

### 3 KEY HITTING PROBLEMS THAT PLAGUE MANY PLAYERS

(Source: <http://www.softballspot.com>)

#### 1) Trouble with Inside Pitch

If a player is getting jammed on the inside pitch, the first thing to evaluate is their stance. Are they standing too close to the plate, causing the thin part of the bat to be over home plate when they swing? If so, try backing them off 2 or 3 inches off the plate.

You can also try the "Inside Pitch Drill", which helps hitters stay "inside the ball" and develop an inside out swing. Start by setting up a tee on the inside corner, but well out in front of home plate.

The player's stride should be normal (straight back at the pitcher), and when the stride foot comes down, the hitter's front side should be closed. If the front toe is opening up as the player swings, they are using too much upper body. Encourage them to slow down and stay closed.

On the swing, pass the hands very close to the body to get the bat head out in front. Make sure the hitter's bottom arm is driving the knob of the bat down, with their top hand active to get the proper extension. Don't extend the hands away from the body and "cast the bat" with an outside-in swing.

Practice this drill with 15-20 swings, 3-4 times per week.

Get a video demonstration here: <http://www.softballspot.com/sp/hittingsecrets.html>

#### 2) Trouble With Outside Pitch

There's a reason why most pitchers try to work the outside of the plate... this is a very common weak spot for most hitters, but is surprisingly easy to correct using the "Go to the Ball Drill":

To start, place the batting tee on the outside corner and even with the hitter's front foot.

The stride should be in the same place regardless of the location of the "pitch". Stride straight forward, back at the pitcher, then drive the hands through the ball with a smooth weight transfer.

The hitter will be trying to hit the ball to the opposite field, or up the middle with a line drive or grounder. To avoid hitting fly balls, drive the knob of the bat down to the ball, and exaggerate hitting down on the ball with the bottom hand.

After the ball is hit, the player's weight should continue toward the flight of the ball (i.e. to the opposite field).

Have your hitter practice this with 25-30 swings, 3-4 times per week. Work your way up to sessions of 50-60 swings over time.



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#### 3) Swinging At Bad Pitches

This isn't necessarily bad, because it shows the hitter is being aggressive and swinging the bat. Personally, I'd prefer a player be over-aggressive than too timid to swing at all.

Still, you can help players make better choices at the plate by helping them to see the ball better. Try this "Change-Up Drill" to help improve a player's ability to see the ball and react.

Stand 20-25 feet away from the hitter and pitch the ball at different speeds. Encourage the player to see the ball clearly, adjust to the speed of the pitch, and make solid contact.

Subtract 1 point for every pitch the player swings at that is out of the strike zone. Add 1 point for a swing and miss at a good pitch. Add 2 points for a swing and hit of a good pitch. Continue until a player reaches 10 points, and then rotate in a new hitter.

