



Baseball Hitting Presentation

“Successfully Hitting a Round Ball with a Round Bat Isn’t Easy”

Hitting is a game of failure...

Hitting is a game of mental toughness over mental weakness...

Hitting is a game of individual comfort...

Hitting is a game of correct repetition...

Hitting is a game of failure...

Seven of out ten hitters are unsuccessful. If a player can successfully get a base hit three of ten times they are still considered “good hitters.” If that player can hit .300 at every level of play they will make millions of dollars per year playing professional baseball. What other sport can say that 70% of the time you failure you are still good? Can you imagine a basketball player only making 30% of his free throws or a quarterback only completing 30% of his passes? And what other profession can you be unsuccessful 70% of the time and still make millions per year!!

This goes right into the area of mental toughness. Good baseball hitters understand the percentages and don’t get too high or too low with their performances over a course of a season. They understand not everyday will be a “four-for-four day” at the plate. And good hitters, when seeing a great pitcher or on a day they aren’t swinging the bat great, will try attempting a bunt for a hit, a hit and run hit, draw a base on balls or get hit by a pitch. They understand great pitching will beat great hitting the majority of the time. They have an understanding “failure” is going to happen when you are trying to hit a round ball traveling 80+MPH with a round bat from just over 60 feet!

Hitting is a game of mental toughness vs. mental weakness...

Yogi Berra once said, “Hitting is 90% mental and the other half is between your ears!” It’s not quite that true, but the point is made on the importance of the mental side of hitting.

Ask your players how many of them remember having a game where they had three or more hits in a game. Most all of your players will raise their hands. Tell them to look around and see everyone with their hands up. Tell them you knew the answer to your question, but wanted to show everyone has the ability to be successful. Doing it consistently is the key and that’s where mental toughness vs. mental weakness comes in. It’s easy hitting a baseball when things are going good. The baseball looks like a beach ball and the field seems bigger. The biggest difference between a player that is hitting well vs. a player that is slumping is one player isn’t thinking at all and the other is thinking too much. We all know what “thinking too much” does!

Being mentally tough means a player won't let a bad umpire's call, a previous at bat, bad hitting conditions or field conditions, and many other factors influence their at bats. The mentally tough hitter has a game plan with an approach of hitting the baseball. He knows what type of pitcher is throwing. He knows the umpire's strike zone. He knows how to work a count and to take what type of swings in each count. The mentally tough hitter isn't thinking about all of the important hitting mechanics he's worked on in practice. In a sense, he just "sees the baseball and hits the baseball."

The mentally weak hitter is questioning his abilities and over-analyzing too many things in his hitting mechanics. He's also "thinking in reverse" of all the other positive characteristics of the mentally tough hitter. Every hitter has been there. The infield looks like there are six fielders and the outfield doesn't have gaps. Many mentally weak hitters show their frustrations on their faces.

There really is no "magic formula" to teach hitters to be mentally tough. However, there definitely are things coaches can do to improve each of your hitter's mental toughness. Probably one of the best things coaches can do is to "just let your players play on game day." Too many coaches try to coach hitting techniques to players while they are actually in the batter's box! There's nothing wrong with giving a few tips to players between innings, but when they are in the batter's box they have enough to worry about.

Fundamentally sound hitters are traditionally more mentally focused than hitters that don't have the basic hitting mechanics mastered. So this means, work with your hitters daily to improve their techniques. Drill work, evaluation forms and videotape analysis will help greatly. As will positive reinforcement and positive criticism. Having a guest lecturer that specializes in mental toughness or listening to mental imagery tapes are also great methods to help develop mental toughness.

Hitting is a game of individual comfort...

Probably the two greatest hitting instructors of all time, Ted Williams and Charlie Lau, had basically two opposite hitting styles they taught. Which was a better hitting style is neither here or there. They were both very effective. The point being is there are many methods of hitting a baseball. When you look at professional baseball players you could pick players out by just looking at their stances. Hitting has to be comfortable to the individual. The saying, "if a hitting coach **clones** his hitters they end up looking like **clowns**," holds true. Let your players develop their own "feel" as a hitter and then adjust from there. Obviously, if hitters are being unsuccessful in their individual feel they will probably be open to your suggestions.

Hitting is a game of correct repetition...

Whatever your individual hitting style is it needs to be repeated, repeated and repeated again. And it needs to be worked on correctly. Hitting a baseball is one of the most, if not the most, difficult individual tasks in all of sports. The best way to become a great, consistent hitter is to practice, practice and practice...and practice it correctly!