

# TOSH TIMES

## TOSH Baseball Program Newsletter

Official sports medicine and sports performance provider to



Winter 2017

### Keep Your Chin — Not your eyes — On The Ball... Here's Why It Will Help You Hit Better



I say it every year: Thanksgiving comes along, then Christmas and the New Year, then BOOM — IT'S BASEBALL SEASON!! The Presidents'

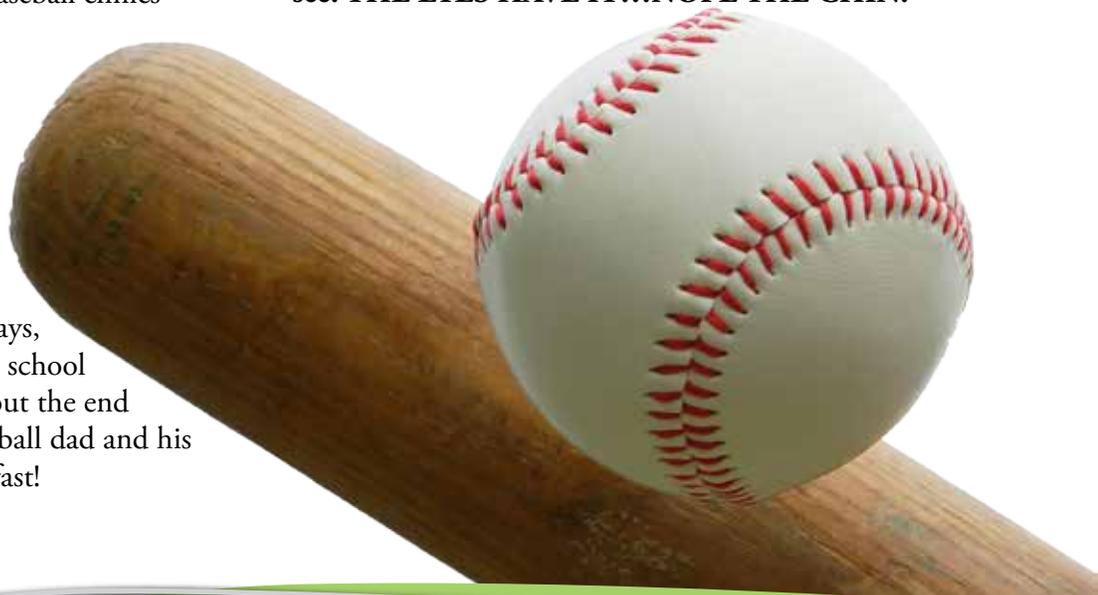
Day Tournament is only weeks away and MLB spring training is only a few weeks after that. Coming up in short order, we also have several winter baseball camps and our free TOSH / Rocky Mountain School of Baseball clinics and seminars.

How many of you baseball families are already driving kids to indoor practice and individual skill sessions to get ready for the upcoming season? 2017 begins and you're already busy as ever getting your athletes to their appointed rounds. I remember those days, and I miss them! My only son is a high school senior this year and I'm already sad about the end of the era of being a very involved baseball dad and his coach of many years. It all went by so fast!

To take my mind off of that, I have a busy TOSH workload involving hitting, throwing, pitching, and fielding video analyses and hourly one-on-one sessions with players (and parents) trying to get themselves optimally prepared for the rapidly-approaching season.

I've helped baseball and softball athletes of all ages develop their individual skills and improve their power and confidence for more than 15 years at TOSH. During that time, my coaching and instruction have been very scientifically based, yet my methods to teach that science to my students and their parents and coaches has evolved as I learn more and more about athletes' tendencies and habits.

**This BY FAR is the most detrimental habitual tendency I see: THE EYES HAVE IT...NOPE THE CHIN.**



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You cannot hit what you don't see. (I'm not speaking of actual vision correction, but that would be an important thing to check. In fact, one question I ask parents on the day of their athlete's first session is: When was the last time you had your child's eyes evaluated?)



About 95% of my first-time hitting students have flaws in how they prepare their head to see the ball. They think they're seeing the ball with both eyes as clearly as they can, but I show them and their parents the flaws in their vision and how to fix them. They simply didn't know better.

They begin by seeing the ball out of the pitcher's hand, usually using peripheral vision. Then as the ball approaches the contact spot at the plate, they begin using the other side of their eyes' peripheral vision not because they should, but because they're pulling their head away toward the field. So they end up only seeing the ball contact the bat out of the corner of their eye if at all.

How accurately can they hit the right spot on the ball if they don't optimally see what they're trying to hit? Most hitters, even young ones, will tell you exactly which spot on the ball they know they should contact with the bat to produce the most chance for success. But if you ask them if they're purposely looking for that spot on the ball as it flies toward them they'll tell you; "No — I just see the white thing and try to hit it."

**Here's how to fix that:** Teach them to get their CHIN on the ball. If their chin is pointing at the release point of the ball as it's being pitched, then both eyes are optimally seeing the ball as it zings toward the plate. The helmet and the nose don't get in the way and the brain can more quickly calculate the speed and angle of the pitch.

As the ball approaches the point of contact at the plate, teach your athletes to point their chin AT that point so both eyes can clearly see the sweet spot of the ball and their brain, hand/eye coordination, and swing mechanics can bring the bat to that spot on the ball. If the head is properly aligned, the eyes and the brain can be trained to track a more specific spot on the ball. With good tee work drills, you can teach the athlete how the ball will travel after contact if the eyes, consistent swing mechanics, and the bat contact the ball ideally. That being said, the value of making an athlete's swing mechanics as purposeful and consistent as possible is also a huge factor, especially when you're focusing on seeing what you're hitting.

Please call me at TOSH if I can help explain this better or for any other baseball needs you may have. Visit our TOSH baseball program website with information on our training program: <https://intermountainhealthcare.org/locations/the-orthopedic-specialty-hospital/medical-services/sports-medicine-and-performance/sports-training/baseball-and-softball/>

Have a great pre-season and keep those kids safe!

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# Eating for Strength: What to Eat to Help You Build Muscle in the Offseason

By *Ashley Hagensick*  
TOSH Sport Dietitian

Offseason is a good time to participate in activities you enjoy other than baseball. It's also a good time to work on getting stronger for the upcoming season. Getting stronger means building muscle, and in order to optimize muscle growth you need to challenge your muscles and fuel your body right.

Food is your body's fuel and different types of food have different functions. Protein is needed for building muscles while carbohydrates and fats are needed for energy. Eating enough protein every day is important to build muscle, but eating enough carbohydrates and fat is just as important.

If you don't eat enough carbohydrates and fats, your body will have to use the protein you've eaten for energy and building muscle will be much harder. Remember, your body already needs extra calories because you're still growing.

Follow these tips to help build muscle:

- After exercise, choose foods that have both protein and carbohydrates in them. For example, try a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, grilled chicken sandwich, chicken burrito with beans and rice, and Greek yogurt with fruit and granola.
- Don't skip meals! To build muscle you need to fuel your body consistently. Make sure to eat breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks.
- Eat protein throughout the day, not just at dinner. Sources of protein include meat, dairy, nuts, beans, eggs, fish, and soy. Find a place for protein at every meal.

Some athletes who want to build muscle turn to supplements for help, but is this a good idea?

Many supplements claim to build muscles, but since supplements aren't regulated by the Food and Drug Administration, they can actually do more harm than good. Supplements can contain illegal substances, which can lead to health and performance problems. Choose to get your protein from real food to help you maximize muscle growth, health, and performance.

[For more information, visit our TOSH Nutrition website.](#)



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