



Cricket
development
programme

A background image of a cricket match in progress on a green field, with several players in white uniforms visible. The image is overlaid with a blue gradient and a white circular logo at the top.

CRICKET DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME LEVEL 1

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DISCLAIMER

The CDP resources are to give teachers, volunteers and parents guidance on how they could deliver cricket sessions and aid a child's development. They provide expert skills and drills to work on along with objectives to follow the national curriculum . While we try our hardest to make the resources accurate and up to date, please make your own judgement on the location and delivery of the CDP sessions. We accept no liability to you or any third party in respect of your use of the resources.

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Batting Skills

The following pages are colour coded so you can see the drills and games which focus on the skills below

-  Bat pick up & grip
-  Stance and balance
-  Straight drive swing
-  Improving top hand/ high elbow
-  Head to the ball.
-  Pull shot
-  Cut shot
-  Sweep shot

BATTING SKILLS



BATTING BASICS

- Bat pick up & grip
- Stance and balance
- Straight drive swing
- Improving top hand/ high elbow
- Head to the ball.
- Pull shot
- Cut shot
- Sweep shot



(1) Bat pick up & grip

Description:

The way we pick up the bat is crucial because, when done correctly, it helps us to hit the ball with the largest possible surface area, as an example if we hold the bat with too much of the bottom hand our back shoulder can be too dominant which can make us play across the line.

Drills:

Pick ups

Practice swing

(With this basic skill, Introduce a game early but focus on repeating the pick up every time.)



Lay your cricket bat on the ground with the face of the bat pointing downwards, and the handle pointing directly towards you. (Fig. A)

Hold your hands out in front of you and create the V shapes by positioning your thumbs as shown in Fig. B. Right handed batsmen should have their right hand on top and left handers should have their left hand on top. The V's on each hand should line up with each other. Imagine there is a line connecting them!

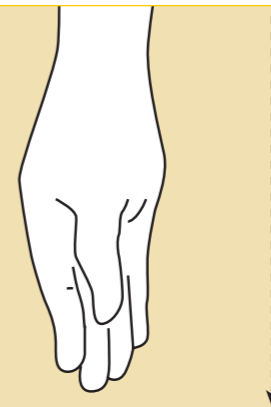
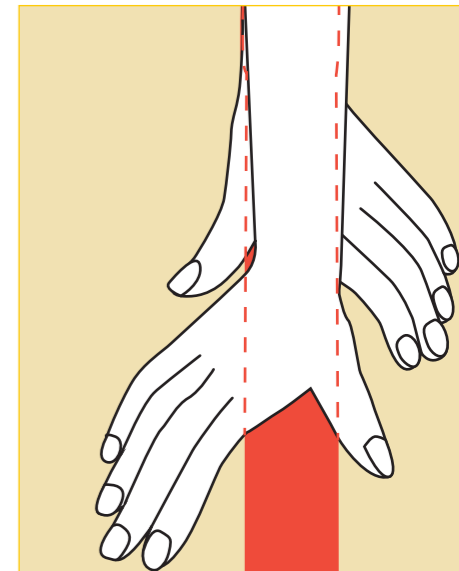


Fig. A



Front of bat

Fig. B



Bend down whilst keeping your hands in this position and place them on the back of the bat handle (Fig. C).

Make sure there is a small gap between them! The V shapes created by the position of your hands should now line up with the middle of the back of the bat.

Once your hands are in position on the back of the handle, wrap your fingers around it and pick up the bat.

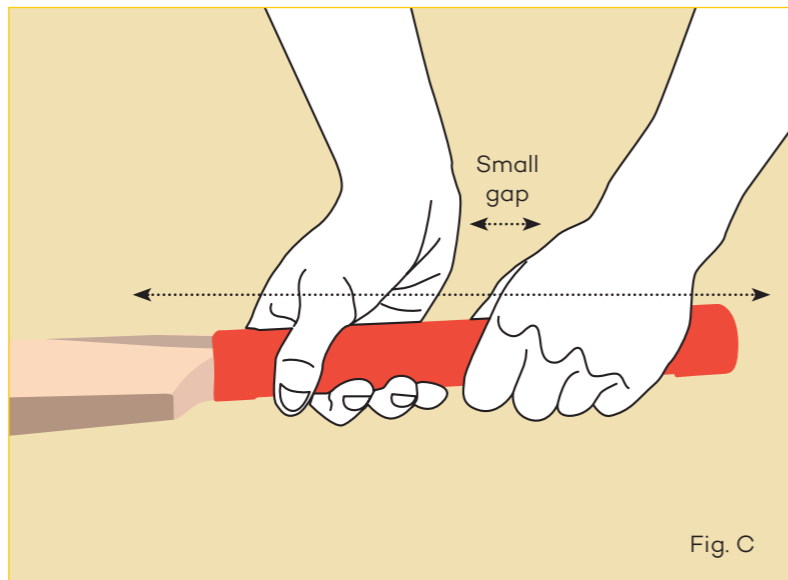


Fig. C

CORRECT



The main priority with the grip is that the player is comfortable when playing the basic shots they are going to learn.

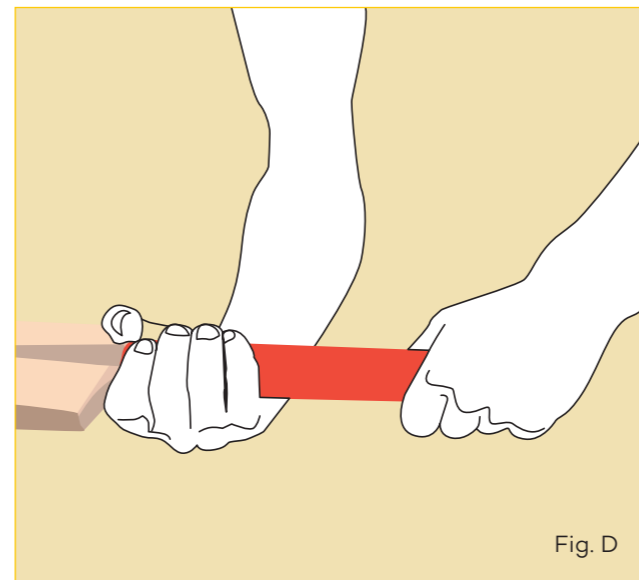


Fig. D

WRONG

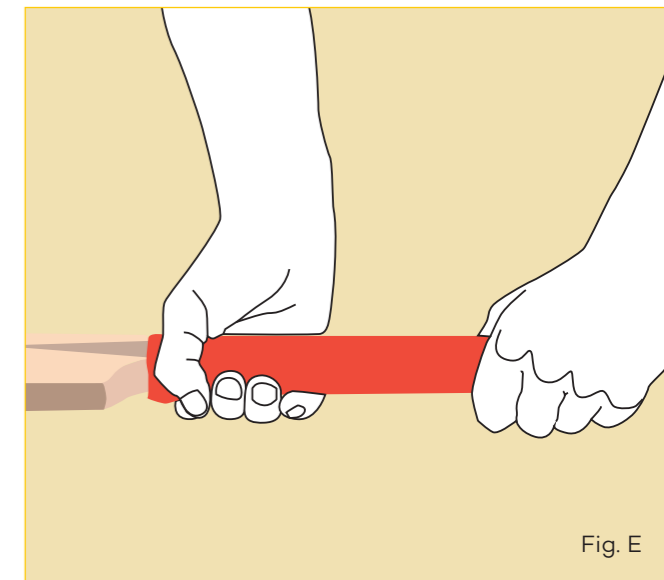
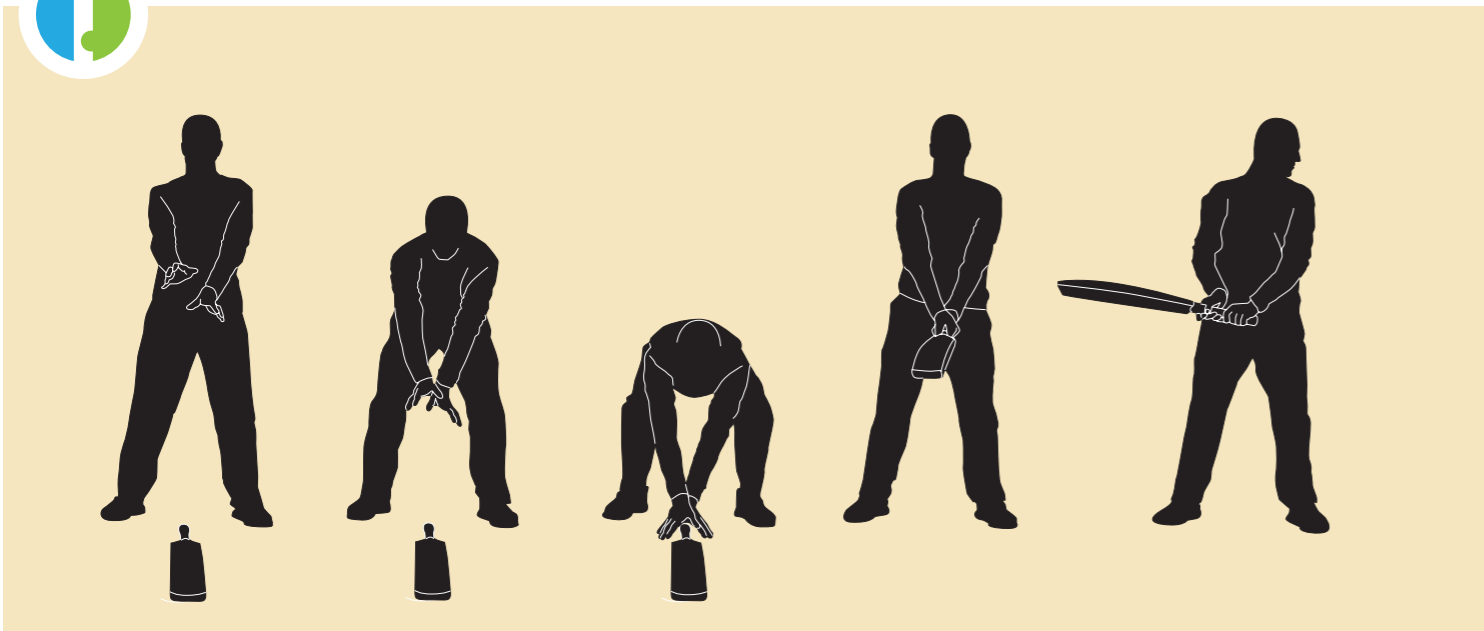


Fig. E

WRONG



**Bat pick up drill**

Distribute the bats evenly between players.

Take it in turns to practice picking up the bat as shown in the image above. Players should focus on picking up the bat with the thumb and first finger of both hands creating a V to line up with the spine of the bat (Fig. B p 27).



Get the players to adjust their grip so they feel comfortable when playing cricket shots



Practice swing
Distribute the bats evenly between players.

Get the players to practice swinging the bat, ask them to focus on the handle of the bat starting off facing towards the bowler, when they start their back-swing the bat handle should face

towards the floor and then on the follow through facing behind the player.

Keep repeating this movement until it feels repeatable.



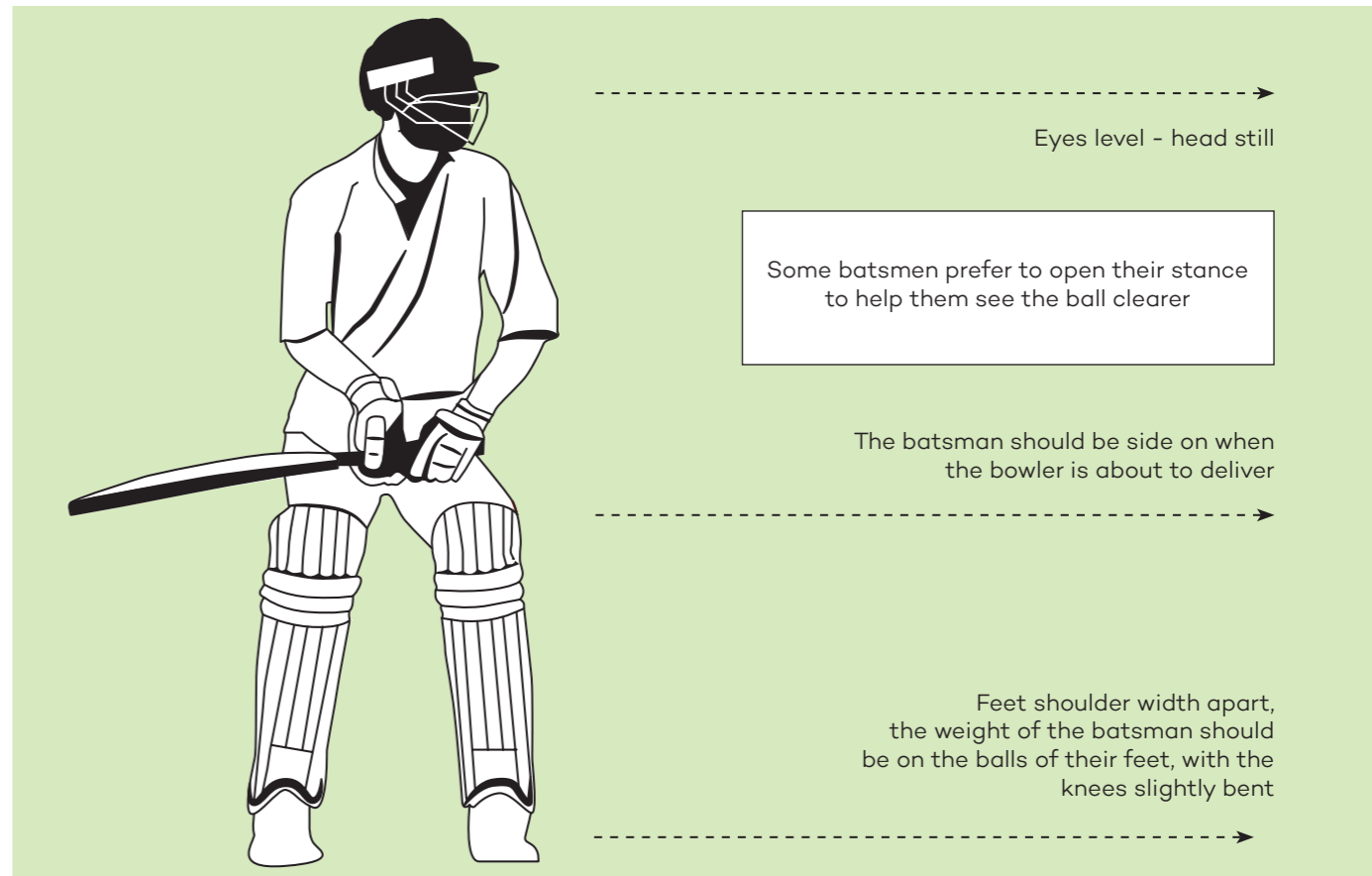
(2) Stance and balance

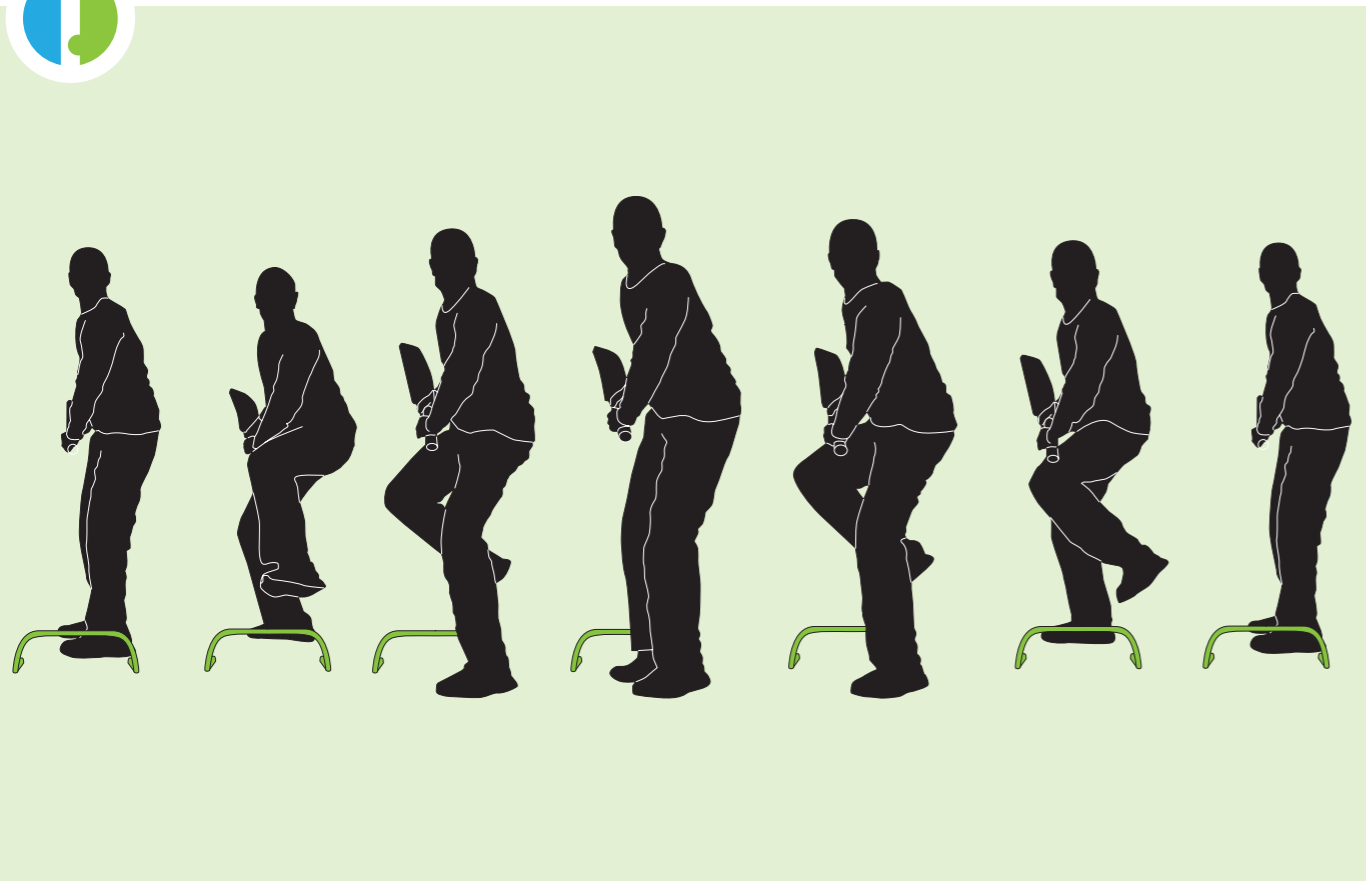
Description:

Feet shoulder width apart, eyes level comfortable standing position side on. (Don't lean on the bat)
Hands in a comfortable position along side body. Our main focus when thinking about our batting stance is to make sure we are in a comfortable repeatable position and our head is still when we want to hit the ball.

Drills:

Hopping over cones/ hurdles
Hit balls off three cones showing movement to mid off, straight and mid on.
Spin and hit facing the wrong way.
Back foot lift shots- progress to foot on chair





Hopping over cones/ hurdles

This drill is all about creating good movement for the players.

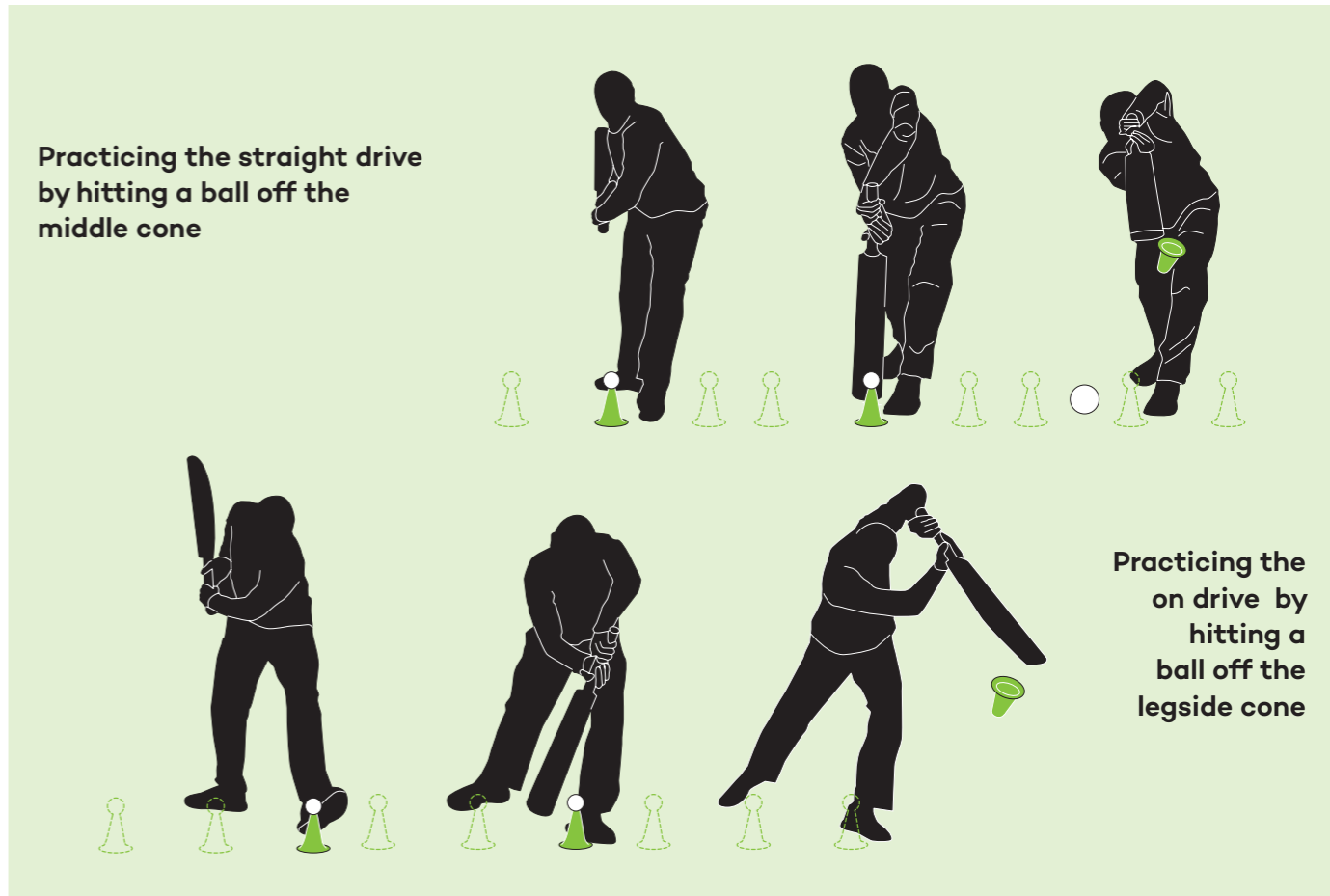
With their bats in hand, the players should stand side on to the hurdles/cones and step over leading with the foot closest to the hurdles/cones. Repeat this movement and allow the players to have fun seeing how quickly they can make the movements whilst staying balanced.



Hit balls off three cones showing movement to mid off, straight and mid on.

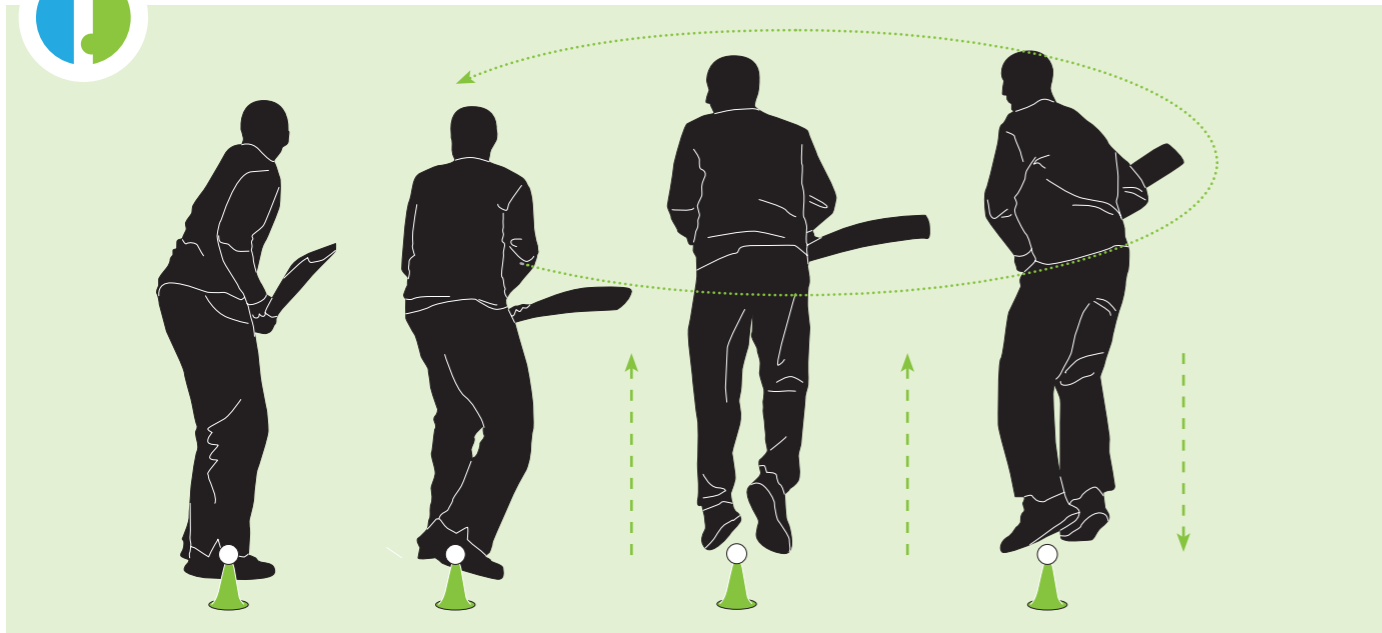
Split the players into even groups and give each group 3 cones each with a ball on top, make sure all players are positioned, so they don't hit the ball at one another. The players should then take it in turns to hit the balls off the cones towards cover, straight and towards midwicket.

(View fielding positions on page 197)



Practicing the straight drive by hitting a ball off the middle cone

Practicing the on drive by hitting a ball off the legside cone



Spin and hit facing the wrong way.

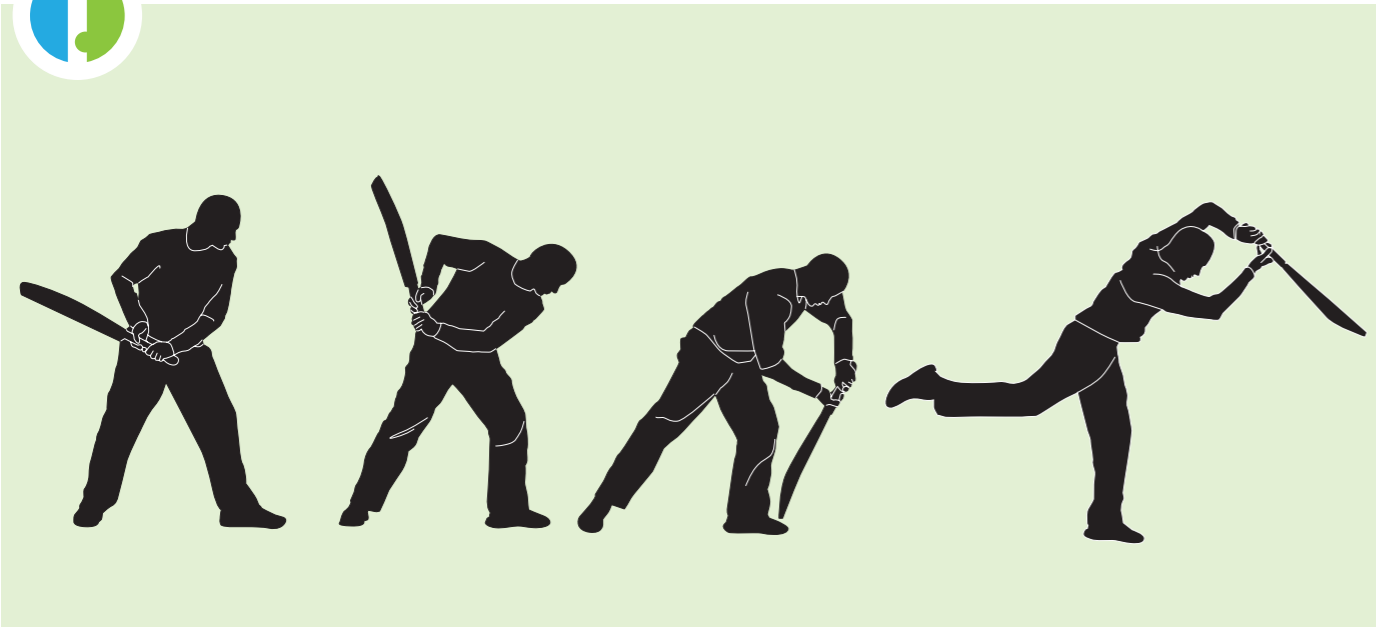
Set out a ball on a cone and have the players facing in the opposite direction, side on, as seen in the image above. The aim is to spin 180 degrees and land ready to hit the ball straight.

Players can take it in turns to hit the ball off a cone. This is a great drill for spatial awareness but also allows the players to get used to moving their feet when playing cricket shots.



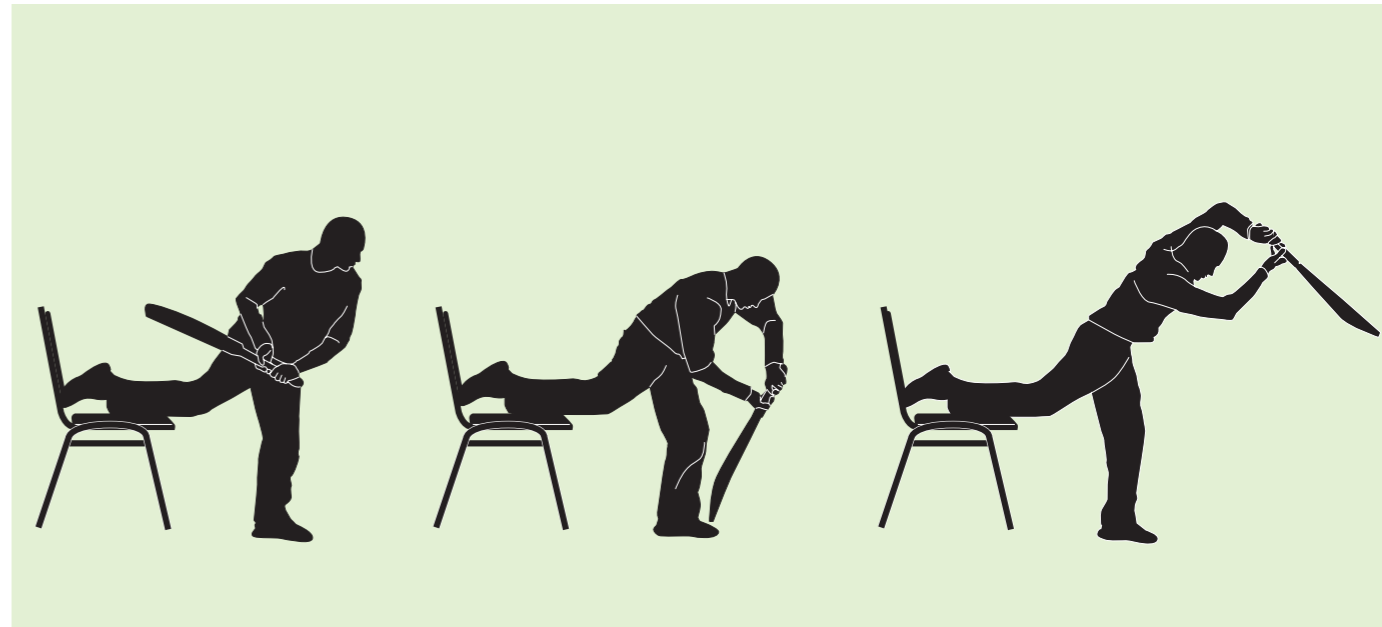
Put cones down for scoring areas roughly 5m away from the players for them to try and aim at. (See Fig. F page 62)

The player should be trying to hit each ball with a full face of the bat. (Using one hand is a difficult skill, so emphasise there is no pressure to succeed with this drill).



Back foot lift shots

Distribute the bats evenly between your players. Firstly, get the players practicing their bat swing a few times. Once they have done this for a few minutes ask them to try and lift up their back leg when swinging the bat. To progress this drill you can use a bench or a chair for the players to balance their back foot on and try hitting balls from this position.



Progress to foot on chair

These drills test the overall balance of the player and help to create a more stable base when making contact.



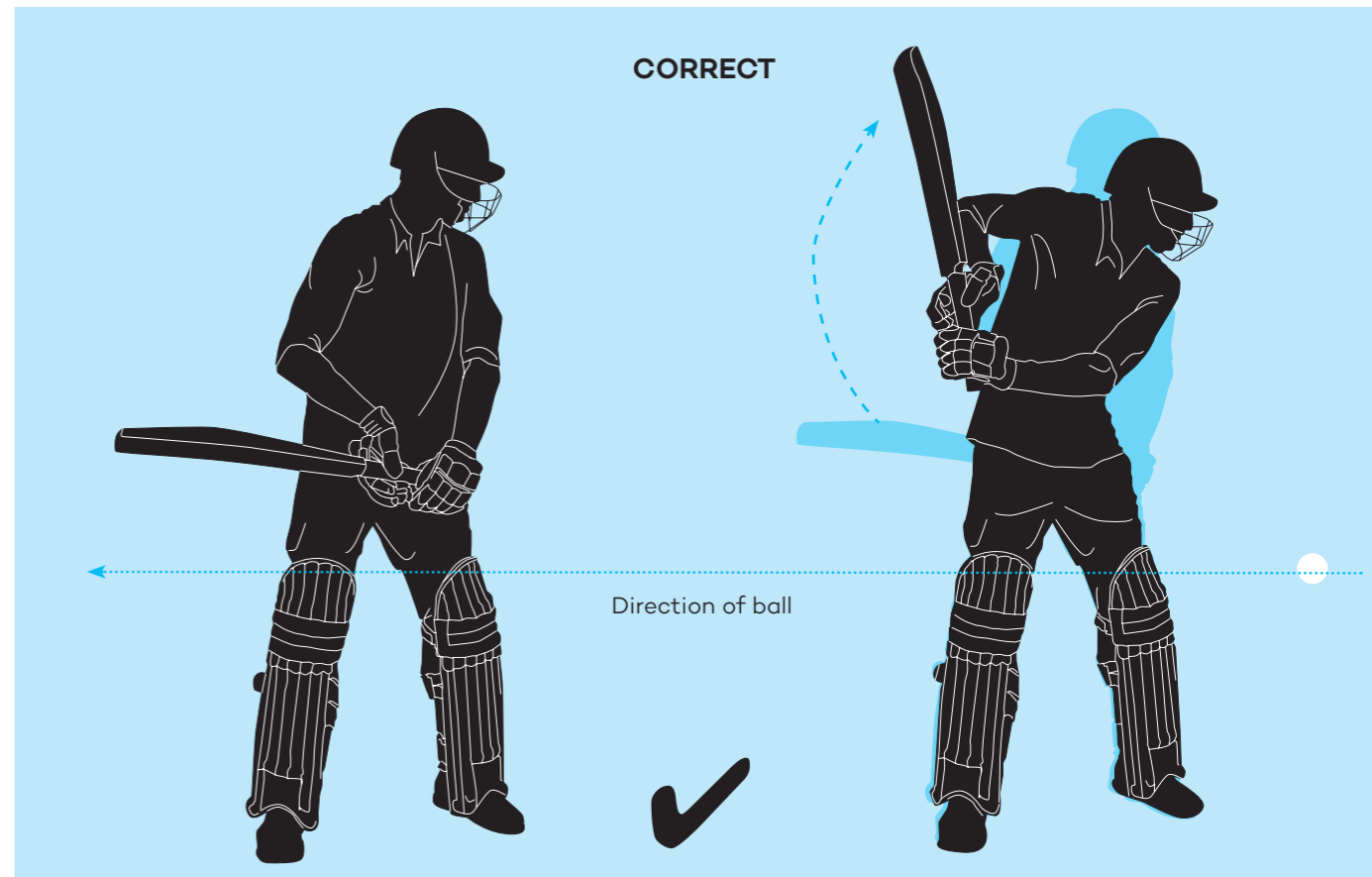
(3) Straight drive swing

Description:

These sessions are to make sure we can repeat the same swing over and over again with maximum chance of hitting the ball. The common mistakes are to swing across the line of the ball making it more difficult to make contact.

Drills:

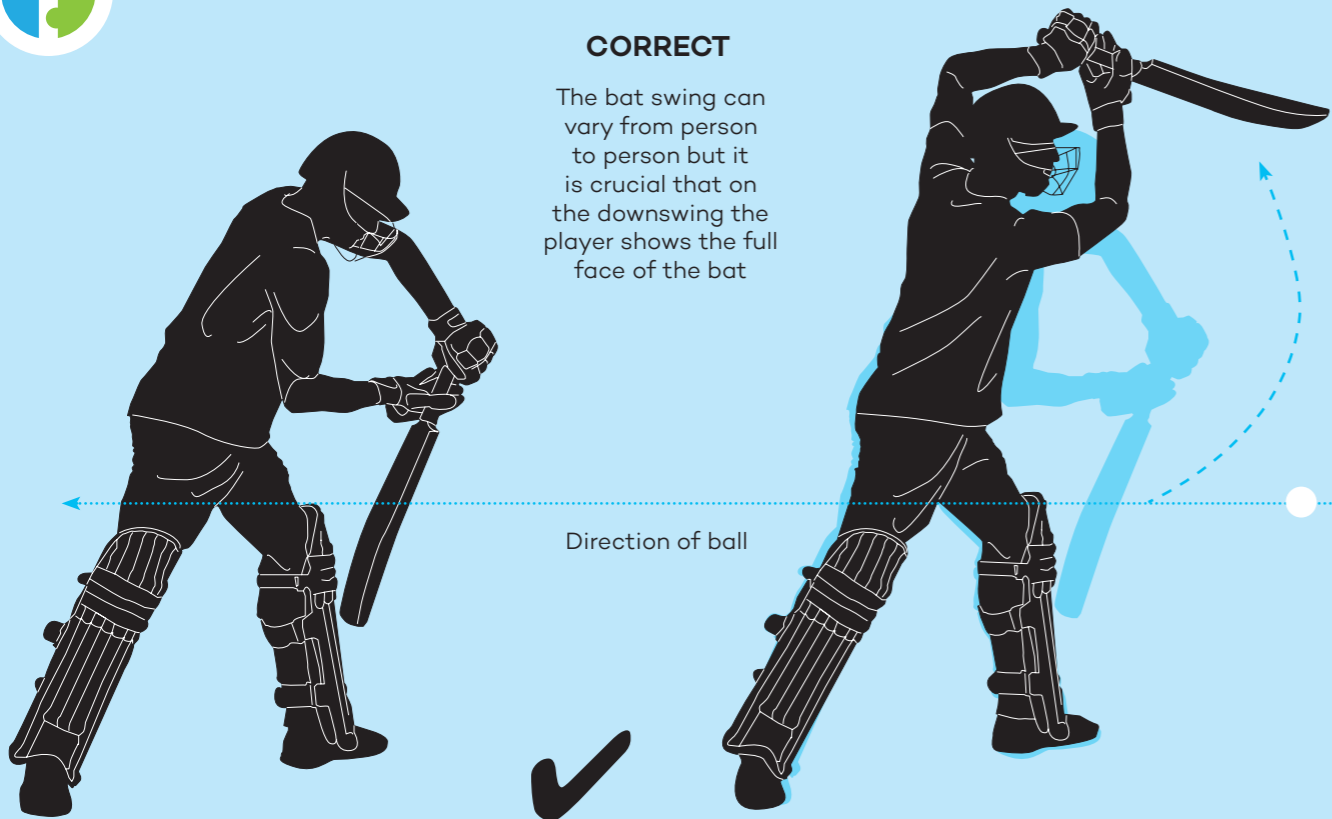
- Practice swing through stumps
- Swing against a wall one handed
- Getting the ball to return to a similar point





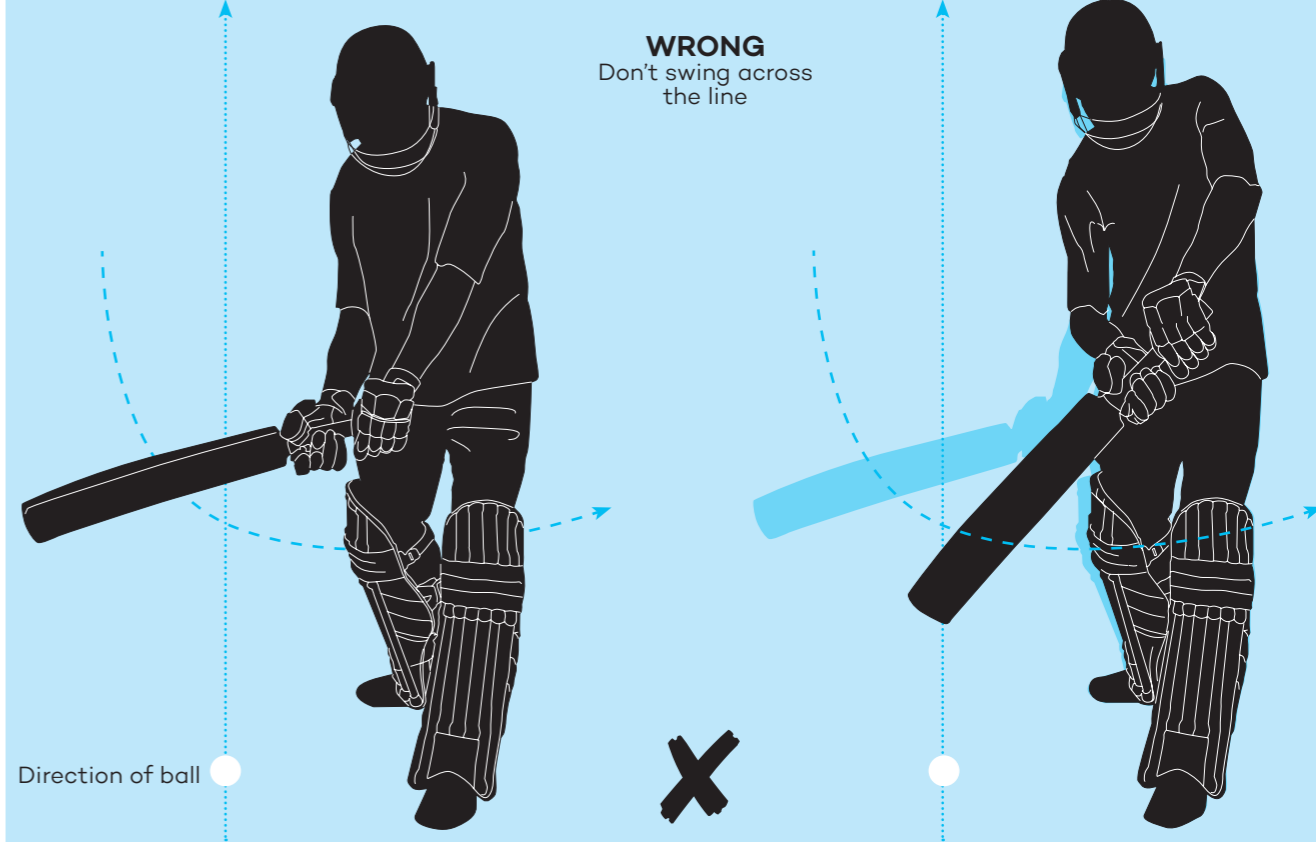
CORRECT

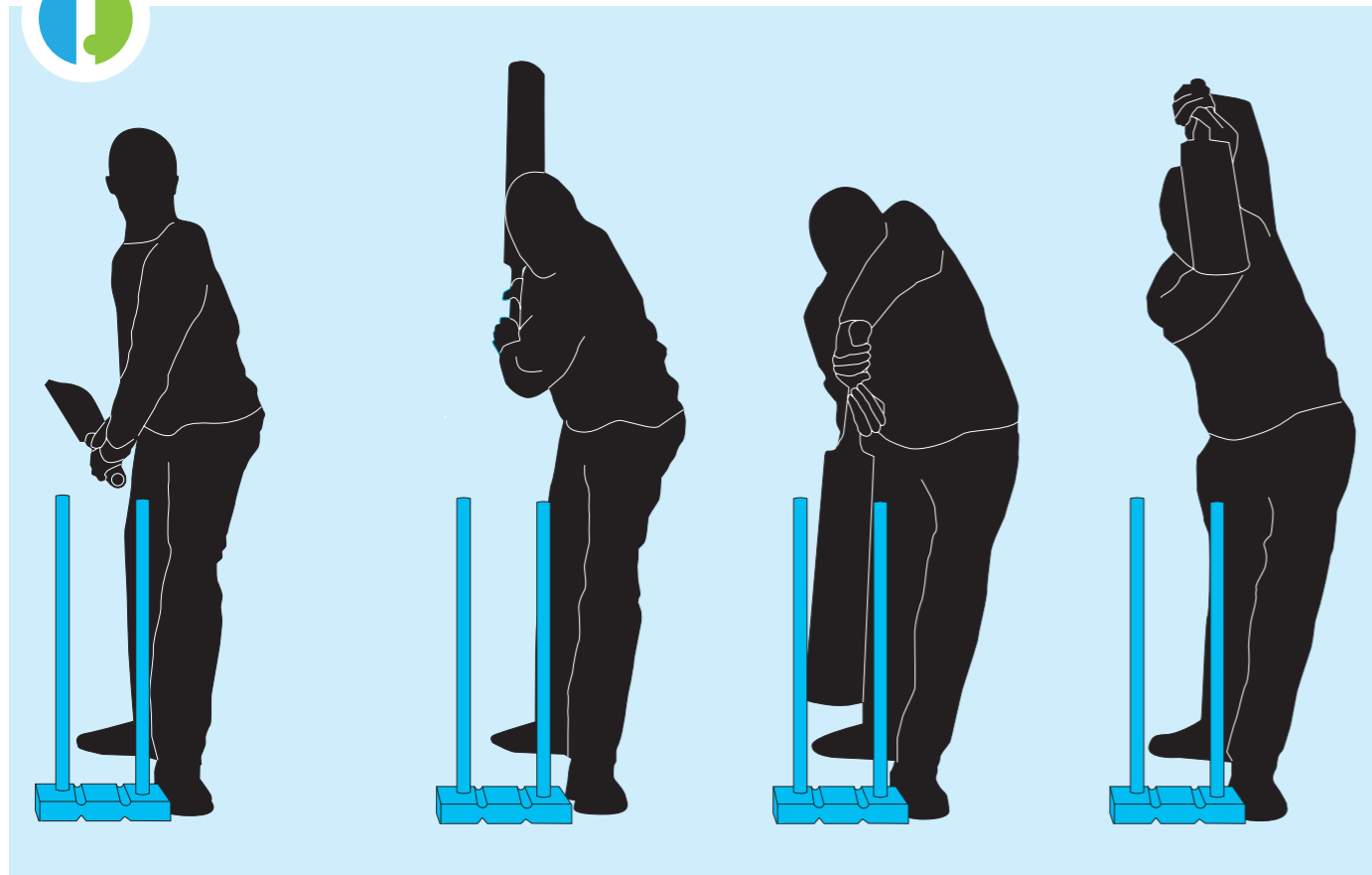
The bat swing can vary from person to person but it is crucial that on the downswing the player shows the full face of the bat



WRONG

Don't swing across the line





Practice swing through stumps

For this drill its best to use a set of cricket stumps with the middle stump removed, however it can be done with cones or any objects for the players to swing their bat in-between.

Players should get into their stance with their foot alongside the stumps/cones as shown in the image. Ask the players to swing slowly through the stumps/cones trying not to make contact with the stump/cones. The more confident players get with this drill the quicker they can swing and even add a step into the shot before swinging.

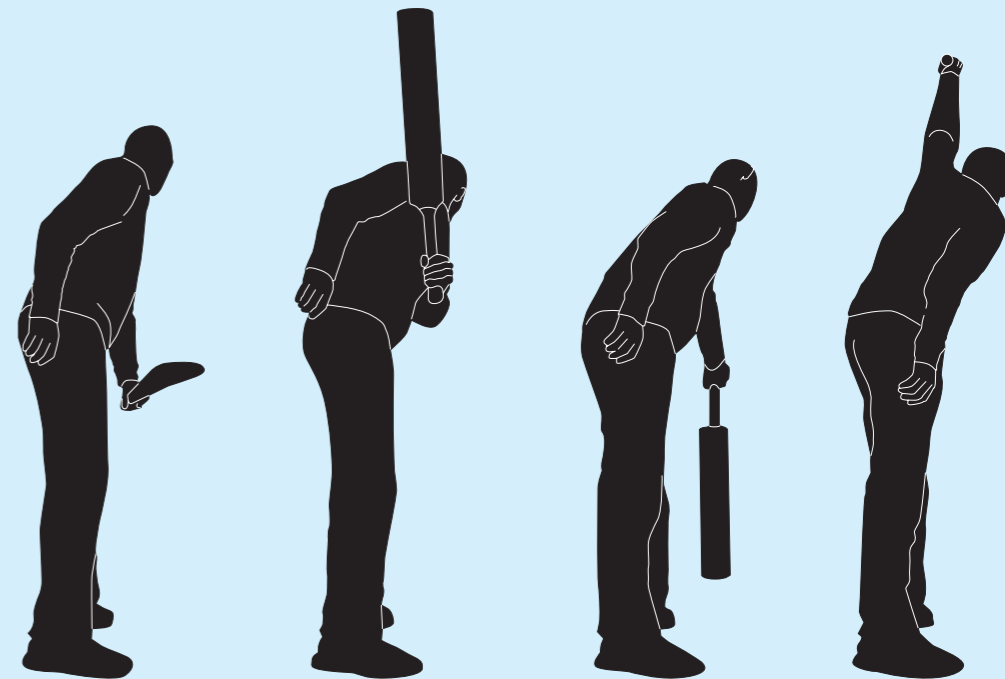
This drill is to focus on players swinging the bat as straight as possible to increase the chance of making contact.



Swing against a wall one handed - leading hand

For this drill you may need to split your players up depending on how many bats you have for the group.

Find a wall the players can line up against. Ask the players to take it in turns only swinging the bat straight with their left and the right hand.



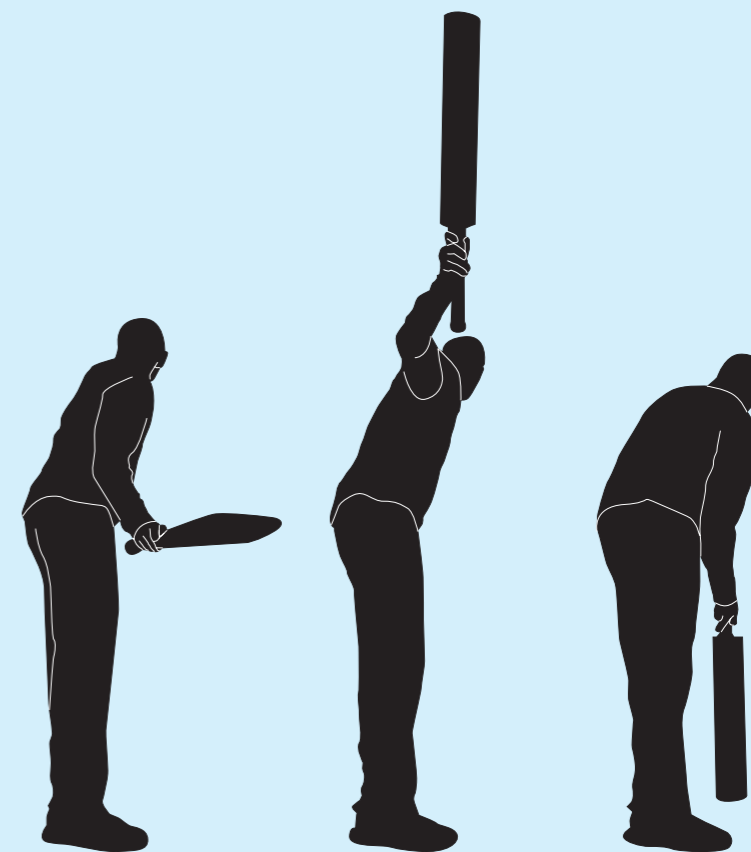
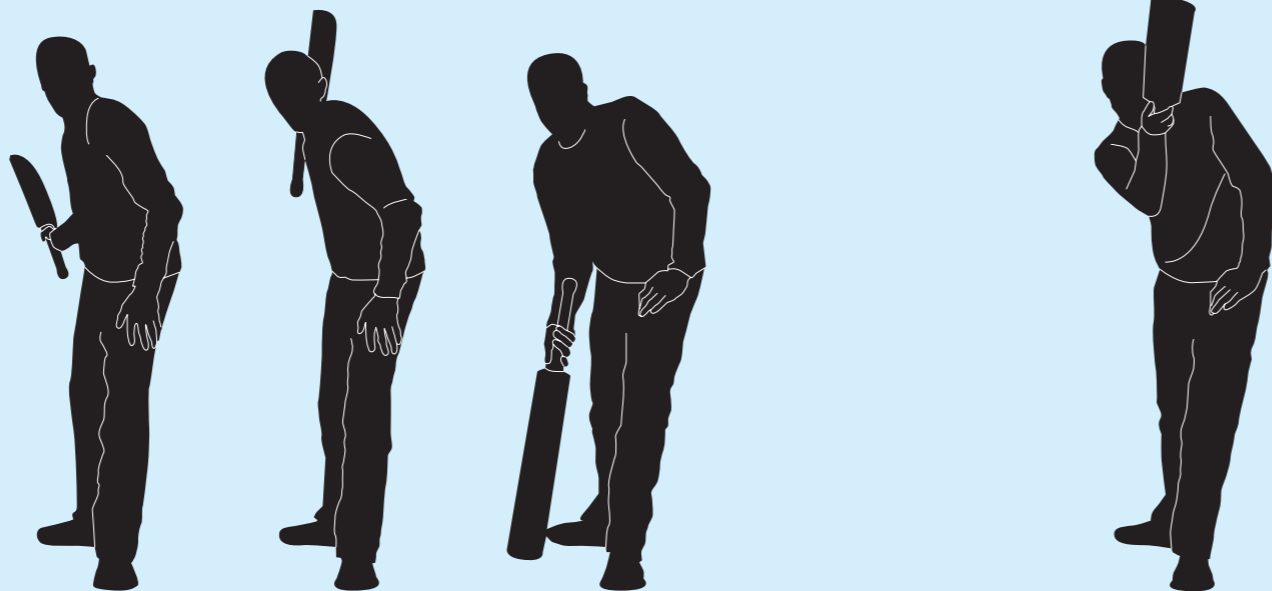
The reason we do this drill is to allow the players to learn how both hands work independently when playing cricket.

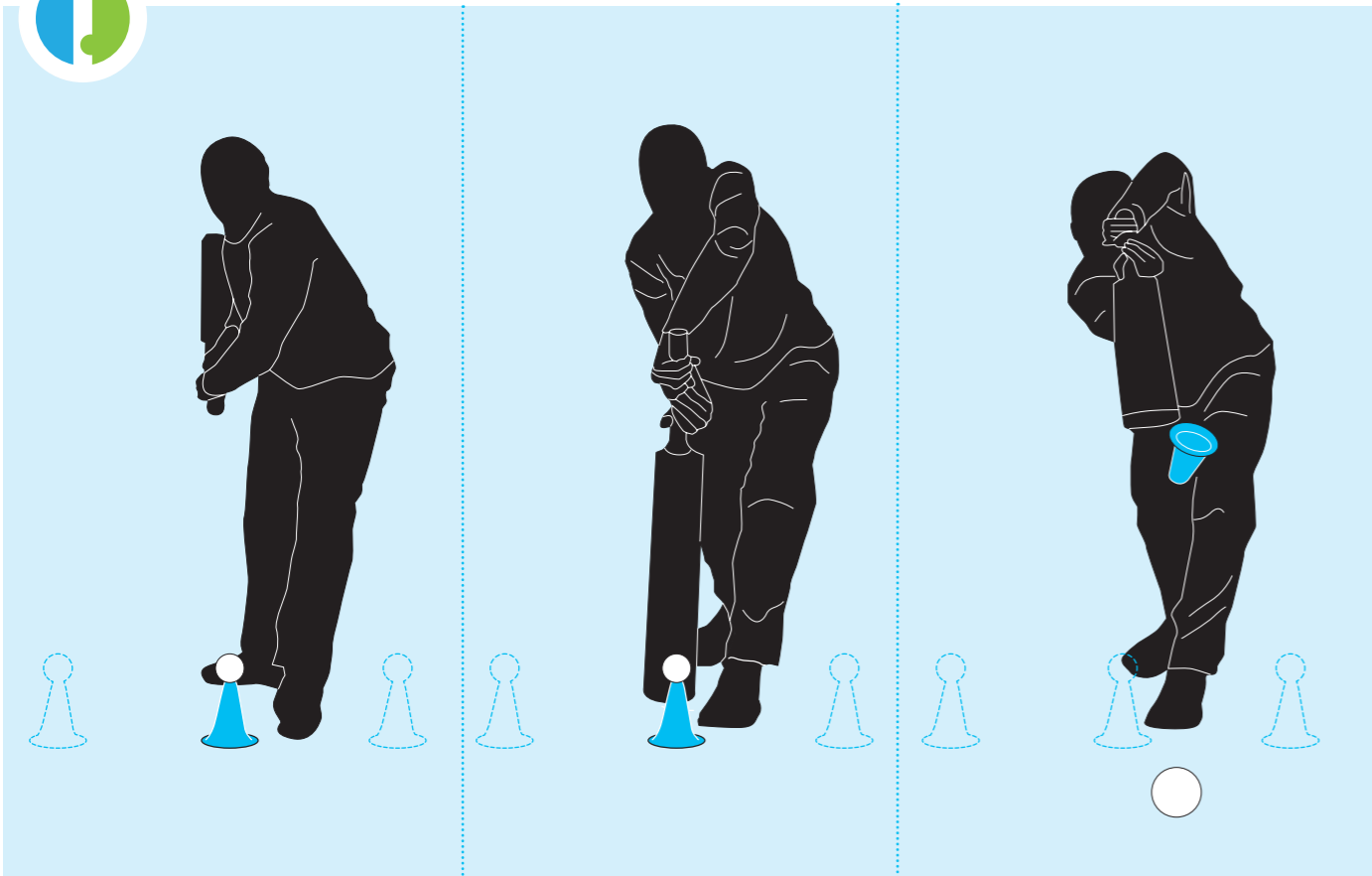


Swing against a wall one handed - back hand

For this drill you may need to split your players up depending on how many bats you have for the group.

Find a wall the players can line up against. Ask the players to take it in turns only swinging the bat straight with their left and the right hand.



**Getting the ball to return to a similar point**

For this drill the players are looking to hit the ball against a wall to allow the ball to return as close to the player as possible.

When practicing this drill ask the players what they feel helps them to hit the ball straight.

Using the full face of the cricket bat will give the player the best opportunity to hit the ball straight however every player will find their own way for success.



(4) Improving top hand/ high elbow

Description:

Your top hand is for control. To improve your top hand use the drills below. The high leading elbow allows you to have good control over where you are trying to place the ball while maintaining efficient technique. The elbow acts like a sort of steering wheel which directs the ball where you want it to go while swinging the bat in as straight a line as possible to the target area

Drills:

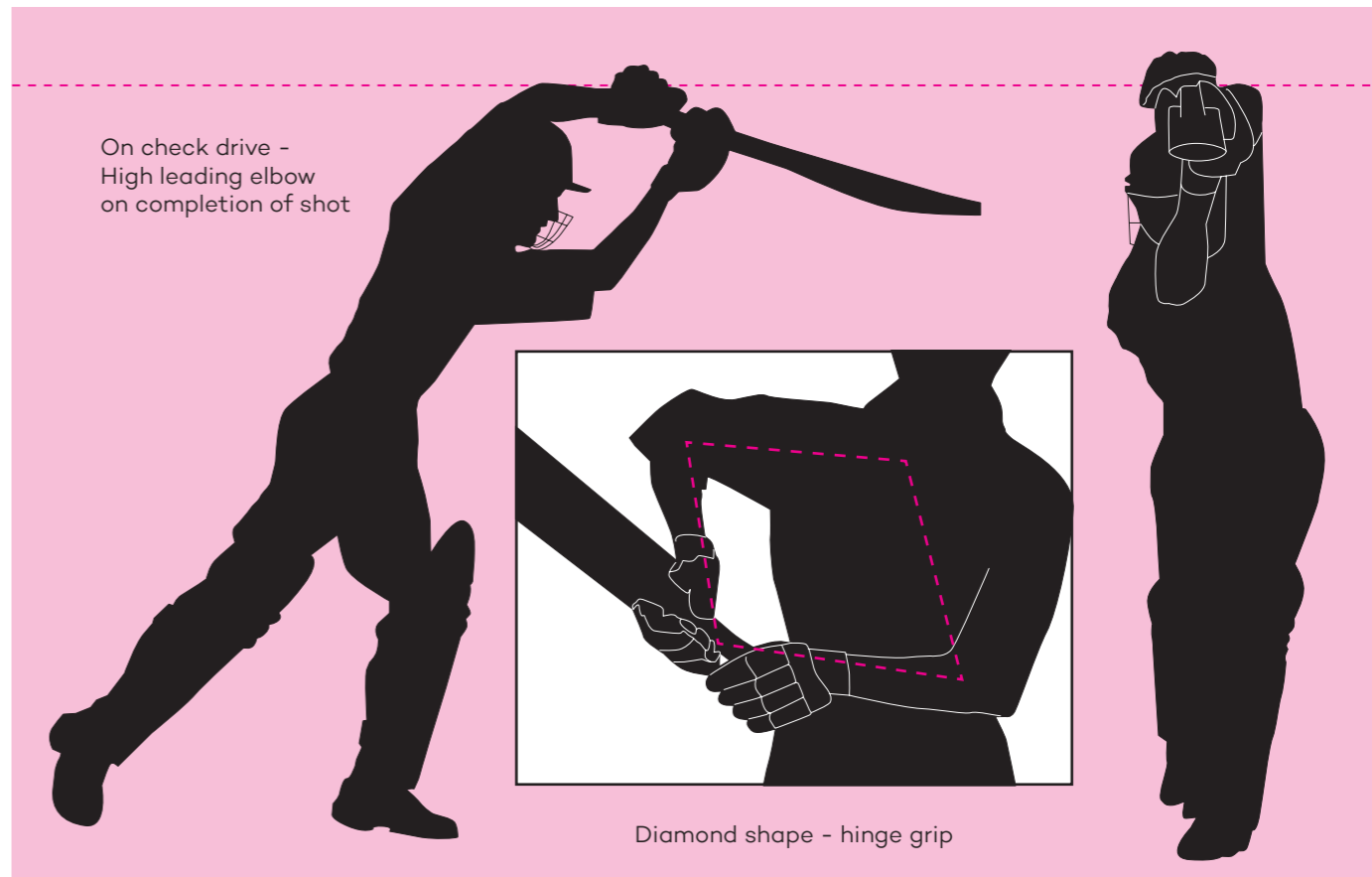
Release bottom hand wall swings

One handed drills

basics - One hand shot from a cone with scoring areas

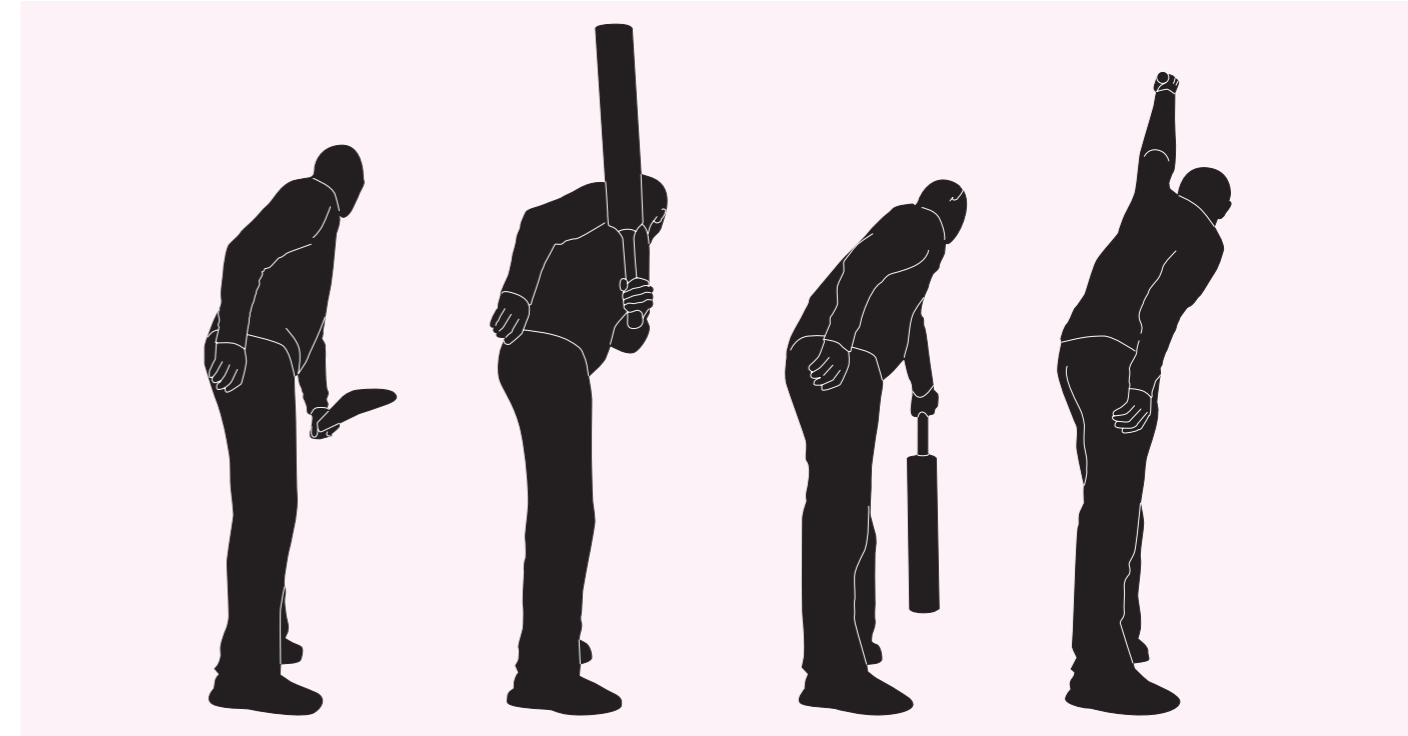
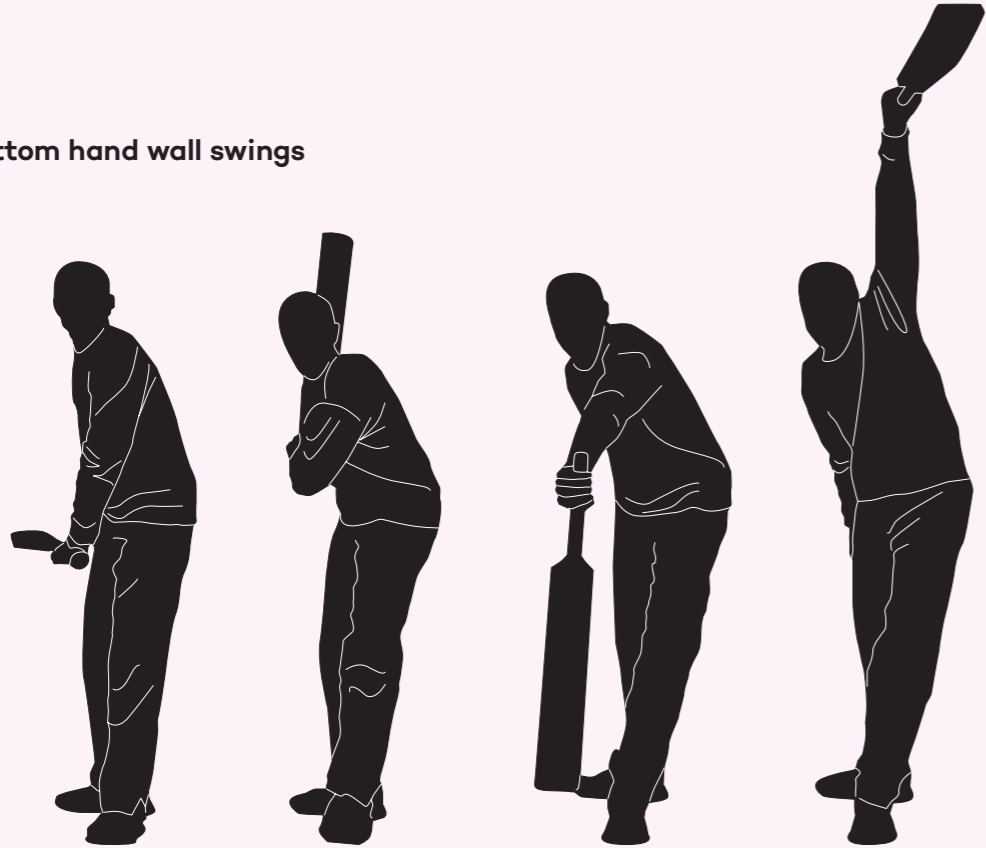
medium - One hand shot from drop feed with scoring areas

advanced - One handed shots from underarm feeds with scoring areas

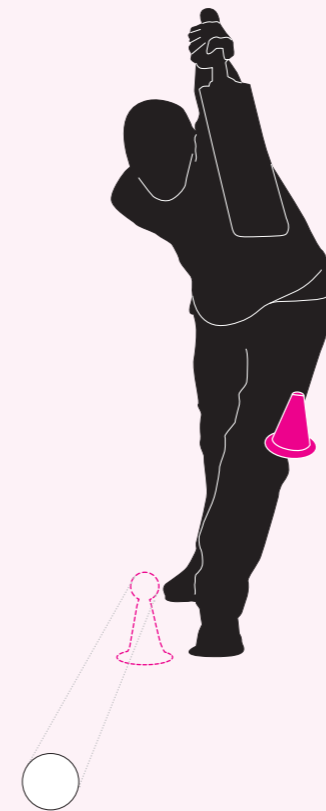
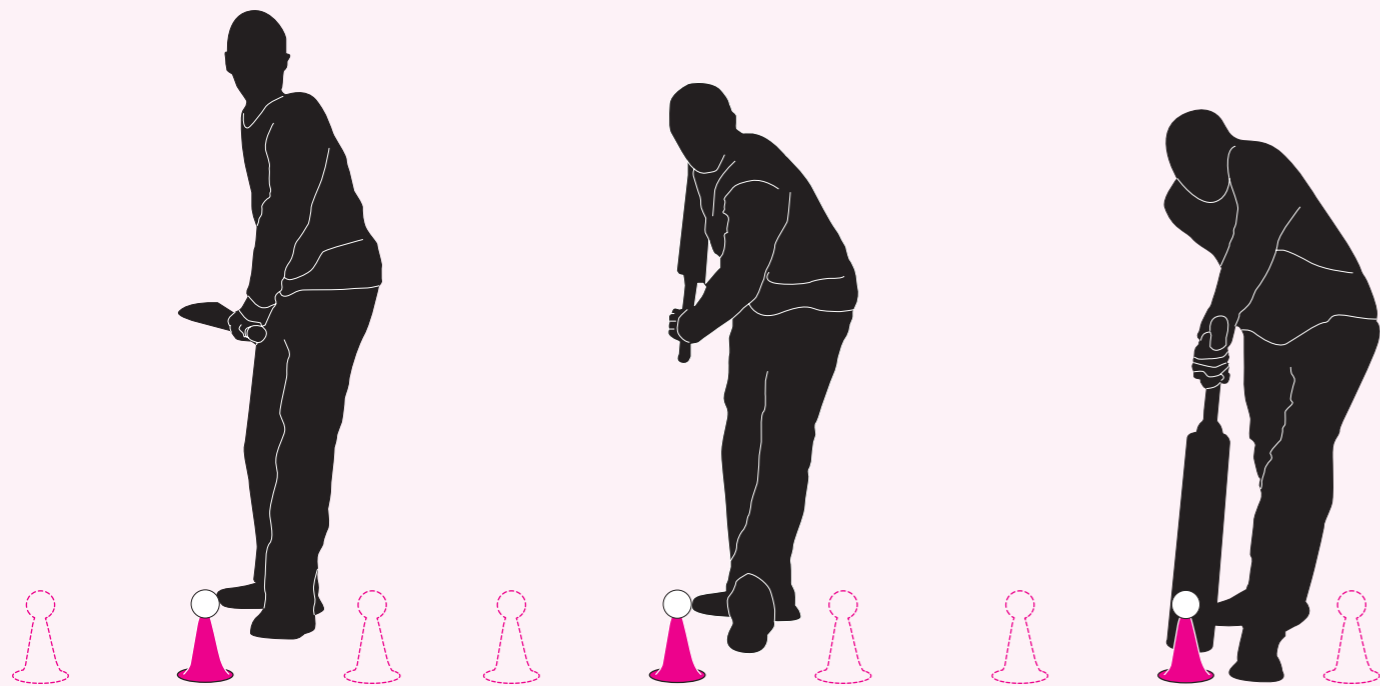




Release bottom hand wall swings



This drill is the same as page 52 but this time only focusing on releasing the “bottom hand” (their dominant hand). Players that aren’t very strong will fatigue quickly with this drill so take it in turns to practice with breaks.



One hand shot From a cone with scoring areas basics

Split the players up into even groups with bats and cones distributed evenly. Put three cones in front of the players with a ball on each cone as shown opposite

Put cones down for scoring areas roughly 5m away from the players for them to try and hit the ball towards. (See Fig. F over the page) The player should be trying to hit each ball with a full face of the bat.

Using one hand is a difficult skill, so emphasise there is no pressure to succeed with this drill

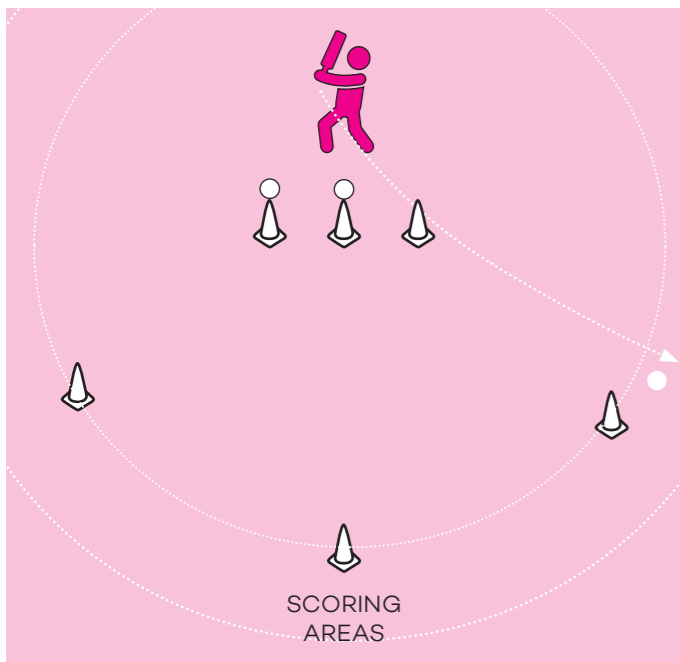
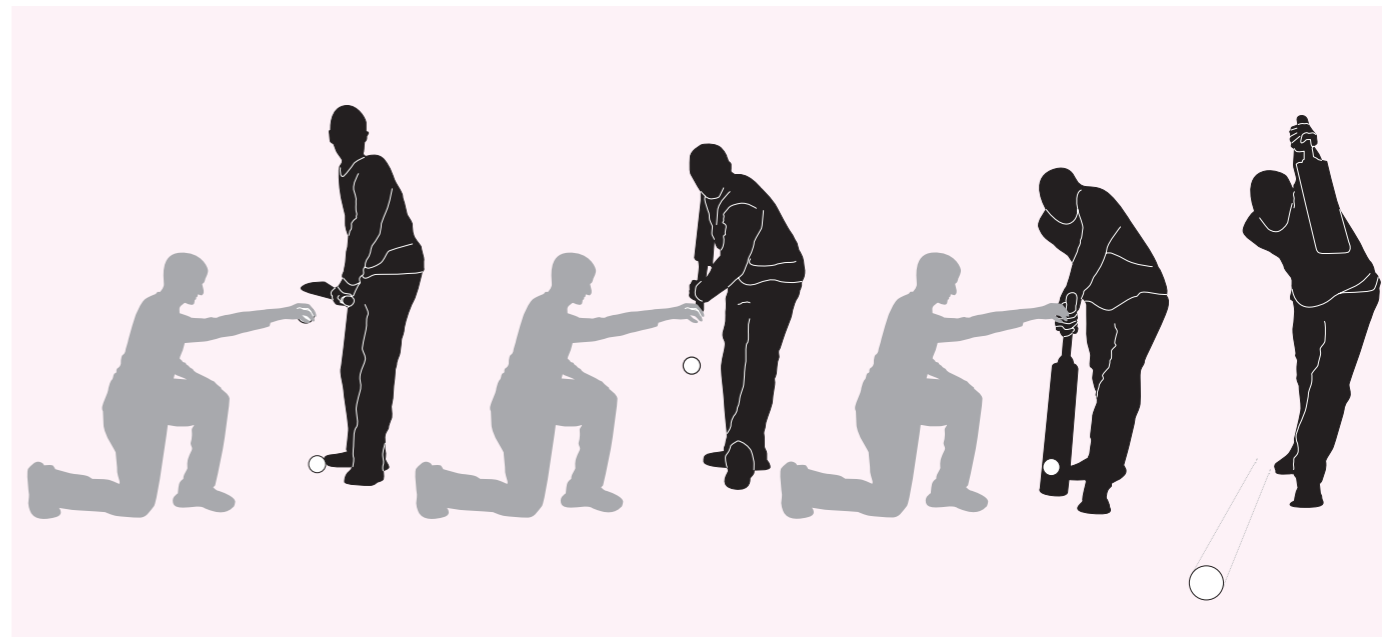


Fig. F - Basics

This drill is to try and isolate the top hand on the bat when making contact with the ball.



One hand shot

From drop feed with scoring areas medium

This is the same shot for the player as on page 60 however this time another player should drop a ball just in front of the batter for them to hit on the half volley. For this drill it will be helpful to ask the players to hit the ball as straight as possible to make sure the feeder isn't in danger of being hit.



One handed shots from underarm feeds with scoring areas advanced

This drill is the most advanced level, one player (or the coach) will underarm soft balls towards the batter. The batter should try and aim to make contact with the ball under their eyes and keeping the ball on the ground after contact.

The players should not try and hit the ball hard for this drill to make sure it's safe for the feeder

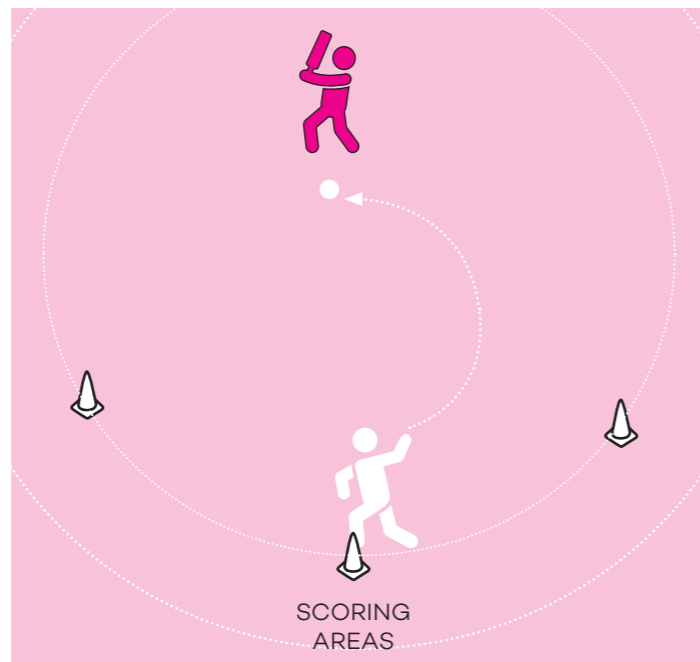
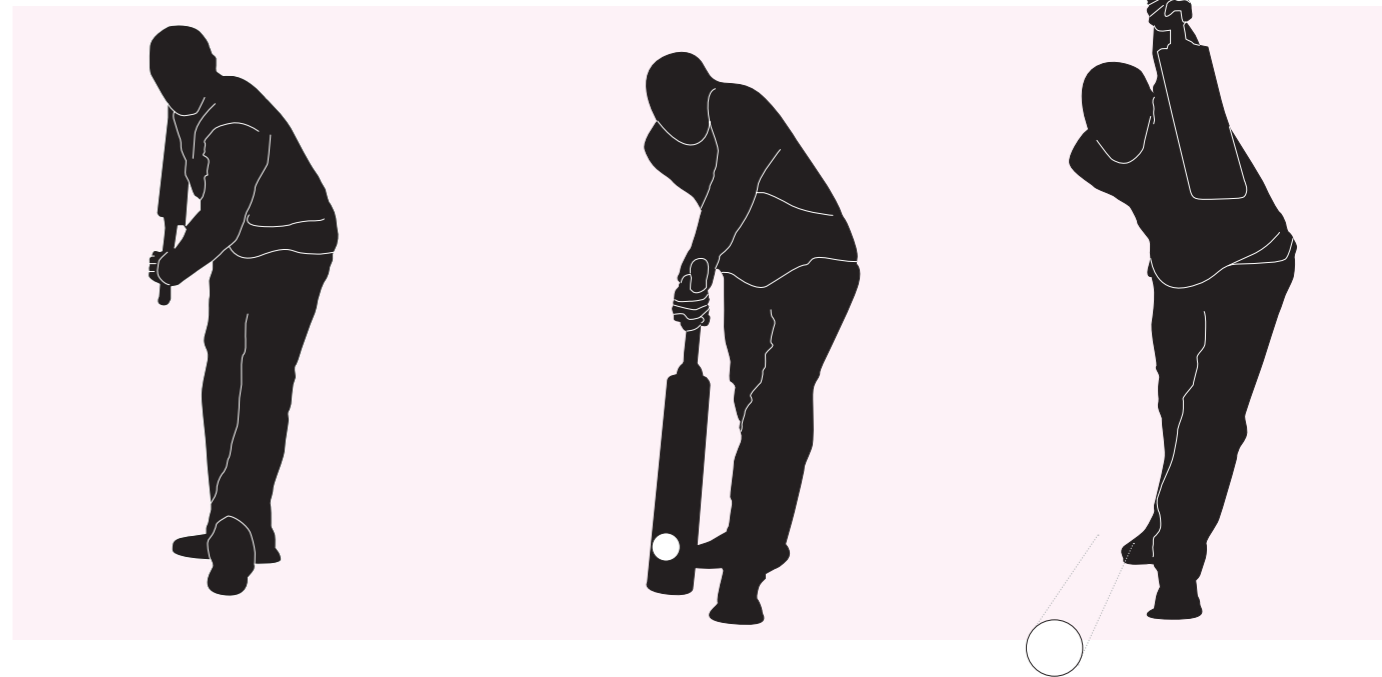


Fig. G - Medium



Helpful note: Ask the players to use the momentum of the bat to hit the ball rather using their force to swing the bat. The image above shows the best starting position for the players



(5) Head to the ball

Description:

We lead with our head for a few reasons:

To make sure our head is as close to the ball as possible.

To make sure we don't plant our feet.

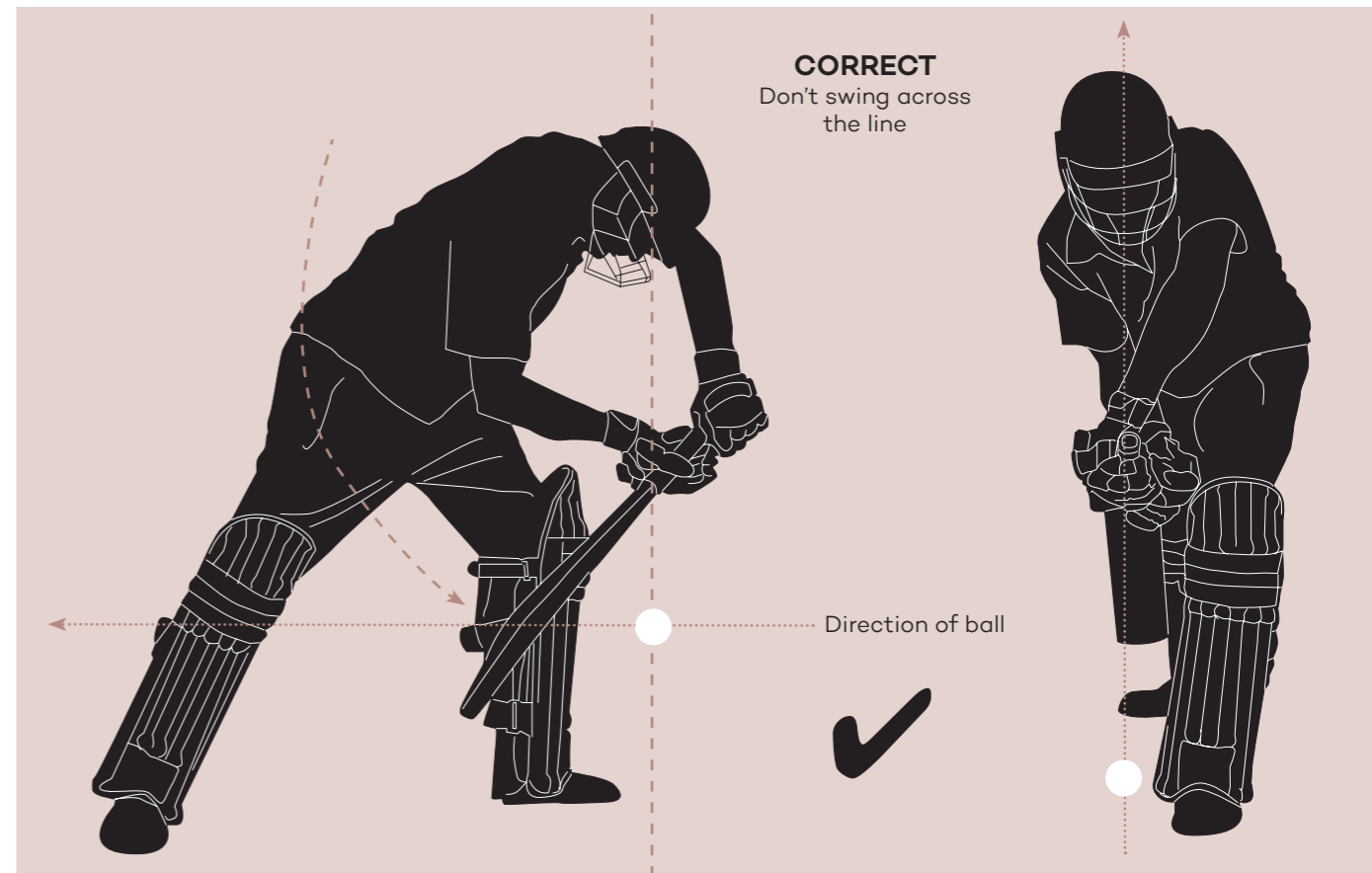
One of the most common technical problems in batting is a head falling over to the off side or leaning back when hitting the ball.

Drills:

Cone drills starting in the position of head over the ball.

Dropping shoulder towards the ball which helps head go over the ball

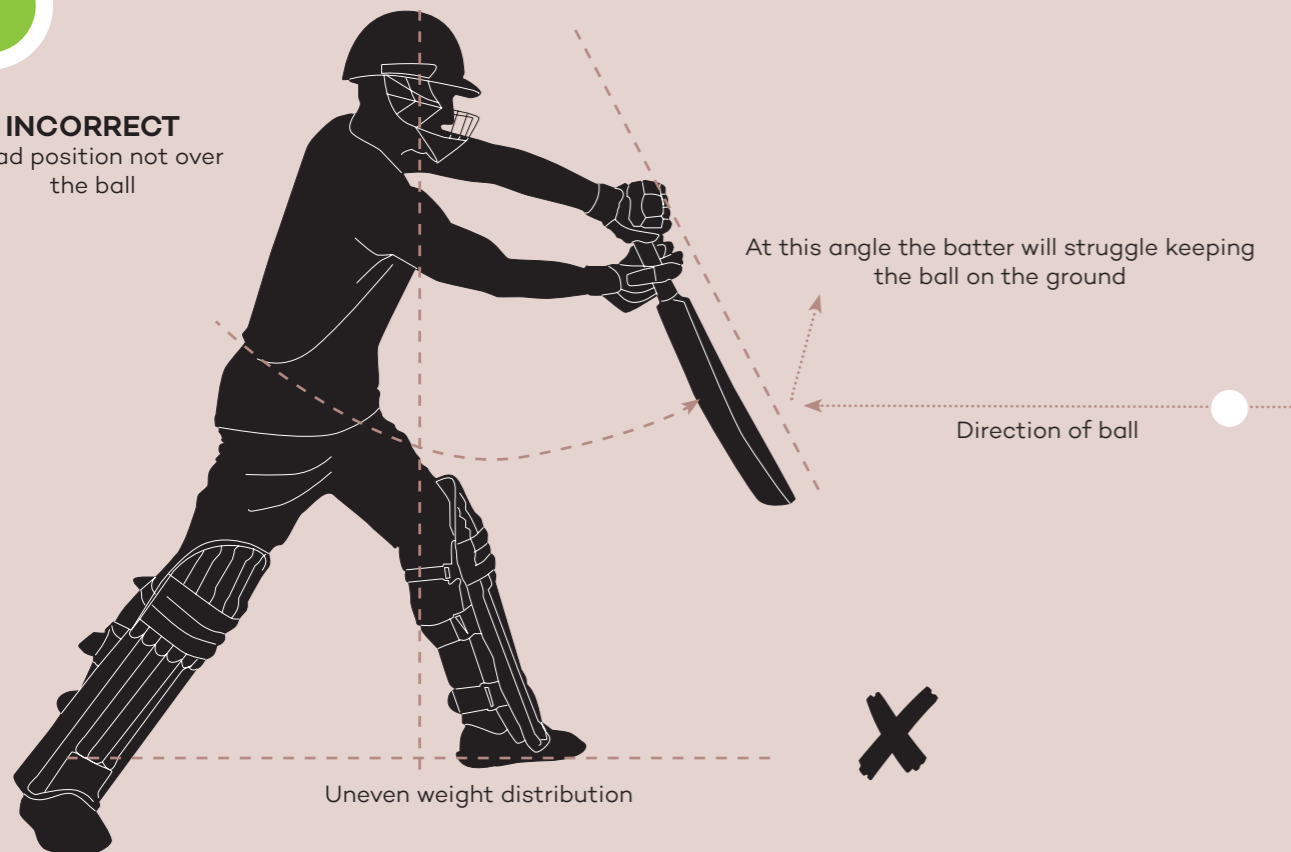
Back foot lift shots - progress to foot on chair





INCORRECT

Head position not over the ball



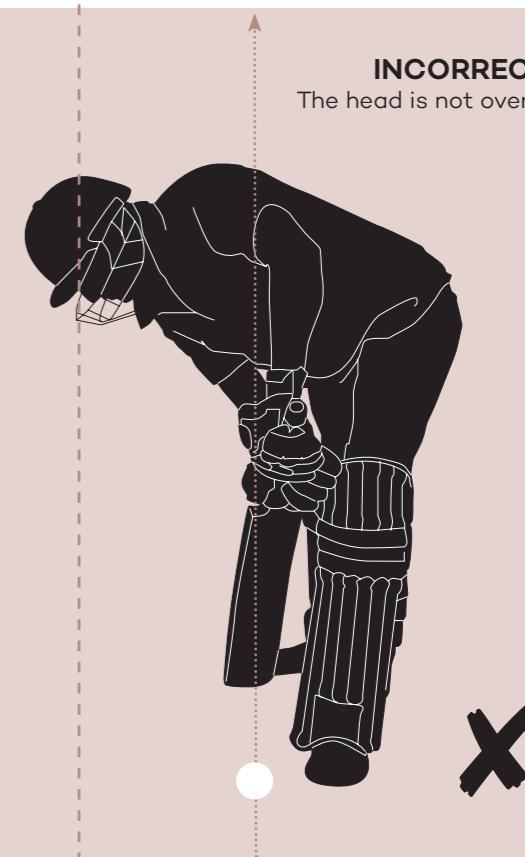
INCORRECT

The head is not over the ball.

Even weight distribution between your feet is important as this allows you to move onto either the front foot or the back foot quickly and easily. Whether you're moving onto the front or back foot to play your shot, it's important to make an early decision to either attack or defend and you need to take your head to the line of the ball - when on the front foot, this is often referred to as "getting your head over the ball".

Using your head

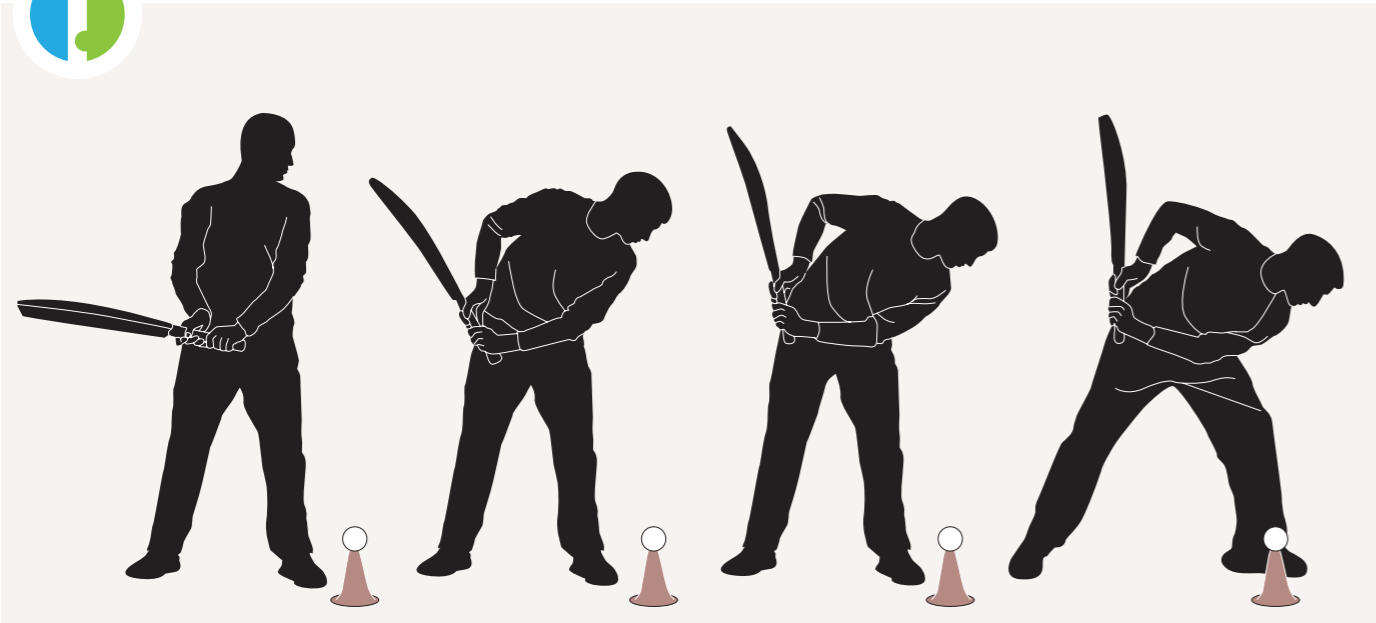
Keeping as still as possible allows you to pick up the subconscious cues from the bowler's run-up and delivery and to allow you to focus on the bowler's hand/ball/fingers/crease position on release with maximum concentration.



**Cone drills starting in the position of head over the ball.**

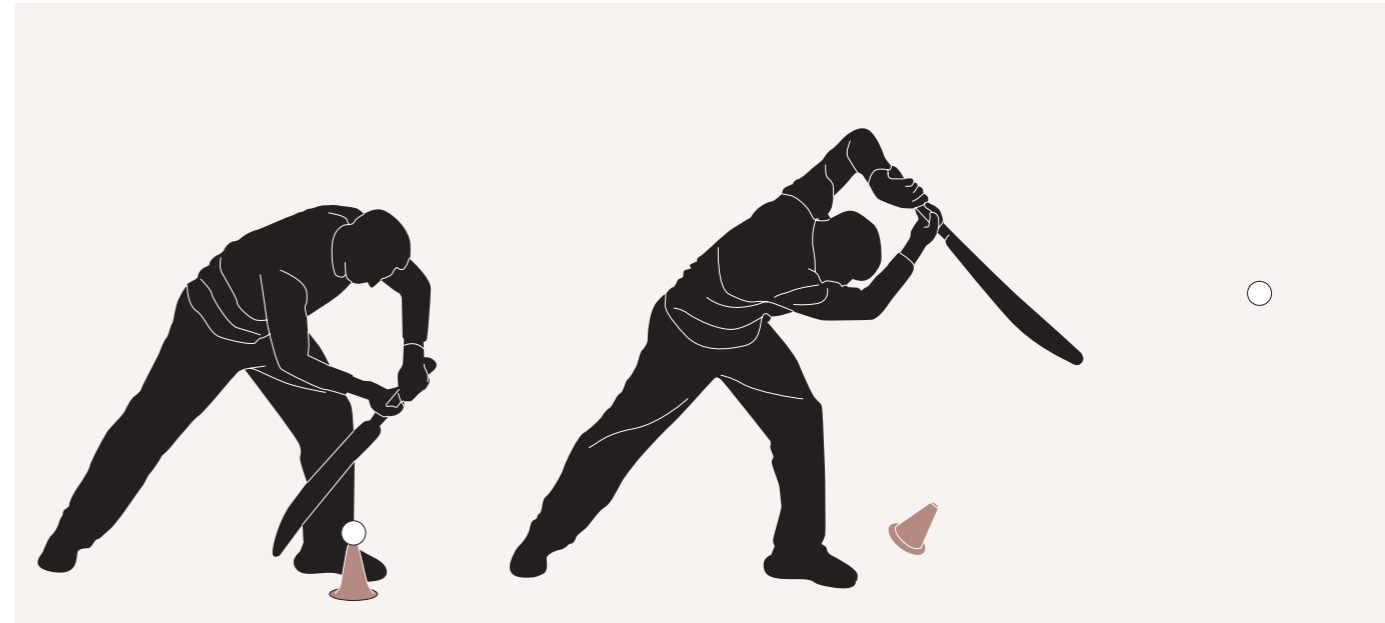
This drill is to focus on the head position when making contact with the ball. When learning to play cricket players want to learn to keep the ball on the ground as much as possible to limit their chances of getting out.

For this drill the player should get into the position shown opposite with a ball on a cone under their eyes. The players should focus on hitting the ball from this position and maintaining their balance. This drill can either be done hitting the ball into a net/wall or you could turn it into a fielding exercise too and have other players collect the balls when the batter hits them and return them to the cone when it's safe to do so.

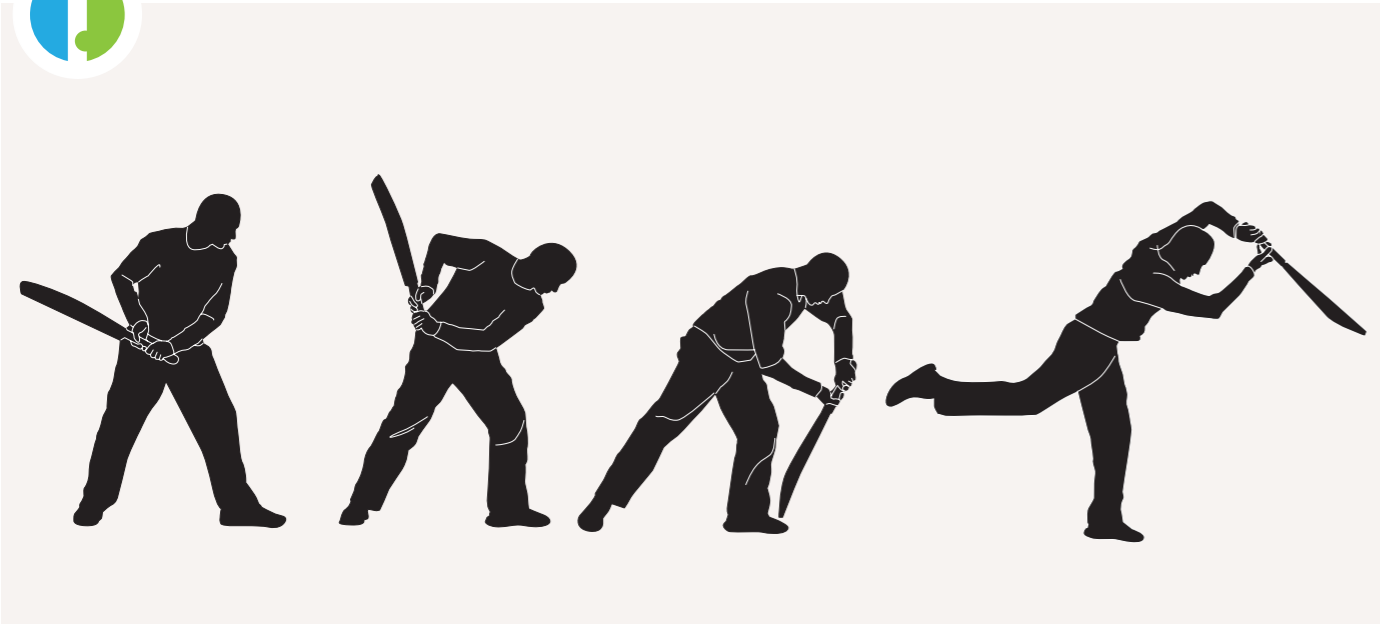
**Dropping shoulder towards the ball which helps head go over the ball**

This drill is a progression from the previous drill on page 70.

For this drill the player should focus on moving their head and shoulder towards the ball before their feet.

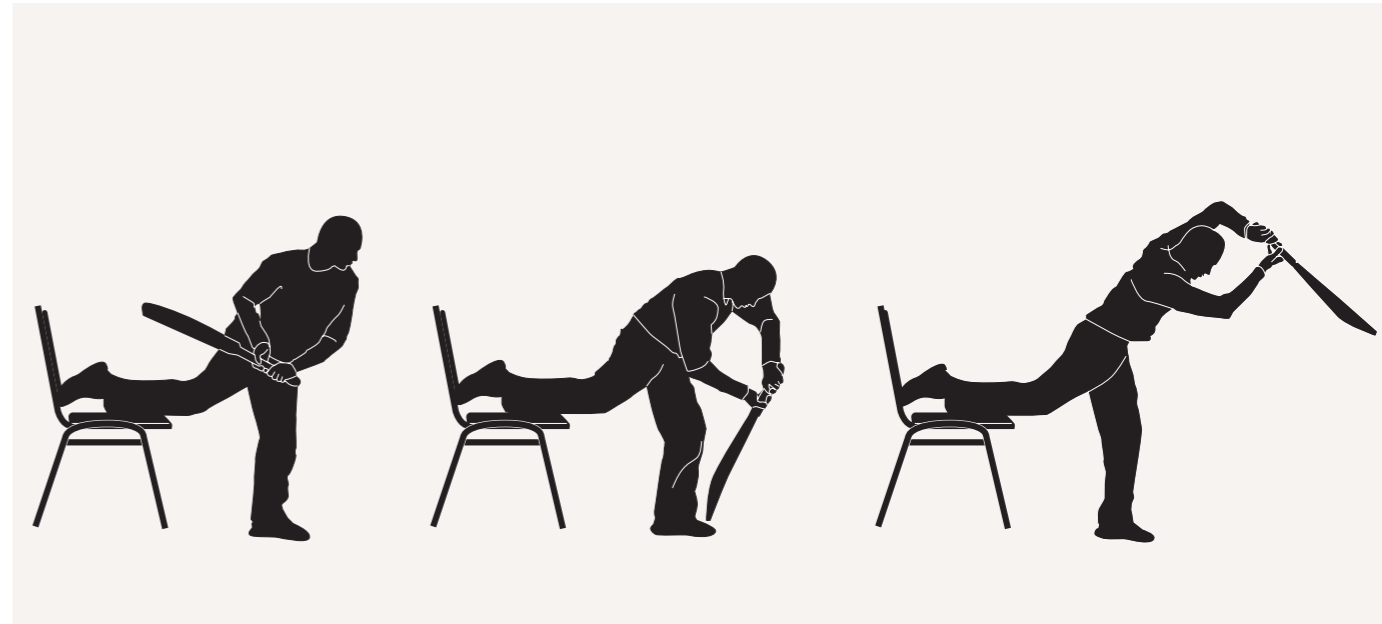


One common issue with young cricketers is they like to stride towards the ball first and their head doesn't move which makes their weight backwards and is harder for them to be in control of the shot.



Back foot lift shots - progress to foot on chair

This drill is brilliant for both improving balance and head position on contact. Have the players practice their swing normally to warm up and then ask them to lift their back leg as their weight goes forward as shown above. The players will find that they can only lift their leg and maintain balance if their head goes forward.



This drill can also be done with the player resting their back leg on a chair behind them. This is drill requires a lot of strength and stability but is a really good one for the children to practice at home.



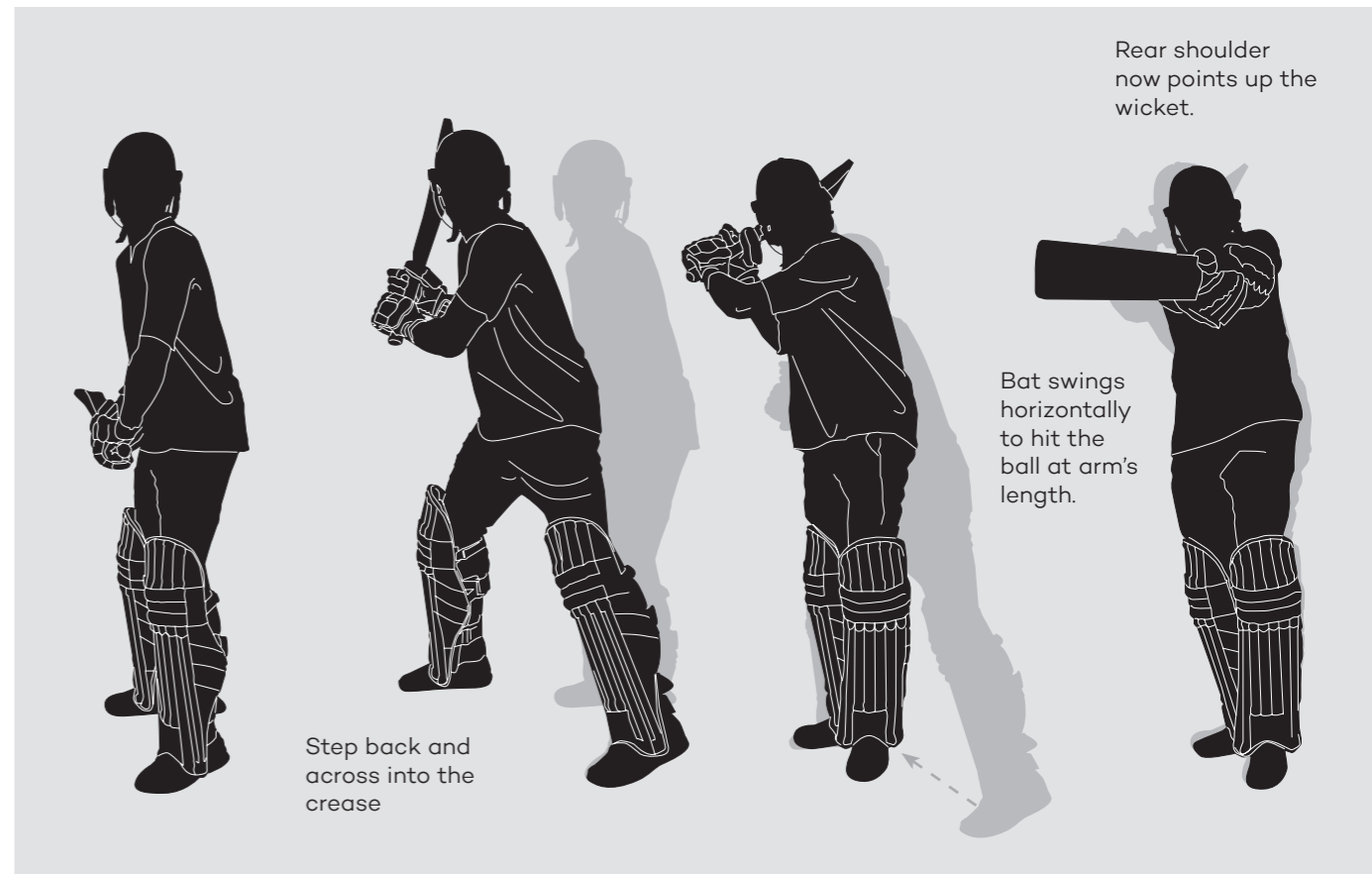
(6) Pull shot

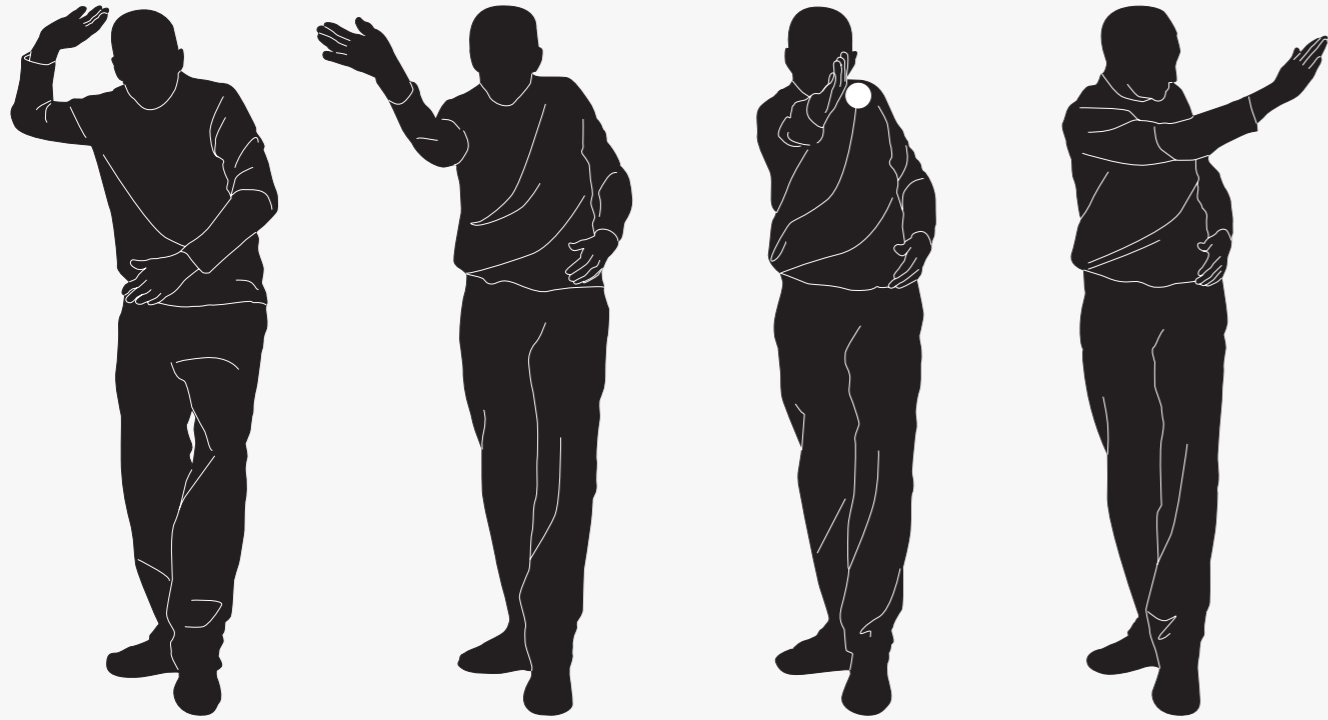
Description:

The pull shot is most commonly played against fast bowlers. When the ball is above waist height it is easier to play a cross batted shot than swinging straight. It is important to get high hands in order to get maximum success with your shot.

Drills (using soft balls):

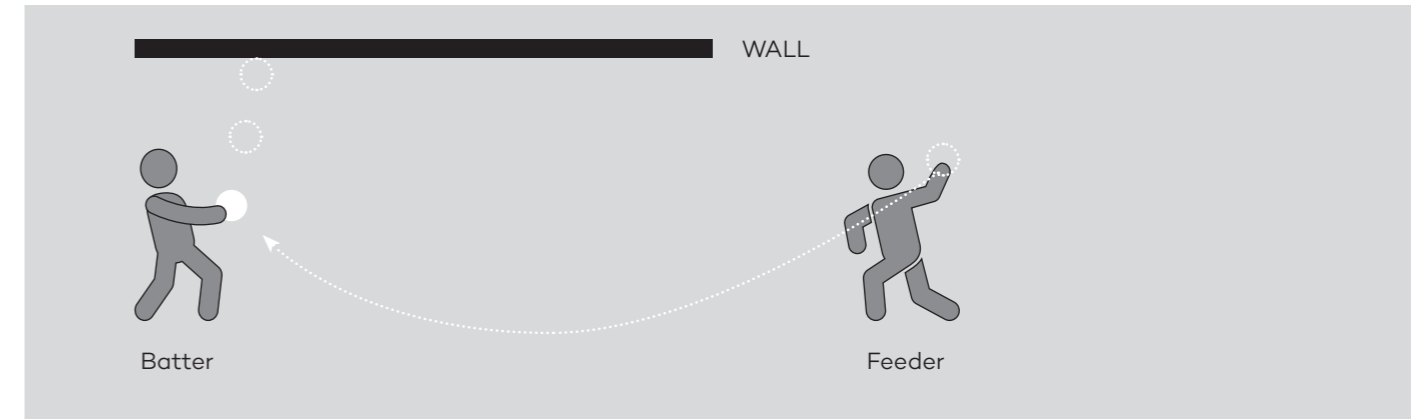
Pairs high hands slapping tennis balls (pull)
With bat hitting into a net / wall

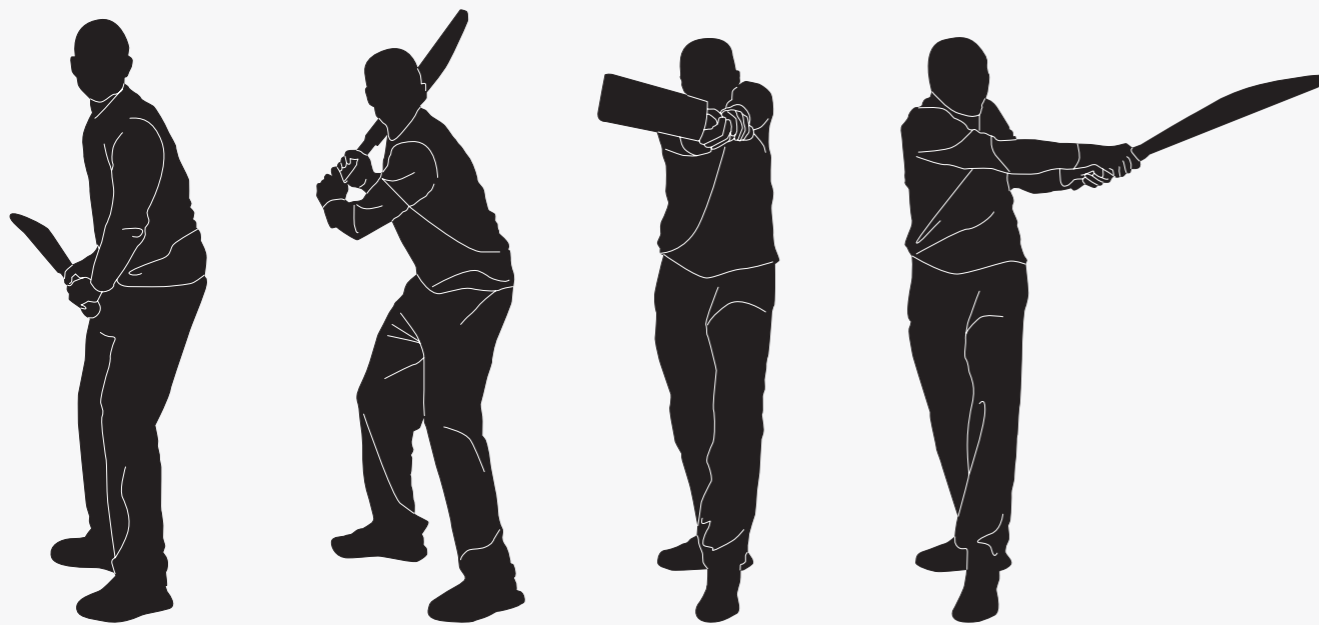




Pairs high hands slapping tennis balls (pull)

This is a really fun drill for children to practice. Split the players up into pairs with tennis/soft balls evenly distributed between the group. One player is the batter, one is the feeder. The feeder should aim to underarm the ball at the batter's chest for the batter to hit to the leg side using their hand (ideally into a net or wall) as shown left making contact with the ball in front of their body.



**With bat hitting into a net / wall**

After practicing hitting a tennis ball with their hands the players can now progress onto using a bat. Split the players up into pairs with tennis/soft balls evenly distributed between the group. One player is the batter, one is the feeder. The feeder should aim to underarm the ball at the batter's chest for the batter to hit to the leg side using their bat (ideally into a net or wall) as shown on page 76 making contact with the ball in front of their body.

Make sure when practicing this shot that there is enough space between each player as players swinging their bat could put others in danger.



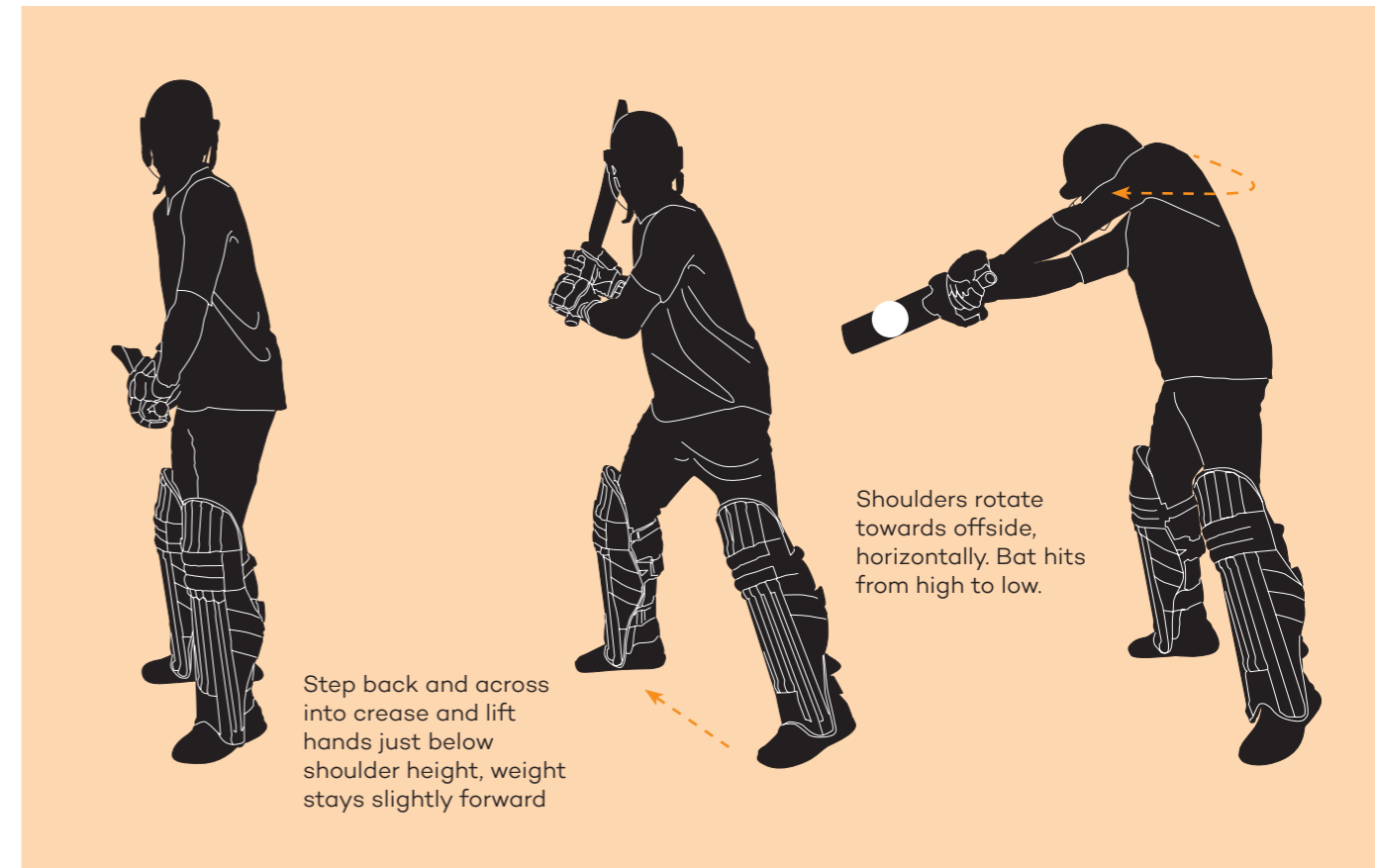
(7) Cut shot

Description:

We want to try and keep our side on position to allow us to hit the ball square of the wicket where there are less fielders and keep our hands high to be in control of the shot.

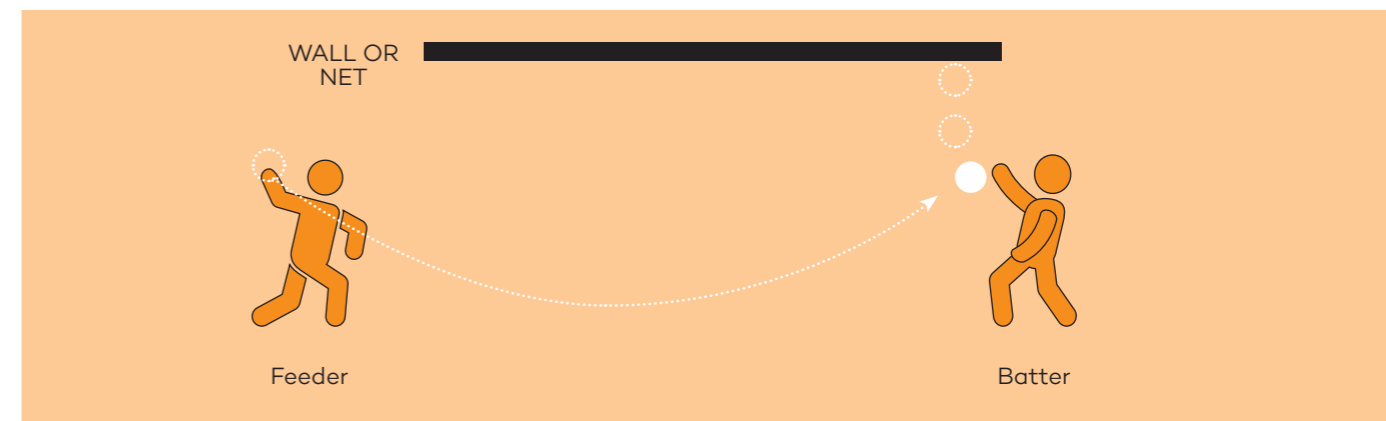
Drills (using soft balls):

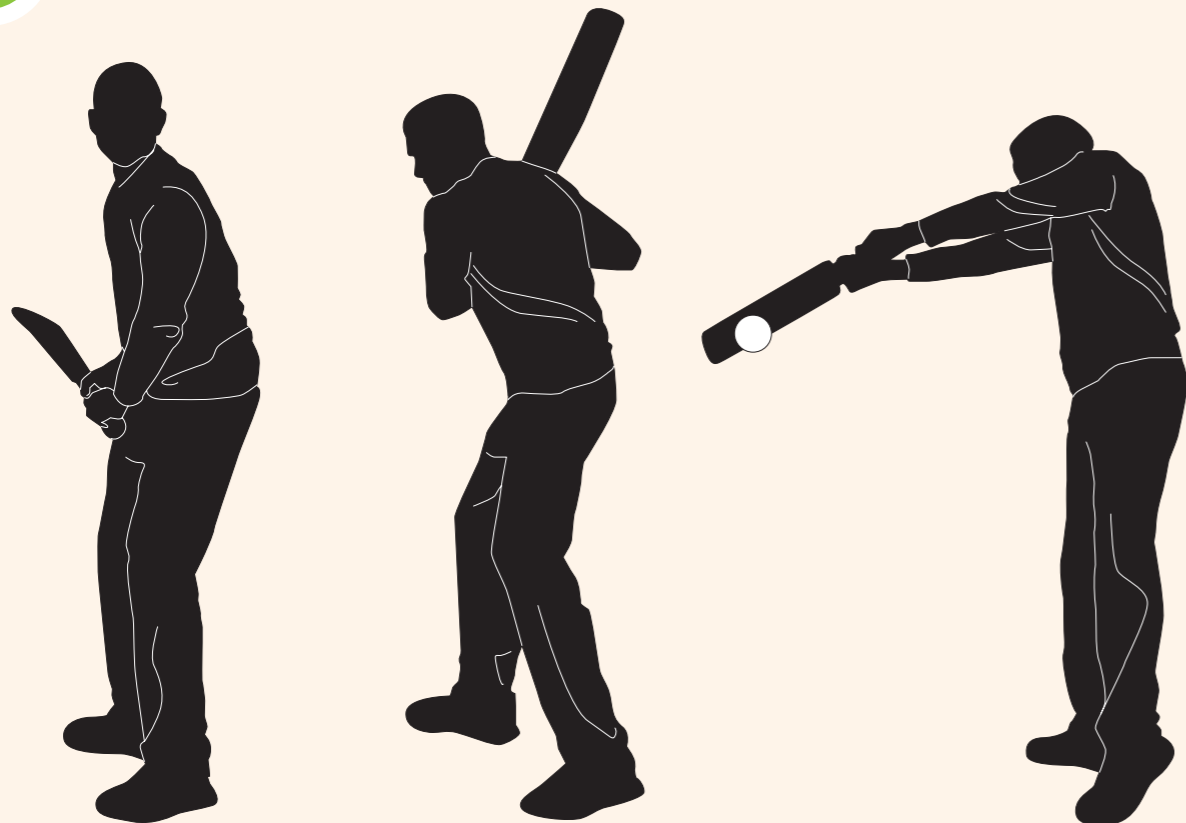
Pairs high hands slapping tennis balls (cut)
With bat hitting into a net / wall



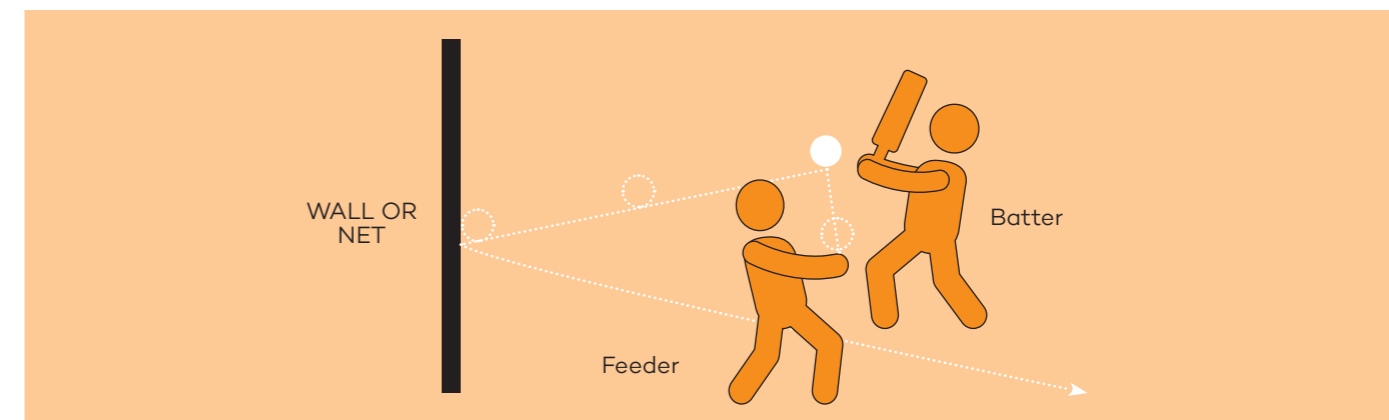
**Pairs high hands slapping tennis balls (cut)**

Split the players up into pairs with tennis/soft balls evenly distributed between the group. One player is the batter, one is the feeder. The feeder should aim to underarm the ball to the left of the batter away from their body at shoulder height for the batter to hit to the offside using their hand (ideally into a net or wall) as shown opposite making contact with the ball in line with their body.



**With bat hitting into a net / wall**

Split the players up into pairs with tennis/soft balls evenly distributed between the group. One player is the batter, one is the feeder. The feeder should aim to underarm the ball to the left of the batter away from their body at shoulder height for the batter to hit to the offside using their bat (ideally into a net or wall) as shown opposite making contact with the ball in line with their body.





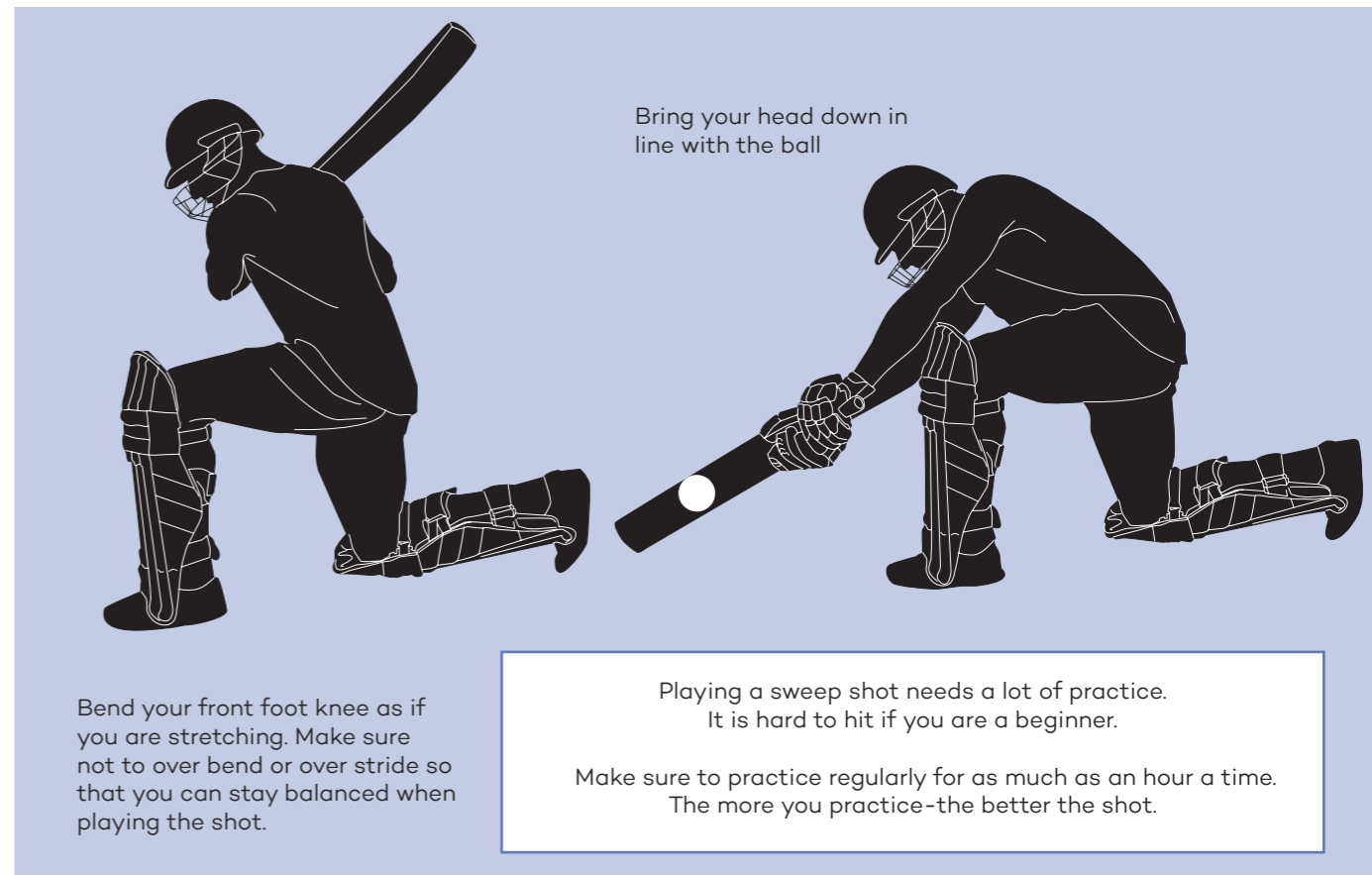
(8) Sweep shot

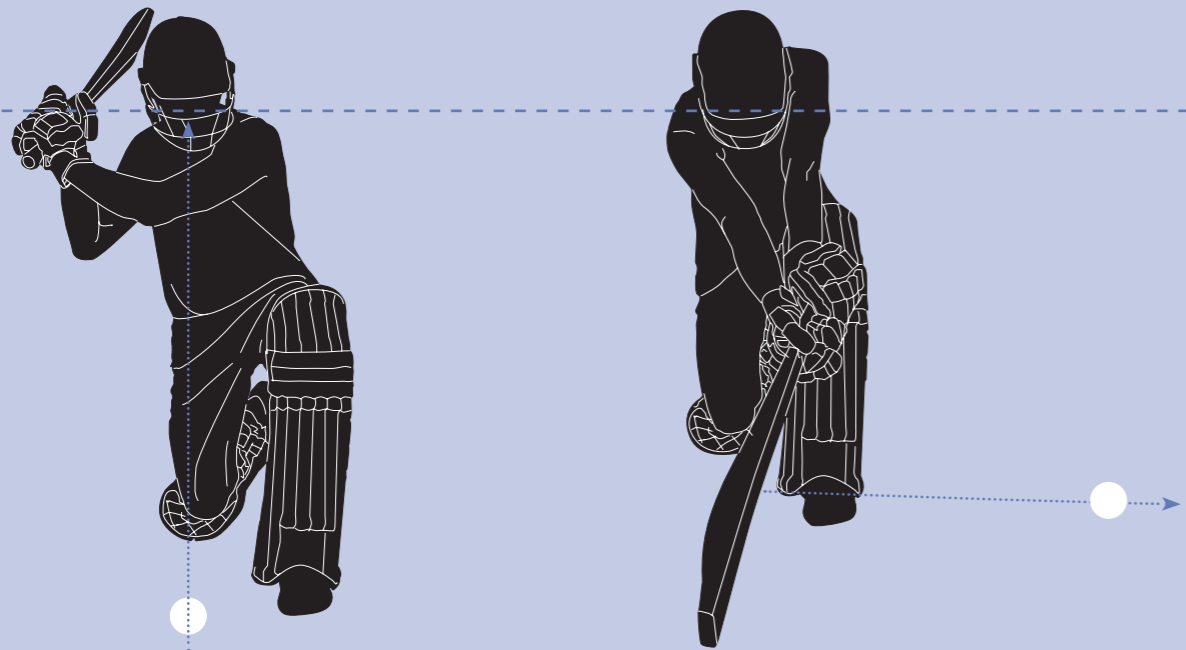
Description:

The sweep shot is a very useful shot to play against spinners. It is important to have a strong base, head towards the ball and extended arms when making contact with the ball.

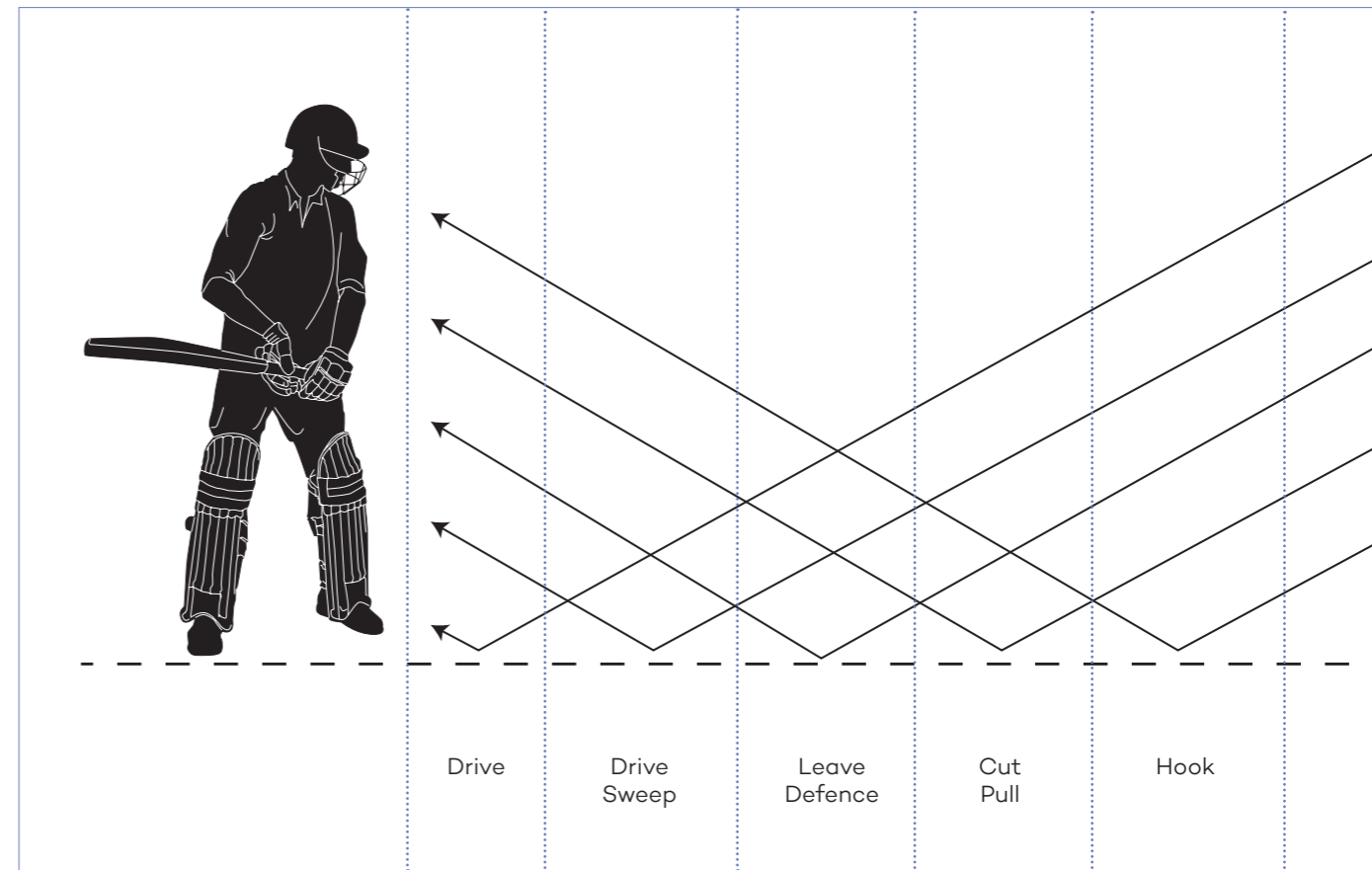
Drills;

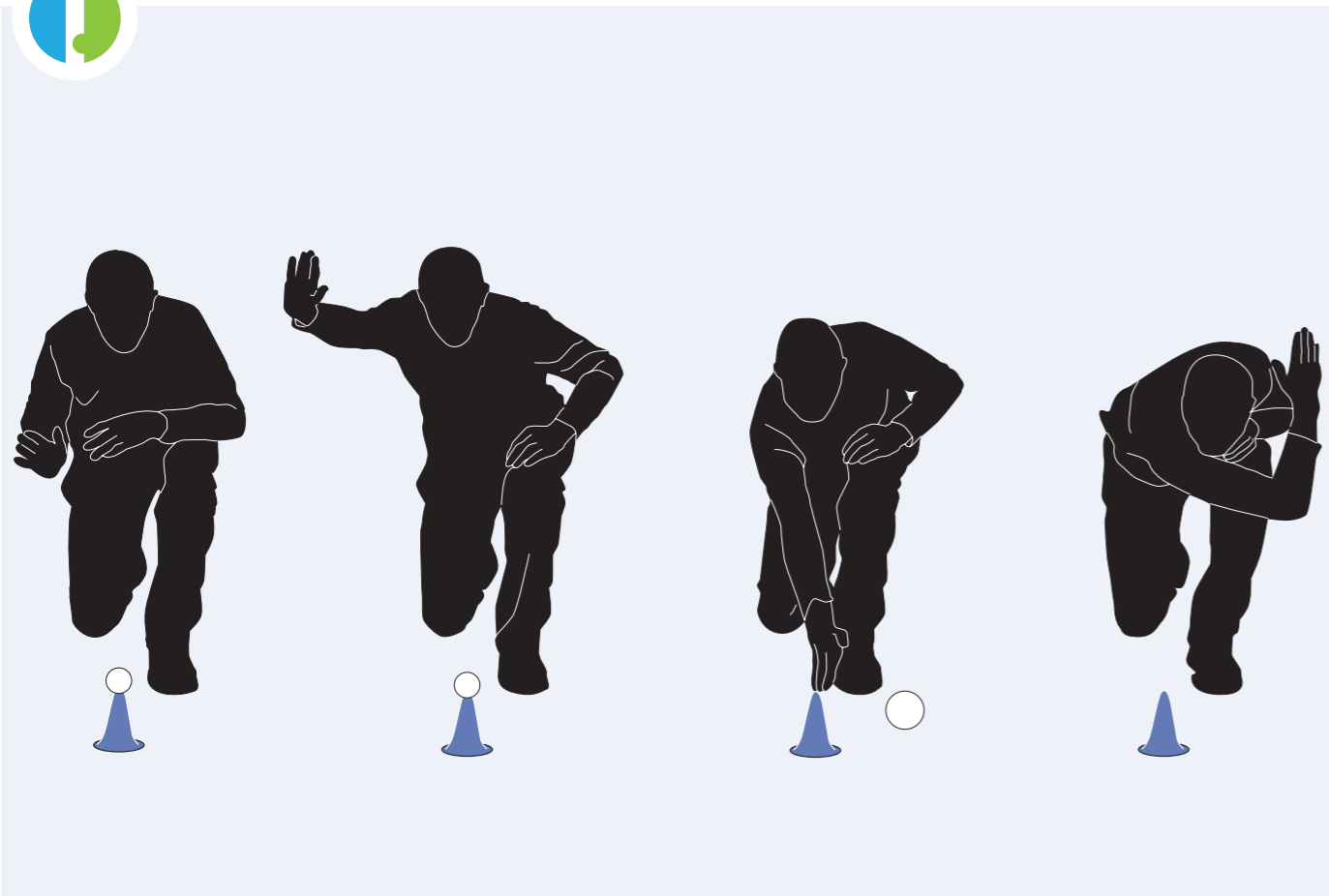
Pairs hand sweep
Cone drills sweep
Drop feed sweep





A sweep shot is normally played to a full delivery, usually from a slow bowler



**Pairs hand sweep**

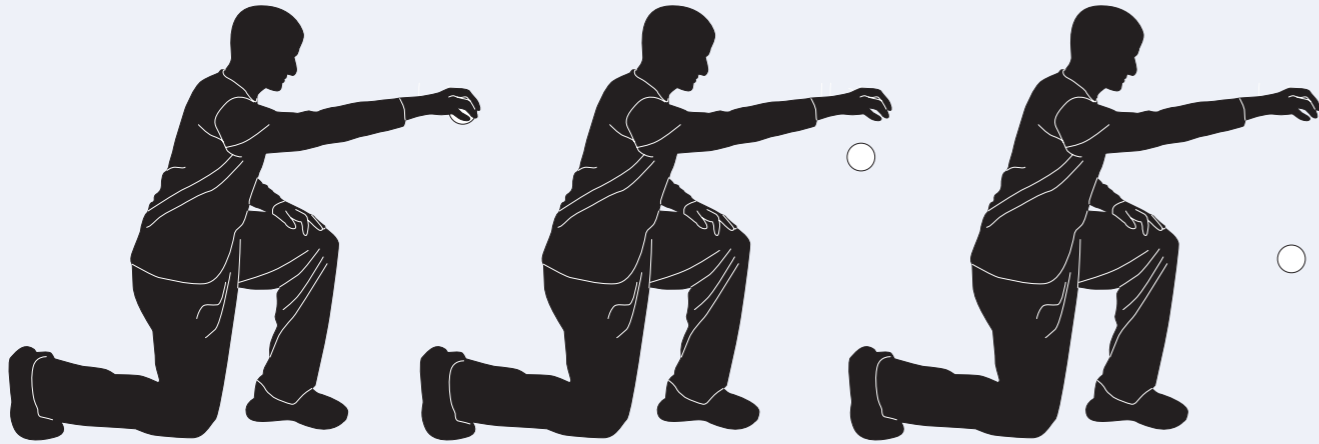
Split the players into even groups (ideally pairs). Place a tennis/soft ball on a cone in front of the batter. The batter should be on their knees in the position shown opposite. Players should try and hit the ball off the cone with their dominant hand towards the leg side.

Right-handed batters hitting to their left and left-handed batters hitting to their right.

**Cone drills sweep**

Split the players into even groups (ideally pairs). Place a tennis/soft ball on a cone in front of the batter. The batter should be on their knees in the position shown opposite. Players should try and hit the ball off the cone with their bat towards the leg side.

Right handed batters hitting to their left and left-handed batters hitting to their right.



Drop feed sweep

Split the players into even groups (ideally pairs). One player will be the batter and the other the feeder. The feeder should look to drop the ball from shoulder height, when kneeling, (as shown above). Far enough away from the batter so that their arms are extended when hitting the shot. The batter should try and hit the ball on the half volley into a net/wall.

Players have a tendency to try and hit the ball too hard with this drill and it can take the focus away from learning the sweep.

Keep reminding the players to focus on trying to make contact in the middle of the bat and not hitting the ball as hard as they can.

NB. When hitting this shot towards a wall make sure no players can be hit on the rebound.



Batting shots



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