

SKEETER GENTILE – HITTING DRILLS



Drill #1: Ball punches front hand:

A player kneels next to a tee. She hits a tennis ball off the tee using the back of her front hand. The idea is to lead with the elbow and finish with the arm extended down the power line as she drives the ball back toward the pitcher.



Drill #2: Ball punches back hand:

A player kneels next to tee. She hits a tennis ball off the tee using the front of her back hand. The player should work on driving her back elbow into the hitting slot, finishing with her arm extended up the middle. If the player pulls out when hitting, have a partner stand across from her and hold her front arm to prevent the unwanted action. Or just have the player hold her front arm out in front of her body to achieve the same result.



Drill #3: Theraband snaps:

In this partner drill, player 1 kneels next to a tee, holding a folded elastic band. Player 2 sits across from her, with her open right hand on top of the tee. Using the band as her "bat," Player 1 swings and attempts to hit Player 2's hand with a loud "snap." The goal is to lead with the elbow and get a good wrist snap at contact. If the player achieves a dull thud sound instead, she likely led with her hand and pushed the ball. This drill also helps hitters learn to stay inside and keep the hand tight to their body to avoid coming out.



Drill #4: Radial bat two hands extension:

A player kneels next to a tee with her front knee on the ground and her back knee off the ground. Using a radial bat, she hits a softball off the tee, leading with the elbow and finishing with the arm extended down the power line. Instruct her to sink her weight and load back, so it's like her normal swing. This limits front shoulder rotation, helping her get the bat through the zone.



Drill #5: Quick snaps:

The hitter stands next to a tee, with her belly button facing the ball. She takes two quick practice swings, without hitting the ball, then a full swing on her third pass. This helps the player work on hand path, wrist snap and getting the barrel down into the hitting zone.



Drill #6: T-stackers challengers:

Stack two balls on a tee using tee stackers, one ball on top of the other. Hitters compete to see who can hit the top ball first, then the bottom ball, without either ball falling off the tee. The goal is to hit cleanly and explosively. If both balls fall off the tee, the hitter did not hit with power.



Drill #7: Double tee:

Set up two same-height tees in a line and place a softball on each. Place the back tee between the hitter's feet, in the location where she'd contact an outside pitch. The hitter swings, attempting to hit the first ball to the right and the second ball straight ahead. If she rotates off the ball and doesn't get through the hitting zone, the second ball will remain on the tee. This provides the player with instant feedback, so she knows to make an adjustment.



Drill #8: Drive step adding swing:

Set up a tee with a softball on top. Start the hitter two big steps behind the tee. She pushes off her back foot and moves forward one step, then a second step, and finally she takes her swing on her third step. This works the backside drive. The player must keep her head inside her back foot to avoid coming over the front leg.



Drill #9: 4 x 6:

Set up a tee with a softball on top. Start the hitter with her back leg on top of a 4 x 6 piece of wood, then have her take her normal swing. Elevating her back foot in this way prevents her from sitting back and forces her into an attack position, so she must really drive into the ball when hitting. This can also be useful as a way to get your hitters comfortable hitting in less-than-perfect batter's boxes.



Drill #10: Hitting pod / tennis ball backside drive:

A hitter sets up next to a base, standing with her back foot on top of a tennis ball. A coach tosses a softball to her from the side. As she swings, she focuses on driving off the tennis ball into the pitch. For players who need more stability, cut the tennis ball in half.



Drill #11: Walking to T:

Set up two tees in a line, about 5 feet apart. Starting at the back tee, the player hits the ball off the first tee, strides forward, then hits the ball off the second tee. The goal is to create momentum in the swing.



Drill #12: Volleyball swings:

A hitter sets up next to a base. A coach tosses a slightly deflated volleyball to her from the side. As she swings, she focuses on hitting the ball explosively.



Drill #13: Open stance front toss:

A player sets up at the plate with her body open to the pitcher. As the pitcher sends balls in, the hitter's job is to hit line drives and gap shots. This drill helps players practice bat control, good hand path, and separation of the swing.



Drill #14: Front toss alternating:

The hitter sets up at the plate. The pitcher alternates the type of ball pitched—tennis ball, rubber ball, volleyball, whatever you have on hand—forcing the hitter to adjust with each pitch.



Drill #15: Eye patch extension & full front toss:

For this drill, a hitter wears an eye patch on her front eye as she hits. This forces her to rotate her head, so she keeps both eyes on the pitch. It also helps with over-rotation of the load. The hitter starts by hitting off a tee, then progresses to a soft toss then a front toss as she gets more comfortable swinging with the eye patch on. Players should alternate between swinging through to extension and swinging through to full.

To view video demonstrations of these drills, visit <https://www.theartofcoachingsoftball.com/hitting-drills-drills-more-drills/>.