

CADETS

PLAYER DEVELOPMENT ACADEMY

OFFENSIVE ROUTINES: HOW TO PREPARE FOR A BASEBALL GAME

What is a baseball routine? Why is it important? How do the pros get ready for a game? Doug explains how to prepare for a baseball game through batting practice, pregame, and game routines.

What is a baseball routine?

A batting practice or pregame routine is a physical or mental act that will prepare us for the game.

It's a progressive action, a set of pre-game drills, that helps our body and mind prepare for a game.

Why is it important to have a routine?

It is important because our body responds to repetition, and this is our time to work to groove our swing to be better that day, and hopefully in the future.

Different types of Baseball Routines

1. Batting Practice Routine

How to practice batting: Your batting practice routine is separated by rounds and usually set by your coach. He will usually tell you how many swings you are taking and what you are trying to do. All batting practice routines are different, I will talk about a typical batting practice routine.

- **First round:** The first round of batting practice is usually 8 swings and trying to hit the ball the other way.
 - Why? We want to get the feel of letting the ball travel and not reaching out to hit the ball. When we hit the ball the other way we force ourselves to wait a little longer to hit the ball.
 - We want to create as much time as possible and feel like we are slowing the baseball down with our eyes and by the way we react to the ball.
 - The last thing we want to do in the first round of batting practice is get jumpy or feel we have to hit everything out in front of the plate.

- **Second round:** Usually the second round consists of situational hitting.
 - It might start with 3 hit and runs, where you have to swing the bat and hit a ground ball, preferably to the opposite side of the infield.
 - The next 3 swings are usually move the runner from 2nd to 3rd base with 0 outs. Once again we are trying to hit the ball to the right side, either on the ground or deep enough that the runner would be able to tag up.
 - The next 3 swings are score the runner from 3rd with less than 2 outs. Sacrifice fly if the infield is in and just a ground ball away from the corners if the infield is back.
 - Round 2 is important for bat control and using your hands.
- **Remaining rounds:** Usually the next 2 to 4 rounds are just hit and work on anything you want to work on.
 - This is where you need to know how you feel what you are trying to accomplish and build a routine.
 - As long as you are hitting with a purpose, anything is alright.
 - Trying to pull homeruns, hitting balls off of the L screen, hitting balls from gap to gap, or just trying to hit line drives, are different plans that you can bring into batting practice.
 - Try moving the ball around the field. Remember don't always follow what the person hitting ahead of you is doing. Do what will help you.
- **After batting practice routine:** An after batting practice routine, helps with the final preparation before the game.
 - Some players may get some food, or take a few more swings. Some might listen to music or take a shower. It doesn't really matter, this is your down time just before the game.
 - Know what time you need to be dressed, so you can be on the field to get yourself ready.

2. Pre Game Routine

A pre-game routine starts when the player gets to the stadium. It consists of the baseball drills one does in order to get ready for the game, allowing you to get out on the field and get loose.

- Always allow ample time to get stretched, run, play catch and take a couple minutes before you go out on the field or hit.
- Your routine should ideally stay the same so your body knows what's going to happen next. Over time, when you do the same stretches and running routine at the same time of the day, your body realizes it is time to play a game.
- This routine is important and usually people don't take this very seriously. Not being loose can increase injuries and most injuries come from not being properly warmed up.
- As you move along in your playing days you will find out that you are in charge of your own career. You have to figure out what you need to do to get ready. Everyone is different, some people hit till their hands bleed, some just sit on the couch and watch tv until the game starts. Usually the latter routine doesn't keep you around very long.
- Your routine is yours and nobody else's.
 - Your hitting drill routines can be general, such as "I like to hit off the tee and take some soft toss before batting practice." With this routine you may do a batting drill off the tee or you may just hit, depending on how you feel. You may take 10 swings or you may take 100, once again it depends on how you feel.
 - Some are a lot more strict, " I like to take 25 swings off the tee, 10 on the outside corner, 10 on the inside corner, and 5 right down the middle." That's it, no more, no less, but whatever that player needs to feel ready to go is all that matters.
- Think of every day as a day to get better, take advantage of each day because you don't know when baseball will be over for you.

3. Game routine

These routines help you to react in the game.

- On deck circle routines
 - Do you use a donut to weight your bat? Do you stretch, or just take some swings to get loose.
 - Relax and make breathing and visualization a part of your routine. See the fastball right down the middle that you are about to hit right up the middle about 10 feet off the ground.
 - See it and feel it before it happens. Once you get up to the box, everything goes out the window except for your mental approach.
- At the plate routines
 - It is now time to compete. Every big league hitter has some type of routine when he steps in the box.
 - He gets in the box the same way. He stands the same distance from the plate every time. He touches the plate the same way and waggles his bat.
 - He might lay his bat on his shoulder relaxed waiting for the pitcher to get his sign.
 - There are many routines and they are all mostly different but they serve a purpose for each individual.
 - Ryan Howard will get in the box and point his bat toward the pitcher. He does that so he knows his shoulders are in line with the pitcher (not closed) and so he can keep his torso upright.
 - Everyone does a little something as a mental or physical reminder before they do battle with the pitcher.