

**EDUCATE • MOTIVATE • DOMINATE**

**DOMINATE  
THE  
DIAMOND**

**7 Principles to  
Coaching Youth  
Hitting**



®

## ***Hitting Philosophy***

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## ***Principle 1: Be on Time & Be on Plane!***

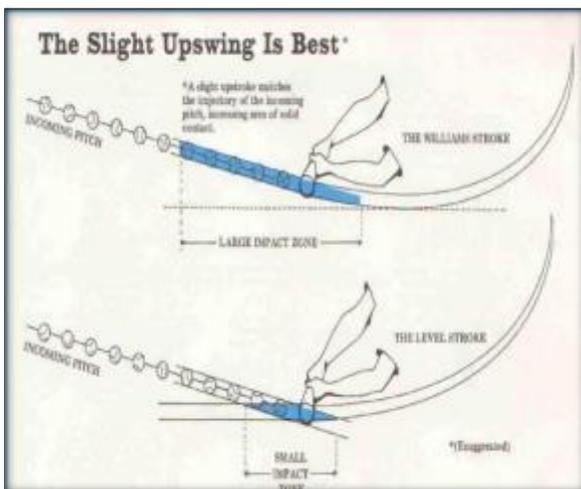
- Too often we focus on developing the “prettiest” swing.
- Doesn’t matter what your swing looks like, if you’re not on time you don’t get to use it!!
- Timing should be worked on in the hole & on deck... Not In the Box!
- The barrel of the bat needs to be on plane with the pitch as long as possible!



Coco Crisp Barrel on Plane



Josh Donaldson Barrel on Plane



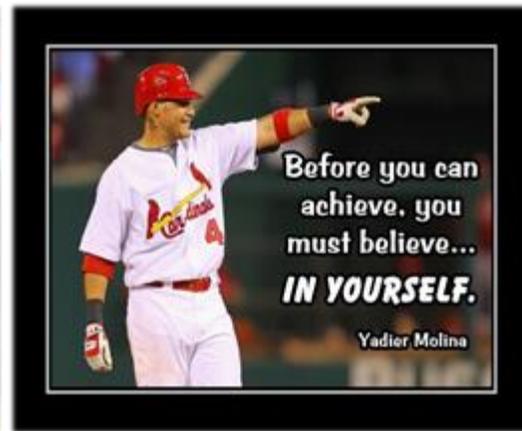
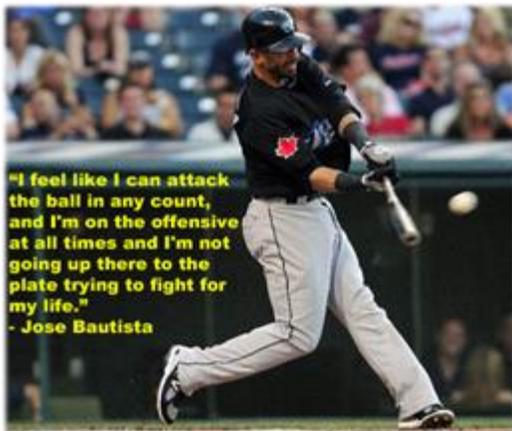
Being on plane gives you more room for error.



Timing needs to be done on deck!

## ***Principle 2: Mindset Over Mechanics!***

- Be less concerned with mechanics in the batter's box and more concerned with competing!
- We have to believe in ourselves as hitters!
- Stop thinking about what your swing looks like and get in the box and focus on being the toughest hitter on the field!
- Be FEARLESS!



### Where I'm Coming From

Every time I ever stepped into a batter's box, I wanted to destroy whoever was on the mound. In my mind, that guy was trying to take food off my table and I would bite them if it meant me getting a hit.



by Gary Sheffield



## ***Principle 3: Have Rhythm & Timing!***

- To be a successful hitter, you must have consistent rhythm in your swing.
- Don't "Get your foot down early!"
- Rhythm and timing are more important than the swing itself, and hitters should have a "Yes, Yes, No" mentality in the batter's box.
- The swing should be smooth and relaxed. Not Stop & Go.



Above: Mike Trout loading during a game. His load is smooth and relaxed. He is never jumpy or reactive to the pitcher. As hitters we must dictate the tempo!

## ***Principle 4: Hunt the Fast Ball Early in the Count!***

- Think swing before the ball is even pitched! Don't wait to see the pitch, location, and spin before you make the decision to swing. SWING FIRST, TAKE SECOND...
- You can always make the adjustment and keep your hands back on an off speed pitch if you're looking for a fastball. However, if you're looking for an off speed pitch, you will get beat by a fastball.
- Pitchers try to work ahead with fastballs early in the count. Look to drive the ball early and often!

Count	PA	AB	%AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BA	OBP	SLG	OPS	wOBA
0-0	81482	76200	11.6%	10924	25448	5077	492	3211	13419	.334	.340	.540	.880	.367
0-1	67138	64514	9.9%	8180	20553	3967	400	1866	8765	.319	.326	.479	.805	.346
0-2	60726	59665	9.1%	3624	9142	1592	147	675	3618	.153	.161	.219	.380	.169
1-0	52494	50765	7.8%	7238	17216	3594	400	2265	8843	.339	.340	.560	.900	.383
1-1	64832	62939	9.6%	8325	20483	4077	418	2183	9153	.325	.329	.508	.837	.361
1-2	104933	103344	15.8%	6770	17154	3198	342	1440	7185	.166	.173	.245	.418	.185
2-0	18620	18149	2.8%	2828	6457	1447	144	1065	3785	.356	.354	.627	.982	.418
2-1	39754	38976	6.0%	5398	13119	2728	345	1597	6084	.337	.337	.547	.885	.381
2-2	99412	98248	15.0%	7281	18317	3530	386	1745	7802	.186	.191	.284	.474	.208
3-0	16337	1012	0.2%	3504	379	72	10	103	643	.375	.959	.771	1.730	.502
3-1	34814	16316	2.5%	6956	5713	1281	136	994	3476	.350	.691	.628	1.319	.563
3-2	92962	64455	9.8%	12550	14481	2932	370	1793	7753	.225	.458	.365	.823	.391

Above: Big League statistics collected from 2009 – 2012.



**Above:** Dustin Pedroia taking a pitch.

He was ready to hit and committed to swinging until the last possible second.  
His lower half and core committed to the swing and everything went except his hands.

## ***Principle 5: Have a Game Plan!***

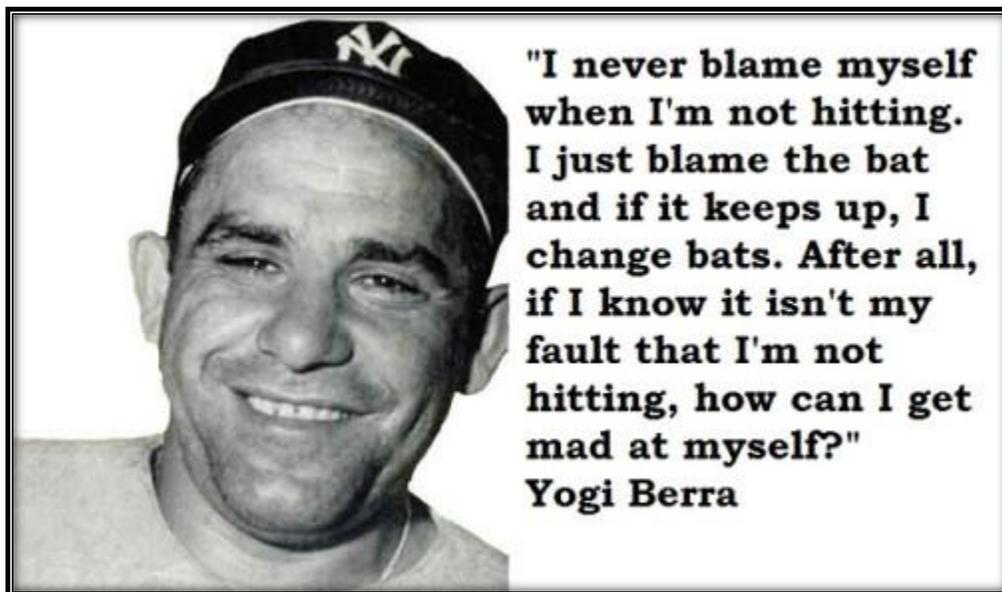
- Every great hitter hits with an approach or game plan. Look for your pitch to drive!
- Each time you step in the batter's box, you should have a plan.
  - Whether it's driving the ball to the opposite field, hitting the ball back up the middle, shooting the ball in the gaps, or trying to hit a home run to dead center, hit with a game plan!
- Too often, hitters go up to the plate aimlessly and just try to "make contact" or think "don't strike out."

<b><u>COUNT</u></b>	<b><u>PLAN</u></b>
<b>0 Strikes</b>	<b>Hit your pitch!</b>
<b>1 Strike</b>	<b>Hit Strikes!</b>
<b>2 Strikes</b>	<b>Expand the strike zone and compete!</b>

1. In the table above, it shows us that with no strikes on us, we need to be hunting our pitch! If you reference page 5, it should be the fastball in the zone that you like to do damage!
2. When we have a strike on us, we need to hit strikes, regardless of the pitch type.
3. With two strikes, we need to expand the strike zone and compete! Make the pitcher work and throw pitches! Be a tough out!

## ***Principle 6: Be Mentally & Physically Tough!***

- Hitting is difficult enough; we don't need to add any extra pressure to ourselves when we step in the box.
- Regardless of our batting average, each at bat is just as important as the last.
  - **It doesn't matter if you're 10 for your last 10 with 8 home runs or you're 0 for your last 10 with 8 strike outs... the 11<sup>th</sup> at bat is just as significant.**
- Find a way to flush all of your swing thoughts once you step in the batter's box.
  - **Use focal points on your bat or use different triggers to forget about everything else that's going on. 100% of your focus needs to be on beating the pitcher!**



Above: Yogi Berra making a sarcastic remark about being in a slump. We always need to believe in ourselves even if it means tricking ourselves into having confidence.

# ***Principle 7: Quality at Bat vs. Statistics!***

*“A Quality At-Bat is an at bat that makes a positive contribution towards our team goals!”*

*– Coach Cliff Godwin (Ole Miss University)*

## **What is a Quality At-Bat:**

1. Executing a hit/run – SAC bunt/Sac-Drag/Squeeze
2. Executing a bunt for a hit
3. Taking a walk, getting hit by a pitch or a catcher’s interference
4. Moving a runner from 2nd base to 3rd base with zero outs
5. Driving in a run from 3rd base with less than 2 outs
6. Any RBI (Sac fly, 2 out RBI, etc.)
7. All hard hit balls on the line or on the ground (NOTE: All base hits are not QAB’s, Ex. Bloop hits – We want HARD contact)
8. 8 pitch at-bats
9. When you can see 4 or more pitches after you are down 0 – 2 in the count

(Steve Springer – Quality At-Bats)

