

STOP SWINGING ACROSS THE BALL

We seniors have been instructed to swing level from little league on up while playing the game of baseball. Well, that teaching technique has been replaced by today's swing experts with the "turning of the barrel" or getting the bat barrel early and deep into the hitting zone quickly with a slight uppercutting swing. This swing requires using a slight uppercut from 25 to 35 degrees from a level swing (see insert) rather than the long-established level swing or swinging across the pitch.

The level body rotation is a swing across the softball works well to the pull-side of your swing but does create some good hits that wind up in foul territory. The slow pitch swing works best on the vertical plane. Whereas the baseball swing works inside to outside corners of the plate primarily or in a horizontal plane. Like I mentioned, the traditionally taught level swing has been supplanted by swing coaches today with an upright swing or Ferris Wheel motion with a turning of the barrel action to the ball. **The Ideal Alignment is when the center of bat and the center of ball meet on the same line.**

Benefits of a slight upright swing: (See diagram)

- Allows the batter to hit the center of mass of the softball for better contact and greater ball exit speed,
- Keeps the hands inside the ball when swinging squaring up barrel with pitch,
- Strikes the ball with a slight lift elevating the ball for more line drives and reducing ground balls,
- Allows the batter to be able to wait on the pitch longer for better pitch selection,
- Reduces ripping the ball foul that only puts a strike on the batter which is crucial when starting with a 1&1 count,
- shoulders move in a rocking motion back toward the catcher and then forward toward the pitcher keeping the well hit ball in play,
- allows full usage of the ball park by driving balls hard to all fields,

Review of "Turning the Barrel":

How do we execute the turning of the barrel swing mechanic? It is done by applying a torquing action with the hands to the bat handle. When hand torque is applied to the bat, the hands will be pushing in opposite directions. Therefore, torque applied to the bat handle from opposing directions will begin the acceleration of the bat. This torquing of the bat handle does not mean you grip the bat tighter to execute the opposing hand action. Take your normal grip. Using hand torque, the bat will rotate around your hands from the rear shoulder and then deep into the swing plane, permitting the hitter to use the whole field. By getting the bat on plane early, and deep into the swing zone, allows the hitter to either go out and get the ball in front for a pull hit; or letting the ball travel deeper into the hitting zone, for those middle and off-field hits.

Instead of concentrating to strike the ball with your top hand, which can reduce barrel contact time with the ball, try and "catch" the ball on the barrel as professed by the great Barry Bonds. Start your swing with your lead arm and then extend the back arm through the ball in the palm up/palm down hand position. This technique will allow the ball to remain a split second longer on the barrel for maximum trampoline effect. You are in essence catching and sweeping the ball with your swing rather than hitting at the ball which can have the effect of slowing down your bat speed. As Barry Bonds was once quoted... "let the incoming ball get in the way of your fast swing!

Recommended videos to view the vertical swing:

Catching the bat on the barrel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IKz9ZQ-Rmvg>

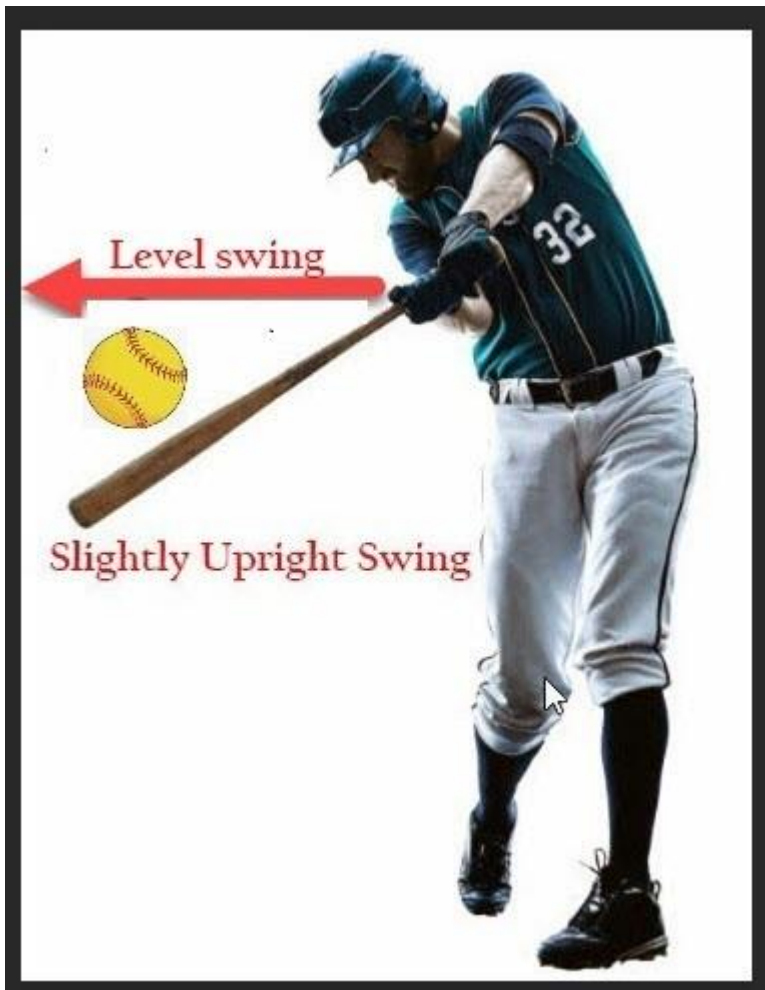
Teacherman demonstrates “How to Fix a strictly Rotational Swing”:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RUC71Evr1PQ>

Antonelli upright swing mechanics: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CA5Rom9d5yM>

Happy hitting,

Art Liversole



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