

Hands below the Ball

The purpose of this document is to define hand location when positioning to hit a baseball or softball. The most natural way to position to catch a ball is with the hands below the ball, and the same for hitting. I believe it should be taught that way. Why?—Gravity and Visibility.

Catching with eyes close to the ball

When we are learning to catch a ball, we learn catch it with our hands under the ball, over the ball, or on the side of the ball. In other words, there is a decision to be made as the ball approaches. Because the ball hurts when you catch it the wrong way, we learn naturally. Over time we naturally learn to wait on that decision with our hands under the ball; plus, this is the most comfortable (balanced) position for moving to catch the ball. We wait in that position because (if we can) we want to catch the ball with our hands under the ball. With hands down, the ball is closer to our eyes (easier to see, easier to catch).

Hitting with the eyes close to the ball

Whether hitting or fielding we want our eyes close to the ball. With hands down, the ball is closer to our eyes (easier to see, easier to hit). But, why is it not taught that way? Remember learning how to catch the ball and the decision which way to hold the mitt? It is not taught that way simply because when we are learning we are taught to only hit strikes. If every strike comes straight into that little box over the plate, then the best way to hit is with the hands over the ball (especially if you are trying to hit between the outfielders). However, if we want to hit the ball through the infield on a low line drive at the outfielders, then we want the hands under the ball. Once you want to be under the ball with your eyes and hands, there will be that same decision you had when learning to catch. The answer is the same. Set up to hit the ball with your hands down under where you expect the ball, and only hit the exceptionally low ones down from your starting position.

What about bat speed and power? Gravity

When you set up with hands below the ball, gravity helps you swing the bat, even on the low ones. The longest balls I have ever seen hit were gravity assisted.

Summary: Hands below the Ball

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