

PITCH HUNTING Part 1 - Be a 'YES' Hitter EVERY pitch, learn to stop your swing

The way people explain hitting is often misrepresented

They say you have **0.35 seconds to decide to swing on a 95mph fastball.**

In one sense that is true. A 95mph fastball from 60 feet away might calculate to a 0.35 second reaction time, but that's not how an elite MLB hitter thinks.

Elite hitters don't see the ball and then decide between yes and no if they are going to swing. **You shouldn't either.**

Think about it. If you waited until the ball was thrown and then decided to swing or not to **swing**, the ball would be past you. **You do not have time to hit a 100mph with this approach.**

If you did, you would be late and have a very defensive looking swing.

How this really works is the elite hitter has **committed 100% to swing the bat before the ball is ever even thrown.**

He is in swing mode. I call this **YES mode.**

It's not a guess, it's a commitment.

When a hitter is committed to swinging before the ball is ever pitched, this changes the decision-making process.

He really only has one decision to make...

The only decision to make is to STOP from swinging.

Putting on the brakes and holding up is far easier than getting going.

This is the classic problem many hitters have, and they then get overwhelmed by harder throwers because they are **NOT committed to swinging.**

They are trying to decide **Yes or No.**

Great hitters are committed to YES I am swinging and simply react to NO.

Swinging the bat has already been pre-determined... The question is will you stop if needed?

Think about it. If you are unsure if you're going to swing and then you decide YES in the last instance, it is so much harder.

Why? It's harder to get going than it is to stop.

What fools people at the younger levels is that you can get away without being a YES hitter when you face weaker or slower pitching.

The more reaction time you have allows you more time to decide and think. This is one of the major reasons why many hitters struggle with elite level velocity.

Commit to swing. Learn how to stop your swing if needed. Don't get caught in between yes and no.

Instead, commit to YES, and then react to NO if needed.

Every hitter is a yes hitter in Batting Practice.

They pre-determine and commit to swinging the bat before the ball has ever been pitched. In BP, we are often like robots, just 100% in swing mode.

We need to take that mindset to the game...

100% committed to swinging with the understanding that you can stop if needed.

Practice it! One way to improve your batting practice is by NOT throwing everything for strikes on purpose.

When we take game like BP, one of my favorite exercises is purposely missing the strike zone at least 40% of the time.

Why? In the game, the best pitchers will still miss 40% of the time.

I don't do this drill to work on the player's eye at the plate.

I do this drill so the hitter can actually practice the STOP if and when needed.

If I do this drill and all of a sudden the hitter is late on batting practice fastballs, that will likely mean he is thinking too much and no longer committed to YES.

Stay 100% committed to YES and when you get your pitch, don't be late.

Note: When I do this drill, I will misfire the ball by a lot... Not a little.

The reason is I want the hitter to simply practice the stop and not confuse the intent of the drill thinking I'm challenging his eye at the plate.

I want aggressiveness.

I tell the hitter to attack anything over the plate and stop if it's a misfire.

This is a basic 101 way to practice using the same thought process in BP, that you have to use in a game.

So parents, no longer should your kid get mad at you for throwing bad pitches in BP.

He should thank you.

PART 2 - Eliminate Zones

Another way to practice the "Pitch Hunt" in batting practice is to simply eliminate a small area of the strike zone that you will not swing at with less than 2 strikes.

An example of this would be if you eliminated the outside corner. Everything from that point and in you are attacking.

That means you're still attacking three-quarters of the plate, you are just putting the brakes on when the pitch is on the outer corner.

I'm not a big fan of splitting the plate in half.

I like my hitters to eliminate $\frac{1}{4}$ of the plate, not half the plate.

The reason is I believe hitters will NOT be aggressive enough and start taking too many called strikes.

Practice eliminating small areas. If it's an outer corner, then attack everything from that point and in.

You can also eliminate the inside corner.

This means your putting the brakes on any pitch on the inside corner, and attacking everything out over the plate.

Another way to practice this is to eliminate the upper half of the strike zone...
Attack anything below the belly.

You can also eliminate the lower half of the strike zone....
Attack balls above the thigh only. Nothing from the thigh down.

When you get your pitch, **hit it hard.**

These are just examples of other ways of practicing YES hitting and practice putting the brakes on.

You need to realize when you attack hitting with this method and commit to an area, it's almost like you know which pitch is coming.

In fact, you need to trick yourself into 100% knowing the pitch is going to be the pitch your hunting.

Don't get distracted.

For example, if you're not taking the outer corner and the pitcher makes a great pitch on the outer corner with less than 2 strikes, don't let it distract you.

It wasn't what you were hunting.

Commit and stick to your plan with less than 2 strikes.

If he does it again, he just made 2 great pitches and you need to tip your cap to him.

Distractions come in various ways... When a pitcher throws a strike in an area you were not hunting, don't lose the commitment to your plan due to one pitch.

If the pitcher throws a pitch high and nowhere near the strike zone, don't let the wildness distract you. **Re-Commit to your plan.**

I say this because a lot of amateur hitters get less aggressive when they see some wildness... Then the pitcher throws a strike and we let it go by.

A pitcher who is known to be wild enough, or wild within the strike zone is very effective. The reason is that he is making the hitter uncomfortable and distracted.

Stay committed to your plan.

Re-Commit between each pitch