



# **Coach Steve's Softball Training Modules for Primary & Middle School Players**

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# Softball Training Modules for Primary & Middle School Players

## 2. Batting

Every Player develops his own special Batting technique over time. One of the greatest hitters in major league baseball, Cal Ripkin, changed his batting stance many times during his Hall of Fame career - so there is no one size fits all.

There are five elements that make up a good baseball swing of which the

- first one is the “**Stance**” which includes the “**Grip**”
- Then the “**Stride**”, the “**Shift**”, the “**Rotation**” and the “**Follow-through**”
  - Together these make up the action phase of a Batter’s hitting motion.

### 2.1 The Stance

The “**Stance**” is the semi-stationary position taken by the Batter as he waits for the Pitcher to deliver the ball and involves:

- A correct “**Grip**” of the bat handle - knuckles aligned & bat held upright
- An athletic posture (legs apart shoulder width, feet inside the batter’s box), slight bend at the knees, weight distributed evenly and a relaxed posture
- Align Body Core Centreline to be over the back corner of Home Plate
- Eyes looking at the Pitcher to quickly see the ball in flight

#### **Right Handed Batter**

**Left Hand at the knob at the end of the bat**  
**Right Hand next to left - no gap between the hands**

**Bat Handle held in the fingers - not the palm of hands**  
**Bat held Upright for maximum power**



#### **Left Handed Batter**

**Right Hand “Choked-Up” 50mm from the knob**  
**“Choke-up” Grip improves hitting consistency**

**Used by Experienced Players on 2 Strike count**  
**Recommended for Players new to Softball**

## 2.2 Shift & Rotation

The “**Shift**” and “**Rotation**” parts of the ball hitting swing involve:

- the “**Shift**” starts with
  - Lean backwards to transfer weight to the back foot
  - Move the hands moving downward (by moving the knob of the bat and the back of the hands to point towards the ball)
  - While at the same time, transfer weight to the Batter’s front foot.
- The “**Rotation**” continues by
  - the turn of the body core to face the playing field
  - while bringing the bat into the “Contact Zone”.

The ideal “**Contact Zone**” where the Bat meets the Ball

- is between the front half of Home Plate to approximately 100 to 150mm in front Home Plate. *(see Section 2.2)*



Shift

Rotation (1)

Rotation (2)

### **Right Handed Batter**

**Moves directly into the Shift and Rotation parts of his swing**

**No stride as front foot does not move forward during the swing**

**Ball Contact Zone  
150mm in front of Home Plate**

### **Left Handed Batter**

**Contacts ball in his Contact Zone  
about 250mm in front of Home Plate**



### 2.3 The Follow-through

**Right Handed Batter**

**Accelerates his swing through Rotation  
and  
Finishes swing with a high "Follow-through"  
with arms fully extended**



### 2.4 Hitting Instruction Videos

Both Alex Rodriguez and Cal Ripken are in Baseball's Hall of Fame. Their approach to hitting was quite different as compared in the table below

	<u><b>Cal Ripken</b></u>	<u><b>Alex Rodriguez</b></u>
<b>Stance</b>	"Busy"	"Compact, Smooth, Quiet"
<b>Body core alignment</b>	200mm behind Home Plate	Back half of Home Plate
<b>Contact Zone</b>	200mm in front of Home Plate	Front half of Home Plate
<b>Shift</b>	"Busy", Front foot pulled back	Body move backwards
<b>Stride</b>	Long: front foot moves forward 300 to 400mm	None, weight transfer to front foot - stays in place
<b>Rotation</b>	Quick hands, Full turn	Quick hands, Full turn
<b>Body Core on Contact</b>	Back half of Home Plate	Back half of Home Plate
<b>Follow-through</b>	Full, left hand only on bat	Full, left hand only on bat
<b>Career Home Runs</b>	431 (48th All-time)	696 (4th All-time)

[Cal Ripken - "Long Stride" Batter](#)

[Alex Rodriguez - "Compact Swing" Batter](#)

## 2.5 Batting Hints for Softball Players

- Many different styles but the key to consistent batting is
  - **Stance and Grip** relaxed, athletic posture
  - **Look** at Pitcher's "**Knee Spot**" - the release point of the ball



**Right Handed Pitcher**

**Completing his windmill motion with  
Ball release point just above his right knee**

**"The KNEE Spot"**

- **Shift** weight back, then forward, hands move down towards the ball
  - (Stride forward with front foot; useful but not necessary)
  - **Rotation of Body Core** and swing the bat to the **Point of Contact**
  - Accelerate swing through the ball and **Follow-through**
- 
- View the Alex Rodriguez Youtube Video where he demonstrates the "Compact Swing" recommended for developing Players.
  - Use the Hitting Net to determine your ideal positioning for:
    - Body Core Alignment relative to Home Plate at the Stance Position
    - Point of Contact relative to the front of Home Plate
  - Take regular practice sessions at the Softball Hitting Net

*Goals: Senior 1<sup>st</sup> Team Players should be able to hit 10 consecutive balls off the hitting Tee directly into the middle of the hitting net on a consistent basis. Senior 2<sup>nd</sup> Team and Middle School players work on achieving personal bests towards achieving 1<sup>st</sup> Team standards*