

"Down and Away"

The hardest pitch to hit in baseball is the one you don't feel confident about. That pitch for me is the fastball **down and away**. Hitting the ball to the opposite field, right field for right-handed hitters, left field for left-handed hitters, is a tall order.

Hitting the pitch that is **down and away** takes a lot of patience and precision. "The Baseball Book" says you have to let the ball get deep into the strike zone, and keep the barrel of the bat moving on the flattest plane possible during your swing or you will just roll over a **down and away** pitch and hit a soft dribbler -- if you hit it at all.

In high school, they show you, again based on "The Baseball Book", that a fastball **down and away** is the most called-for pitch,

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and as the pitchers become more accurate in college, that remains the case. I personally have always struggled going the other way with a pitch on the outer half of the plate, and up until this point I had almost disregarded practicing trying to hit it because of a lack of improvement.

About two weeks ago, I was introduced to a series of exercises based on The TRUSTCard™, developed by SalvageTRUST LLC; exercises through which I was told I could possibly re-educate myself, i.e., **re-educate my brain** how to do a much better job of hitting the **down and away** pitch.

The exercises called for **the same purposeful failure** [meaning, “making mistakes on purpose in a controlled way – because the human brain learns **ONLY** after it makes a mistake”], that **I had already seen in** The Personal Learning Protocol™. (The PLP is another component of the Applied Brain Research developed by SalvageTRUST LLC which I already had been using academically

with great success, in my first few weeks and months at college).

The purpose of these “Brain Map” Exercises, which my Mentor at STLLC shared with me, (and which I will describe below), was to help me restructure MY “brain maps”, the ones in MY own brain; which contain the motor and sensory information (the not so good, the bad and the ugly), that I have stored up in my brain until now with respect to hitting the **down and away** pitch. This was a new concept for me but since I’ve had good luck with The TRUSTCard™, I decided to give it an honest try.

Still, I was (a little) skeptical.

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Step One: Of The “Down and Away” Exercise

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Using a batting tee (because I couldn't find a batting practice pitcher, at first), I set up the tee location that I had been struggling with (with the ball stationary lower to the ground, at knee height or below and on the other side of home plate), and approached the batter's box just as I would in a game.

“Approaching the box” varies from player to player, but for me it always involves using The TRUSTCard™ to calm myself down along with setting up in the same part of the batter's box for every at-bat.

Step Two: Of The “Down and Away” Exercise

After I went through my approach and got comfortable. as

instructed, I then took 25 swings just looking to make contact with the ball (positioned as above) off the tee. I was instructed and I complied with not trying to do too much of anything with each swing. Ordinarily, hitting off a batting tee where the ball sits motionless would produce pretty solid contact.

But not in this drill! Not yet.

Because of how I was told to proceed, my swings didn't produce the same level of solid contact that you would expect from hitting a stationery ball off a batting tee; but what these initially-prescribed swings did do was to begin building what I want to describe to you as "spatial awareness" in my brain; but, which I was later told was restructuring certain of MY personal hitting "brain maps".

Step Three: Of The "Down and Away" Exercise

This is the step that seemed the most confusing; because my

Mentor told me that after the above 25 swings to follow up with 25 swings without making any sort of contact whatsoever.

At first when I was told to do this I didn't understand, but since it was explained to me in terms of The Personal Learning Protocol™, it made more and more sense. When you swing and miss over and over, the "misses" actually build the brain maps required to consistently hit the ball ... so this step is very important.

Step Four: Of The "Down and Away" Exercise

Now that I had swung and missed 25 in a row (on purpose), I felt pretty eager to get back to trying to actually hit the ball.

I was instructed to try not to really hit the ball with any power, rather just try to make contact.

The results were pretty immediate. My hands felt smoother to

the baseball, and even without really trying, I was hitting the down and away ball with authority, a new feat for me.

After my session on the batting tee, I had a teammate throw me live batting practice, focusing on the down and away pitch.

It was the best round of batting practice I have taken in a long time, and even my teammates noticed the difference.

My balance, timing, and barrel (of-the-bat) accuracy were all improved, and I could feel my eyes, hands, hips, and shoulders all in sync with one another (without my having to heavily concentrate on making them work together).

This training method was so successful that I repeated the exact same Steps 1-4 process with other (pitch) locations with which I have less or little trouble, and I have been producing much better swings all around.

My Success begins with my continued use, in preparing for the batter's box, of The TRUSTCard™.

That puts me at ease for each at-bat, free of baseball-related or non-baseball-related **STRESS**.

Then, the "down and away drill" involved progressing into the STLLC "Brain Map" Exercises which were purposed to let me restructure the relationship between sensory and motor brain cells in MY brain and MY eyes, hands, hips, and shoulders, when dealing with a down and away pitch.

I'm a better hitter today, no doubt about it. The whole brain map restructuring process above on the down and away pitch took about 30 min, tops.

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