

## 9 Fundamentals of Hitting Series

1. See the Ball.
2. The Grip
3. Rhythm
4. Balance
5. Load the Knob
6. Separation
7. Stay Square
8. Let the Ball Come to You
9. Bottom Up

### The Hit Doctor® 9 Fundamentals of Hitting

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Having worked and talked with many college and professional hitting coaches all over the country, we have found that great hitters generally have many different hitting styles and stances. However, it is our conclusion that great hitters & hitting coaches everywhere generally subscribe to certain absolutes.

The following are what we feel are the nine absolute hitting fundamentals, commonly taught by major league hitting coaches:

**1. See the ball sooner and longer:** Pick the ball up at the release point and follow it all the way in with a still head, In BP keep your eyes in the contact area for a 2 count.

**2. The Grip:** To get the best grip, a player should grip the bat in the fingers, not in the palm of the hand. The strength of your hand is in the fingers, not the palm. Also, we have found that most upper-cutters and wrist-rollers hold the bat in the web between their thumb and forefinger, and this may be the cause of their upper-cutting or wrist-rolling. The bat should lay between the bottom section of the pinkie finger, through the middle section of the index finger, on each hand.

**3. Rhythm:** It is important that a player has rhythm. Rhythm is simply hands and hips moving in sync with each other, under still eyes. A player should keep the body moving while awaiting a pitch. Once a player has his upper body in sync with his lower body, it then becomes easier to get himself in sync with the pitcher. Rhythm is timing. Timing is rhythm. Activate your barrel, activate your butt!

**4. Balance:** Great hitters have great balance. They gather their power and center of gravity into the area behind the belly button, and then maintain the relationship of the head to the spine--from the beginning of the stride, to foot strike, and then to contact. The key to balance is even weight distribution in the stance--between and over the balls of the feet, head and chest toward the plate, and butt towards the dugout. As the player strides towards the pitch, he maintains the position of the head and its relationship to the spine.

**5. Load the knob:** All great hitters have some sort of "negative movement" where they go back before they go forward. This acts as both a loading mechanism and a delaying action, which lets the ball travel. Professional hitters take the knob of the bat back, towards the backstop, before they stride. For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction. We don't care if the player takes the knob back with his hands, his front shoulder, an inward turn of his belly, or by cocking his front knee back, or all of the above, as long as the knob goes back before it goes forward. It's knob back, reach with the front foot.

**6. Separation:** Simply put, a player should step and then swing, as opposed to stepping and swinging simultaneously. Separation is timing. Timing is controlling the pause between when a step is

taken and when the swing is started. It is important for a player to realize this distinction in order to consistently hit pitches of varying speeds and outside pitches with authority. Great hitters think about staying square to the plate as long as possible. They try to feel their chest and belly button facing the plate until the ball gets there. They try to feel closed until they swing. In reality, the hips leak open first, right after foot strike, but great hitters try to "feel closed".

**7. Stay Square:** The belly button and chest should face home plate as long as possible. A player should stay square to home plate until his hands knock the body into an open position.

**8. Let the ball come to you:** A player develops power when he begins to trust his hands by letting the ball come to him. Most amateurs open up their bodies prematurely prior to making contact with the ball. As a result, they hit the ball with limited power and too far out in front of them. By letting the ball come to him, a player makes contact with the ball somewhere between the front hip and front foot, which enables him to hit the ball with maximum power.

**9. Bottom Up:** Great hitters may think: "swing first, turn second" but they actually start their lower half first. At foot strike their back knee and pelvis turn toward the ball. The legs then take the back shoulder toward the ball and only after that does the hitter fire the bat. I think that far the hips open at foot strike may be a function of flexibility but there is no doubt that the hitters who have hit the most homeruns per pound (Jimmy Wynn, Joe Morgan, Hank Aaron, Ken Griffey Jr. ) all had their cup pointing at the pitcher before they swung!