

Lean into It Footwork

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The purpose of this document is to define the footwork used for throwing and hitting hard off the back foot. Because of the obvious forward lean we see in catchers throwing to second base and great baseball hitters like Babe Ruth, Ted Williams (and even famous hitters like Cal Ripken Jr.) it is called “Lean into It Footwork”. When we lean into something we are pushing; but, when we are pulling we are leaning away. Throughout my documents I have described both hitting and throwing together because (the way I was taught) when done properly they are both throwing motions. Many people question the power of leaning into a pitch, but in both Baseball and Fastpitch the longest balls hit have been hit by people “leaning into the pitch”. Similarly, some of the fastest pitches have been made leaning forward off the back foot whipping into a front foot vertical pivot without any rotation until after the release.

Push and Pivot

In both throwing and hitting hard off the back foot, we push and pivot. We are bending forward at the waist, whipping both arms forward from the waist, and using a front-foot pivot to pop and add power to our whip. You could say to do this we hold our shoulder in, but if we pivot off that front foot vertically the shoulder will stay in. In other words, the arms and shoulders whip in response to what we do with our feet. Plus, this vertical pivot stabilizes our head close to the ball.

Off the inside of both Feet

The footwork for this forward leaning motion is the same for all forward leaning or pushing motions. Whenever we are pushing, we are leaning forward and bent forward at the waist. In other words, our butt is up so we are balanced forward creating a small strike zone when hitting and a low profile when throwing. For both throwing and hitting (overhand and underhand) there is both a forward push and a vertical pivot, both off the inside of the foot (the big toe and ball of the inside of the foot). When we are balanced in this position for pushing, we will notice our elbows are close to each other, so our hands will form a longer golf type grip on our bat and long straight fingers upon release of the ball. In other words, just what we do when we push anything, we hunch our back to focus the power on one point.

Summary: Lean into It Footwork

The purpose of this document is to define the footwork used for throwing and hitting hard off the back foot. Because of the obvious forward lean we see in catchers throwing to second base and great baseball hitters like Babe Ruth, Ted Williams (and even not so great hitters like Cal Ripken) it is called “Lean into It Footwork”. When we lean into something we are pushing; but, when pulling we are leaning away. In both Baseball and Fastpitch the longest balls hit have been hit by people “leaning into the pitch”. Similarly, some of the fastest pitches have been made leaning forward and whipping with a front foot vertical pivot. The footwork is the same for all pushing.