

COACH'S TIP: *How to fix too much head movement during the swing (Turning the head or drifting).*

The head is the “root” to a lot of problems not only in Little Leaguers swings, but anybody’s swing. Teach your hitters to keep their head still during the swing.

There are varying philosophies on what a hitter should do with their head throughout the swinging process. Some coaches preach – “No movement...at all!” Others say minimal movement is acceptable.

My opinion is this – during all pre-swing movements (i.e. - load, stride) it is acceptable to have a little head movement. Alex Rodriguez, Gary Sheffield and Ichiro all have some head movement during the load and stride... I think it’s fair to say that they’re all “pretty good” hitters. Once your hitter gets to “launch” position (stride foot has landed and their weight and hands are back), all head movement must stop as the hips rotate, hands fire and contact is made.

The main drill I do when I have someone turning their head and/or drifting during their swing (head coming forward) is the “Nose on the Ball Drill” or “Nose on Contact Drill.”

“NOSE ON THE BALL DRILL” (“NOSE ON CONTACT DRILL”):

The player will hit off the tee keeping their head behind the tee and baseball while also keeping their nose pointed at the tee (contact point) throughout the entire swing. The cues I use are “Look at the ball, then look at the tee.” They should focus on seeing the ball and the mechanics of their swing...NOT on the outcome of the swing.

I also put the baseball on the tee the same way every time with the seams of the baseball “one on top of the other.” The hitter will focus on or, “stare” at, the space in between the two seams. The hitter will attempt to watch their bat hit the ball directly between the seams. If you are using wiffle balls, have the hitter focus or stare at one of the holes in the wiffle ball and watch their bat hit that hole during the swing. The main focus is for the hitter to be looking at the ball at the beginning of the swing and be looking at the tee at the end of the swing – with their nose pointed at the point of contact the entire time.

This will train you hitters to focus on contact and seeing the ball rather than where the ball is going or, the outcome of the swing. If they focus on the swing (see the ball, head still, stay balanced), the chances of the outcome being good increase...If they focus on the outcome (Looking up to see if the ball is going over the fence before they have even hit the ball), the chances of the outcome being bad increase. They need to remember this simple saying...”see the ball...hit the ball!”



Notice the hitter’s nose is “pointing” at the ball (contact).