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Hi, coaches. We'd like to start off this video with our first section, consisting of the visual system for the body. And to start off that we want to talk about visual cues, depth perception, and field of vision.

I believe it's very important to talk about that area before we start talking about any hitting mechanics. Because when you talk about, in getting into the hitting mechanics you need to know what happens with your strongest tool of your body first and that's your eyes. And when we start talking about our eyes, what we want to do is think about, you know, what's happening out there. We want to see with our eyes and things are going to help us become a better hitter.

And it starts off with our visual cues. And visual cues right now, when we're talking about that, we look at the pitcher and whatever he does physically helps us to determine what's going to happen physically in our swing. So the physical movements of the pitcher are going to be cues and visual cues for our body to start everything in motion and continue through the whole motion of the swing. Okay? So keep that in mind as we go through the whole talk in talking about our hitting mechanics and all the way through the talk today.

And the next step we want to think about is our field of vision. When we're talking a field of vision, when I look out to the pitcher, right now as I've set up in my batter's stance right here looking at the pitcher, and I look out there to him – whether it's a softball pitcher or a baseball pitcher – when we're looking out to him, right now they're in my strongest area of my field of vision. Now I can see third base and I can see first base. And that's in my peripheral vision. But the strongest area in my field of vision is towards the middle of the infield where the pitcher's coming from.

And as a hitter we have to struggle to try to keep the ball in our strongest area of our field of vision. So when we're swinging the bat, all the habits we develop in our hitting mechanics has to be geared towards trying to keep the ball in our strongest area of our field of vision. All the way through contact area. And that's a big important thing to remember when you're working on developing good habits as a hitter. Whether you're being a baseball player or a softball player, developing all the way through your career it's very important, okay?

And then when we talk about the field of vision, as our habits are developed physically in our swing, we also have things develop in our depth perception. When we talk about depth perception, that's the ability for your eyes to decipher when you want to start your swing based on where the ball is, okay? And physical habits that you develop as a hitter are going to determine how well you can decide where the ball is and when to start your swing.

So when we talk about visual cues, depth perception, okay, and field of vision, they are all three very important things when we talk about our visual system. And as we go through the whole thing and talking about all the steps and all the sequences of the swing, they are going to be very important aspects of the whole swing.

Okay, coaches, the next subject I'd like to talk about is rhythm and muscle memory. We just got done talking about the visual system of the body, and this goes right in conjunction with that. When we're talking about rhythm, you have to think about what you really want to do as a hitter, okay? And when you're talking about rhythm, rhythm must be created; it doesn't just happen or occur, okay?

And it's just like you take a piece of music and a songwriter's writing that piece of music and some performer's going out there to sing that, they have to rehearse it day in and day out to keep the rhythm the right way. They can't miss a beat there.

They leave a note out, it changes the rhythm and the sequence and it will destroy what you're trying to do there, when you're trying to sing the notes right after the other. And when you're talking about hitting, it's the same thing. So when I'm talking about hitting, I have to work on creating things in a sequence, one after the other, and letting it flow. And that's where you get your rhythm to go, okay?

And muscle memory's the same thing. If I want to produce muscle memory, it works where I have to have my visual system, okay, has to be right on with my physical movements of my body. So they go right in step with each other, okay? So my sequence with my visual system, when I'm looking at visual cues off the pitcher, they're going to determine, okay, whether I have rhythm in my physical swing and there's sequence in my swing from start to finish.

So when I'm looking to make myself a better ball player day in and day out, I need to be practicing these things each day as far as what I'm looking for for cues, okay, as far as visual cues, to help me create and maintain rhythm. My body makes adaptations each day, okay? And some right and some wrong. If I want the right adaptations to occur each day, I have to work on getting the right rhythm each day and specifically let's work on what we're visually focusing on every day to try to keep my visual rhythm right on with the physical rhythm.

And when we're looking at that, if I want the swing to be powerful each day and to be able to go out there and become a great hitter, I have to work on creating the swing and letting it flow from start to finish each day. So that's very important when I'm talking about this and it's very important for each student or each player to take a look at, you know, what the swing is actually doing.

And when you take a look at... you know, you're going back and comparing it to a piece of music, okay? If I want to do some things in my swing, I take and compare to where on the front side of my body, I'm going to make it quiet. So I split my body right in half. The front side is quiet and the back side makes the noise. Well, the front side would be like somebody in the piece of music that's a quiet whole note. It's taking time, it's quiet, okay? There's no rush to get it done right away. On the back side, where I make the noise and where the power is produced in the swing, I'd be a very aggressive sixteenth note where I'm just getting it done very quickly and very explosively and it'd be very noisy.

So that's what I want to look at when I'm talking about visual rhythm and the physical rhythm working with each other, and talking about creating the right type of muscle memory when we're thinking about becoming a great hitter.

PART 2

Okay, coaches, now we'd like to start on our five stages of our swing, starting with our stance. And I'm going to have one of our former baseball players from Iowa Central, Andy Wolf, to come in here and help me. And we'll go through the whole stance and we'll talk about things I think are very critical for you to become a better ball player.

Andy, go ahead and come on in here a second, please. First of all, when we get in our stance, what we like a hitter to do is get himself in a comfortable position. And we want to start with our feet. When we talk about hitting, you talk about building a house and you start with your foundation. When you build a house and when you talk about hitting, it's the same thing, start with your foundation.

So we start with our feet first, okay? So when Andy gets in here first, he's going to try to make sure when he gets in there he's comfortable, but he also wants to make sure he has good plate coverage. So what we like to do is take that bat and lay it down so he can touch the outer part of the plate, and he covers it right there, okay? And he's got good plate coverage right there, okay? And then what we're going to do first is we're going to take a look at the feet now, okay, after he's got a good stance there. Okay?



We're going to take a look at his feet. Now, we want the feet outside of his shoulders, okay? We want them spread out there. When we get the feet spread outside of shoulders... and if I'm sitting right here as a hitter, I spread my feet outside of my shoulders for a big reason. I want to let my lower half of my body really help me out to become a better hitter, okay?

I can really tie myself up in the lower half of my body if my feet are working the right way and aren't spread out to give myself room to work in the lower half, okay? So the first thing Andy's concerned about is getting his feet outside of his shoulders, giving his lower half enough room to work correctly in the swing, okay?



The next thing is, some hitters have a tendency to do, is take their feet and set up just like that where their toes' pointing out like this. And they get in there and their weight's on the outside of their feet and over their heels. And it's not a very athletic type of swing being produced by having your feet in this position. So what we would like to do is turn our feet in just a little bit.



And it's a personal thing as far as what the hitter's going to do. You know, some might have him turn in a little bit more and some not, okay? So what we like to do is just have our feet turn in just a little bit, where the weight goes on the inside of our feet and over the balls of our feet and get it off the heels, okay? And Andy's already done that. If you take a look at Andy right there, his feet are outside of his shoulders, he's nice and comfortable, okay?

And after we get with the feet right there, now we'll move up to the knees, okay? When you talk about hitting, you hit like you walk, okay? You walk talk and nice and easy, it's relaxed and it's a nice motion where you don't have to work at it very much. And when we're talking about walking, you just lift your knees or bend your knees as much as it takes to take the next step. And that's the same thing that you're going to do when you



hit, okay? You want to get in your stance, bend your knees slightly so you're comfortable just like you would be when you're walking, okay? And they also want your eyes parallel to the ground.

So when we talk about the whole stance and stuff, we want to make sure that our knees are bent slightly, okay, and we stack everything on top of each other, okay? Each part of our body is stacked up and down, okay? So right

now we're going to bend slightly in the knees, alright? And then after we get that, we want to take a look at keeping our knees inside our feet, okay?



From start to finish, okay, you should be able to keep your weight, your swing, and your whole body in between your feet, okay? So our knees need to stay between our feet from start to finish.

And our knees need to be inside by... when we take our feet and turn them in a little bit, our knees are automatically inside of our feet. So we've got a good job, we've done a good job there so far. So we want the knees bent a little bit.

Okay, then we stack our hips over our knees, okay? And again, we're going to bend at the knees, not the waist, okay? When you bend at the waist, you cause some problems automatically happen, okay? If you take a hitter and compare him to a figure skater or an ice skater, when an ice skater goes into the rotation and their spin, okay, you'll notice that their arms are close to their body, okay? And when they're rotating in that fast spin, okay, they are straight up and down, okay, they're not leaning over, okay? And that's what... and they're vertical when you're talking about their spin, okay? And they can rotate very fast because of that.



Now if you take somebody and tip them over a little bit, what happens is you interfere with that body's tendency to try to rotate, okay? And you interfere with the ability to rotate quicker. And what we want to do is keep from getting

in the way of that happening. So we're going to stack our body pretty much vertical, okay, and try to minimize how much we lean over or bend at the waist, okay? So if we're going to bend anywhere, we like to try to bend, you know, at the knees.

The other thing, going back to the eyes, if I bend at the waist, what happens is I put one eye below the other, okay? And I want to have my eyes parallel to the ground because that's how I read everything out in front of me. I can see everything clearly out in front of me, make good judgments on anything I want to do. Whether I'm playing out in the field or swinging a bat or playing another sport, I make my best judgments when my eyes are parallel to the ground. So when I bend at the waist, I take that advantage away from myself, okay?

So and we stack our hips above knees, then we're going to stack our shoulders above our hips, okay? And when we do that, we want to try to keep the front shoulder just a little bit lower than the back shoulder, okay? And that does two things for us, by getting the front shoulder just a little lower than the back shoulder. It gives our eyes a clear path to the ball and it gives our hands a better path to the ball, okay?

And by doing that, you're taking a look, the pitcher is out there in front of me right now. I should not be hiding my chin from the pitcher, okay? If Andy would kick his front shoulder up a little higher. Right now you won't be able to see Andy's chin very easy, okay? Now he's creating a whole different swing for himself. But if he takes that front chin and puts it down a little bit, now you can see his chin, he's not hiding anything from you. You can see that right now he's got a better path with his hands to the ball, okay?

The next step we do is we take our head, okay, and we stack that over our shoulders, okay? When we get our head stacked over our shoulders right now, we want to get our head turned where we can see the pitcher with both eyes.

So if I would close my front eye, okay, like this right here. If I close my front eye, and I can see the rim of my nose, okay, with my back eye. I'm not seeing the ball with two eyes. I can turn my head until I can see the ball with two eyes, okay? So that's very important, to make sure that when we're talking about hitting, we are doing the things that are going to allow us to become a better hitter. And seeing the ball with two eyes is very important, okay?

Then we get to the part where some people have a problem when we talk about hitting, okay? And that's the placement of our arms and our hands, okay? The easiest thing that I can show you to do right now is we drop our hands down the side of our legs, okay? And what we want to have Andy do... okay, why don't you go ahead and set the bat down, Andy, alright?

What we want to have Andy do is just drop his arms down besides his legs, and he's going to leave the elbow relaxed down beside the rib cage, bend at the elbows, bring his hands up here, okay, where he's comfortable, okay? The top of his strike zone, okay, even with his armpits, okay?



And what I'm going to do over here is I'm going to try to push down, okay, on his hands. Alright?

Now, don't let me push down. Now, that is a very strong position to put his

hands in, to have his arms, okay, and the elbows. Because it's going to allow him to be very strong and execute the swing.

So the next thing we want to do is show a couple things that can go wrong when we put the hands in different spots, okay? Now what I'd like you to do is raise your back elbow, please. Okay, now I used two hands to push him down before, alright? Don't let me push down. Okay, one arm pushing down. Go ahead and resist again. Resist it. Back elbow up. Okay, don't let me push down.

Okay, I can do that with one arm there, whereas I have to use two hands here, okay, if he gets in the good powerful position. Right there. Okay? Now that position is the same position you want to be in if I'm talking about, if I'm going to throw the ball and start, my position to throw the ball from, okay? And this is the same position I want to be in if I'm going to start swinging the bat, okay? It's not the position I'm going to swing forward from, it's my starting position in my stance. We're going to do something after this, okay, when we go into our load.

But that's a very strong position to start from, okay? Again, you take a look at this, you know, if a pitcher's come set right here, okay, they're not throwing right here, but that's their stance where they're going to start from and they're very strong from here. And it's the same thing in hitting. We're not going to swing right from here, but it's going to be our position where we're going to start everything from. We're very strong and we're stable.

The thing you've got to realize, when you're talking about hitting, is that your stance is the only part of the swing that the pitcher does not have impact upon. So we'd better do a pretty good job in our stance to make sure we keep that from happening. Now pitchers are paid to take away your best swing, okay?

And hitters, as position players, they're paid to take their best swing every swing they take, okay? So we've got to make sure that we get in a position that's going to be very strong, okay. And keep things from jumping into our swing and eliminating the good habits we want to have.



your body.

So right now, my recommendation right now is get the elbows down, relaxed. Okay, hands up in a position where they're right even with your armpits, okay? And what we're going to do is you need to know three things as far as... before we get done with talking about the hands, okay? You need to know how far the hands are away from your body. A good rule of thumb to go by is you take your top arm bicep, okay, the top arm forearm. When you go to skin to skin, right here, okay, that's how far your hands should be away from

Okay, right there. And you talk about, you want an estimate of how far your hands should be away from your body, it's going to be different as far as age groups and how old a person is, but usually you're going to be anywhere from the 4-8" range as far as how far the hands are going to be away from your body. And as you're younger, you're going to be a little bit closer, okay?

And what we want to work on is keeping the hands in a good position where, you know, we don't get them so close to the body right here that we can't get them started, or we get them so far away from the body that we lose control of the hands, okay? So we want to keep that in mind when we're talking about where the hands should be.

Also, we need to know, in relationship, where should the hands be in relationship in this direction right here. Okay? We like to put the hands somewhere between the midline of our body and our back armpit as far as our starting position, okay? So my hands, I like to have them somewhere either in this area or here.



Okay, not past the shoulder, alright? Because when we start getting past the shoulder, that's where we're in trouble, okay? So we want the hands in a good strong position here. And as far as how high they want to be, just start in the top of your strike zone, which is your armpits, okay? So when Andy's going to grab the bat, okay... and he's not going to put it up there yet. We're going to take the hands and where the callouses of your hands start, okay, or where your fingers start, you lay the bat right there, okay, in both hands. So that when you grab the bat and you wrap your fingers around it, your second knuckles are lined up, okay?

And when you do that and you tip the bat back, what we like to do is you take the bat and just start down the side of your leg, you tip it back, and you can just lay it right next to your back ear, okay? If you don't like that position, don't over-adjust. Just make a small adjustment, move the hands and the bat back a little bit, okay?

Very important thing we need to realize when we're talking about hitting is the angle of the front arm, okay? When we talk about hitting, right here we have a 90-degree angle with that front arm. When you talk about this and you get more in-depth about it, the front side of the body has a big impact on how you're going to hit as a ball player, okay?

So we've got to do a very good job of maintaining that 90-degree angle and getting our self in a good position right there.

You can see the relationship from bottom to top is elbows in the bottom, then your hands, then the barrel of the bat. That's very important as we stood up in the stance, okay? And as we start into the next position, we go from the stance to low, we'll talk more about what we really want to do with the front side and the arms and in talking about the whole aspect there.

PART 3

Okay, coaches, the next subject we'd like to talk about is the load, okay? We started off with the stance and then we want to get into the load. And if we're doing a good job of getting ourselves set up in a stance and we're very strong in our stance and got a good position there, the load becomes a lot easier to work on and maintain in creating good rhythm from start to finish. And this is the second part of our sequence in our swing, okay?

So I'm going to talk about the load right now. I'll have Andy set up in his stance right here, okay? Because when you're talking about the load, we want to think about being quiet on the front side, okay? Again, going back to when I talked about it earlier. You're going to split your body in half, okay? The front side's quiet, the back side makes the noise, okay?

You need to know what happens on the front side. And when we start on the front side, okay, our load is on the front side, it's quiet, okay? And then our stride is also on the front side and that's quiet, alright? Then on the back side is where we're going to make our noise, alright?

So going back to what we want to talk about here in our load, okay, we want to be very quiet where we're doing this, okay? Create some rhythm, okay? And we want to think about, you know, what we want to do here, and in talking about with our front leg and our front side arm. They're very important when we talk about the load. Because these two parts of our body are going to be very important when we talk about what kind of swing we'll be developing as a hitter, okay?

So the front knee, right now, is going to become very important in our load. We're going to take the front knee and then we watch the pitcher, okay, they're going to tell us by their physical movements when we start our load. And we'll get more into that a little bit later here.

But the front knee, what we want to do is we're going to take that front knee, and all we want to do is we're going to establish a distance when we get in our stance, okay? And

what we want to do is take the knees and take that distance they have in the stance, and we want to take that front knee and get it closer to the back knee.

I want to bend that front knee in closer to the back knee before I take my stride. And to do that, I have to bend the front knee and I have to take the front heel off the ground a little bit, okay? So I want to be quiet when I'm doing this.



Now I can have, you know, some movement in my body as long as when I'm taking care of the load, that the weight doesn't go over the outside of my back foot, okay? I can have some physical movement occur or some minimal weight shift to happen in my load, and you're going to need that to happen to create some rhythm here, okay? But we want the weight shift to be minimal, okay? So we want to create some rhythm, but we also want to have a point to where we have that front knee going in quietly towards the back knee, alright?

And we don't want to be mechanical, but it's got to be quiet. So that front knee's going to bend a little bit and the front heel's going to come off the ground, okay? Right there. Just like that, okay? Can you show me what it looks like there? Just do the front knee. Okay. You can see that. And do it about three times for me, if you could. Right there. There's the load right there for Andy. The front knee's coming in towards the back knee. You can see some movement of the body; there's some natural rhythm there. Okay?

And then we also need to help out the top side. That's going to help the bottom side, okay, by cocking the lower half, alright? The top side we're going to take, and imagine there's an imaginary rope attached to my front knee to my hands, okay? When my hands walk back... it's a walk, it's not a sprint, okay? When my hands walk back, they're going to pull that rope and it's going to pull that front knee right with it. So the hands are going to walk back the same time that front knee cocks the lower half of the body, okay? And what you think about right here, it's like taking a hand gun, okay, and taking a gun and pulling the hammer back on the gun.

Okay, the gun's cocked, alright? It's cocked and it's ready to go off. Well, it's the same thing you're doing with the lower half of your body, okay? And the top half. When I take that knee, I'm cocking the hips, alright? Now, keeping this in mind, when I cock the hips

like this, I also have to maintain this stability by, when I stride I want to make sure that the hips are still cocked, I don't pull the trigger too soon, okay?

So when I'm cocking the hips here in the load, that's good. But I want to make sure that it's maintained and I don't lose that, okay? I don't want to pull the trigger too soon. So I'm cocking the hips here so later on, okay, I can pull the trigger on the gun and really explode, okay, when I get into the swing. So right now, it's a quiet load. I cock the hips right here. Cock the hands, alright?

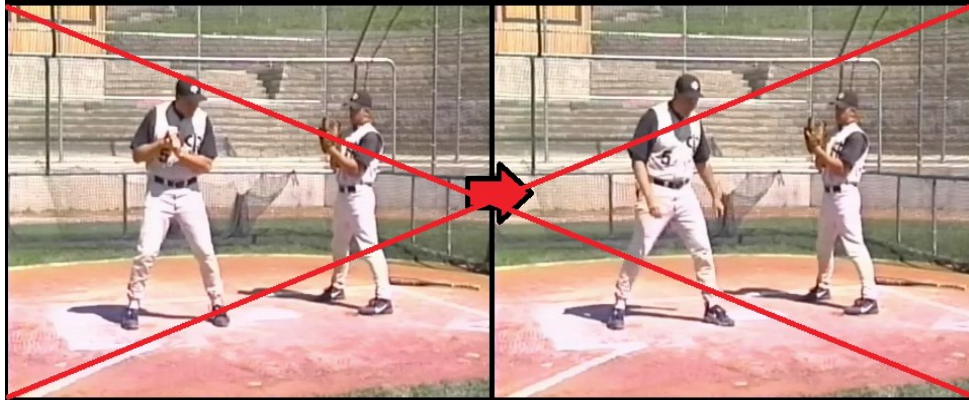


Now, you take a look at his front arm. When he takes his hands and walks them back, what he does not want to do is let his hands go so far back that when he loads, that he bars his front arm. Okay? Now. You take a look at this right now. He's got his front arm in a short lever position. What I'm talking about is, our body's made up of levers, okay? Right now, the distance between my shoulder, okay, and my hands, okay, is going to determine what kind of lever I have. If I bend this elbow now, the distance is shorter. Now, I'm in a short lever position.

Okay, if I was going to throw the ball, there's a short lever position. Now if you want to maintain velocity or bat speed, okay, you want to create bat speed going from a short lever to a long lever, forward. Not from a short lever to long lever, backwards. Okay? So we've got to keep that in mind, that when we get done loading our hands and our lower half of our body and we get into launch position, that we are not in a long lever position, we're in a short lever position. Very important to remember that, okay?

So do that a couple times. Walk your hands back and your knee at the same time. Okay? Now he's cocked. Okay, his stance is... you see right now, he's got some rhythm in his stance. Okay? His hands are doing a little bit of rhythm right here in his stance. His feet are doing a little rhythm right there. Okay? And now he's going to cock the hips and cock the hands back, okay? Right there. And he's quiet, okay? It's a walk, not a sprint.

Okay, coaches, the next part of the swing we'd like to talk about is your stride. And as we talk about that, I'd like to cover three parts here real quickly. We started in our stance and then go to load and then to stride. And comparing it to what a pitcher really does. When we talk about hitting, I think hitters and hitting coaches need to spend more time finding out why some pitchers throw so hard and get so much out of the lower half of their body. And we can use some things from that to help us get a little bit more out of our lower half or our body as a hitter too.



So what I want to do right now with Andy, is I'm going to have him get in his position that he'd be in, his stance for hitting. He has the ball in the glove, okay? Right now when you're looking at this right now, if I take a guy that's throwing 95 miles an hour off the hill, okay, off the pitcher's mound, alright, and he takes his knee, and you watch out, the first thing that moves is going to be his front knee. He's going to bring it in right here and he's going to bring it in towards the back knee.

When he brings that in, he's going to get something out of his lower half, okay? Now he's going to be humping that ball up and throwing it hard for a reason, okay? The front side helped create that, alright? What he did with the front side and the front knee. Now you take that same guy and you tell him not to do that and you tell him just to slide step, and that same guy is going to lose three to four miles an hour on his fastball.

And the other thing he'll lose probably is the ability to put the ball where he wants to put it, as far as accuracy, okay? So he's losing velocity and accuracy. And some of the pitches he wants to put a bit on, okay, he'll lose that ability to do that too.

And it's the same thing you talk about hitting. If you take a hitter and they don't do anything on the front side in their load, and when they take their stride, all they do is just take a step like this, okay? We really have a dead front side. Not really creating anything or cocking the lower half of the body, okay? And it's the same thing that's happened to that pitcher is going to happen to the hitter, okay? When you talk about the pitcher bringing the knee in here and throwing the ball 95 miles an hour, now you tell him to slide step, now he's throwing 91.

Yeah, he's still throwing hard, but not hard enough that, he wants to be able to get the guys out. Well, the same thing with the hitter. You have him go like this, okay, they've

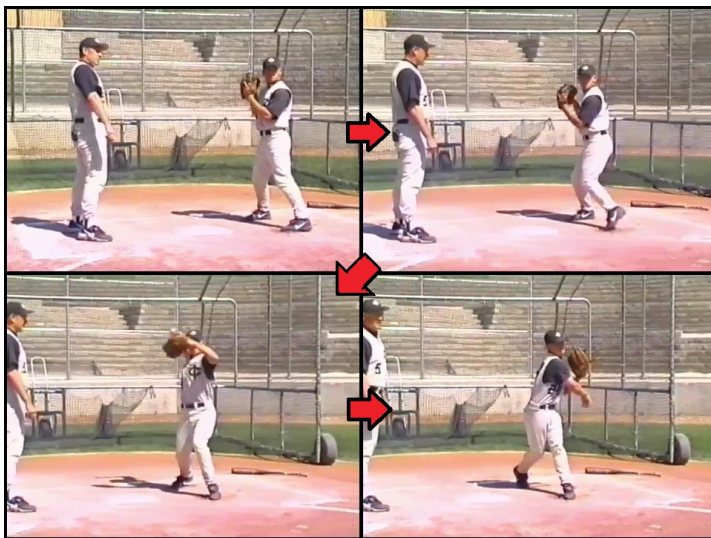
got more power, more rhythm created, okay? Now you tell the guy to forget about that and just take a step like this, okay? He's losing his ability to create the right kind of rhythm and a little pop in the lower half of the body, okay?

So what I want Andy to do right now is work on taking that front knee in, okay, and then I want him to throw the ball, okay, to our pitcher out there. Okay, go ahead. Okay, just take a step. Just take a step like you're just going to throw the ball, okay? Take a step like... after you bring your knee in, just take a step and throw it to him. Okay. Now bring the knee, when you do this right now, bring the knee in and bring the foot with it just a little bit and just step and deliver the ball every time. Okay, now grab the bat and do the same thing.

PART 4

Now as we're talking about this right now, okay, we rotate back and forth and you can do this in developing a young hitter, you can take and have them bring their knee in and swing the bat here, bring their knee in and throw the ball, too, okay? And you're doing the same thing, okay? Now go ahead and watch Andy as he's doing this, okay? He's bringing his knee in. Okay, stepping and swinging just like he would if... okay. Now let's pretend like you're going to throw the ball. Same thing you did when you threw the ball out there. Okay. Right there. Alright?

So we're talking about trying to get something going in the lower half correctly, alright? I pick a ball up, I'm going to bring the knee in, bring the foot with it, okay? And then step and throw the ball, okay? Then I grab a bat, do the same thing. Swing it, okay?



Now we can watch Andy right now. Okay, his front foot really doesn't come back with the knee and that's fine, okay? His heel comes off the ground, alright? And some hitters, they can do this too, okay? You can take their front knee and when it comes in, the front foot can come with it a little bit and then go back to your same spot, alright? Either one's okay as long as you're getting that front knee to go in first, alright?

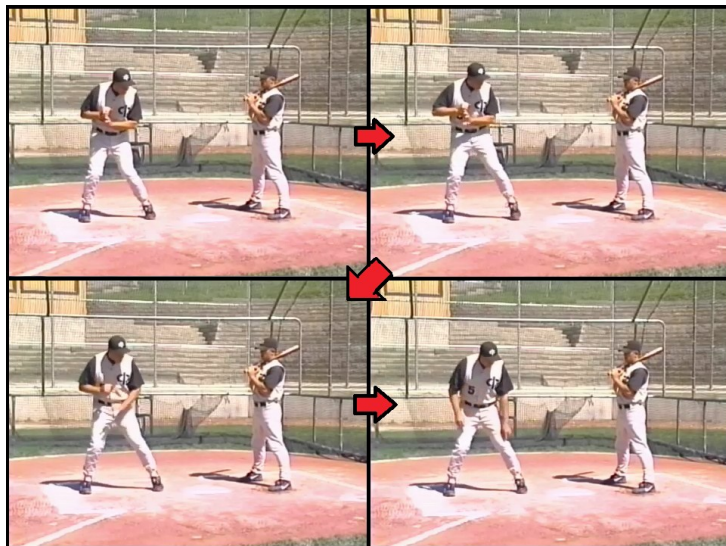
Now, when we overdo it and we bring that knee up in the air, that's when we get problems. Okay, now that leads into what we're talking about here in our

main phase of the stride, okay? Alright. He's already loaded, okay? He's taken his front knee in, alright?

Now, when he strides, okay, what we want him to do is slightly lead with the ankle, okay? Quietly lead with the ankle, okay, and step on his big toe, the balls of his feet, with his heel, front heel, just a little bit off the ground, okay? We don't want it too high off the ground because then we've got too far to put that heel on the ground and get in our back side of the swing, okay?

So he loads and then he's going to stride quietly, okay? Go ahead and get in your stance, load, stride quietly. Now you notice right now he's leading with the heel. He can have the heel a little bit lower on the ground. Right there. Okay? His hands are in a good launch position. His front side's closed. His chin, okay, is right above his shoulder. He can see the pitcher really well and he's in a good launch position to be able to execute the swing right there. And you notice his hips are in the middle of his body. His head's over his belly button. Okay? When you watch good hitters, good hitters hit with their hips in the middle of their body, okay? We want to think about that as we're a hitter, okay? So we're quiet.

Okay, you can go ahead and get in a stance again. Okay. Get his rhythm. Alright. Now. When he loads, his knee's going to be... he's going to decrease the distance, excuse me, he's going to decrease the distance between his knees, okay? And then when he takes his stride, okay, he's going to go back to about the same distance he started with his stance. And his front knee's still bent, okay? We don't want land with our front leg straight, alright? So we're still bent with our front knee when we land in our stride. Go ahead, one more time. Load, stride, right there. Okay. That's pretty good right there.



Okay, coaches, we'd like to move on to the next phase of our swing which is our actual swing of the bat, okay? Of the whole swing, alright? So what we're going to do right now is we're going to have Andy get in his stance. We're going to have him load and then stride, and then we're going to execute the swing from the beginning of the launch position all the way up to the follow-through position, okay? So right now, Andy, I want you to go ahead and get in your stance.

Okay, he's got a little bit of rhythm going right now. Okay, then he's going to load and he's going to stride. Now. He's in a good launch position right now. Now what we want to remember, going back to what we talked about before, is we want to go from t a short lever position, okay, right here, alright? He's got his front arm at 90 degrees, alright?

And he can execute that, swinging the bat correctly through the ball by having his hands go inside the ball, the path of the ball, as it's coming down to the plate, okay?

And he's going to execute that swing and create the bat speed by creating, going from knee to knee, okay, and elbow to elbow, alright? Bat speed is created from going knee to knee and elbow to elbow, alright?

On the back side, okay, now we're on the back side of our body right now, when we talk about the swing. When you're talking about the phases of your swing and you get to the actual swing, alright, you're going to be using the back side to produce the power. So what we want to do with Andy right now... if you can turn to face him right there, Andy. Okay. What we want to do now is when Andy gets in his loaded position, we're going to take the back foot and we're going to squish the bug here.

Now, there's a misconception sometimes with some people when they talk about squishing the bug. We don't want to just spin on the back foot, like that, okay? We want to get off the back heel, high off the ground, okay, so we can get that heel up in that area right there. Okay? So the back heel is pointing back to the catcher and we've got a good angle with the back leg.



Okay, when you get done with the swing, okay, the front leg is angled back, okay, towards the hips, and the back leg is bent. So we have one leg that's not bent and one leg that is. And the back leg's going to be the one that's bent, okay? So we're going

to squish that bug and get off the back heel, right there, and create some force and back towards the ball.

The other thing you want to take a look at, alright, is we have a gap between our knees when we get in our stance, okay? When we get in our stance, this gap right here has got to be eliminated if we're going to hit the ball correctly when we execute the swing. So right now we have this certain distance between our knees.

When we get done, we're going to go knee to knee. When we get in our stance with our elbows right now, okay? Our elbows have a certain distance. When we execute the swing, at contact we have to close the gap between the elbows. Okay, to create the right swing. Alright?

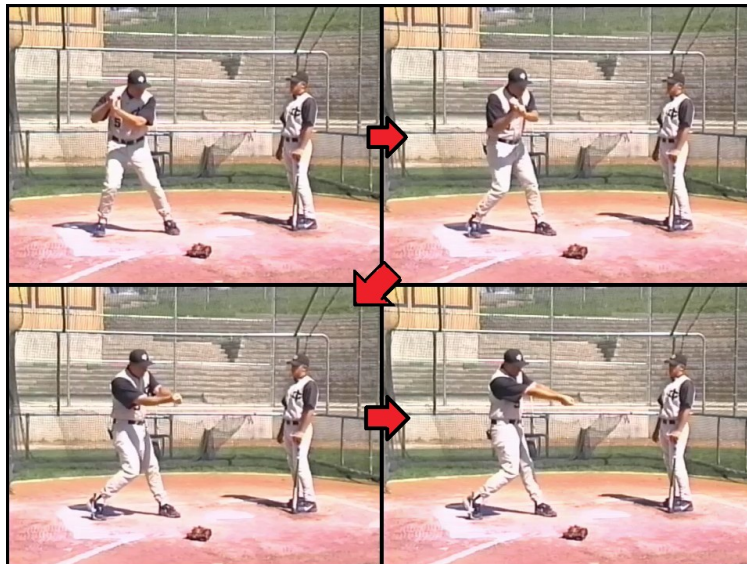
The other thing Andy's going to be, look for him to do is he's got his front shoulder or his front chin or his chin on the front shoulder right here, okay? So he has the chin on his

front shoulder when he starts. And when he gets done, his chin ends up on the back shoulder, alright?

And his top hand, okay, which is his right hand, is going to end up on his opposite shoulder right here when he gets done swinging. And we have a glove right down here, okay. When he gets done swinging, okay, and he's in the batter's box and he's going to be looking at that glove at a good angle right there.

Okay, go ahead and get in your stance again. Okay. Okay, Andy's got some rhythm. He's going to load. Okay, stride. Alright, go elbow to elbow, knee to knee. Just hold that position right there.

Okay, you can see right there, he's high off his back heel right there. His knees are close to each other. His front foot is flat, okay? He's hitting against his front foot, not over it. He's got a good elbow-to-elbow position right here, okay? And his chin's on his back shoulder right there. Okay, that's at contact, right there we're looking for.



Okay, you go back in your stance again. Okay. When you talk about hitting, okay, and you break up the sequence of the swing, you want to look at what you're doing. You want to load, stride, and then when you go to hit, okay, we want to make contact right there, okay, and we want to look for a high strike. Okay? We don't want to be taking the hands and we're dropping them down early, okay?

If I can get Andy in the stance again right here, okay. The correct path of the bat, okay. What we want to talk about is the bat being point A, hands being point B, and the ball being point C. Alright? So what I want the bat to do is go from A to C. Now if he drops it down here, he's going A, B, C. He wants to go straight from A to C in his swing every time he hits the ball. A to C every time, okay?

And when he gets there and he's going to hit the ball, alright, you're starting square right here in this position, and he wants to end up square. So we want to get here. Take on the pitcher right now. Take him on. Okay? Every time. Every time you get in there and you want to hit, you've got to be able to take the pitcher on, alright?

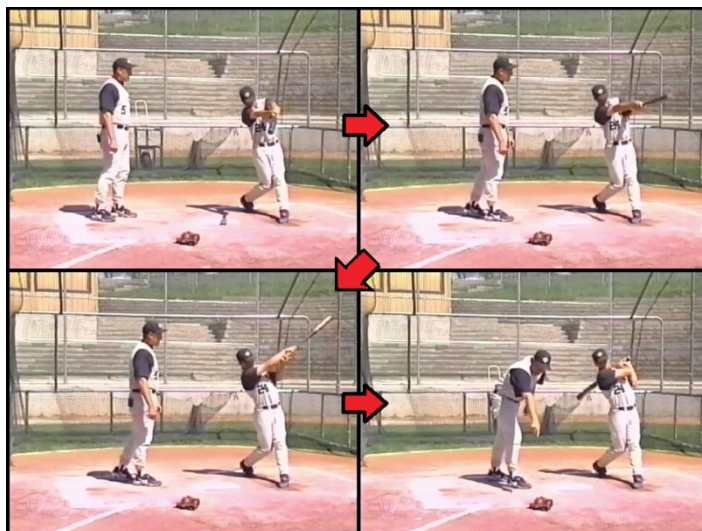
Go ahead and get in your stance again there, Andy. Okay. Load, stride, knee to knee, elbow to elbow. Right there. Okay? You can see his head is over his belly button. We've got a straight line going from his head, or his back ear to his hips to his back knee, right there. Up and down. Vertical. Alright.

Now we're going to go ahead and go into the follow-through position, okay? He's got his stance right now, okay? He's going to load, stride, okay, knee to knee, elbow to elbow, okay? Now finish it off, follow-through position, okay?

His chin's right here. Now his eyes should be looking right over here, okay? Right in the glove right there. We put an object on the ground so your eyes will be able to work correctly in your visual system, okay? So his eyes are looking right down there, alright? Okay.

PART 5

At this point, I'd like to review the five stages of the swing. I'd like to cover some important tips and observations I've picked up through my college experiences.



First of all, when we start off here, I'd like to get in the stance. And as we get into the stance, I'd like you to think as being a bicycle. You're going to make yourself into a bicycle. You've got 10 gears in this bicycle. Now as we get in the stance and we have 10 gears, we're quiet, we've got some rhythm here, and we're in first gear. Okay? Now.

As we get in first gear, we're going to also stay in first gear when we load. We're also going to go into first gear when we take a stride. Now the point to really bear down on

is we want to get into 10th gear as we start the swing.

Now the aspects you need to understand here is, as we start to swing, we need to have the important parts, the mechanics of the swing down. So to get the swing into 10th gear correctly, we need to squish the bug correctly. So as I squish that bug with the back foot, I need to feel the ball of my back foot on top of the bug and the back heel high off the ground, and close the gap between my knees.

Now as I'm doing that, I need to imagine that the barrel of the bat is point A, the hands are point B, and the ball's point C. I can allow the hands to swing the bat correctly if I squish the bug correctly. If I just spin on the back foot like this, I didn't close the gap up, an A to C swing is impossible. Having the hands in the wrong position to try to produce an A to C swing is also impossible. So I need to imagine that the barrel of the bat is

going to go to the ball A to C correctly, but to have that happen correctly I have to have my elbows sitting on an imaginary table. This table's sitting right here.

So when I get in my stance, the elbows are sitting right on the table. There's a pencil underneath my front elbow. So when I'm in first gear right here, I'm going to take and get into the load and pull that rope that's attached to my front knee to my hands, back, that front elbow's going to draw on the table. And actually both elbows stay on the table when that happens.

But as I draw on the table right there, there's an imaginary eye on my front shoulder that has to stay focused on the pitcher and cannot go off the pitcher. So I'm taking that eye on that front shoulder as I pull that rope, and staying in first gear, and I go back with the hands, that eye stays right on the pitcher. If it does not, what will happen is the hands probably went back here, I barred the front arm, I got myself in trouble and lost a good position to hit in, okay?

The other thing you want to notice is I want to keep my front elbow, okay, inside or in front of my belly button. If that front elbow passes the belly button, the front arm's going to bar and lose that good hitting position, or it's going to turn that front shoulder so much that my eyes are not going to be able to stay focused on the ball. So that's an important point to realize.

So we've got the bicycle right here. We're in first gear. We've got some rhythm. We're going to load in first gear, take our stride in first gear. Now to go to A to C correctly – the barrel of the bat is point A; hands, point B; the ball's point C – barrel goes from A to C, squish the bug, close the gap. A to C contact with the ball right now.



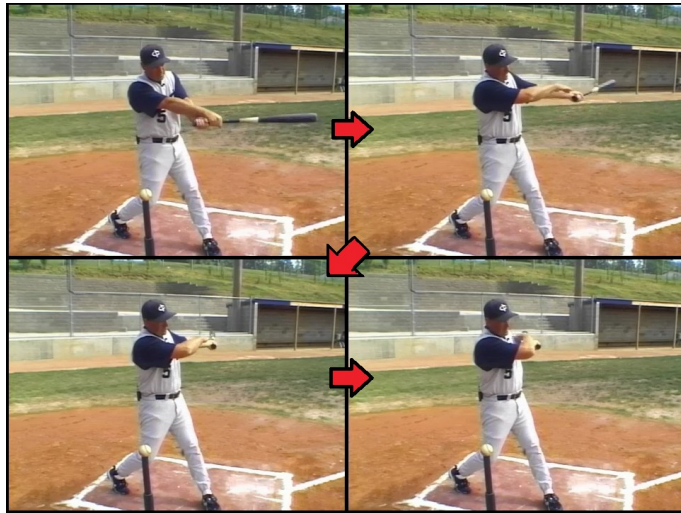
Now after we make contact, our eyes stay in contact area. Going to roll the wrist, okay? Now if I want to, after the wrist is rolled, I can let the barrel, I can let the hand, the top hand go off the barrel of the bat and continue through with that top hand to the opposite shoulder and the barrel of the bat continue through the follow-through.

And I want a flat follow-through with the barrel of the bat. The barrel of the bat should not finish above the top of my head, and it shouldn't

finish much below my front shoulder, which is my left shoulder right here.

Now the other option is when I make contact with the ball and after I roll the wrist, is to hold on with both hands and the barrel of the bat continues through. The elbows need to bend after the wrists are rolled, and come through here. The problem that often happens, if somebody keeps that top arm extended all the way through, it's almost

impossible for the eye to stay focused on the ball. We tend to develop habits where we pull off the ball and then a lot of times that happens when somebody tries to become a dead-pull hitter. So we want to let the elbows bend, come through right here, and with a flat follow-through.



And the reason we have a flat follow-through, with that barrel finishing above our back shoulder and below the top of our head, with both hands on the bat, the reason for that is we want the hips and shoulders working together. If I have a high follow-through, what happens is the hips and shoulders are going to fighting against each other and I have a swing that's very awkward, it doesn't have a lot of rhythm in it. And we have some problems even in drills that we're trying to perform not only on the field

too. So that's something we need to keep in mind as a hitter.

So real quickly. First gear in the bicycle right here. Elbows on the table. Got a pencil underneath the front elbow. Pull the string back here. We're still in first gear. Front elbow stays in front of the belly button. Take a stride. Hands stay back. Both elbows on the table. Hands in good position to hit from right here. Now when I take that stride, the front heel is going to lead towards the pitcher, but I don't want that heel being way off the ground. We want to step soft, but we do not want to have that front heel so high off the ground that when we try to swing we have a hard landing, okay?

So I can actually take a stride and have that heel touch the ground as I take the stride as long as it's a soft landing. And then we want to squish the bug properly. And make contact with the ball, roll the wrists, have a flat follow-through, and eyes stay in the contact area. We've got the hips and shoulders working together and we produce a pretty good swing.

Now, for all that to happen on a consistent basis in drills and in the game, we need to know when everything starts. When you're talking about hitting, you look out there on the mound and you see the pitcher throwing the ball, if the pitcher's throwing 85-86 miles an hour, you have about four-tenths of a second, okay, from the time the ball is released to the time it hits the plate.

Now that four-tenths of a second can be split into two-tenths a second it takes from the barrel of the bat to get to the ball, okay? But the problem is, a lot of hitters, they try to put the load and the stride and the swing and everything in that four-tenths of a second. The good hitters are already going to have the load out of the way before that ball's released.

Okay? And that's something that you really need to bear down and understand why they're doing that. If a person's throwing really hard, we're going to go off of what the pitcher tells us as visual cues.

Their physical movements are going to tell us when we're going to start our load. So if a pitch is thrown 85-86 miles an hour, about the time that they separate their hands, okay, is going to be about the time their body starts coming at us. Now it's going to be about the same time we're going to start our load. Now if the pitcher's not throwing quite that hard, you might start your load about when the ball gets up in here. Okay? And if he can throw them slower, it might be a little bit later.

So you do all your timing based on what the physical actions of the pitchers are. So you need to understand that so you have a consistent rhythm day in and day out as a hitter.

Again, this is Kevin Ziesman, Assistant Baseball Coach from Iowa Central. I'd like to thank you for joining us today. I also would like to thank Scott Browning and Andy Wolf for helping me out with our hitting drills today. I invite you to also check out our other videotape in the Coaches Choice series.