

INSTRUCTIONAL DRILLS FOR YOUTH BASEBALL

1ST STATION HITTING

Hitting: Explain the following:

- (1) "HOLDING THE BAT"
- (2) "BATTER'S POSITION"
- (3) "POWER POSITION"

1. **HOLDING THE BAT:** Kids should hold the bat comfortably with a loose grip (ultimately in the fingertips) but tight enough so they do not lose control after swing. Demonstrate: Make certain the kids do not grip the bat too tight. The bat should not be straight up; the knob of the bat should be angled toward the opposite batter's box with both elbows angled slightly downward.
2. **"BATTER'S POSITION":**
 - ✓ Have kids line up on the base line spread out to ensure enough room.
 - ✓ Have kids turn sideways as though they were batting and facing you as though you were pitching. Keep the left-handed hitters together on one end of the line.
 - ✓ Have kids drop their bats on the ground in front of them to use as a straight line.
 - ✓ The "BATTER'S POSITION" is: Kids standing with their feet shoulder width apart, knees slightly bent and comfortable and hands together as though they were gripping an imaginary bat. You do not want them to be standing straight up you want them in a comfortable position. Use the bats on the ground to line their feet straight. Make sure the kids are comfortable and placed into this position.
 - ✓ Make certain the feet are pointed straight against the bat. In the batter's box, the rear foot should be positioned either slightly turned in (toward the pitcher) or straight toward the plate. **THE REAR FOOT SHOULD NEVER BE POINTED TOWARD THE BACKSTOP.** Be sure to check this, because most kids are not aligned properly.
 - ✓ Give the command "BATTER'S POSITION" and they should always be in this position. You are going to have to repeat this indefinitely for the kids to

remember. This will always be known as the "BATTER'S POSITION".

3. **"POWER POSITION"**: This is the position the kids take when they step into the ball without swinging.
 - ✓ Have kids step in line with the bat on the ground toward the pitcher as if they were going to swing.
 - ✓ The "POWER POSITION" should be: Batter steps from the "Batting Position" as though they were preparing to swing. The batter should not step too far and become unbalanced. You want a short step always toward the pitcher and while doing so you want the kids to bring the hands back and up. This part is crucial! Kids always want to drop their hands when they step so you need to repeatedly say **"hands up"** **"bats up"** when they step.
 - ✓ Keep the kids in the "POWER POSITION" look them over and make certain they are balanced with their weight slightly back but **DEFINITELY NOT FORWARD!** The kids should be looking over their front shoulder as though they were waiting for the pitched ball. Their feet should be in a straight line along the bat on the ground.
 - ✓ Once you are comfortable the kids look good start giving the commands as follows:
 - A. Okay, kids on the line (bat on ground). Everyone ready, **"BATTER'S POSITION"**. Okay, ready! **"POWER POSITION"**. Look everyone over and make sure they are correct and then Okay, ready! **"BATTER'S POSITION"** and back and forth over and over until you feel as though they realize they are completely different positions.
 - B. While giving the commands, please remind them to step straight at the pitcher, keep their hands up and bats up, elbows slightly downward and do not take too large of a step **YOU WANT THEM BALANCED**. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of making certain the kids understand these two positions.
 - At some point, you can introduce the kids to holding the bats during this drill, but make certain there is plenty of room and absolutely **NO**

SWINGING!

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2nd STATION HITTING

Hitting:

- (1) SQUISHING THE BUG
- (2) LOCKING FRONT LEG
- (3) INTRODUCE SWINGING / FOLLOW THROUGH

Line the kids in a straight line side by side. Have them spread out so there is plenty of room because they will eventually be swinging. Again, have the left handed kid line up together on one end of the line.

- Remedial "BATTER'S POSITION" and "POWER POSITION" briefly.
- 1. **"Squishing The Bug"**: Demonstrate by standing sideways as though you are batting in the "POWER POSITION" with your hands on your hips. Turn you rear knee and foot as though you were squishing a bug. Do not turn you foot so much that you are turning it over; only turn you foot so that your toes would be facing the pitcher. **DO NOT LIFT YOUR REAR FOOT OFF OF THE GROUND!!** Now, in this position you rear leg should form an "L" shape.
 - Have kids get into the "BATTER'S POSITION" with their hands on their hips.
 - Now, give them the command of "POWER POSITION" and have them remain there. Once they are there give the command of "squish the bug". Have the kids, with their hands on their hips turn their rear knee and foot as though they were squishing a bug. Make sure they do not turn their knee and foot too much (twist) because they will lose their balance. Make sure the kids do not lift their rear foot off of the ground. Make sure the rear toes are facing the pitcher and their rear leg and foot make an "L" shape and they are balanced.
 - Get the kids back into the "BATTER'S POSITION" and start over.
 - Give them the following commands: "BATTER'S POSITION",

"POWER POSITION", "SQUISH THE BUG". Watch them and make sure they are understanding your commands and they are performing the instructions properly.

2. **"Locking front leg"** Demonstrate by standing sideways as though you were batting in the "POWER POSITION" with your hands on your hips. Now, simultaneously turn your hips and rear leg and foot. Do not move your front leg or foot (pretend it is glued to the ground). You should now see an "L" shape with your rear leg and foot and your hips should be turned and your stomach is facing the pitcher. Your front leg should be straight and "locked".
 - Have kids get into the "BATTER'S POSITION" with their hands on their hips. Now, give them the command of "POWER POSITION" and have them remain there.
 - Tell the kids there is superglue under their front foot and they cannot move them.
 - Now give the commands "squish the bug" and "lock the front leg". The kids need to turn their hips, turn their rear leg and rear foot making sure they do not turn their foot too much (twist) and the rear toes are facing the pitcher. Look them over make sure the rear leg and foot make an "L" shape and the front foot is locked. YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO DRAW A STRAIGHT LINE FROM THE REAR SHOULDER TO THE REAR KNEE. The weight should not be forward and the kids should be fully balanced. If they are falling over, they are not positioned correctly. Make the necessary changes to ensure they understand.
 - Repeat this process over and over.
 - **Take your time and make sure they fully understand because this part is the FOUNDATION.**
3. **Introduce Swing:** Take kids from the "BATTER'S POSITION" to the "POWER POSITION" to the "swing".
 - Have the kids simulate holding a bat in their hands and make sure their hands are in the proper positions.
 - Re-emphasize to kids the importance of a balanced position when they are in the "BATTER'S POSITION" and go into the

"POWER POSITION".

- Simulate pitching to the kids and advise them to get into the "BATTER'S POSITION". Now give them the command of "POWER POSITION". Have them freeze in the "POWER POSITION" and walk around and make certain they are balanced and have a good foundation
- with the weight slightly back, (**definitely not forward**) hands up, simulate the bat being up and the knob of bat is angled toward opposite batter's box, both elbows slightly downward, head over front shoulder. You should not be able to push the kids over in the "POWER POSITION".
- While in the "POWER POSITION", give the command "swing". Kids will now proceed to swing from the "POWER POSITION". **THEY SHOULD NOT BE STEPPING!** *Remember, they have already stepped into the "POWER POSITION" so the rest is swinging, locking their front leg and turning the hips and rear legs.*
- After giving the command of swing, make certain you are repeatedly telling them to "squish the bug", "turn your hips" (so that their belly is toward the pitcher) "lock the front leg" (foot is super-glued to the ground).
- Demonstrate to kids; Throwing their hands through the strike zone with their front elbow thrusting downward to their front hip and the knob of the bat driving down through the strike zone toward their front hip.
- Repeat these steps and make certain you watch each phase and the kids are performing them correctly.
- Once they are comfortable, have the kids line up in a group of 4. Give them their bats and allow them to perform the commands **with a bat**. Make certain there is plenty of room because they are going to be swinging.

4. **Follow Through:** Ultimately, you want the kids to finish their swing holding the bat with both hands. When the kids finish, their front leg is locked and their rear leg is turned "squish the bug" ("L") shape and their arms should continue all the way around their bodies. Use the term, "**Show the girls in the stands your shirt but don't look at them**". Pretend the stands are directly behind the batter and you want them to turn their torso around as far as they can with their front leg locked and the rear leg in a "L" shape.

You want the head positioned over the rear shoulder looking down in front of home plate at the end of the swing and follow through every time. **The kids want to follow their shoulders with their head but you have to remind them and correct them each time.**

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3rd STATION HITTING

(1) Introducing baseballs

1. **Introducing Baseballs**: The kids now have full instruction on the "BATTER'S POSITION", the "POWER POSITION", "SQUISH THE BUG", "LOCK THE FRONT LEG", "FOLLOW THROUGH" so now comes the fun part.

- ☞ Break the kids up into groups of 4 or 5 depending on the numbers and perform "soft-toss" and use the batting tees. It really depends on the number of coaches available and the number of kids.
- ☞ Set up a Batting Tee and give the kids all of the commands previously learned.
- ☞ I would suggest the following: Okay, batter up! Show me your "BATTER'S POSITION". Look it over. Okay, show me you're "POWER POSITION". Look it over. Now let them hit and make sure they "SQUISH THE BUG", "LOCK THE FRONT LEG", and "FOLLOW THROUGH". Use the term **"Show the girls in the stands your shirt but don't look at them"** repeatedly when the kids are completing their follow through. Make certain the kids are performing all of commands correctly and allow them to hit the ball.
- ☞ "Soft-Toss"- Have the kids hit the under handed pitches into a net or fence but make certain you are giving the kids all of the commands and they are performing them correctly.
- ☞ Tell the kids to swing the bat hard but under control.
- ☞ **FOR ALL COACHES KEEP IN MIND THERE IS DEFINITELY A SEPARATION BETWEEN THE "BATTER'S POSITION" AND THE "POWER POSITION"**.
- ☞ After the kids appear comfortable, I would like the coaches to begin giving the following commands:

1. **STEP**
2. **SWING**

- ☞ During warm ups you can say to the kids who are about to hit:

Show me your Stance (BATTER'S POSITION) then show me your Step (POWER POSTION) now show me your swing.