

“Produce Bat-Lag, Not Bat-Drag, During the Swing”

Bat-Drag is a common swing flaw amongst senior softball hitters and is serious enough that it needs to be corrected. What we want to produce is Bat-Lag and NOT Bat-Drag. Bat-Lag is a normal and very necessary component of a sound swing that generates power effortlessly without over-exertion.

What exactly is the difference between the two similar sounding terms? Many swing teachers use these two terms, Bat-Drag and Bat-Lag, interchangeably; this is incorrect. Bat-Lag produces power by delaying stored up energy built up during the swing process. Bat-Drag is when the hitter literally drags the bat-head to a position which is below the batter’s hands and resembles a dragging like effort.

For it to be Bat-Lag the bat-barrel must stay very close and tight to the back shoulder when initiating the swing (see the illustrations). If the bat is launched off the rear shoulder that would be casting out into the hitting area resulting in reduce bat speed and Bat-Drag.

Bat-Drag also requires the hitter to fight against the force of gravity by attempting to lift the bat to the ball. Bat-Lag is where the hitter has control of the barrel at all times by maintaining the bat-head slightly above the hands in the swing plane. Dragging the bat to the ball can cause the hitter to be late with the wrists resulting in the ball being struck on the neck of the bat or even in the handle area, resulting in weak hits.

A good Bat-Lag position is when the bat-head is pointing back toward the catcher and is near the rear shoulder of the hitter with the hands leading the way to the ball. Bat-Lag will have the knob of the bat being pressed forward toward the incoming pitch by the hitter. The wrists must remain hinged until the last possible moment to take advantage of the lag effect.

Understand that the hitter can angle his or her swing up at the incoming ball to meet it as long as the bat-barrel is kept above the batter’s hands (i.e. you don’t have to swing exactly level with the ground). When bringing the hands forward using Bat-Lag in the swing the bat-head is actually fairly static until the release of the wrists into the contact zone.

Bat-Drag is problematic because it affects proper timing, good sweet-spot contact, and fights against the force of gravity when trying to accelerate the bat to attain maximum bat-speed. Bat-Drag strongly affects the bat-head flipping action to the ball by delaying the whip or snap of the bat-head at contact. When dragging instead of lagging the bat barrel, you’ll find that it’s difficult to catch up to the ball at the precise moment of ideal contact resulting in less effective ball-striking.

Bat-Drag will also cause the hitter to loop up and over the ball in trying to catch up to the timing point thereby, topping the ball to the infielders yielding easy grounders. Proper Bat-Lag will allow the wrist action to naturally create an under-spin action applied to the ball producing either rising line drives or fly balls that will have extended carry. Creating proper Bat-Lag in your swing will raise your batting average and produce more extra-base hits while reducing weak outs.

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