eye coordination
- Learn to keep body balance through hitting mechanic.
- Shorten swing path and correct players who have long swings and are around the ball.

EQUIPMENT

- Baseballs
- Baseball bats
- 2 protective screens

SET UP

- 1 player
- 1 pitcher (the coach can be the pitcher)
- 1 coach

EXECUTION

- Batter stands in normal hitting position. A screen is placed on the far side of home plate so that the bat takes a short and direct route to the ball.
- This drill will refine the hitter's balance and mechanics.
- One person will throw the ball from behind a protective screen. The other screen is placed lateral to the batter, next to home plate.
- The batter attempts to avoid hitting the screen that is next to him. He will need to keep his hands inside the ball in order to swing.

HITTING DRILL BATTING (BP03)

DRILL: BATTING PRACTICE (WITH SOFTBALLS)

OBJECTIVE

- Develop power
- Practice hand and foot coordination
- Learn to keep body balance through hitting mechanic.

EQUIPMENT

- Softballs
- Baseball bats
- Protective screen

SET UP

- One pitcher (the coach can be the pitcher)
- One batter
- One coach

EXECUTION

- The pitcher will pitch softballs while being protected by the screen.
- This drill can take place two or three times a week

HITTING DRILL (BP04)

DRILL: 1-2-3

OBJECTIVE

- Teach hitters to get into the ready position on time.

Every hitter needs to be ready on time. It's better to be early than late. The proper way to initiate the swing is to load, stride forward, and separate while ensuring that a batter's weight remains back; then comes the swing. These movements should relate to the rhythm of the pitcher's leg kick.

The three steps are:

1 LOAD 2- STRIDE FORWARD AND SEPARATION 3- SWING.

EQUIPMENT

- Baseballs
- Baseball Bat
- L Screen
- Tee
- Batting cage or field

SET UP

- Set up the tee with the pitching screen 40-45 feet away from the hitter.

EXECUTION

- The coach simulates a pitcher's delivery, without throwing the ball. He simulates the entire windup (practice both full windup and from the stretch). The hitter will start the movement with the rhythm of the knee of the pitcher and hit off the tee after the coach simulates the delivery.
- This drill can also be executed using double tees.

BP04



HITTING DRILL (BP05)

DRILL: CENTER BALL

OBJECTIVE

- Teach hitters to coordinate the connection between their arms and legs during the swing.
- Teach players to hit with their arms and legs rather than their bodies.

*Arm and leg coordination help the bat travel faster to the strike zone.

EQUIPMENT

- Baseballs
- Baseball bat
- L Screen
- Batting cage or field

SET UP

This drill can be executed in the batting cage or on the field.

- Hitters sets up to hit.
- Place a ball on the ground in the middle of the hitter's legs.

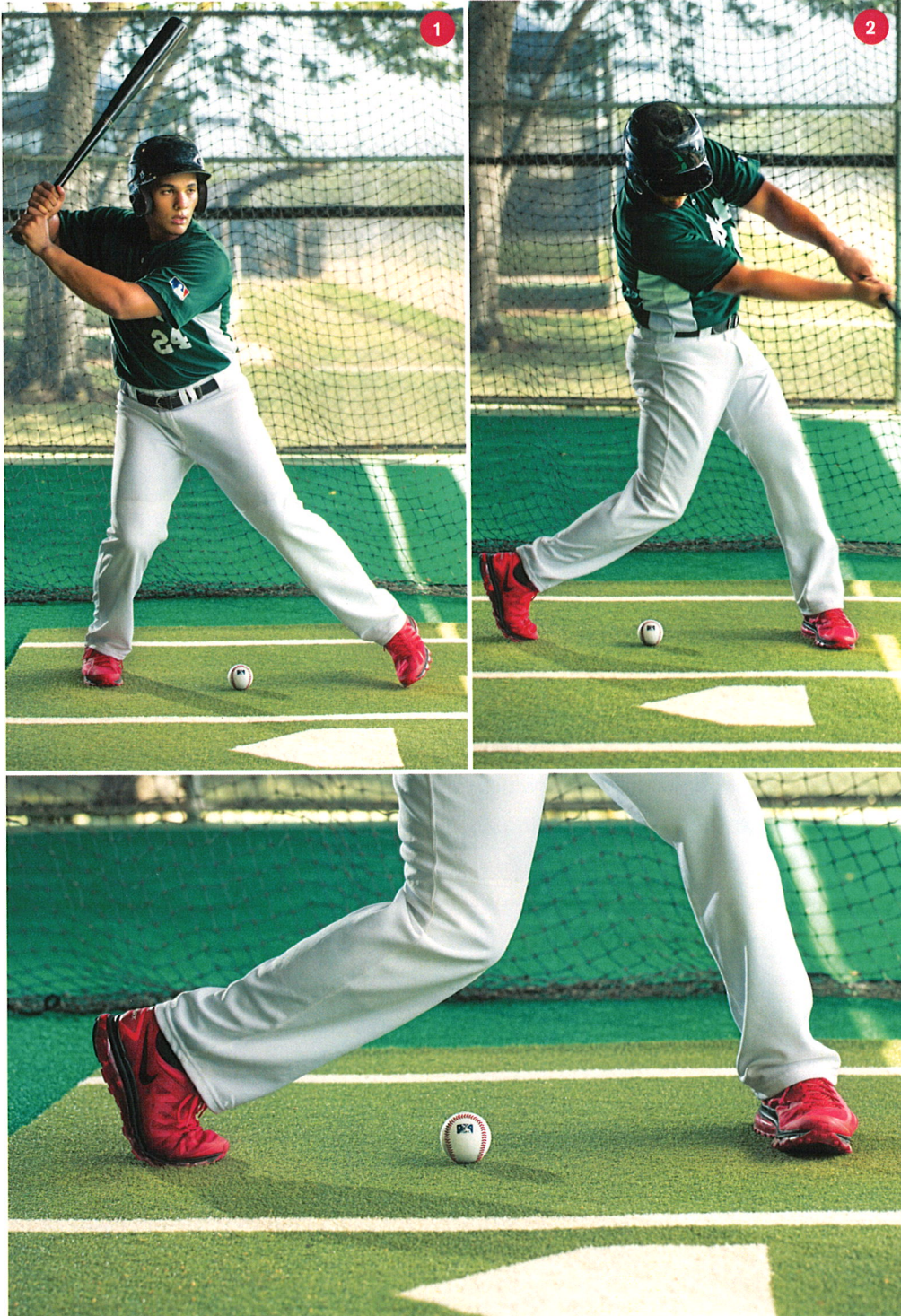
EXECUTION

Coach will feed the hitter side toss, front toss, or BP

- Batter will hit the ball; back knee should hover above the ball on the ground at the end of each swing.

*Make sure that after each swing, head and shoulders are lined up with the back knee, which hovers above the baseball on the ground.

BP05



HITTING DRILL (BP06)

DRILL: WALKING THROUGH, STEP AND BACK, BACK AND FORWARD

OBJECTIVE

- Teach hitters to remain balanced.
- Create a strong lower half in every hitter.
- Teach hitters proper weight distribution and timing.

This drill helps hitters who have trouble maintaining balance. Most coaches and players complete this drill with a tee or side toss. It is also a good drill for warm-ups.

EQUIPMENT

- Baseballs
- Baseball Bat
- L Screen
- Tee
- Batting cage or field

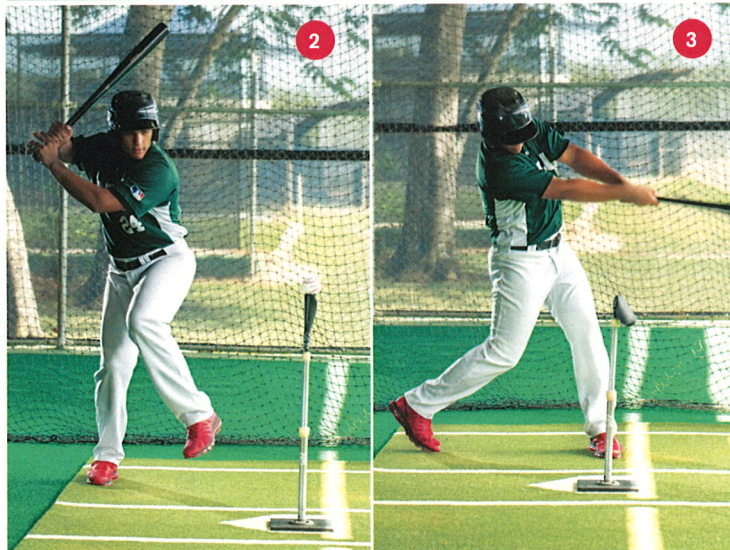
SET UP

- Set up a pitching screen, the hitter will hit off a tee or a double tee. (You can also execute this drill using the side toss).

EXECUTION

- Walking through: Hitter begins behind the batter's box. The hitter steps into the box, beginning with the back foot, then initiates the load, stride and separation, and swing.
- Step back drill: Set the tee by the middle of the hitter's body. The hitter will take one step back, stride, separate, and swing.
- Back and forward drill: From starting position, hitter loads back leg without stepping back, strides, separates, and swings.

BP06



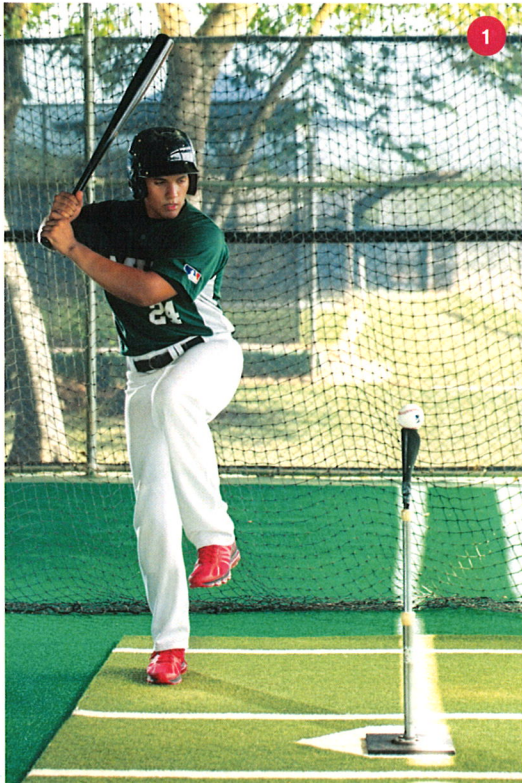
BP06

**STEP BACK
DRILL:** Set
the tee by the
middle of the
hitter's body.
The hitter will
take one step
back, stride,
separate, and
swing.



BP06

BACK AND FORWARD:
The hitter should load without taking a step back, lift his leg, and swing the bat.



HITTING DRILL (BP07)

DRILL: ONE HAND

OBJECTIVE

- Improve arm action during hitting.
- Improve coordination between the arms and the back leg.

The main goal is to have both arms actions working together.

EQUIPMENT

- Baseballs
- Half bat
- Batting cage or field
- L Screen
- Tee

SET UP

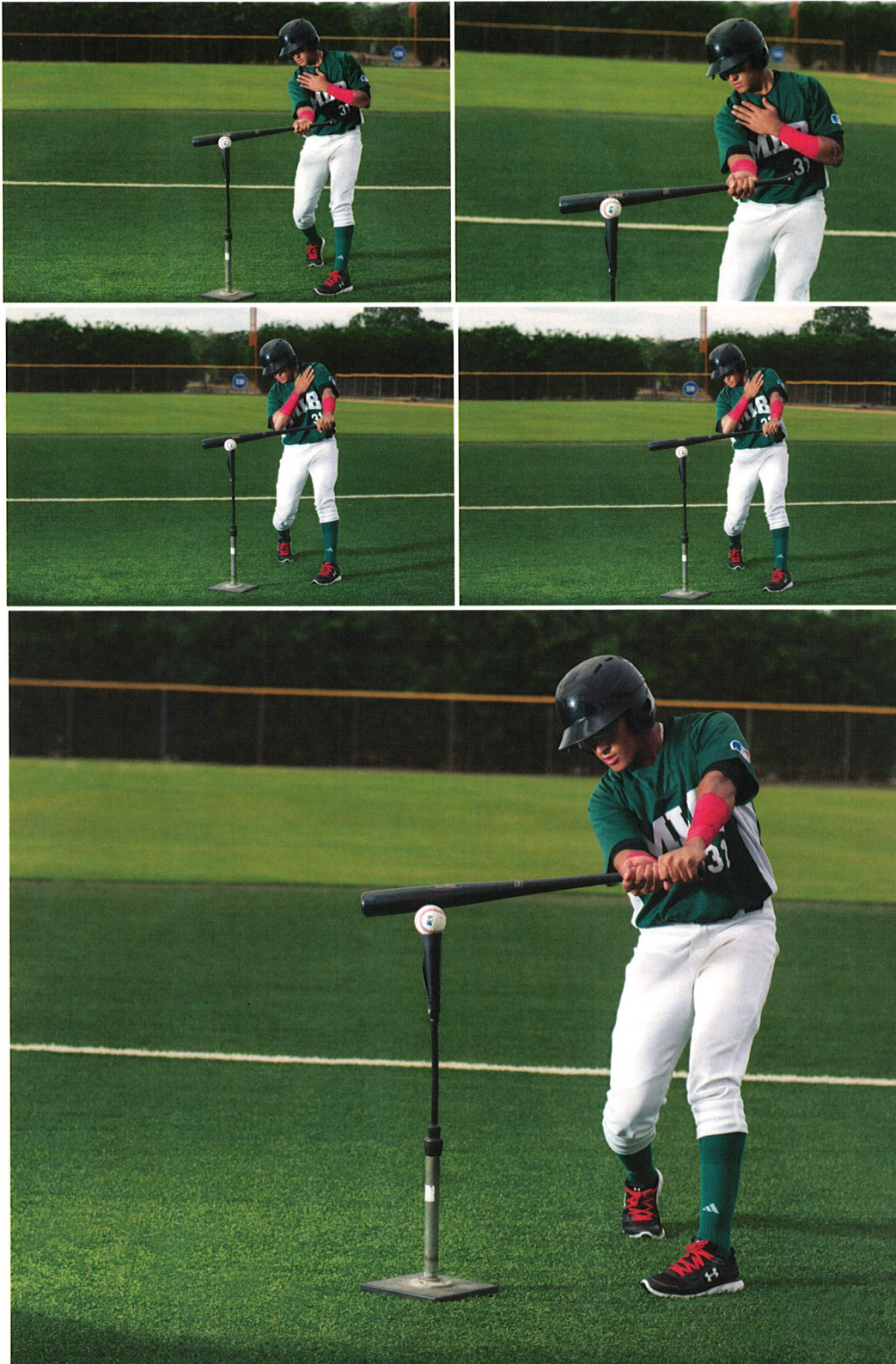
- Coach will throw a side toss, front toss, or BP

EXECUTION

- Non-dominant hand: The hitter will swing with only the non-dominant hand on the bat. Most of the hits will be ground balls. Practice coordinating the use of the back leg.
- Top (dominant) hand: The hitter will hit the ball with only the top hand on the bat. These hits should be line drives. Coordinate the use of the back leg to add power.
- Both hands: The hitter will finish the drill hitting the ball with both hands. Repetitions are determined by the coach.

*Be careful, as too many repetitions with the dominant hand can cause shoulder pain. (10-15 swings recommended).

BP07



HITTING DRILL (BP08)

DRILL: SWING SEQUENCE ACTION

OBJECTIVE

- Learn to keep a consistent sequence of motion in swings at fastballs as well off-speed pitches
- Create good arm rhythm
- Improve body control and coordination

EQUIPMENT

- Baseballs
- Baseball Bat or half bat
- Tee
- L Screen
- Batting Cage or field

SET UP

- Hitter will hit from the tee only.

EXECUTION

- Start the drill with an empty tee. Hitter will simulate a slow-motion swing with good timing. (Get the body back and loaded).
- After the slow-motion simulation, the coach will put a ball on the tee. Then the hitter will complete the action.
- Real-time swing should mimic the slow-motion simulation. The key in this drill is performing it with rhythm and staying inside the ball.



BP08

HITTING DRILL (BP09)

DRILL: COLORED BALLS

OBJECTIVE

- Establish the habit of keeping eyes on the ball after contact
- Improve body control
- Work on being on top of the ball

EQUIPMENT

- Colored baseballs (Painted baseballs with different colors)
- Baseball Bat
- L Screen
- Tee

SET UP

- Screen should be about 35 feet away from the batter.

EXECUTION

- Coach will throw the batter side toss, front toss, or BP. Hitter should hit the ball and identify aloud to the coach which color was just hit.

Make sure that after each swing, the hitter keeps his eyes at the point of contact.

*With this drill, the hitter can work on other aspects of hitting mechanics.

BP09



HITTING DRILL (BP10)

BACKSPIN

OBJECTIVE

- Teach hitters how to hit the ball correctly.
- Improve hitter vision.

EQUIPMENT

- Baseballs
- Baseball Bat
- L Screen
- Batting cage or field

SET UP

- Set up pitching screen 30 feet away from the batter

EXECUTION

- Coach will feed the batter side toss, front toss, or BP.
- Hitter will hit the baseball downwards-upwards while generating backspin so that the ball carries. This drill requires vision and body control.

HITTING DRILL (BP11)

DRILL: FROM THE KNEE

OBJECTIVE

- Create the habit of keeping the hands on top of the ball.
- Improve bat control and rhythm.

Good drill for hitters with tendency to drop their back shoulder.

EQUIPMENT

- Baseballs
- L Screen
- Baseball Bat or half bat
- Pad

SET UP

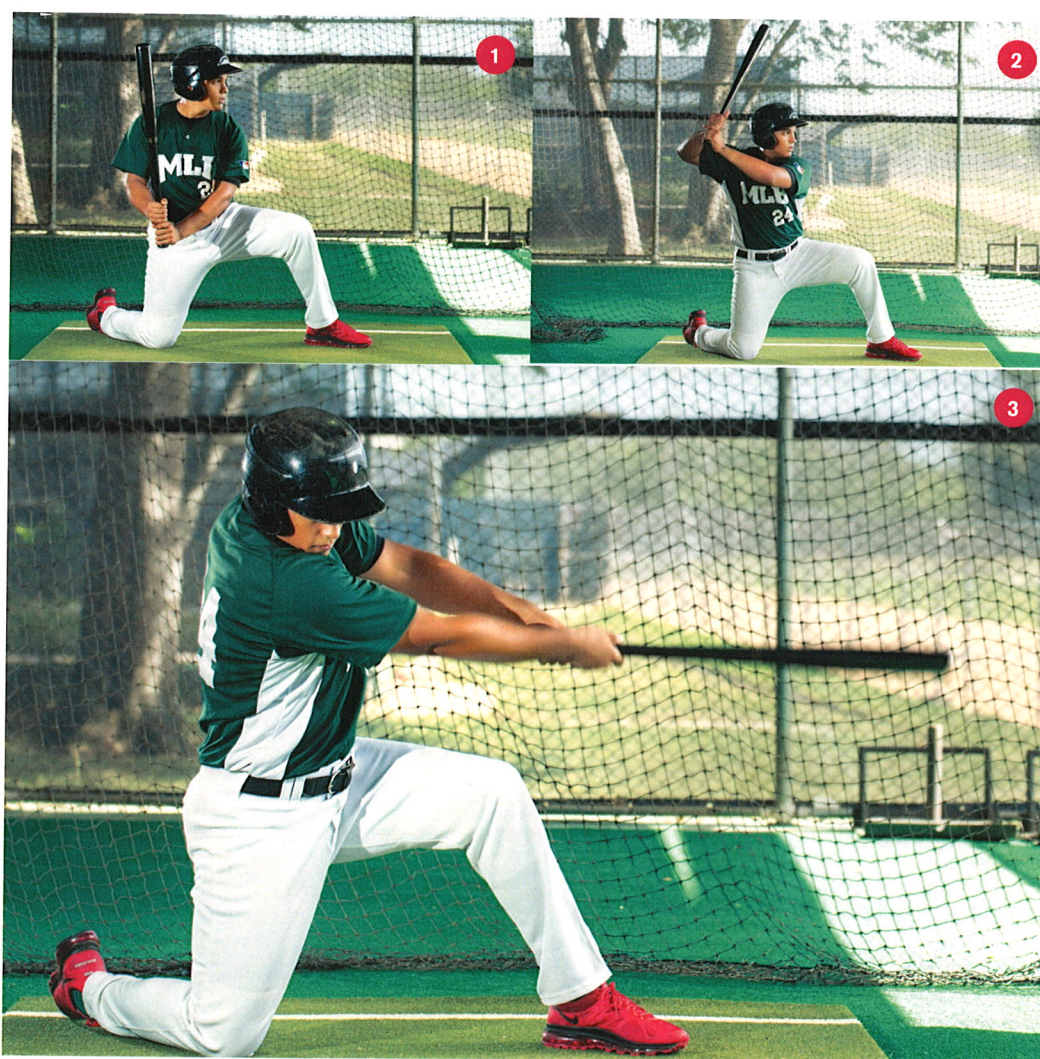
- Place a pad on the ground, where the hitter will place his back knee.

EXECUTION

- Coach will throw the batter side toss, front toss.
- Coach tosses the ball to the hitter. In side toss, the toss should be at the height of the batter's nose.
- Hitter will hit the ball while keeping the back knee on the ground. If the hitter drops the back shoulder, the ball will spin back towards him.
- Hitter will try to hit ground balls or line drives while remaining on top of the ball.

Repetition will help hitters to be on top of the ball consistently. Make sure to not flip the ball too quickly, as that could hurt players.

BP11



HITTING DRILL (BP12)

DRILL: HIGH TEE

OBJECTIVE

- Teach hitters to keep their hands above the ball.
- Teach hitters how to remain on top of the ball.

EQUIPMENT

- Baseballs
- Bat or Half bat
- L screen
- Tee

SET UP

- Place the tee in the middle of the plate
- The tee should be placed at chest height.

EXECUTION

- Hitter should keep his hands on top of the ball in order to hit line drives or groundballs driving the ball to the middle or outwards.



HITTING DRILL (BP13)

DRILL: DOUBLE TEE

OBJECTIVE

- Teach hitters how to stay inside the ball, to stay on top of the ball, and to pull the ball correctly.

EQUIPMENT

- Baseballs
- Baseball Bat
- Batting cage
- 2 Tees

SET UP

- To be on top of the ball: set up one tee behind the other; the tee that sits behind should be three inches lower than the tee in front.
- To stay inside the ball: set up one tee in the middle of the plate and another tee in the inside part of the home plate.
- To pull the ball: Place both tees next to each other.

EXECUTION

- To be on top of the ball: the hitter should hit the ball on the tee furthest away from him. Make sure the hitter doesn't hit the closest tee to him.
- To stay inside the ball: the hitter should hit the inside part of the ball of the closest tee. If the hitter doesn't keep his hands tight, the hitter will hit the outside tee.
- To pull the ball: the hitter should hit the ball on the closest tee, pulling the ball without hitting the outside tee.



BP13

TO BE ON TOP OF THE BALL:

Hitter will hit the ball off the furthest away tee. Make sure the hitter doesn't hit the back.



BP13

TO BE INSIDE

THE BALL:

Hitter will hit the inside part of the ball of the closest tee.

If the hitter doesn't keep his hands tight, the hitter will hit the outside tee.



HITTING DRILL (BP14)

DRILL: BACK HAND

OBJECTIVE

- To control shoulder movement, especially for a hitter with a tendency to drop the back side and get under the ball.

EQUIPMENT

- Baseballs
- Baseball Bat or half bat
- Batting cage
- L Screen

SET UP

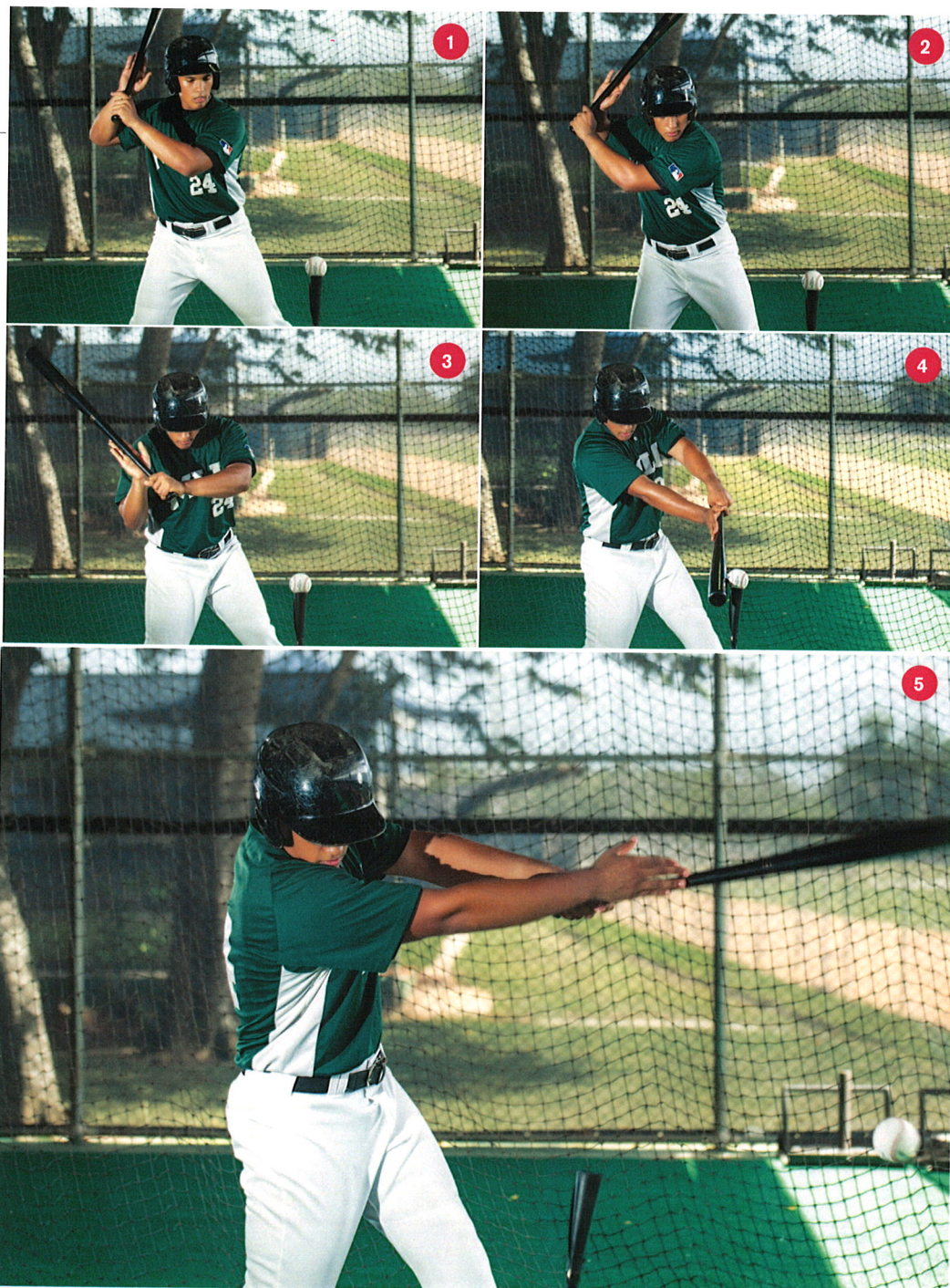
- Hitter will be ready to hit and coach will feed side toss, front toss, or BP.

EXECUTION

- Hitter should be prepared to hit with the top (dominant) hand open, rather than clenched around the bat.
- The top hand will work on pushing the barrel down and through the ball.

BP14

After finishing this drill, hold the bat with a normal grip and practice the number of repetitions the coach will assign.



HITTING DRILL (BP15)

DRILL: DOUBLE TEE EXTENSION

OBJECTIVE

- Teach a hitter to keep the bat in the strike zone a little longer, especially for a hitter who has a tendency to pull away from the ball after contact

EQUIPMENT

- Baseballs
- Baseball Bat
- L Screen
- 2 Tees
- Batting cage

SET UP

- Set up two tees (one on home plate, and one just in front) with a ball on each of them.
- Both tees should be set at the same height.

EXECUTION

- Hitter should hit both baseballs. Make sure the batter has both hands on the bat after the swing.

*This is a difficult drill. Be patient.

BP15



HITTING DRILL (BP16)

DRILL: TWO BALLS

OBJECTIVE

- Eliminate a hitter's tendency to over-anticipate
- Improve hitter vision and ability to follow the ball out of the pitcher's hand.

EQUIPMENT

- Baseballs
- Baseball Bat
- Batting cage or field

SET UP

- Coach will feed the batter side toss.

EXECUTION

- The coach should have a ball in each of his hands, ready to feed the batter side toss. The hitter should stay patient and ready to see which ball is tossed. The coaches should flip the ball with a rhythm to simulate either a fastball or curveball.



HITTING DRILL (BP17)

DRILL: LOW TEE DRILL

OBJECTIVE

- Teach hitters to hit low pitches effectively, especially for a hitter who tries to lift the ball before the point of contact, causing his head to move and him to lose sight of the ball. This drill helps hitters extend through balls low in the strike zone.

EQUIPMENT

- Baseballs
- Baseball Bat
- Tee

SET UP

- Set up the tee at its lowest height.

EXECUTION

- Hitter remains tall while hitting the low pitch. The hitter should keep his eyes at the contact point, and the back knee should move down to the strike zone.



BP17

HITTING DRILL (BP18)

DRILL: REACTION DRILL

OBJECTIVE

- Teach batters to properly react to pitches on the outside and inside parts of the strike zone.

EQUIPMENT

- Baseballs
- Baseball bat
- L screen
- Tee

SET UP

- Set up the tee by the outside corner of home plate, so that it is located a few centimeters off the plate. Have the batter stand in his natural hitting position, with the coach standing in front of him at an appropriate distance for soft toss behind the pitching screen.

EXECUTION

- The player will wait for the soft toss from the coach. During the motion of his toss, the coach will decide whether or not to throw the ball to the batter. If he does release the ball, it should be thrown to the inside part of the plate and the batter should react to the pitch without hitting the tee set up on the outside edge of the strike zone. If the coach does not throw the pitch, the batter should swing at the ball positioned on the tee on the outside edge of the zone.

