



Mental Approach to Hitting

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~ MENTAL APPROACH ~

Hitting is the most difficult skill to perform in athletics and, as a result, most players struggle when dealing with failure. Failure is part of the game of baseball, especially from an offensive standpoint. Three hits in ten at bats, despite failing seven times, is considered good. Hitters evaluate at bats too often on hard numbers instead of concentrating on seeing the ball well and making consistent solid contact. Try to instill an uncorrupted approach to hitting that is not affected by numbers only. Try to stress the importance of not being influenced by things out of the hitter's control (like umpiring, weather, field conditions, hitting background, etc.).



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Successful hitters at all levels commonly share the following positive mental characteristics.

- * Trust in their hitting ability
- * Display confidence in their hitting skills
- * Display a patient, relaxed demeanor
- * Have willingness to learn their strike zone
- * Have a fearless approach in AB's
- * Display determination to win the AB

Unsuccessful hitters at all levels commonly share the following negative mental characteristics.

- * Have a fear of failure/getting beat
- * Make excuses for poor performance
- * Have low confidence/self-esteem
- * Poor aptitude when getting instruction
- * Struggle to control emotions
- * Display inconsistent or poor work habits



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Successful hitters learn to combine their strong mental characteristics with their physical tools and use them all to their advantage. In order to gain a consistent successful approach hitters must overcome the adversity that surrounds them.

Good Approach

Saw the Ball Well
Comfortable
Good Concentration
Aggressiveness
Staying Within Self
Seeing a lot of Pitches
Hitting in Good Counts
Solid Contact
Execution of Situation/ Accepting the Role
Compete, Compete, Compete!

Poor Approach

Did not see the Ball Well
Uncomfortable
Lack of Concentration
Over -Aggressiveness
Non-Aggressiveness
Making Outs Early in Count
Always Hitting 0-2
Umpire Affected Call
Approach Changes in Mid-AB
Affected by Weather, Background
Fear of Failure



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Hitters need to learn to evaluate each at bat without being clouded by emotion and unrealistic expectations. Good hitters focus solely on the at bat at the moment instead of previous successes and failures. Have a plan, execute the plan & reap the benefits. The key to successful offense is to have the mental toughness to grind out at bats. Hitters need to be able to respond positively to their performance in at bats and realize they have little control over results.

Keys to Evaluating AB's

Approach >>>>→ Performance >>>>→ Results >>>>→ Response

-	-	-	-
-	+	-	-
-	-	+	+
+	+	-	-
+	-	+	+



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Players will often respond to the result of their at bat instead of their approach or performance. It is imperative for hitters to overcome the successes/failures from one at bat to another in order to be consistent in their approach. The response to an at bat will often carry over to the next plate appearance. By focusing on performance over results hitters can learn to trust their approach and ability to hit.



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Mental/Physical Preparation for Hitters

Pre-Game

- * Fine-tune and maintain rhythm/timing of mechanics with swing repetitions
- * Have questions answered concerning physical approach
- * Maintain early recognition and visual awareness of pitches

In Dugout

- * Mentally review the Pitcher being faced and his repertoire (watch the opposing Pitcher warm up if possible)



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Mental/Physical Preparation for Hitters

On Deck Circle

- * Watch Pitcher's delivery and release points
- * Pay attention to what Pitcher's secondary and out pitch is as he works hitters
- * Recognize any situations that may be presented in your AB

In Batter's Box

- * Control emotions and breathe
- * Intensify concentration and channel aggression
- * Rely on game plan
- * Relax, Recognize and Respond!