



Soft Toss and Batting Tee Drills Detailed Description

Soft toss drills, when performed properly, can be a very effective method of teaching and improving hitting. The reasons we believe in using soft toss drills involve the following:

1. The drills help hitters work on and overcome their weaknesses. Certain drills specifically stress certain hitting problems.
2. A player's swing can be broken down. Certain drills are used primarily to isolate a specific body action or to stress specific hitting techniques.
3. Because of the number of drills, soft-tossing provides variety in a workout. Many drills can be combined to increase the difficulty and create more game-like situations.
4. Many players can perform the drills together and the drills provide quality swings with a lot of repetitions.

Some helpful hints when using these soft toss drills are:

FOR THE PLAYER OR COACH TOSSING THE BALL

- The tosser should know why they are performing the drill. Many times tossers toss the ball in the same spot and on the same cadence, which doesn't benefit the hitter greatly. Knowing the primary reasons and benefits of the drill and challenging the hitter promote improvement.
- The tosser should position himself at an angle in front of the hitter, rather than side-by-side. This will better simulate an incoming ball from the pitcher.
- The tosser should have a locked elbow and stiff wrist with the palm of his hand facing the hitter. This will provide better accuracy on the toss.
- The tosser should show the ball to the hitter, call "ready", bring back the ball (which simulates the wind-up) and then toss the ball. On certain drills, like the double-toss, this can't be done.
- There should not be any arc on the toss.

Some helpful hints when using these soft toss drills are:

TO THE HITTER

- The hitter should have a game plan. Like the tosser, he should know what the specific drill is stressing and what they should get out of it.
- On most drills the hitter should look forward to an imaginary pitcher and then react to the “ready” call. This will create more of a game-like situation. However, on certain drills his eyes have to be on the tosser (eg. double-toss and rapid fire).
- The hitter has to be relaxed and comfortable—he can’t be tensed up. A little body movement, especially in the hands, will help in this area.
- The hitter should strive for contact on the “sweet spot” of the bat and try to swing through the ball.

Batting tee drills are very effective and widely used when teaching hitting. The reasons we believe in using batting tees involve the following:

1. The drills help hitters work on and overcome their weaknesses. Certain drills specifically stress certain hitting flaws.
2. The drills can break down the hitter’s swing. Various drills stress specific body part actions or specific hitting techniques.
3. Because the ball is not moving, batting tee drills provide success opportunities. This is especially beneficial when beginning a new drill or when working on a hitting problem.
4. The drills provide variety in a workout. Performing different drills makes a workout enjoyable.
5. The drills provide quality swings with a lot of repetition.

Some helpful hints when using these batting tee drills are:

- Have a game plan. The hitter should know the “WHY” in performing the drill. Don’t swing just to swing. Every drill has a primary focus on what should be accomplished.
- Begin your stance with your eyes looking straight ahead at an imaginary pitcher. On contact your eyes should be on the ball. This will make drills more difficult, but more game-like.
- Put yourself in a game situation. Tell yourself Justin Verlander is giving you a fastball on the inside third and you’re going to explode the hips, throw the hands and drive the ball in front of the plate to the gap. The more game-like the drill the more enjoyable and the more benefits you’ll see.
- Make sure your feet placement, in relationship to the plate, is consistent. When hitters work on balls in different locations they have a tendency to adjust their feet placement to make the drill easier.
- It’s all right to hit the tee. No hitter will ever hit every ball perfectly.
- Quality is always more important than quantity. Although we want each hitter to get a lot of repetitions, we want the swings to be a quality piece of hitting.