

Top and Bottom Hand Dominant Swings

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The purpose of this document is to define swings as either Top Hand or Bottom Hand Dominant. In order to have solid powerful short quick swings for all types of pitches, one has to throw the bat with either the top or the bottom hand. To understand those short powerful quick swings, the key may be to first understand the top hand dominant swings, then the fact that in all these short swings we throw the bat down at the ball (with both hands towards the bat's "butt end"), then to understand that there has to be a helpful hitch (or Figure 8) in a short quick bottom hand dominant swing.

Top Hand Dominant Swings

Top hand swings are the key. Once they are understood, it is easier to understand the hitch in a good bottom hand swing. The hardest balls I have ever seen hit were "right in the eyes" and hit with a top hand dominant swing. Some were on the inside corner, some center-cut, and some on the outside. Some were tomahawk and some were hooking swings, but all these high pitches were hit with a top hand dominant swing. Plus, some low pitches were hit a long way with a top hand swing. Besides being most powerful, the top hand swings shortest, quickest, and takes the greatest advantage of gravity. They are more powerful because with top hand swings, the batter can lean into and through the pitch towards his target. In these swings (like catching a ball) the head moves down toward the ball and the target. The butt end of the bat also moves down toward the ball and the target. The swing starts down with most of the power being generated by big hip and back muscles through the top hand: like throwing the bat with the top hand. Then that power pivots vertically on the front foot with the bottom hand supporting that pivot, but the top hand continues to be dominant. It pivots on the front foot supported by the bottom hand, but just like throwing off the back foot, the back foot doesn't explode into the pitch until that leaning vertical pivot. This timing of the back foot explosion is very important. It is the "short swing". Until that point, the batter has not committed the swing. So, to take a pitch, all he has to do is (with his top hand) lightly keep the bat from falling over. When hitting a pitch in the eyes, the "swing" is very short (probably less than 30 degrees). When golfing or hooking a low pitch, the swing is more gravity assisted so it is quicker, but the bat twirls almost 180 degrees. So it is a longer swing, but the net effect of quicker and longer 180 degree top hand swing is about the same as the 30 degree top hand swing. In other words, when dropping the bat on ball the energy is exerted quickly when you start the drop at the pivot.

Bottom Hand Dominant Swings

A good bottom hand swing incorporates the same principals as a good top hand swing, but it takes a "hitch" or "time" to get there. That hitch is very much like the Figure 8 throwing motion described in my other documents. Like the Figure 8, time is required to transmit the push off the back foot and the down motion of the start of the swing into a horizontal (around the corner) bottom hand pulling motion. One key to a good bottom hand dominant swing is a good heel plant from which to initiate that horizontal rotation. Since it is a rotational horizontal pivot, It cannot be a toe plant. It must be the

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heel to keep the head close to the ball and moving towards the ball in the direction of the target. Just like a good top hand dominant swing, the swing starts late and if done right is easy to stop. To “check” that swing start, you keep the energy out of the bat as long as possible. That is where the hitch comes in handy. With that hitch, the bat can stay neutral horizontally during the downswing. In other words, again in the downswing both the top and bottom hand move the “butt end” of the bat towards the ball, and the swing does not officially start until the horizontal pivot on the front heel. Again, until that pivot the top hand can lightly keep the bat from falling into the hitting zone. Again, if done correctly the energy expended right at the pivot. So, by the time the ball hits the bat, the bat is light in the fingers but supported by the skeleton leaning into the pitch in the direction of intended ball flight. Because the Bottom Hand dominant swing is a pulling swing that pulls the bat while extending the arms into and through the pitch, this alignment requires a Figure 8 type hitch.

Summary: Top and Bottom Hand Swings

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