

THE ELBOW UP MYTH, Debunking the Elbow Myth...

I'm glad you are concern, you have every right to be! What is a myth? A myth is an idea that is commonly perceived to be true, but isn't.

"Get your elbow up!" is a constant advice given to kids. Sadly too many youngsters do just that only to experience further difficulty with their hitting. It is doubly reinforced when the young ballplayer is successful in little league in hitting constant fly balls...these are balls that will soon turn into outs as the kid moves up in the ranks and kids learn to catch better.

Getting the arm up is the number one hitting myth of all times. If there was a hall of fame for "wrong advise" this would win hands down (no punt intended). It has a life all of it's own. But the fact is that it's entirely wrong.

You can spend the rest of your life researching and reading about hitting a baseball and you will not find any expert-hitting instructor recommending it. You won't find it in any hitting book. I have been reading and researching about the art and science of hitting for the last 25 years and have never seen this advise in print or in any other fashion. Although, I confess to hearing and seeing it every single day at a ball park by well meaning coaches and dads.

Hitting with the elbow up slows your swing. It slows the critical power connection between the back elbow and the torso. It causes the hitter to bring his hands up too high. Some bring their hands above their back shoulder. This is very poor technique. The results will be one of two possibilities...either the hitter will have to hitch his hands down as he loads to get back down to the proper launch position, or even worse, he will just launch down on a steep angle from too high a position.

In addition to making contact harder, it encourages upper cutting. Many youngsters find this technique easier because they believe that by using gravity this will jump start their bats...but it is not a good way too hit...he will never be able to hit his best.

By the time some of them discover how wrong this advise is they have swung a bat thousands of times, making any corrections either too late or too difficult.

Here is what JD Koltz has to say about hitting with the elbow up.

THE ELBOW UP MYTH

I'm sure that every small child or coach that has worked with kids has heard:

"Kept your back elbow up"

- well unfortunately this does not teach proper hitting technique

Here are some thoughts on this:

WHERE SHOULD THE BACK ELBOW BE?

Elbows must be relaxed. How? Create an upside down "V" with the arms and hands.

1. The back elbow needs to be in a relaxed position, with no tension. Should not be above the hands
2. What is relaxed?
3. Relaxed means that the elbow should not be above the position of the hands.

Do not try and drive the back elbow up. Why?

1. Having the elbow up and above the hands will create tension in the shoulder and neck therefore reducing the ability to swing the bat quickly and effectively.
2. The high elbow will cause the hitter to unlock the back elbow as they start to swing by pushing out (casting), causing an upper cut and long swing. In order to swing, the hitter will unlock first which means they will straighten out the arm, which reduces bat speed.
3. The high elbow will not allow the hitter to effectively fire the hands and bat at the ball.

Relaxed Elbows @ 45 degrees...Why?

1. Initially teaches the proper path to the ball
2. Assists torso starting the swing.
3. Forces the batter to start hands by dropping the hammer.
4. Force hitter to swing with bent arms.
5. Removes the hitch and excess trigger action.

High Elbow/Hand Position on Bat...

1. The high back elbow also does not allow the hitter the proper grip on the bat.
2. Hitters need to keep the bat in the fingers (not the palms) in order to create wrist snap and bat speed.
3. High back elbow makes it more difficult for the hitter to create bat speed and maintain a short stroke.
4. The hands, bat and elbows should all be in a 45-degree position. This position will give the batter the best chance to maintain a quick, compact stroke and along with hip rotation, create a smooth consistent swing.

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