

THIRD STRIKE ADJUSTMENTS

COACHES: Here's a proven methodology for teaching players how to adjust for the

1. Review the complete list of potential adjustments.
2. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each.
3. Have the players pair off, draw a home plate on the ground and practice each adjustment.
4. Players then practice all adjustments of the batting tee and then soft toss.
5. Ensure players work on their third strike swing at every batting practice.

1. PROTECT THE OUTSIDE CORNER

To avoid being fooled on an outside pitch, move several inches closer to the plate. This will permit better visual and bat coverage of the outside edge. Be aware it could also create a vulnerability low and inside.

This is a mandatory adjustment.

2. MOVE CLOSER TO THE PITCHER

Moving forward in the batter's box reduces the effectiveness of breaking pitches. This means there will be a better chance of contacting the pitch before or early in the break, while the visual angle is still manageable. Because this adjustment shortens the pitching distance, batters will have to trade off between hitting pitch movement and pitch velocity.

3. IMPROVE BAT CONTROL

Choke up on the bat, or split the hands for better bat control. Both these adjustments will reduce the swing weight of the bat, allowing for a quicker, more controlled swing. Every inch of choke-up reduces the swing weight by about 1/2 ounce. This equates to about 6 inches of ball travel on a fast pitch. **Also a mandatory adjustment.**

4. SHORTEN THE SWING

Bring the hands forward, closer to the center of the chest to start the swing. This shorter swing will reduce power, but probably increase swing accuracy and the chances of making contact with the ball.

5. ACHIEVE BINOCULAR VISION

Seeing the ball with both eyes improves tracking ability. The easiest way to achieve this is by opening the stance so that the front foot is farther from the plate than the rear foot. As the body turns to more directly face the pitcher, the bat also moves closer to the point of contact, which automatically shortens the swing as well.

For more information on Hitting Adjustments see, "GOLD MEDAL HITTING" Part 2.