

# Using a Tee to improve your hitting

By **Cortney Patteson & Andrew Karkoulas** (Peak Performance Athletics Training Facility, Guelph Ontario). Article from SportsXpress (January, 2015)



The tee is often known as the most despised piece of training equipment in a coach's repertoire. It is boring. It is almost never fun. It is the greatest tool in becoming an offensive force.

The reason why the tee gets a bad rap is the way that it is used. Set up down the middle, waist high and never moved – often smack dab in the middle of the plate. This can sometimes be more harmful than helpful. Taking 100 quantity swings is far less effective than 25 quality swings.

## Rules of hitting the tee:

1. **Move it:** contact points for hitting an inside pitch vs. an outside pitch are different; therefore, the tee should be moved according to the pitch you are working. Make sure that in a swing session, you work the inside pitch, middle pitch, and outside pitch. The inside pitch is where the contact point is three inches in front of the inside corner of the plate; the middle pitch is set up at the middle white front edge of the plate, and the outside pitch is where the tee is set up on the outside back corner of the plate.
2. **Change the plane:** pitchers are constantly working on locating pitches in the top and bottom borders of the zone. As hitters, let's start practicing hitting these pitches! Make it a point in your swing session to adjust the tee to mimic both the top and bottom of the strike zone.
3. **Visualizing:** no hitter in the history of baseball has ever stepped in for a bat with their eyes firmly planted down on the plate. Start with eyes out, and then visualize a pitcher. Motion a proper load, drop the eyes, spot the ball, and then hit. There is one commonality between all successful athletes: they all visualize.
4. **Double down:** using two tees at once can help expose mechanical errors. Set up two tees, one in front of the other. The back tee should be slightly lower than the front. Set up a ball on the front tee, and swing aggressively, avoiding the back tee. If you see the back tee move, we can start to pinpoint mechanical errors in the upper body. This is great when there are no coaches around!
5. **Mix it up:** Why is the tee boring? Routine. Most swing sessions are the same. Start with the tee, and then go to underhand, and go to live. Do not be afraid to "check" your swing every so often. Start tee, go to underhand, and back to tee work, then go to live and finish on tee. Checking your mechanics before, during and at the end of a swing session will help you notice any inconsistencies as we get tired.

You want to improve your average this season? **Tee it up.**