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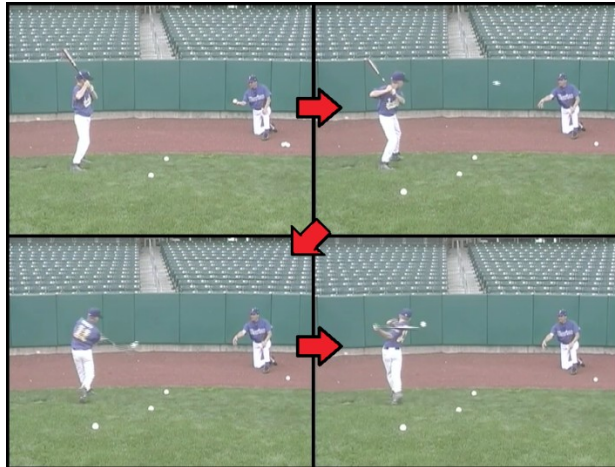
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Welcome to Homework Hitting. We're going to take you through a series of drills that you can use in your backyard to practice. These drills will assist you in developing bat speed, bat quickness, proper sequence of swing, and rhythm and timing. They can help to make any player a better hitter.

These drills can be practiced in your driveway, in your backyard, your garage. There is very little space needed for you to perform them. So now no player has an excuse for not becoming a better hitter. Use a bat, use a ball, but do not use an excuse. Good luck with your practice.



This first drill is called a soft toss fake drill. It is actually where we are going to soft toss the ball to the hitter and let him swing through.

Jake is working on getting his front lower half of his body started into the swing and trying to use his legs first, hip rotating first, then his upper body, and then delivering the bat. Just keep your head down on the ball. See the ball all the way in. Good. This is a good drill to work on technique because it's a non-threatening situation to

the hitter in that it's easy to hit the ball as it's tossed to him.

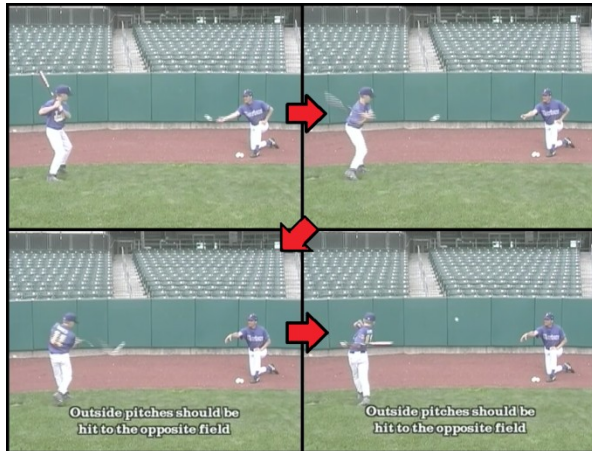
Now we call this the soft toss fake drill because every once in a while I'm going to fake the toss to be able to see if he's got his back foot up and beginning to rotate with the lower half of his body. Good. That back hip could rotate just a little bit more on it, Jake, and we're in business. Ideally, you'd like to see line drives, hard ground balls as Jake is providing for us.

In this particular drill, ideally we would like Jake to take 10 swings and then take a break. Notice that I'm not rushing Jake. I'm taking my time, I'm making sure he's set, on balance, and ready to go before I release the next pitch. We want him to work on rhythm, timing, perception, and the proper sequence of the swing.

Next drill is called the inside soft toss drill. On this particular drill, I'm going to work Jake on pitches on the inside part of the plate.

I'm going to take the soft toss ball, show him the ball, pull it back, and throw it towards his front hip. This will give him a feel for hitting a pitch that is on the inside part of the plate. Once again we're working on rhythm, timing, and the proper sequence of the swing. Jake is going to work hard on trying to keep his hands inside the ball and swinging through the ball. He's going to try to pull his hands through on the inside part of the ball.

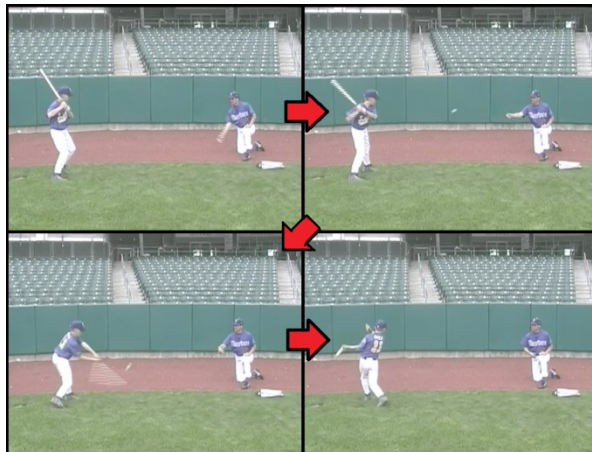
Great swing. You see that line drive? That's exactly what you want from the hitter. Great follow-through on Jake. Notice on the high follow-through, that's exactly what you want. Excellent job, Jake.



This is the outside pitch soft toss drill. In this particular drill, I'm going to be tossing the ball to Jake's back hip, which would simulate a pitch coming on the outside part of the plate. Ideally, the hitter would like this pitch to get a little bit deeper out over the plate so that he can hit the ball to the opposite field.

Again we're going to show Jake the ball so he can work on his rhythm and timing, and work on that pitch. Good swing. Notice Jake, he's taking the ball to the opposite

field very well, hitting the ball deep back in the hitting zone. And that's exactly what we want. Good job, Jake. Notice the number of line drives that he's hitting. That's excellent. Great job.

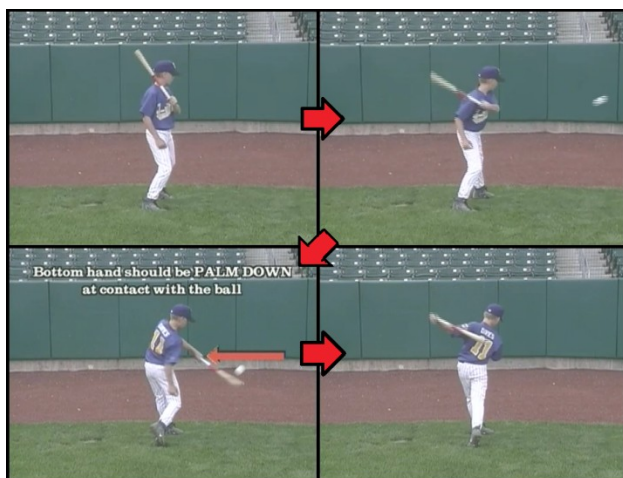


This next drill incorporate Wiffle golf balls. Jake is going to be using a broomstick with tape around it as the bat. This is a very good perception drill because Jake is going to be hitting a ball that's much smaller, obviously, than a baseball.

So he's got to track it a little bit more closely. He's going to be using a bat that is not as big and wide as the normal bat that he uses. Therefore, excellent for perception, keeping your eye on the ball, trying to keep your head still so that you make contact with the

pitch.

We will use our normal soft toss rules where we'll show Jake the ball, pull it back, and come through. Good swing right there. We're looking for line drives, balls that are hit hard on the ground. This is a much more difficult drill because the balls are smaller and the diameter of the bat is smaller. Jake's doing an excellent job hitting the line drives, keeping his head still, tracking the ball. Exactly what we would like.



This is a half-bat soft toss drill, or you could use a tee ball bat. The idea is that you're using a bat that is smaller and lighter because we're going to use one-hand drills here.

We're going to use the half bat with Jake, and it's just a baseball bat with the barrel cut off of it.

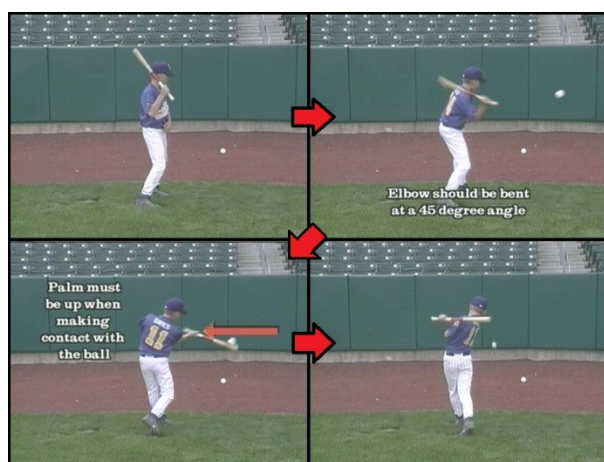
And with this, he's just going to start off using his bottom hand and he's going to swing through on this soft toss drill using his bottom hand. Ideally, when the bottom

hand comes into the contact position, we want it to be with palm down.

And that's what we're working here. It really isolates that particular spot in the swing and allows us to really concentrate on that. With all drills, all hitting drills, we want Jake to continue to work on his rhythm and timing and the sequence of his swing. That is very important that we keep that intact.

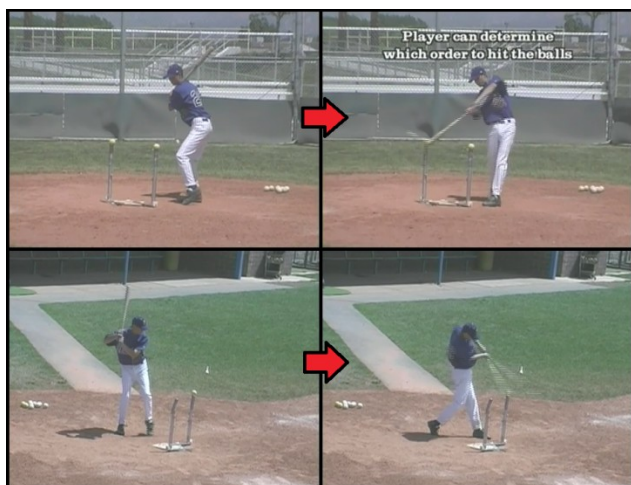
Jake is going through his normal swing and working on the bottom hand. By using the half bat, he can control it and make excellent swings. Once again Jake's doing a great job hitting line drives, and that's exactly what you want out of the drill.

PART 2



Jake's now going to use only his top hand on the bat and we're going to work on the movement of the top hand through the swing. We're also going to look at his elbow and make sure that it's coming into a slot on a 45-degree angle into the hitting position. The ideal thing is for him to have his palm up at the point of contact and then continue through the swing.

You've got to use your whole rhythm, timing, sequence, everything with it, Jake. Excellent. Great job.

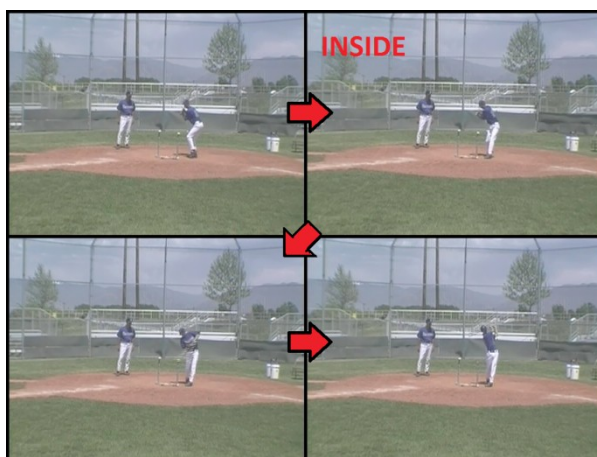


This is the inside outside tee drill. We have a ball set up on the inside part of the plate where the hitter would normally make contact, and we have a ball set up on the outside part of the plate.

It's an adjustable tee and the base is shaped in the form of a home plate. It's an excellent tee because you can actually put the balls in the position that you would want a particular hitter to make contact with that pitch. For instance, on the inside pitch, we can set slightly in front of the plate on the inside corner. The

outside pitch, we can set up back deeper in the plate where we'd like the player to make contact.

If a hitter is doing this by himself, then he can determine, as he begins his stride, which pitch he's going to swing at. A hitter's stride remains the same regardless of whether a pitch is inside or outside. This helps a hitter understand that he can take the same stride whether he's hitting an inside pitch or an outside pitch.



On the inside pitch, the hitter is going to pull his hands through hard so that he gets the barrel of the bat on the ball.

On the outside pitch, his hands are going to move slightly away from his body and hit the ball deeper in relationship to home plate. As you can see, Taylor has the balls placed on the inside tee, slightly in front of his body. The outside pitch, we want to hit on the back part of the plate.

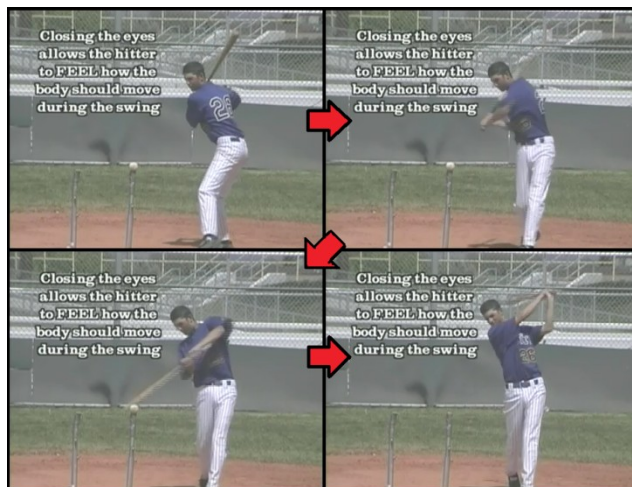
We call that hitting the ball deep in the strike zone. For a hitter to hit that inside pitch consistently, we must make sure that he has his swing in sequence.

As soon as his front foot makes contact, his back heel comes off the ground aggressively and rotation begins. This allows his hands to travel inside the ball, bring his elbows in close to his body, and allows him to get the barrel of the bat to the ball.

This is a variation of the inside outside drill and really works best for the hitter. As the hitter begins to make his rhythmic movement towards the ball, the partner that is not swinging will call either inside or outside and the hitter will then adjust to that pitch and hit that particular pitch.

Taylor begins inside. And he works on getting to the inside pitch. Outside. Outside. Excellent swing. Excellent swing. His stride remains the same whether the hitter is trying to hit the inside or outside pitch. Inside. But the hitter should step away from the tee each time, come get to this comfortable stance to begin his swing. Inside.

On the inside pitch, Taylor's getting his hands inside the ball. It's a very important skill when hitting the ball on the inside part of the play. Outside. On the outside pitch, his hands are going to move slightly away from his body.



This is the blind tee drill.

Taylor's working on hitting a pitch that's down the middle, off the front edge of the plate. He will step into the box, assume his stance, look out to the pitcher, and then close his eyes and hit the pitch.

The reason that he's going to work on closing his eyes is it allows him to feel how his body is working in the swing. And he can work and feel the sequence of the swing.

By that we mean when his front foot makes contact, his back heel comes up aggressively, he begins rotation of his feet to his legs to his hips, and eventually to his upper body. It allow the hitter to actually feel what the body is doing. And it gives him a better sense of presence of how the body parts are working together.

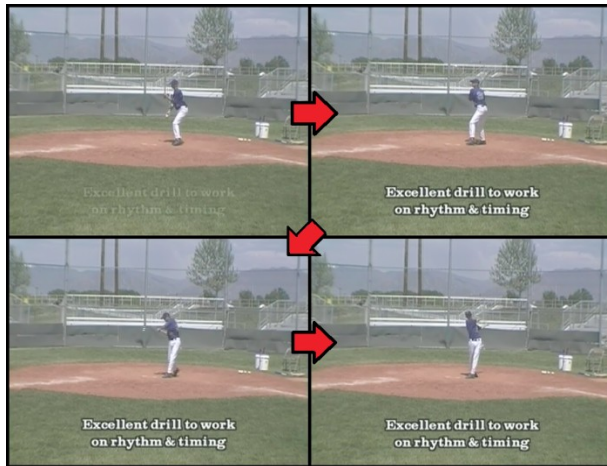
With tee drills, a hitter would want to complete 10-20 repetitions per day.

This next drill is called the hum drill. Some hitters will have tension in their swing and an easy way to work on relieving that tension is through the hum drill.

What the hitter will do is as he steps in and assumes his stance, he will begin to hum – mmmmmm – as such. Mmmmmm. And he wants to keep that tone throughout the whole swing. You will notice that some hitters, if they would do this drill, they would begin to hum and then just before the point of contact, they would raise that voice up a pitch because there's a lot of tension in their swing. So we're going to try to keep tension out of our swing and keep our hum on one particular level here.

Mmmmmm. Mmmmmm. Mmmmmm. Mmmmmm.

A hitter with tension in his swing would sound like this. MmmmmmMMMMMMmmmmmm. MmmmmmMMMMMMmmmmmm.



will see him popping the ball up.

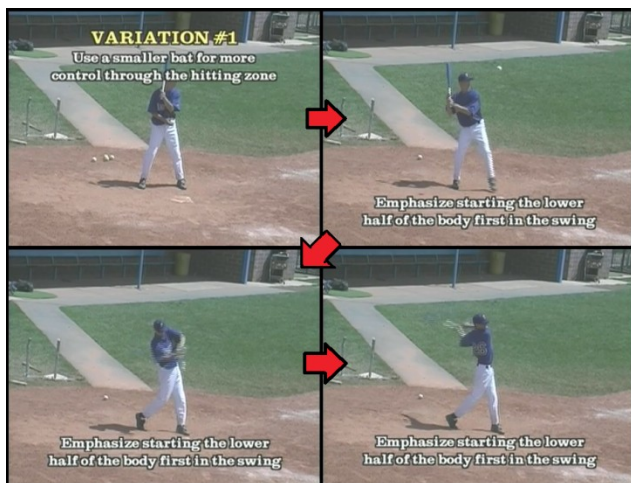
This is known as a fungo drill.

Taylor's going to toss the ball up and go through his swing and try to hit line drives and ground balls. It is a real good rhythm and timing drill. He's trying to work through the sequence of his swing and to make sure that his swing is in the proper sequence.

The hitter here is trying to work on keeping his hands above the ball. If his hands are going below the ball at contact, then you

He will hit ground balls and line drives when he has his hands above the ball. It's a very important point in hitting, is that you want your hands above or over the ball at contact.

Again, the fungo drill is being used here to hit line drives and ground balls. In order to make contact in the proper place, you must toss the ball out in front of your body just slightly.



stance and working on his rhythm and timing of his swing.

A variation of this drill is to use a tee ball or a Little League bat. The reason that we would use this bat is it's easier to control, a little lighter to handle, and it allows Taylor to get that through the hitting zone just a little quicker.

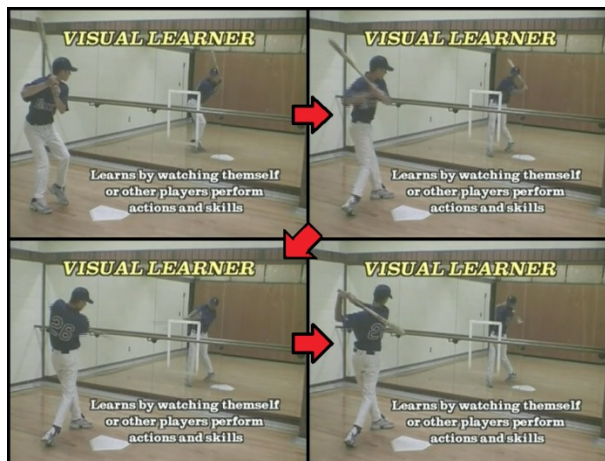
This is an excellent rhythm and timing drill. As you can see, the lower half of his body started early and he's working through the entire sequence of his swing as he's hitting the ball. And you will notice, each time he steps into the batter's box, he is assuming the proper

PART 3

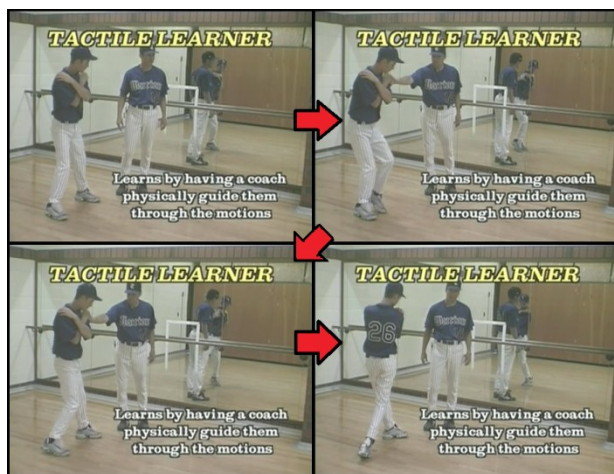
Why practice in front of a mirror? You can see your body actually going through the movements, you can see the proper sequence of the swing, and this will help you to assimilate the movements that are necessary in having a good swing.

And by him being able to visualize and use the mirror then, hopefully, he'll be able to carry that over out into the field. Taylor's a visual learner. The mirrors are very effective with visual learners.

Coaches, there are three types of learners. There's the visual learner, the oral learner, and the tactile learner.



The visual learner is a player who watching himself or watching other players, learn and are able to pick up a particular skill. An oral learner is a player that you can really talk to and you can actually talk him through the movements and then he has his success from there.



A tactile learner is a player that really learns better by putting your hands on them and helping them through the movement. And by them feeling you moving them through the movement and assisting them in that way, it helps them to be able to learn the skill much easier.

This player is working on what we call the dry drill. It was created by Bob Kaiser of the Utah Baseball Academy and it helps a player to be able to feel the proper sequence of a swing.



Taylor is working on taking his stride. When his front foot makes contact, getting his back heel up, and beginning rotation, with his hips going first, back heel coming off the ground in a forceful action, and then his upper body rotating. The reason we have his arms crossed is we want to take the hands and arms out of the swing.

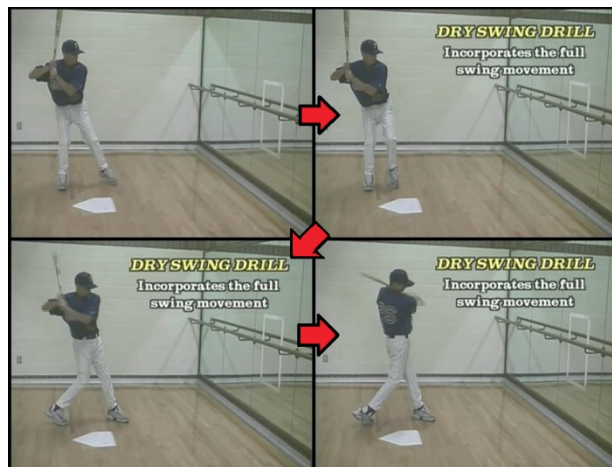
It's much easier for him to be able to feel the sequence. He doesn't have to worry

about swinging a bat. And we really want to work on the proper sequence here with the lower body leading the way.

Taylor is more of a tapper. In other words, when he begins his stride, he pulls his front foot back, taps the ground, and then goes forward. You will notice when his front foot makes contact, his back heel forcefully comes up off the ground, and then his back hip begins to rotate, which causes his torso and then his shoulders to continue that rotational skill.

There's two forms of energy in a swing. One is linear, when your front foot makes contact; that's the slight movement forward. The other is rotational, which begins when the back foot comes off the ground in a forceful act. Then the hip begins to rotate and the energy is produced then into the upper body.

A hitter that's working on this particular drill really wants to work on being able to concentrate on the proper sequence. Most hitters will do this drill anywhere between 10-20 repetitions. The big point is that they are concentrating on getting the sequence correct. Once their concentration begins to wane, then they should stop.



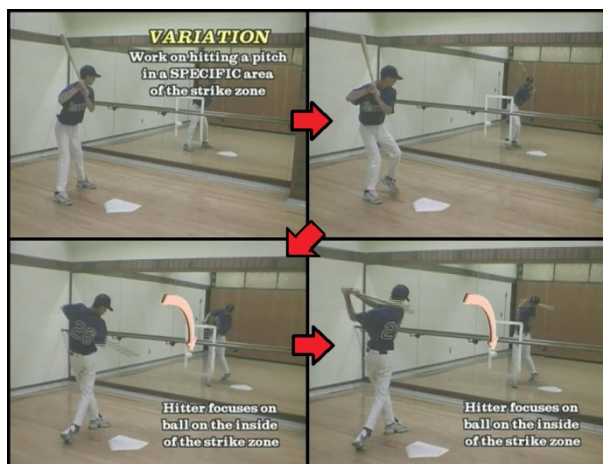
This is a dry swing drill. Where Taylor is actually going through his swing as he visualizes it through the mirror.

He's working on the components of the swing. He's making sure that his swing is in the proper sequence. He's also working on the rhythm of his swing. By that we mean his stride, where he comes back with his front foot, taps, and goes forward.

It is very important to get the sequence of the swing correct. The energy developed through this swing is then delivered to the bat. The bat lags behind the rest of the body and is the last part of the rotational piece.

This dry swing drill allows the hitter to see himself from a different angle. He can actually see his body parts working in sequence as he looks straight into the mirror. It gives him a different view. It really helps a visual learner. Mirror drills allow a hitter to become consistent with his swing. He can develop the proper sequence and he's able to do this practicing on his own.

We are using an actual home plate in this particular drill. It helps Taylor to get a feel for the distance that he is from the plate. You could actually use tape on the floor or actually draw a plate on the flooring itself.



This is the strike zone awareness drill. It was developed by Jerry Weinstein, an excellent collegiate and professional coach.

We have taped Taylor's strike zone on the mirror. It is set at his armpits down to his knees. It is the actual width of the plate, 17". And as he begins to stand in his stance, he can actually see where his strike zone is.

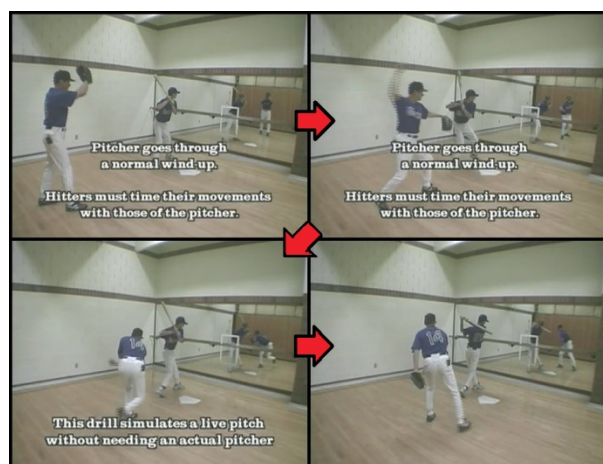
The other part of this drill is he could stride and go through his swing while totally being

aware of his strike zone. Many young hitters are not aware of their own strike zone. This is excellent for a visual learner to actually see the strike zone he's working with.

This is an advance strike zone awareness drill where we're actually working on hitting a pitch on the inside part of the plate.

By Taylor going through his swing, he can actually see his hands having to come inside the ball and being able to hit the inside pitch. He visually can see exactly what his body needs to do in order to be able to get to that pitch and hit through the ball.

We could place balls at different spots on the strike zone so that he could work on his swing throughout that zone. Taylor can also work on tracking the ball by simulating it coming out of the pitcher's hand and tracking it into that hitting zone, where the ball is taped.



This is a rhythm and timing drill.

The pitcher is going through his wind-up as the hitter is working on his rhythm. By rhythm we're meaning when he starts with his front foot, either striding or, in Taylor's case, tapping, and getting his front foot on the ground before the ball's halfway to him. Rhythm and timing together.

The rhythm part is him having an even smooth start with his front foot, under control, going to a balanced position. Feet

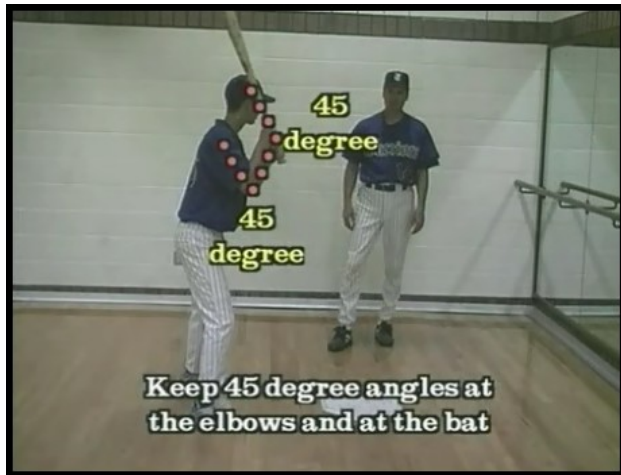
not further than the length of his bat. It is really a position of power and strength.

The hitter can actually see when he should begin his swing in order to arrive on time. The key is for the hitter to start at the same time every time, to be able to help to have the proper timing.

PART 4

This is a stance and balance drill. It is another dry mirror drill that we use to check out a hitter's stance. He can visually see his stance in the mirror.

And we're looking at, are his eyes level, his shoulders level, hips level, knees level, and is he in a good flex position with his knees and a balanced position with his feet. With his feet at least shoulder-width apart.



You can see Taylor's are slightly more than shoulder-width apart and that's a very comfortable position for him. His bat is either upright or on a 45-degree angle, with the elbows on a 45-degree angle. He has the bat resting in his fingers as opposed to too deep back into his hands. Taylor also has excellent vertical balance in that he's working ball of foot to ball of foot, and his head is over the top of his belly button controlling the center of gravity.

To practice this drill, you would step away from the plate and then approach the plate and step back into the batter's box as though you were assuming your stance once again. Every time you step in, you're making sure that you're going through the checkpoints of your stance.

Before Taylor moves into his stance, he's actually going through his pre-hit routine each time. He steps away from the plate, looks down and gets the sign, places his left foot down, right foot taps the outside part of the plate to make sure he has plate coverage, and then taps the inside part of the plate. Tapping the inside part of the plate is merely a part of Taylor's own personal hit routine.

Having a pre-hit routine is a very important part of the mental approach to hitting. It helps us to relieve ourselves of distractions and to concentrate solely on hitting the baseball. Upon the completion of our pre-hit routine, we are thinking hit, hit, hit.