

How to Execute Your Swing

You need both arms to work together when you swing your softball bat; a one arm only swing is not ideal, however, each arm does have its role. I believe you should begin your swing to the ball from your launch position using your lead arm (left arm for right-handed hitters and right arm for left-handed batters). A lead arm beginning to your swing will keep your hands inside the ball as you move to contact. The lead arm should be nearly straight and the rear arm bent to about a 90° angle. If you begin your swing with your back arm, you most likely will push or “cast” the clubhead out when extending the back arm too soon killing your swing action.

Try a throwing motion with the bat at the incoming ball instead of just pulling the bat solely with the lead arm. This will increase your bat speed quite a bit and will also square up to the ball better for a solid hit instead of dragging the bat to the ball. You should set your bat lag early in the swing releasing it as you begin extending your rear arm and wrist to the incoming pitch in the classic palm up/palm down position. It’s not enough to just use your hands and arms to swing the bat, you also must snap open your hips driving hard into the ball all at the same time to maximize bat speed. The bat barrel must be “squared-up” to the ball at contact for maximum ball-exit speed.

Contact should happen before you fully extend your back arm. Arms are fully extended after contact maximizing bat speed through the ball ending in a two arm or one arm follow through, depending on if you release your top hand or not after contact. If you release your top hand, you can finish your swing with the “umbrella” follow-thru. This is where you release your top hand right after contact and continue your follow-thru with your lead arm only in an upright trajectory just like you just opened an umbrella.

This follow-thru is a direct consequence of a slightly upward bat path to the ball which allows you to lift the ball over the infielders on a line rather than hitting ground balls from too much top hand to the ball. A two-handed follow-thru is okay as well.

Remember that a proper hip rotating action, that is in sync and supports everything else is necessary for your swing work effectively. Make certain you swing the bat aggressively and not passively and I don’t mean overswinging at the ball. Controlled aggression is what we’re looking for in a senior softball swing.

Recap swing execution (*see insert*):

1. Set yourself in your normal stance at the plate,
2. Stretch arms back to start your swing like loading a bow, as you begin your weight shift,
3. Use lead arm to initiate swing, lead arm is nearly straight, rear arm is at 90°,
4. Throw bat at ball for additional bat speed (without letting go, of course),
5. Extend both arms fully after contact,
6. End in a smooth looking follow-through.

Spend time practicing your swing with the lead arm to establish muscle memory in starting your swing with this technique. The goal here is to have a repeatable swing that will make you more consistent while delivering

maximum force to the ball with minimal effort. Hitting a softball with efficiency can be a very satisfying and doing things correctly can only enhance this fun activity.

The individual in my demonstration photo insert is Brett Kreuger from the greater Seattle area and is a well-established Major plus power hitter in senior softball.

Happy hitting,

Art Eversole

