

# Softball Hitting Tips

- **Spend twice as much time on your hitting as you do on your defense.** Hitting is a tough skill to learn, refine and master. It takes a lot of time to become a highly skilled hitter and ultimately, team selections are often made based on who can contribute offensively.
- **Select the heaviest bat you can swing without losing bat speed or developing faulty mechanics.** This will give you maximum power.
- **Hold the bat with your fingers.** You have considerably more strength and control with your fingers rather than your palms.
- **Adjust your placement in the box according to the type of pitcher you are facing.** For example, move up in the box when facing dropball pitchers and move back in the box when facing riseball pitchers.
- **Don't change your swing right before the season or during the season.** A new swing takes too much time to learn. You can make minor adjustments but no big changes. The best time to change your swing is right after the season.
- **Stay loose at the plate.** Tensed muscles are slow muscles and to be successful at the plate, you need to be quick. Relaxed muscles fire more quickly.
- **Make each swing count.** You shouldn't be swinging just for the sake of swinging. Each swing should have a specific goal whether it is to work on a technical element, drive the ball in a specific location, or adjust to a specific pitch.
- **Don't focus on your batting average but on your on-base percentage.** This is a much better indication of your overall performance at the plate. Reaching a base on an error or a walk is as good as getting a hit.
- **Go from soft to hard focus.** Before a pitch, watch the whole pitcher and don't focus on a specific area (soft focus) and as the pitcher prepares to deliver, zero in to the point of release (hard focus) and try to pick up the rotation of the ball.
- **Learn to hit according to the location of the ball.** If the ball is outside, go with it and drive in the opposite field. If it is down the middle, drive it right back at the pitcher. Finally, if the ball is inside, turn on it and drive it into your field.
- **Focus on hitting line drives.** Line drives will get you a base hit 84% of the time vs. 42% for ground balls and 24% for fly balls.
- **Train your eyes.** Improve your tracking ability by watching pitches from the hitter's perspective when pitchers are working on their different pitches.
- **Master the short game.** Being able to sacrifice, drag or slap in addition of hitting away is a tremendous advantage. When you can hit away, slap or punt a bunt down, you literally become a triple threat and increase your chances of getting on base.
- **Be aggressive but selective.** Assume that every pitch is your pitch. The key is to be ready to capitalize on any pitcher's mistake but yet to be able to hold on if the pitch is not right.

- **Hit behind the runner.** The ability to hit the ball on the ground to the right side of the infield with runners on second or third is invaluable. When hitting behind the runner, you are trading an out for a run. To hit behind the runner, you must keep your hands inside the ball, delay the swing, and make sure that the bat head is above the flight of the pitch.
- **Spend time practicing the short game.** Too many players don't put enough time practicing this fundamental part of softball. The world's best player can successfully put a bunt down on command.
- **Explode out of the box.** The instant you hit the ball and release the bat, drive your right arm forward as you push off the left leg if you are a right-handed hitter. Lefties should drive the left arm and push off with the right leg. Keep your head up, your eyes forward, and your arms pumping. Your first steps out of the box should be short and choppy and on the balls of your feet; then lengthen your stride and spring as fast as you can toward first. Keep your body relaxed and loose to eliminate any tension (tensed muscles are slow muscles).
- **Be an aggressive baserunner and learn how to run the bases properly.** A skilled baserunner with average speed is a lot more effective than a fast runner who doesn't run the bases well.
- **Practice sliding.** Skilled sliding will save your butt more often than you can think. Master the various slides: bent leg, pop-up, back door, and head first.