The complete guide to batting excellence

1st Edition

By Conrad Lotz
Thank you for purchasing *Cricket Batsman Tips*. Be sure to check out the other books in our very successful series:

• Wicket Keeping Tips ([www.wicketkeepingtips.com](http://www.wicketkeepingtips.com))

• Spin Bowling Tips ([www.spinbowlingtips.com](http://www.spinbowlingtips.com))
Foreword

As an ever-learning student of the game it is a great privilege to be in a position to share my knowledge that I have accumulated over the years. I have been playing premier league club cricket for 16 years, including some first cricket, and have actively been coaching for nearly 10 years. I started coaching from the age of 19 and as a young coach made many mistakes that taught me many valuable and hard lessons. I am now in a fortunate position to share all this wisdom and knowledge with you.

Batting is my passion and I strive to better my game with each practice session or match, making it as interesting and intense as possible. I started at the bottom having never played any major school or University cricket. I started playing for the University 3rd team. Through hard work and determination over the years I was able to become the most consistent opening batsman in my province and eventually received First Class honors.

Now, I’ve taken the time to use what I’ve learnt and share it with you; even though the odds might seems against you, you can rise above the rest using batting basics and hard work.

Cricket is bigger than a game. It’s a lifestyle!
Table of Contents

Foreword

Chapter 1: Introducing the Book
  1 Introduction ........................................... 8
  1.1 Layout of Book ........................................ 9
  1.2 Leaders by Example ..................................... 12

Chapter 2: The Ideal Batsman
  2.1 Definition of a Batsman ................................. 21
  2.2 Opening batsman ....................................... 22
  2.3 Number 3 and Top Order ............................... 23
  2.4 Middle Order .......................................... 24
  2.5 Tail-ender ............................................... 25
  2.6 Pinch-hitter ............................................ 26

Chapter 3: Batting Equipment
  3.1 Introduction ........................................... 28
  3.2 The bat .................................................. 29
  3.3 The head guard (“The Helmet”) ....................... 30
  3.4 The Gloves .............................................. 31
  3.5 The Leg guards (“Pads”) ............................... 32
  3.6 The abdominal guard (“Box”) ......................... 33
  3.7 The thigh guard (“Thigh Pad”) ....................... 34
  3.8 The inner-thigh guard .................................. 35
  3.9 The Arm guard ........................................... 36
  3.10 The Chest guard ....................................... 37

Chapter 4: The Grip and Stance
  4.1 Introduction ........................................... 39
  4.2 The Top Hand Grip ..................................... 40
  4.3 The Bottom Hand Grip ................................ 41
  4.4 Gripping with both hands ............................ 42
  4.5 The Stance ............................................. 43

Chapter 5: Taking Guard
  5.1 Introduction ........................................... 45
  5.2 Middle/Centre .......................................... 48
  5.3 Middle and Leg (“Two Leg”) ......................... 49
  5.4 Leg Stump ............................................... 50

Chapter 6: The Shots
  6.1 Introduction ........................................... 52
  6.2 Forward Defensive ..................................... 53
  6.3 Back-foot Defensive .................................. 59
  6.4 Straight Drive ......................................... 66
  6.5 Off-Drive ............................................... 73
  6.6 Back foot Drive ........................................ 80
  6.7 On-Drive ............................................... 88
  6.8 Back foot glance ...................................... 95
  6.9 Cover Drive ............................................ 103
  6.10 Lofted Drive .......................................... 110
  6.11 Cut ...................................................... 117
# Table of Contents

**Chapter 7:** Practice  
**Section A:** Practice Philosophy  
7.1 Practice ........................................ 203  
7.2 Intent ........................................... 205  
7.3 Intensity ........................................ 207  
7.4 Assistance .................................... 208  

**Section B:** Practice Principals and Practicality  
7.5 Visualization .................................. 210  
7.6 Mirror Practice ................................ 211  
7.7 Short-direct ball practice ...................... 212  
7.8 Throw Downs .................................. 213  
7.9 Batting in the Nets ............................. 215  
7.10 Bowling Machines ............................ 218  
7.11 Video Analysis ............................... 219  

**Section C:** Drills  
7.12 Introduction .................................. 221  
7.13 Batting with top hand ....................... 222  
7.14 Batting with bottom hand ................... 223  
7.15 “Stump and Golf ball practice” ............ 224  
7.16 Swinging through the stumps .............. 225  
7.17 Speed Throw-downs .......................... 226  
7.18 Stamina Batting ............................... 227  
7.19 Batting with fielding positions .......... 228  

---

**How To...**  
6.12 Square Drive .................................. 125  
6.13 Paddle ......................................... 132  
6.14 Pull ............................................ 138  
6.15 Sweep .......................................... 143  
6.16 Late Cut ....................................... 151  
6.17 Hook ........................................... 158  
6.18 Slog Sweep .................................... 166  
6.19 Reverse Sweep ............................... 173  
6.20 Introduction .................................. 181  
6.21 Building an Innings ......................... 182  
6.22 Leaving the Ball .............................. 185  
6.23 Playing in the “V” ............................. 187  
6.24 How to play pace bowling ................... 188  
6.25 How to play short bowling .................. 190  
6.26 How to play on a seamer’s paradise .... 193  
6.27 How to play spin bowling ................... 195  
6.28 Advancing to the ball ....................... 197  
6.29 Batting in a Pro 20 ........................... 199
Table of Contents

Section D  Fitness

7.20 Running between the wickets  ............... 229
7.21 Tennis Ball Practice  ...................... 230
7.22 Timings Shots  .................................. 231

Chapter 8:  Psychology

8.1 Introduction  ........................................ 263
8.2 Nervousness  ........................................ 264
8.3 Concentration  ....................................... 265
8.4 Lean Streak (“Bad run of form”)  ............. 266
8.5 Relaxation (“Switching Off” ) .................. 267
8.6 Mental Toughness  .................................. 268
8.7 “Purple Patch”  .................................... 270

Chapter 9:  Match Day

9.1 Introduction  ........................................ 272
9.2 Conditions  .......................................... 273
9.3 Walking in to bat  ................................. 274
9.4 Setting Personal Targets  ....................... 275
9.5 Chasing Targets  .................................... 276
9.6 Sledging  .............................................. 277
9.7 Running between the wickets  .............. 278
9.8 Hitting boundaries on demand  ............. 280
9.9 Batting with a runner  ......................... 281
9.10 Losing one’s wicket .............................. 282

Bibliography  ............................................. 283
Additional Materials  .................................. 284
3.2 The Bat

The following the success of the IPL, innovations are regularly introduced into the game pushing the boundaries on the MCC Laws. Enter the Mongoose!

The Mongoose cricket bat was designed by inventor Marcus Codrington Fernandez with the intent to spice up game of cricket. The former Australian batsman Stuart Law, funnily called it "a half-brick on a stick". The mongoose bat is a specially designed T20 bat. The blade is 33% shorter than a conventional bat and the handle is 43% longer. It is believed to provide 20% more power and 15% more bat speed and gives the batsman an advantage. Though the bat is more powerful, it is the same overall weight as a conventional bat but in effect feels lighter, because the longer handle offers greater leverage. The Mongoose was approved by the ICC on the 22nd May 2009. 4 days afterwards this new innovation was first used by Stuart Law playing for Derbyshire vs Durham (YouTube video) on 26th May 2010. It was launched at IPL 3 on the 19th March 2010 by non other than Matthew Hayden, playing for the Chennai Super Kings. Hayden had success with the bat early on scoring 93 of 43 balls. (View the CricInfo commentary or YouTube).
4.2 The top hand grip

The top hand will take hold of the bat’s top part of the handle. The index finger’s top part and the thump’s top part will form a “V” with the knuckle of the index finger in line with the middle of the top part of the bat.

Playing more front foot strokes like drives and cut shots require a firm and powerful top hand follow through. If the top hand is more prominent, it generates more power than the bottom hand which produces a stable technique and correct bat angle.

The grip for the top hand should be firm on the bat. Upon impact from the ball it must not turn in the batsman’s hands while playing shots. This can cause top edges because the full face was turned toward the side and the ball hitting these edges – most of the time – seems to find hands willing to catch the ball in the field.

Adam Gilchrist was famous for using a squash ball, gripping it between the bat handle and the top hand. He squeezed it hard with the top hand to ensure that the bat does not turn and the hand provides all the superior force when playing shots. This was discovered only after he played a masterful 149 from 104 balls in the 2007 Cricket World Cup final in Bridgetown. This caused a huge stir as it was suggested that it was not lawful. However, no laws was breached. It was clever innovative batsmanship!
5.2 The Stance

1. The head must be still and the chin should almost touch the front shoulder looking at the bowler.
2. The head and front shoulder must lean forward and almost align with the front foot.
3. The shoulders must be relaxed. Tense shoulders will slow muscle movement.
4. The feet must be shoulder-width apart.
5. The knees should be slightly bent.
6. The hand will tuck the bat behind or between the feet. This is personal preference. Some batsmen tuck the bat outside the feet or in the between them.

A batsman can stand wider with the feet which will cause less foot movement and is preferred by batsman that put more power into the shots. It will be to the batsman’s advantage to learn the basic stance first before customizing the stance.
The crease is made up of four lines that forms a demarcated area where a batsman is positioned to face bowling. Stumps consisting of two sets of an off-stump, a middle stump and a leg stump are positioned on the back line, called the bowling crease, and planted firmly into the ground. Two bails are placed on top of the stump in horizontal position.
Chapter 7

Shot Mechanics
7.19 Reverse Sweep

The paddle is a shot played against slightly fuller length slower bowling, especially spin bowling, towards in front square or behind square region on the off-side. Rather to focus on timing the sweep requires the batsman to pick the correct length. In most cases the aim of the shot is to unsettle the bowler to change line and length. The shot should remain a surprise shot and a batsman should never overdo the shot.
7.19 Reverse Sweep

1. The stance will be side on with feet pointing towards the point region and the toes’ tips will align with the guard (Chapter 5) that was asked by the batsman.

2. The head will face the bowler while the chin should almost touch the facing shoulder.

3. The arms must be relaxed and elbows bent while holding the bat.

4. The hands will grip (Chapter 4) the bat and lift the bat in a horizontal position.

5. The knees must be slightly bent and relax for the feet to move easily into position.

A batsman stance should never have to be conscious of the ready position otherwise the focus will shift from the ball and the it needs to be in such a way to easily move into position.
6. The head must be kept still to enable the eyes to judge the correct line and length.

7. The front leg must make a large stride forward as close as possible to the pitch of the ball.

8. The heel of the back foot will lift providing balance when the back leg bends almost 90 degrees ending with the back leg knee on the ground.

9. The front shoulder will open up and the head and front shoulders must be in vertical line with the front pad keeping the head down and still as possible.

10. The arms will bring the hands and the bat to an outside off stump position lifting the bat and the bat will be positioned in the area of the front pad. This shot does not require any force or power.
7.19 Reverse Sweep

11. The hands will bring the bat over and across towards the leg stump. The hands will bring the toe of the bat forward pointing to the opposite stumps.

12. The bottom hand will be in front and the top hand will be back, both hands twisted slightly.

13. On the point of contact the arms will assist the hands to almost scoop the ball towards the 3rd man area.

14. The hands must not switch throughout the shot, but remain with the left hand at the top of the handle.
7.19 Reverse Sweep

15. The head must be kept down with the hand bringing the bat across to the off side.

16. The head will turn to the direction of the ball to assess if a run is safe
7.19 Reverse Sweep

Front-On Sequence
7.19 Reverse Sweep

Side-On Sequence
7.24 The short ball

The Sway

The sway is moving the upper body out of the direct line of the ball. This is commonly used when a ball is on the middle and more toward the off-side

To take evasive action the following actions must be taken:

- The head must be still and the eyes must focus on the line and the length of the ball.
- When the ball leaves the hand later than normal, the ball is destined to be short.
- When the ball is pitch short and still rising from the wicket the batsman should remain still and not jump or turn the head away. **Keep your feet still!**
- Watch the ball until it is close to the body.
- If the ball is on the off-side relax the hands so the bat drops to the ground.
- Move the head out of the way which will take the upper body with it. Feet must be planted and knees must be able to bend depending of the height of the ball.
7.27 Advancing to the ball

How to advance to the ball?

1. Take a stride with the front foot towards the line of the ball.
2. The back foot will move behind and in front of the front foot. *
3. The front foot will then take another stride towards the pitch of the ball.
4. All the weight will be transferred onto the front leg.
5. The eyes will remain on the ball until the ball is under it.
6. The hands will bring the bat through until contact is made under the eyes

*Some batsmen prefer not to use the cross-step method as explained above. A batsman can, in stead of crossing with the back foot over the front foot, just bring the back foot towards the front foot (two-step like). The cross-step give extra few inches because the back foot came further across and provides base for the front foot to stretch further.
Players often put the most focus on the batting in the nets. Rightly so! This is the curtain raiser for the upcoming match and also the last place to ensure that all “systems” are ready and confidence is high walking into the match. Often batsmen approach a net practice completely wrong. The mind set, walking into bat is the most common one of hitting the ball rather than not losing one’s wicket.

This is the only place other than a cricket field where one can learn the value of one’s wicket. A wicket is a valuable thing and should not be made cheap. Often, batsmen walk in to bat, time the ball sweetly but nick the ball three times and get caught for trying to clear the field and on top of that still feel it was a great net session, because they played some big shots. Does this sound familiar? This is the biggest mistake.

Batting in the nets must always be done with the next match in mind:

**Read the wicket first by leaving some deliveries.** It might be just a nets practice session but the wicket can still provide assistance to the bowlers and be difficult to bat on.

**Identify the bowlers that you can score runs off.** Target the weaker bowler or even the good bowler that’s struggles bowling on the wicket.
9.2 Drill #1: Batting with only top hand

The focus is placed on the top hand to guide and generate power when hitting steady through the correct line of the ball. This will avoid bringing the bat from an inside-out. Inside-out means the back lift takes the bat away from the body and then must bring it back into line to place a drive. This have a negative influence the timing of shots as extra effort is spent on correcting the line from an out side position to straight.

**Preparation:** Use a cone and balance a ball on top off it anywhere on half-volley length

**Execution:** The top hand will grip the bat while the bottom hand will be placed behind the back of the batsman. The batsman will play any drive shot. The hand will swing through the line and should hit the ball of the cone. The ball must be hit with the full face of the bat and must go into the direction where intended.

**Workload:** 50 hits
10.3 **Strength Training**

Batting requires strong shoulders. The shoulders initiates the arm movements. Stronger shoulders mean more power with less effort. This exercise targets the side shoulders.

**Preparation**

Grasp dumbbells in front of thighs with elbows slightly bent. Bend over with hips and knees bent slightly.

**Execution**

Raise upper arms to sides until elbows are shoulder height. Maintain elbows' height above or equal to wrists. Lower and repeat. Maintain slight bent elbows when lifting.

**Workload**

2 Sets x 12 Repetitions
10.3 Strength Training

Front abdominals and Lower back aka Core Muscles or Stabilizers need to be strengthen to provide power for all shots and running. This is such an important exercise - not an easy one to do but definitely the best.

**Preparation**

Elbows must be bent with front arms on the ground holding the body straight with feet touching the ground.

**Execution**

Hold the position for 1 minutes dead still without moving any body part.

**Workload**

3 Sets x 1 minute each (time can be adjust as the muscles strength improves)