

8H Hook Sit Tomahawk and Golf Swings

8H Hook, Sit, Tomahawk, and Golf Swings

The purpose of this document is to describe four swings that are required to hit fastpitch.

Knowing these four swings, a batter can easily shape their body to make firm contact with any pitch. Firm contact comes from hitting against the spin. To hit against the spin, a batter must line the swing up with the pitch. These four swings are required to align the bat with the pitch. Hitting against the ball's spin will align the bat with the movement of the ball. If the pitch is moving away from the batter, that alignment will be on the inside of the ball. If the pitch is moving up, that alignment will be down trying to spin the ball back where it came from. You want to hook (on the outside) any pitch moving in, and you may want to lift any pitch moving down. And finally, you want to sit on any pitch right down the middle. Level swings only line up with level pitches. To hit the pitches back where they are coming from, you need to practice four types of swings.

Hitting Without a Twist

Of these four swing types, three hit without a twist (a windmill movement- because a windmill does not twist). Twisting (a Figure 8 movement like the throwing Figure 8 movement) takes more time. To save time, all these swings are described off the back foot. To hit change-ups and other off-speed pitches, the batter eats up time by moving to the front foot and shaping the body for one of the four swings. Hitting without a twist is done from a high hip position. The power comes from the hips bending at the waist. With all the four swings we want to make use of gravity to throw the bat at the ball. In the high hip position the legs are (relatively) straight, the waist is bent, the head is down, and the elbows are up. When combined with a little crouch, this high hip position presents the smallest strike zone. When hitting without a twist, all lines of the body look straight and long. The grip is long. The elbows, knees and shoulders are together for that long straight look.

Pushing from a High Hip Position

With those three swings without a twist the body is in a pushing position, and the bat twirls inside out from the big bones and muscles out to the little bones and muscles. Upon contact the ball jumps off the bat because all those bones and muscles are lined up behind the contact point. Plus, with each of these three swings the weight is forward, making it easy to use gravity to sit on the fat pitch. If you start out with your weight on your toes (toes down and foot arched) it is easy to sit down into the level swing most instructors teach. That "sit" swing is from a pulling (twisting) position.

Use Gravity to Sit into the Low Hip Pulling Position

With the "sit" swing (a Figure 8 movement), the body uses gravity to move into a pulling position. We pull with our head up, our butt down, our chest out, our knees bent, and our weight balanced for twisting on the outside of our feet. With the pulling motion we also want the bat to twirl inside out from the big bones and muscles out to the little bones and muscles so the ball will jump off the bat.

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Zoning Pitches

I will describe all four swings by describing how I use the three pushing swings with the pulling or “Sit” swing. Until I get two strikes, I like to give the pitcher a corner of the plate that I do not think he will try to use. Since I stand close to the plate and deep in the box, most pitchers who have never faced me will test me inside. They probably do this because with my stance it looks to them like I will have trouble with the inside pitches. So, the first time I face a pitcher, I give him the outside corner until I get two strikes. In other words, I zone him inside. If he comes inside with the rise or the high drop, I will “Tomahawk” the ball (inside out against the spin).

Tomahawk Swing

The Tomahawk swing is a short chop from a high hip position. Like throwing off the back foot overhand, the head comes down right into the contact point toward the target. If he cannot throw the rise for a strike, I will look for the low inside drop and “Golf” the ball.

Golf Swing

The “Golf” swing is also a short chop from a high hip position with the head coming down right into the contact point toward the target, but the Golf swing is underhand.

Sit Swing

Setting up for these two high hip non-twisting swings, I am also set up to “Sit” on the pitch down the middle. To contact a pitch over the plate (rise, drop or curve), from the high hip position all I have to do is sit and pull.

Contact Points- Not just over the plate

Notice, the pushing swings do not make contact over the plate. The inside pushing swings (Tomahawk and Golf) make contact close to the body and the outside pushing swing makes contact away from the body. The pulling or “Sit” swing makes contact over the plate. To hit fastpitch, we have to hit strikes where they are easiest to hit against the spin, not just over the plate.

Hook Swing – Most Versatile

The third high hip non-twisting swing is the “Hook Swing”. The Hook Swing is the quickest and most versatile. For example, I use it exclusively with two strikes. With two strikes I simply hit from both feet and hit the outside pitches to right and inside pitches to left, covering both sides of the plate. With the Hook Swing the hands stay back. Using gravity, the weight of the bat is thrown straight down over the hands. The bat twirls in line with the pitch (against the spin) about four inches before contact. With the Hook Swing, the hands follow the weight of the bat from the time you push

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down into the pitch, in other words they follow the weight through-out the whole swing.

Zoning Outside

When I want to give the pitcher the inside corner, I set up to “Hook” the outside strike.

The versatile “Hook” swing can be used either inside or outside the pitch. Because the ball is away from the body, it can be used to hit against any spin (up, down, in or out).

When you set up to hook the outside strike, with that high hip you are also set up to “sit on” any pitch you want to contact over the plate.

Sidearm Swing for Comparison

There is another swing being taught these days. I call it the “Sidearm Swing”. I call it that because it has the same footwork as the “sidearm throw”. That footwork is a combination of the footwork for the other four swings. In other words, it starts out with linear pushing footwork on the inside of the feet, then at the pivot the pushing forward motion stops and the pivot foot transforms into the base for a pulling rotation. So, with sidearm hitting that transformation pulls the head away from the ball. Just throw the ball up to yourself and try to hit the ball and then hit a target. I mention this swing here because it is good to compare it to the other four in practice. With the other four, the head is always close to and moving towards the ball when hitting.

Summary: Four Swings Required

The purpose of this document was to describe four swings that are required to hit fastpitch. Knowing these four swings, a batter can easily shape their body to make firm contact with any pitch. Firm contact comes from hitting against the spin. To hit against the spin, a batter must line the swing up with the pitch. These four swings are required to align the bat with the pitch. Hitting against the ball’s spin will align the bat with the movement of the ball. If the pitch is moving away from the batter, that alignment will be on the inside of the ball. If the pitch is moving up, that alignment will be down trying to spin the ball back where it came from. You want to hook (on the outside) any pitch moving in, and you may want to lift pitches moving down. And finally, you want to sit on any pitch right down the middle. Level swings only line up with level pitches. To hit the pitches back where they are coming from, you need to practice four types of swings.